

## HAHNEMANN'S PREVISION OF BACTERIOLOGY

### A MISCONCEPTION \*

DR. G. DIRGHANGI

Mr. President, Ladies, Physicians and Student friends,

Seldom in my life have I indulged in controversies unless compelled by repeated request of our near friends and appeal from dear students awakening in my mind a deep sense of duty. Today it appears to be my imperative duty at their demand to express freely my views regarding the miasms of Hahnemann and the Bacteria etc., of modern times as to their parts in causation of diseases, for this controversial question has of late been introduced into the discussional field of homœopathy by some learned friends of the Orthodox School who have honoured us by coming over to our fold. I love them for their search and respect them for their research in their new field. But all new things are somewhat bewildering in the beginning if they are not approached with meek and earnest spirit of learning avoiding reckless dogmatic or hasty conclusions. So it is no wonder that one of them had been so much pleased reading a pamphlet in Hahnemann's Lesser Writings that he unceremoniously dubbed Hahnemann as the Father of Bacteriology, to my mind rather unguardedly without spending necessary thoughts on its reaction on our science. He has advanced able arguments literary, logical, psychological etc., from various angles to prove that Hahnemann had a foreknowledge or rather prevision of Bacteria long before Koch's discovery of Comma Bacilli of cholera as the causational factor or spreading agent of that fell disease. He is pushing his theory with great speed in the leading Homœopathic Journals of Calcutta in both English and Bengali. His friends also speak from platforms or in private talks with students supporting the same theme. I would

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\* (Read at The Calcutta Homœopathic Medical College Students' Re-Union 1952).

have been glad to agree with those friends in some way if the writings of 1831 had been repeated or at least referred to by Hahnemann in his subsequent writings of years near about from 1832 to 1843, but not blindly as their followers. Among the new comers there are certainly many who try to follow Hahnemann and his faithful followers but only a few others with experience of only few years dare to criticise Hahnemann adversely, and work in their own novel way and failing to derive beneficent effect from newly invented methods of their own declare their liberty to cure the patients anyhow *i.e.*, without any fixed principle of any pathy. They take pride in begging and borrowing from other pathies medicines, and methods, caring little for well-established principles of practice of Hahnemann and the reputed elders in the family of Homœopaths. Ignorant people take their liberty reverently and regard them as masters of many pathies, little understanding that the jack of all trade is master of none. Bengal is noted for credulity which produced duplicates of Hahnemann, Kent and others. It is difficult to speak with reason in a place where blind following takes the place of rational procedure. A High Court judge said—In Bengal every man is a born Homœopath.

I am so sorry to raise a voice of dissent here against the honour given to Hahnemann. But students and some of my friends of both old and new schools, who have examined my observations are keenly willing to carry on purely academic discussion regarding the impropriety. And I know for certain, that difference in opinion on any subject of general interest is not likely to alienate the minds of friends and free thinkers. The writer in the journals mainly based his arguments on quotations from Hahnemann's writings interpreting them in his own way. I must be pardoned if I take my stand on what our Master had said in his latest as well as Lesser Writings as I understand them to examine critically what these friends have tried to prove. The truth being determined peacefully by our

unprejudiced colleagues and learned lovers of Homœopathy whose number is not a few now-a-days.

We should not forget, however, that we are here trying to find out the correct views of Hahnemann from his own writings in the subsequent years. My intention is that students of Homœopathy would know what Hahnemann had actually said and meant in his books. They might improve or modify that knowledge later in life. Is it at all desirable to make the defects of Hahnemann's writings loom large before the eyes of students before they are thoroughly acquainted with the truths of Homœopathy as is being done by our new friends?

Let us begin by giving you the plain facts of our case in a nutshell which you are to consider. Hahnemann published a pamphlet in 1831 regarding what he then thought to be the mode of propagation of the Asiatic Cholera (see Lesser Writings, page 758). In this he used such expressions as "excessively minute invisible living creatures so inimical to human life of which the contagious matter of the cholera *most probably* consist". "The physicians and nurses take away with them in their clothes, in their hair, probably also in their breath, the invisible (*probably animated*) contagious matter surrounding the cholera patient". Here I say to you, the expressions "*most probably*" being misunderstood, turned the Allopathically prejudiced head of our friends to think that Hahnemann, then believed, accepted or at least prevised even without microscope the Comma Bacilli discovered by Koch and said to be the cause of cholera or spread of cholera. And that our friend was tempted to propagate this theory to achieve the honour of a discovery so palatable to the taste of Allopaths.

Now I put this question to you. Can my surmise be a reliable ground for your holding that only the hope for his own honour impelled our friend to honour Hahnemann as the father of Bacteriology? Surely you say—No, because, the friend may deny it and may put up some

more positive assertions of Hahnemann to justify his action. You may also hold that merely my surmise or conjecture resting on *probability* cannot be conclusive proof of the honest friend's selfish desire for honour. Here, for the self same reason, you cannot, Sir, take Hahnemann's conjecture resting on *probabilities* in 1831 to be his real conviction or his sure prevision of modern Comma Bacilli to be the cause or spreading agent of cholera, for I shall show that Hahnemann never repeated or confirmed by his subsequent writings up to 1843, the time of his departure from this earth what he had doubtfully written in 1831. The thing is when the immaterial miasm of Hahnemann attacks and overpowers the vital force, *i.e.*, during the incubation period their bacilli, bacteria or parasites of Cholera, Pneumonia, Typhoid or Chronic affections of venereal disease. Cause must precede the attack. The Bacilli etc., come later on as result or ultimate of the disease. It is like the tension of feeling of two neighbouring governments going on unknown or secretly before the ultimatum is given or armies are called on in the open field.

In my opinion, Hahnemann soared so high from the depth of materialism of his time that he boldly promulgated that it is the vital force, the immaterial, invisible force which keeps man alive, happy and prosperous when in health to realise the higher purposes of his existence. But when deranged by the *dynamic influence* of morbid agents inimical to life, it produces *disagreeable sensations* in the organism and inclines it to irregular processes in order to draw the attention of the physician for help, which we call disease. These disagreeable sensations etc. occur during overpowering attack of immaterial miasm on immaterial vital force in the invisible immaterial plane.

But shortly, my friend is of opinion that what Hahnemann wrote as dynamic influence is the work of the Bacteria, parasites etc., the invisible, microscopic living creatures so on and so forth, according to his quotations from Hahnemann's Lesser Writings. But I beg to say now and

always it is not the case. For infection takes place by affection of Vital Force by immaterial, invisible, miasmatic influences which ultimate to material changes, where you find Bacteria, Bacilli etc.

The meaning of the *dynamic influence* has been clearly explained by Hahnemann in the 7th foot-note at page 99 (6th edition Organon). There he writes "The dynamic effect of the sick making influences upon healthy man as well as the dynamic energy of the medicines upon the vital principle in the restoration of health, is nothing else than infection and so *not in any way material*, not in any way *mechanical*, just as the energy of a magnet attracting a piece of iron or steel is not material or mechanical. It is purely specific *conceptual* influence that communicates to a near child, small-pox or measles in the same way as a magnet communicates to the near needle, the magnetic property (page 100 of Organon, 6th Edn.). Again, if one looks upon something nauseous and becomes inclined to vomit, did a material emetic come into his stomach which compels him to this antiperistaltic movement? Was it not solely the dynamic effect of the nauseating aspect upon his imagination? These examples clearly show what Hahnemann meant by infection in the year 1833 and in 1843. Like small-pox or measles, cholera infection also takes place in an immaterial way and immaterial fear may help the spread and cause even deaths which practical experience daily proves beyond any shadow of doubt. Those who care very little for life are seldom attacked or die. These bold hearts serve the sick with little or no precaution with modern antiseptics but by the grace of God, remain safe, sound and steady with their own strength of mind.

Thus we see, Hahnemann speaks of vital force, disease producing force and medicinal force—all these are invisible, immaterial, conceptual and spirit like forces. Surely then Hahnemann freed himself from the materialism of his time. *To drag him down to the material plane of Bacteriology, is a sin which every thinking rational Homœopath should*

*avoid religiously.* To inaugurate the bacteria theory and infuse it into the minds of innocent students instead of susceptibility or vital weakness as cause of disease as said by Hahnemann is simply to 'axe out Hahnemannian Homœopathy.

It will not be, therefore, unreasonable for me to say that our friend laboriously culled and wreathed the flowers of 1831 in a chaplet to place it on the haloed head of Hahnemann in the year 1833 when they were deprived of beauty and fragrance. Plainly speaking our friend quotes Hahnemann's statement from his Lesser Writings published in 1831, on spread of Cholera occurring board ships on the river Ganges in India. He is reported to have said: "In the confined spaces, filled with mouldy, watery vapours the cholera miasm finds a favourite element for its multiplication and grows (Please note here, the real meaning of "*The invisible cholera miasm*" gradually develops into material form from internal, invisible, immaterial state as is natural in every infection) into an enormously increased brood of these excessively minute, invisible living creatures so inimical to life of which the contagious *matter* of cholera *most probably* consists. The cause of this is undoubtedly the invisible *cloud* that hovers closely around the sailors who have remained free from the disease composed of *probably* millions of the *miasmatic* (Means—developed from miasm) animated beings which at first developed on the broad marshy banks of the tepid Ganges always searching out in preference the human being to his destruction. This pestiferous, infectious matter as he calls it, "which is carried about in the clothes, hair, beards, soiled hands, instruments of physicians, nurses and others" seems to spread the infection and cause epidemics. Here, our friend says Hahnemann had anticipated by more than 50 years Koch's discovery of Comma Bacillus of Cholera in 1882.

Our friend sees Koch's Comma Bacillus in Hahnemann's "Miasm" without microscope, I beg to say, perhaps, in his

prejudicial, dreamy vision. Hahnemann never saw or admitted any material cause, Bacteria or Bacilli, as is clearly apparent from my quotations from his subsequent writings in the Organon without any doubt or probability as shown above. Here also Kent says very reasonably—"It is not from external things that man becomes sick not from bacteria nor from environment but from causes within" (page 36 K.P.). Here, I should again draw the attention of our intelligent and unprejudiced listeners to the fact that this statement in the Lesser Writings naturally of lesser importance and authenticity was never referred to by Hahnemann in his future writings. It was made, without actually seeing a case of cholera, without visiting India, without having a glimpse of the Ganges, without feeling the temperatures of the waters of the Ganges so pleasant and something more than pleasingly cool (Hahnemann described it as tepid) without having the good fortune of knowing the wonderful antiseptic properties of the sacredly blessed cold stream which comes down from the Majestic Himachalam. But Hahnemann describes it as tepid for want of actual experience. Another wonderful feature of the statement is that it is punctuated by the words "Seems", "Probably", "Most probably" as stated above. To make a passing remark without actually seeing a disease or anything connected with it is one affair and solid opinion formed after close observation and handling it, is certainly essentially different. The theoretical assumptions are liable to be falsified by cool thinking, practical and repeated observations or experience extending over a length of time. At this period of life to say something in favour of our friend's assumptions, might be that Hahnemann was passing through a doubtful state of mind but that never settled into a solid opinion as it appears from later writings. But correctly speaking his assumption is due to misinterpretation.

On the face of this, Sir, my friend's opinion cannot carry more weight in the consideration of any sensible man than that of Kent, the philosopher, the best follower of

Hahnemann and best teacher of Hahnemannian Homœopathy. Sir John Weir, a student of Kent, in his speech as the President of the Homœopathic Congress 1950, after dealing with an exhaustive comparison of Homœopathy with up-to-date discoveries of modern science with wonderful mastery and precision said towards conclusion:—"With varying success due to human frailty I have had no reason to change from the principles I was taught by Dr. Kent." But wonder is that some of our new friends very often use unparliamentary language against this Kent—and show themselves in their proper light.

In the latest or the sixth edition of *Organon* published in 1843 look at the preface, Hahnemann says: "It can easily convince every reflecting person that the diseases of man, are not caused by any substance, any acidity, that is to say any disease matter but they are solely spirit-like (dynamic) derangements of the spirit-like power (vital principle) that animates the human body (page 18 of *Organon*, Edition 6th). Here, please, notice, there is no word "*probably*" etc. in the assertion of Hahnemann. This was written in 1833 and published in 1843, that is, at least two years if not ten years after Hahnemann's observation regarding probable affection and spread of Cholera published in 1831.

In the 11th para of *Organon* Hahnemann says—"When a person falls ill it is only the spiritual self-acting (automatic) vital force everywhere present in the organism that is primarily deranged by the dynamic influence of morbid agent inimical to life, it is the vital principle deranged to such an abnormal state that can furnish the organism with its disagreeable sensations and incline it to irregular processes which we call disease."

Again in the 12th para he repeats the same thing "it is morbidly affected vital force alone that produce the disease."

In a foot-note to the 12th para Hahnemann says "How the vital force causes the organism to display morbid



phenomena, that is how it produces disease, it would be of no utility to physician to know." (But our friend's morbid attempts are very keen to find that out, for they possess progressive knowledge of science).

This remark was made by Hahnemann here only because he had bitter experience in trying to explain how cholera spreads or affects persons with a probable, i.e., doubtful theory which unhappily our friend has utilised for honouring Hahnemann really perhaps trying to honour himself by way of, as he thought, a wonderful or intelligent discovery. To call Hahnemann father of Bacteriology is only to do him dishonour to our minds, as said before.

Now what was the bitter experience he had? It was a challenge by Dr. Hufeland, of his theory of the "Probable" cause of the spread of cholera. I shall quote from the Lesser Writings of Hahnemann that is from the old stock of our friend's arguments. At para 758 Hahnemann says:—"Only fact brought forward by Hufeland against my proofs that on board an English Ship in the open sea about the latitude of Riga that had no (?) communication with the town two sailors were suddenly seized with the cholera, proves nothing, for it is not known how near the ship came to the infected town of Riga so that the sphere of miasm-exhalation from the town although diluted might yet have reached and infected the sailors who were still unused to the miasm especially if they as is often the case were rendered more susceptible to it from intemperance.") Here Hahnemann being cornered by Hufeland has been compelled to admit that sailors on board ship near Riga were attacked with cholera not from infectious matter washed out from the town, a far fetched idea, but was attacked with miasm of cholera being susceptible to it from the lowered vitality or vital weakness due to their intemperance, etc. Now everybody with common sense is bound to admit that sailors on board ship on the Ganges were also affected with cholera, from the same cause of lowered vitality caused by intemperance, etc. The dismal unhealthy condition which

helped the growth of cholera miasm certainly lowered the vitality of sailors also on the Ganges. Of course, the bad odour, mouldy atmosphere, etc., added fuel to the fire in spreading the disease. So the meteoric or telluric influences causing sporadic or epidemic attacks of Acute diseases cannot be thrown overboard with bad logic or fallacious arguments. What Hahnemann had published in 1843 in *Organon* must have greater authenticity than what he gave out in his Lesser Writings. Again, Hahnemann's statement quoted by my friend is not purely Hahnemann's idea. It was only an echo of the opinion of *public journal*, is clear as day light from his writings at para 758 of Lesser Writings quoted below.

"The most striking example of infection and rapid spread of cholera as is well-known and as the *journals* inform us in this way: "On board ships in the confined spaces filled with watery vapours the cholera miasm finds a favourable element for its multiplication, etc." If the sailors on the sea near Riga are liable to attack of cholera without any actual contact due to intemperance lowering the power of vital force to resist the disease miasm, the sailors on board ship near the shore of the Ganges living under same unhealthy condition and character had their vitality lowered by intemperance. The same causes have been expressed in paragraph 73 of *Organon* of epidemic diseases which prevail among thickly congregated masses of human beings. That calamities of war, inundations and famine also produce Acute diseases by lowering the strength of the vital force and thereby developing susceptibility to diseases when innumerable persons gather together and live under unhealthy conditions and privations, is readily understandable. Hahnemann says:—

Morbific noxious agents do not possess the power of morbidly deranging the health of man unconditionally but we are made ill by them only when our organism is sufficiently susceptible to the attack of the morbid cause—(*Organon* para 31).

Our friend has not clearly defined where lies the similarity of the action and affections of the miasm of Hahnemann and his parasite or bacteria. Hahnemann's miasms are immaterial and invisible but bacteria and parasites are material though microscopical. Miasms primarily affect immaterial vital force, the mind etc., whereas parasites can affect the material parts of men because they are themselves material. The power of the parasites and bacteria can produce a single or a very limited few diseases only, whereas the miasm of psora produces innumerable diseases which affect mankind throughout the world which pathologist failed to count or name anything like exhaustively. It is better to say that we cannot see elephant being blind than being laughed at, saying that the animal is like a pillar or like a tail as in the story related by Paramhansa Ramkrishna Deb.

The truth is unless the vital force is weak and susceptible no acute or chronic miasm can ever affect the vital force. After quoting the doubtful statement of Hahnemann from his Lesser Writings as shown above my friend felt inwardly uneasy and wanted to find out something like more positive assertion relating to his Bacterial theory from Hahnemann's Chronic Diseases. But having failed to find anything of definite nature from the body of the book he had to plunge into the foot-note at page 35 little suspecting that careful readers will never miss to detect the notes of interrogation put at the end of 2 paras quoted denoting the doubt in Hahnemann's mind. Again, 'Chronic diseases' was written about the same time as the 'Lesser Writings'. So the doubtful statement regarding the probable conception of Bacillus, etc. occurred at that time of Hahnemann's life, if at all but did not take the form of doubtless conviction to be recorded properly in the body of his authoritative books. Now, I beg to repeat here, that from such doubtful data can any logical conclusion be arrived at? My friend has undoubtedly shown great and profound knowledge of logic.

But he has also proved the truth of Burke's saying—that it is nature of all greatness not to be exact.

The prejudices of his Allopathic training gave my friend tempting incentive to exertion for finding hint of Bacteria or Bacilli in the Lesser Writings of Hahnemann. He found them and exclaimed like Archimedes—Eureka! 'I have found it'. True students of Homœopathy will be at one with Dr. Kent and say—By none the doctrines of Homœopathy are so much distorted as by some of his pretended devotees. Kent said "The Bacteria are the result of conditions within as it were evolved by spontaneous generation. The cause of ultimates are not from without but from immaterial invisible centre; the power of evolving is endowment from the Creator—K.P. 90." The Britons understood and accepted this but some of my Indian friends does not yet. Poets and Philosophers are born, never made.

The British Homœopathic Association has adopted Kent's Philosophy whole of it, Materia Medica and Repertory as text books for study in their faculty, whereas our West Bengal Homœopathic State Faculty has rejected the first part of Kent's philosophy. Britons know how to honour truth wherever found with sincerity. In order to draw out the meaning, denotation and connotation of Hahnemann's Psora and Miasm my friend has left no stone unturned in the fathomless lore of English Dictionary, Science, Metaphysics, Philosophy and remarkably in Logic which to my mind is only to create psychological cosmos out of logical chaos.

It was in the year 1906 we had Plato's definition of man as a featherless biped and enjoyed it. But in the year 1951 we are given Hahnemann's Miasm and Psora in terms of bacilli, bacteria and parasites, etc., only to regret amply.

God has given Homœopathy to this world through one of His chosen sons for the real, curative and lasting benefit of its suffering humanity. The critics and commentators are temporal beings who work to display their powers of

prejudiced judgment and verbose literary abilities. But truth is not altered by their efforts. Dr. Dudgeon, for instance, charged Hahnemann with "frequent changes and repetition of the same thing, etc." He certainly failed to reckon the necessities for introduction of a perplexing New thing in questions of life and death. Others with more profound knowledge found in Hahnemann's huge writings which they mostly misunderstood—Unwarranted presumption, dogmatic assertion, obscure conception, undue generalisation, incomplete formulations and arguments in a vicious circle. What more to add by these noble critics? Let their too much light kill their vision. You go on collecting honey like honey bees wherever found with Mind.—Tabula rasa.

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### CLINICAL CASE

DR. S. PRASAD, NEW DELHI—5.

SIR,

On the occasion of the New-year's day, 1952, I present to you and to the Medical Profession of India, a case which has baffled the medical Intelligence in India. The patient is an elderly man aged 55 years, middle structure, brownish colour. He lived for over 30 years in a cold climate place. It was gathered that in his childhood he mostly suffered from Malarial fever and used quinine. At the age of 22 years he had a severe attack of Malarial fever and he took some six intra-muscular injections of quinine. It broke down his health and for many years he suffered from Nervous Debility with Palpitation of heart. Homœopathic treatment picked him up. He also used Elixir of Asvagandha for a pretty long time which did immense good to him. He had no attack of fever after 1922 for about twenty