

THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS

Vol. XXVI

JUNE 1959

No. 6

HUMANISM IN HAHNEMANN *

DR. S. M. BHATTACHERJEE, M.A., P.R.S.M., BERTHAMPORE

*Revered President, Respected Guest-in-Chief, Gentlemen
present & Friends!*

Hahnemann, of hallowed memory, is known to you all as a powerful physician and the founder of a particular system of medicine. But it is now deemed worthwhile to dwell upon the humanistic traits in the character of that great man.

The common man in society remains complacent with whatever is traditionally commonplace. He wants to live in ease, peace and security, with the commonplace in life, the commonplace in thought, environment, behaviour and criteria of values. But there is a class of people who, at the outset, become anxious to pierce through that impenetrable circle of the commonplace. To ravish the commonplace is their first objective. They are the people of a new era. They augur in a new age, even amidst the old, and in far advance of their times. Hahnemann belonged to that class.

The Vedanta had said: "Know thyself", which the Greek philosopher, Socrates, re-echoed. Hahnemann's active life commenced with that knowing of his own self. The question that entered into Hahnemann's thought was:

"Medicine is meant for removing the physical and mental ills man is heir to. But how much of good have I been able to do to mankind, by the adoption of this type of

* The English version of the address delivered on the occasion of the 204th Birth Anniversary of Master Samuel Friedrich Hahnemann, celebrated on Friday, the 10th of April, 1959, under the auspices of the Murshidabad District Homeopathic Medical Association.

therapy? How much of the sufferings of man have I been able to alleviate?"

He was then a master of 12 languages, a master also in Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Geology, Biology and Anthropology. There was not a single published work on Medicine or General Science, then, which Hahnemann did not read. He was an M.D. of the Erlangen University of Germany. He was a reputed physician as well as a Surgeon in the whole of Germany. He earned a remarkable name and a fame in the practice of medicine. The problem cropped up in his mind at that moment. Repeatedly it came to his mind: "How much of good have I been able to do to mankind through this system of medicine?" But the answer that came to this question was deeply disappointing. The conclusion that was reached through the logical ways of careful observation, sharp analysis and organized verification, was extremely humiliating and derogatory to the prestige of a physician. In his treatise on the treatment of scrofulous sores, published at Leipsic in 1784, he unequivocally declared: "The patient would probably have done better without me".

Now, commenced his self-scrutiny and self-criticism. In a letter to Dr. Hufeland, a thinker and a physician of the then Germany, whose influence upon the enlightened society was extra-ordinary, Hahnemann wrote:

"I could not conscientiously treat the unknown morbid conditions of my suffering brethren by these unknown medicines, which being very active substances, may (unless applied with the most rigorous exactness, which the physician can not exercise, because their peculiar effects have not yet been examined) so easily occasion death, or produce new affections and chronic maladies, often more difficult to remove than the original disease. To become thus the murderer or the tormentor of my brethren was to me an idea so frightful and overwhelming, that soon after my marriage, I renounced the practice of medicine, that I might no longer incur the risk of doing injury and I engaged exclusively in Chemistry and in literary occupations".

Hahnemann felt that the treatment of those times did more harm than good to his patients. Either their sufferings became intolerable, or they met with death. His patients were not the people alone who were to pay for his treatment; they were, to him, his brothers and sisters. He would rather give up medicine than earn the calumny of killing his brothers or of tormenting them. But, he gave up medicine at a time when his need for money was most. He was married only the other day. He gave up medicine and took to Chemistry and literary occupations.

It was a married life; the family was increasing. Hahnemann had given up Medicine. He would wake up every other night to translate various scientific works from various languages into German, and maintain his livelihood. Cigar was his constant companion to frighten away sleep. Yet, need could not be fulfilled. Money was not available to purchase soap. He would cleanse clothes at night with raw potato, and would assist his wife in household works. He would moisten flour and knead it into doughs. The want of clothing for his children would surpass all description. Food that could be procured was extremely insufficient. "No", even then, "no"; he would in no way take to medicine again, medicine that was notorious for killing his brethren. His children became ill; they suffered unbearable pains, and the disease was dangerous. It was at the point of life and death. An inexpressible burden of agony upon his paternal heart. Sitting by his dying children, he once wrote to Dr. Hufeland:

"Where shall I look for aid, sure aid? sighed the disconsolate father on hearing the moaning of his dear, inexpressibly dear sick children. The darkness of night and the dreariness of a desert all around me; no prospect of relief for my oppressed paternal heart".

The sense of duty to his family, the great love for his dear children, and the deep shadow of the molested paternal heart—that wept and wept, recreate the humane picture of an eternal human mind. And, at the top of all, is placed high above, the everlasting portrait of one who had been the symbol of devo-

tion to Truth, love for his fatherland and limitless affection for mankind as a whole.

The traditional treatment for the insane was through chastisement, e.g., corporeal punishments etc. Hahnemann,—his heart melting with compassion, established a new method in the whole history of medicine, through his conceptions of the kind and institutional treatment of the insane. He said :

“I never allow an insane person to be punished either by blows or any kind of corporeal chastisement, because there is no punishment where there is no responsibility, and because these sufferers deserve only pity and are always rendered worse by such rough treatment, and never improved.”

“The treatment of the violent insane maniac and melancholic can take place only in an Institution specially arranged for their treatment but not within the family circle of the patient.”

After the discovery of Homœopathy, Hahnemann reverted to medicine again. But, then, he did not consider his responsibility over, as soon as a prescription was given. Even amidst his multifarious duties, he would write to many of his patients, advising them in various ways. He established with them a relationship of heart. The patients knew him to be the greatest of their relations.

In the whole history of medicine, Hahnemann was the first to declare a socialistic idea. He said :

“The State

.....
will have them manufactured by a competent, impartial person, in order to give them free of charge to Homœopathic physicians trained in Homœopathic hospitals, who have been examined theoretically and practically, and thus legally qualified. The physician may then become convinced of these divine tools for purposes of healing, but also to give them free of charge to his patients—rich and poor”.

Homœopathy is the only system of medicine on earth, which enjoins that the drug must be experimented with not upon the

sick human body, not upon the lower animals, e.g., the monkeys, the guineapigs, etc., but upon the healthy human organism. Still, to experiment upon the healthy human organism entails a multitude of risks. So, Hahnemann reduced the dose of the drug during provings, and conducted his first proving upon his own body. Why not? The whole of mankind was his brother. How could he do any injury to them? Writing upon the theme, he once said :

“Let alone the danger attending them, which no one who has any regard for his fellow creatures, and who looks on the meanest of mankind as his brother, will deem an indifferent manner.”

The Physician and the Nurse, the two most essential persons in society, evoked his blessings not the less. Hahnemann placed before the world the picture of how the physician and the nurse, in daily life or during the frightful epidemics, in the environment of subdued cries and sighs of diseased, agonized persons, or in the intolerable, life-destroying and poisonous atmosphere, carry on their duties day and night, even at the risk of their own lives, for a paltry amount of money. He wrote :

“They are two persons ordained by God, and placed like Uriah in the battle, in the thickest of the fight—forlorn hopes, quite close to the advancing enemy, without any hours of relief from their irksome guard, two very much misunderstood beings, who sacrifice themselves at hard-earned wages for the public weal, and, in order to obtain a civic crown brave the life-destroying, poisoned atmosphere, deafened by the cries of agony and the groans of death.”

After long twelve years, the cause of chronic diseases and their Homœopathic cures were discovered by Hahnemann, with the firm hope that he would be able to relieve the sick people of the incurable, chronic and complicated diseases. But the dusk of life was fast approaching. He was 73, now. Perhaps, some day, all on a sudden, Death might be calling at the door, and people might be deprived of the benefits of his discovery. So he hurriedly called in two of his most favourite disciples,

Gross and Stapf, and without the slightest reservation, revealed to them all the fruits of his research. Writing upon this, he said :

“Not until the year 1827 did I communicate the essentials of this discovery to two of my pupils, who had been of the greatest service to the art of Homœopathy, for their own benefit and that of their patients, so that the whole discovery might not be lost to the world, if perchance a higher call to eternity had called me away before the completion of the book—an event not so very improbable in my seventy-third year,”

The love and good wishes of the person who is all welfare never remain circumscribed. There was none amongst the members of his family, the German People, the whole of human race, the patient, the prover, the physician, the nurse, the disciple, the student, the child, the old, the woman and the insane, who had been deprived of the blessings and good wishes of Hahnemann.

Victory be to Hahnemann !

PAINFUL FEET AND SKIN TROUBLES

DR. WILLIAM STEPHEN

The efficiency and efficacy of the Homœopathic system of healing and the wonderful results which can be obtained by their correct use is a constant source of amazement to me. This is all the more striking when one comes across a condition in a person which immediately brings to mind the action of a particular remedy. What a joy it is when one is given details of a case which dovetails into the characteristics of one remedy so surely that one can say without any worry about the outcome, “that’s IT !”