

LIFE OF HAHNEMANN

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"Lives of greatmen all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

—*Longfellow*

In Europe, there was absolute chaos and confusion in the realm of medicine during the 18th century. Brutal methods were in vogue for treating the insane and blood letting, burning, beating and other methods were applied for the treatment of diseases. It was in this black period of human civilization that an angel by the name of Samuel Hahnemann came down to earth on the 10th of April 1755. Who could dream that this apostle of Divinity would be the discoverer of Homœopathy and would be one of the greatest benefactors of mankind.

Hahnemann was a child of one year, when the seven year War broke out, causing much suffering to the artists and artisans or Miesen Porcelain Factory, where Hahnemann's father worked as a painter and making its impact felt on the mind and spirit of the young child. In later years when the French occupied Germany Hahnemann denounced War. as 'the grave of science'.

His father discouraged not only his studying in the school but even in the home, as he wanted him to do some remunerative trade for supplementing the family's slender income. The youthful student made a candlestick of clay in which he put his taper in some place of hiding there to pour over his books without being detected.

When Hahnemann was a boy of 5 years he used to get lessons in thinking from his father. He was taught never to be a passive listener and thereby developing his faculty to think with originality. Master Muller, teacher in ancient languages had a great influence over Hahnemann's early studies. In view of his exceptional ability, his teacher insisted on his study with a free tuition.

The boy's aptitude for languages was so great that he became master of French, English, Italian, Greek, Hebrew, Spanish and Arabic in addition to German at the early age of 21. He was held in high esteem and affection on account of his vast knowledge.

Hahnemann left his home at the age of 20 to enter the Leipzig University and migrated to Vienna 2 years later. He was obliged to take up translating and teaching besides his study in order to meet the expenses of a medical education.

He graduated in Medicine from the University of Erlangen in 1779 at the age of 24 years. While he was appointed physician and librarian to Governor Von Brukenthal, he imbibed extensive knowledge in ancient literature and occult sciences. He started his practice at Hettstedt—a town of mines. Here he obtained knowledge of mining and smelting. After about 9 months he left this small town for Dessau, where he attended the laboratory of apothecary Haseler and gained his knowledge of pharmacy and chemistry.

Hahnemann was married with Johanna Henriette Stepdaughter of Herr Haseler at the age of 27 years.

He was dissatisfied with the vague and unscientific medical knowledge of those days. He was determined to discover a therapy based on scientific principles. Being an earnest believer in the omnipotence of God, he used to say that the Creator of Universe must have ordained certain fundamental principles of therapy and he was successful in discovering those principles after many years of perseverant and persistent researches.

Dr. Jai Chand writes thus: "It has been said that genius consists in a capacity for taking infinite pains. It is equally true that the exercise of that faculty is not entirely at the option of the individual. There is a force within man that impels him to labour at an appointed task. The reformer must walk steadily with unheeding ears and with eyes fixed upon a future far beyond his fellows. He must bear the jeers of the world's idlers, pressing onward to the end, be it stake or laurel crown. He by the impelling power within him, is driven to accomplish his destiny. It is only at certain periods in the world's history

that such a man is born, kindling in his heart from childhood the sacred fire. The results of these rare births mark epochs in history and by them mankind is advanced a step forward towards the fulfilment of the Creator's end. Such a man was Hahnemann".

In this pursuit after truth, Hahnemann was greatly assisted by the action of Cinchona. While he was translating Cullen's *Materia Medica*, he came across in the chapter of Cinchona the view that it was used for eradicating Malaria fever and that its antipyretic power depended upon its bitter property. He became indignant at such confused attempts at the explanation of the action of Cinchona; and forthwith took up the task of experimenting the effects of heavy doses of Cinchona on himself. He was astonished to find the symptoms of ague develop in him. Thus a new light dawned on him. That a drug producing certain symptoms on a healthy person, the same drug cures those symptoms found in a patient—"Similia Similibus Curentur". He carried on these experiments on this Law of Homœopathy for about 6 years. For about 18 years he had to give up his practice and had to surmount numerous pecuniary hardships and stiff opposition from all over the world. Yet this determined man carried on his experiments under all odds and ultimately declared the law of cure to the world. He called this new system of Therapy—Homœopathy.

This declaration of a New Principle of cure in 1796 raised a great deal of hue and cry from the dominant school of medicine. They protested against this new therapy based on this law of cures; yet they could not cow down Hahnemann who had sacrificed his medical practice and all earthly possessions for the sake of truth. He had to pass through the greatest privations of life and had to migrate from one town to another and ultimately had to leave his country and settle in Paris.

He was elected member of the Oekonomische Gesellschaft of Liepzig and fellow of the Academy of Science of the Electorate of Saxony. In 1792, Hahnemann under the patronage of Duke Ernst Von Sachsen-Gotha, got an opportunity of treating a case of insanity with his new humane method with complete success. The patient was Klockenbring—a famous author

with highly susceptible disposition. Dudgeon writes: "May we not then justly claim for Hahnemann the honour of being the first who advocated and practised the moral treatment of the Insane"?

In 1793, at Molseleben he devoted himself mostly to literary pursuits.

In 1810, he gave to the world, 'Organon of Rational Healing'—known as the Bible of Homœopathy.

In 1811, he started propaganda about Homœopathy and compiled his *Materia Medica Pura* (Part I). He used to collect a friendly circle of students around him for the purpose of giving insight into Homœopathy. He used to deliver lectures on Homœopathic science which were attended by students and physicians as well as non-medical people. He proved more than 100 drugs.

In 1819, the second edition of *Organon* came out. There was considerable difference in it from the first edition.

In 1820, Hahnemann was exiled from the land of his birth thus corroborating the maxim—"no prophet is honoured in his own country".

In 1821 he got refuge in Kothen with full rights of free practice according to his own method, including dispensing his own medicine—under the patronage of Duke Ferdinand of Anhalt-Kothen. Kothen became Mecca of Homœopathic doctors and patients from all over the world for about 14 years.

Dr. Quin of England was converted to Homœopathy and spread the gospel of this science in England.

In 1824, Hahnemann brought out the 3rd Edition of *Organon*.

In 1831 Asiatic Cholera ravaged all over Eastern Europe and was already surging across the Eastern boundary of Prussia. With existing sanitary and hygienic condition, the authorities were helpless. Allopathic Physicians had no knowledge of its cure far less of its prevention. In such a situation Hahnemann had procured a very accurate description of the symptoms and found that they were very similar to camphor. Hahnemann even without seeing a case of Cholera formulated in detail the curative and preventive treatment of the pest which proved so effective as to create a sensation all over Europe.

He brought out the Fourth Edition of *Organon* in 1829. He lost his beloved wife in the year 1830, when he was 75 years old.

In 1833, the famous fifth Edition of *Organon* appeared and revolutioned the whole concept of medicine.

Hahnemann cured the pulmonary trouble of Mlle. Marie Melanie d'Hervilly Gohier, the adopted daughter of Louis Jerome Gohier, Minister of Justice of French Republic (this is according to Bradford. But R. Haehl gives a totally different account. J.K.). In the year 1835, at his, 80th year as a mark of mutual admiration the two were married at Kothen in Germany. Soon after, both went to Paris and settled there. She married Hahnemann to nurse and serve the great man.

Hahnemann had a pleasant society in France. Homœopathy was widely recognised by the Government and he was showered with Luxuriant State honours. Madam Hahnemann was of great help to him. People from all over the world started pouring in his chamber. Clouds had started disappearing and a bright horizon had ushered in the evening of his life.

Hahnemann wrote numerous articles and delivered innumerable speeches in support of Homœopathy. These writings and speeches had an immense impression on the learned physicians of the day and many of them became votaries of his new doctrine. Some of them experimented on the new principles propounded by Hahnemann and when convinced they vouchsafed them to the world. After incessant trials and tribulations Homœopathy got a foothold in Europe and America.

Hahnemann's first book—*Organon* helped greatly in propagating the gospel of Homœopathy. After this he published his *Materia Medica Pura* which contains the symptoms of a number of medicines particularly those which he experimented on himself and his disciples. Later he published the *Chronic Diseases* which created a great furor in the medical world.

In appearance, Hahnemann was a small man. Although his body was weak externally he was sound and sinewy internally as a result of continuous sufferings and mental exertions. He continued to practice medicine at the ripe age of 82 with indefatigable zeal and vigour.

At 5 O'Clock in the morning of 2nd July 1843, he breathed his last. He exhibited extreme equanimity, patience and imperturbable goodness in his last hours till death. He made his final arrangements calmly. Death could not detract the angelic goodness from the expression of his features. He was at first buried quietly in the forlorn cemetery of Montmartre. But his followers of a later generation reburied him in 1898 in the illustrious cemetery of Pere Lachaise, and his wish to have the words "Non Inutilis Vixi" (I have not lived in vain) engraved on his tomb was now fulfilled appropriately.

Dr. Hahnemann was a distinguished classical scholar and a learned linguist. He was an accomplished chemist and a celebrated physician. He wrote more than 70 original works on Chemistry and Medicine besides his 24 important translations from English, French, Italian and Latin. His translations were not merely mechanical but were embellished with learned and original matters in numerous foot-notes, supplementaries, and independent references. He has been one of the greatest geniuses and patient investigators of the world. He was prodigious in intuition, in deduction, in industry, in research, in absolute self devotion to truth and to humanity. He belongs to that galaxy of great men to whom Law reveals itself. As Newton discovered the Law of Gravitation, so Hahnemann discovered the Law of Similars.

Hahnemann continued to strive for the advancement of Homœopathy throughout his life. He has become immortal by his legacy of Homœopathy to the disease-ridden world. Truly speaking, he was a great saint. Millions of people are getting benefit out of the fruits of his sacrifices and labours. Let us pay our grateful homage to this great benefactor of mankind and let us pledge ourselves to keep the candle of Homœopathy burning for ever.
