

# THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS

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## EDITORIAL

### THE HAHNEMANNIAN TOTALITY

There is an old English quotation, "Behind every great man there is either a great teacher or a great parent". Both the teacher and the parent play an important role in making man a man. A man is a product of what is passed down to him through heredity and what is acquired by him in life through living. What he inherits he has no control over. But what he acquires belongs to him and is the result of his interactions with the environment.

Man interacts with nature through mind. Resident in the mind of every man is a capacity to regulate his mental operations. It becomes manifested to the degree the mind gets disciplined. Education disciplines the mind. A teacher or a parent becomes instrumental in imparting education. To make education achieve its objective one of the foremost criteria is that a person who assumes the role of teacher is himself in balance, for it is only a balanced mind that is capable of apprehending the one that is not in balance and help it to balance. The other criteria belongs to the learner. It is as much necessary for him to be susceptible to receive and react to the situations created by the teacher in a favourable manner as it is necessary for the latter to provide the ideal situations which result in *right* knowledge. Education, thus becomes a two-way process.

Nature is man's ideal teacher because all operations in nature are balanced. But an ideal situation of that order is never obtained to him. Right from infancy in the environment of his family and the neighbourhood, through the successive stages of development, he gets exposed to influences of different kinds and each one of them share the responsibility of disciplining his mind to a lesser or greater degree. All those minds functioning in various degrees of imbalance determine, to a large extent, the course of mind in which they result as experiences. Reason acts as a sorter by converting only those experiences that are filtered through it to result in knowledge of the *right* order in the recipient mind. Sensibility thus rests on the two pillars of reason and sensitivity in man.

No man is ever born great. Greatness is conferred on him by others in recognition of his good acts. Good action implies that it is preceded by good

thought. Good thinking is possible only for a mind that is disciplined. It alone has the capacity to get enjoined to a good purpose and give direction to thoughts to result in good action. Education thus acquires an important dimension in determining the life and living of man.

A phenomenological approach to the study of man in his totality demands the study of the various influences that are brought to bear upon his mind on the evolutionary scale. It calls for a total comprehension of the various causative factors and the concomitance of their occurrence, for it has to be remembered that, in nature, a phenomenon never occurs in isolation. It is also necessary to interpret them in the light of the situations obtained at the time of their occurrence.

The 10th of April brings to the mind a special joy for the homoeopaths all over the world. It is on this day they pay homage to Hahnemann, the great seer, whose *only mission* in life has been "To restore the sick to health" through a rational system of therapeutics, that is Homoeopathy. Scientists have been born at different points of time and have discovered many wonderful things for the mankind. But seldom one comes across the kind of jubilation and enthusiasm amongst the advocates of a branch of science as with the homoeopaths, who have been celebrating the birth anniversary of Hahnemann, the founder of the science, year after year for more than a century and half after him! It raises curiosity to know the greatness in this man who has been occupying the hearts of millions of his followers that has made him immortal. He can only be apprehended by perceiving him in his totality in the light of the foregoing discussion.

It is a common experience in nature for certain trades and practices to run in families through successive generations although, science is not yet aware of a genetic basis underlying such phenomenon. Evidence is on record that Hahnemann belonged to a family of porcelain painters whose artistry on porcelain ware had acquired such fame in Germany of the 18th century that it attracted the rulers of the federal states into which the country was divided at that time to invade Meissen, time and again, and plunder the porcelain wealth that belonged to the town, throwing the poor workers of the factories out of jobs creating economic hardships. In spite of the two famed schools having been located in the town, education still remained a luxury for the privileged few, since the children of the economically backward skilled workers were not able to afford it. In both the schools the greater emphasis lay on the study of languages and art rather than the science. The Europe of that era was just recovering from the impact of authoritarianism in the field of science dominated by the concepts of Galen. Knowledge was being systematized through the methods of inductive and deductive reasoning propounded by Lord Bacon. It was in that transitory period, which in history is described as the renaissance period, that Samuel was born to the porcelain painter Gottfried Hahnemann.

Even if one were to advance a hypothetical conclusion that the talent for

art in little Samuel was a trait he inherited from his talented father, the strong disposition he had for the study of science from a relatively young age cannot be argued on the same premise. Odds strongly favoured the development of a poor motivation for learning in little Samuel because, neither the circumstances nor the disposition in parents were encouraging him in the direction of the acquisition of knowledge of a highly specialised order, which he succeeded in acquiring in later life. Scattered all over his biography one finds several instances, when either he was removed from school because his father was unable to pay for his education or because, the family resources were so meagre that he was made to work for supplementing the income to meet the bare needs of a fairly large family. To his father, education had a limited objective of acquainting his son with the elementary knowledge of reading and writing the native language. The disciplining part he had taken in his own hands as is evidenced by the 'thinking lessons' he gave to his son every evening, as well as through introduction to the principles of Rousseau at a very tender age. But he could not change the course of destiny, for Samuel converted those experiences to cement the foundation on which he could steadily build the super-structure.

If there had been a benevolent force that contributed consistently in guiding Samuel Hahnemann through the boyhood and adolescence to fight against odds and pursue the path of knowledge, it was Magister Muller, his teacher and mentor who, apart from pleading with Gottfried Hahnemann to send young Samuel to school on every occasion he was removed from it, but he also offered him pecuniary help by asking him to tutor the boarders in the elements of Greek. He was also given freedom to attend only those classes which in his opinion were beneficial to him and was allowed to read books on topics other than the subject that was being discussed in the class. These concessions could not be regarded as special favours shown to him but, they were intended to create opportunities for the curious mind to interact with situations that could help it to evolve fully in a natural way. Magister Muller was a sensitive and sensible teacher who could recognise in his pupil a mind which was capable of unfolding itself to unfathomable heights if given the right direction. Hahnemann in his writings about his boyhood has expressed indebtedness to his teacher for whatever he attained in later life.

Very little is known about Hahnemann's early life. The few anecdotes that are recorded in the biographies written on his life when arranged logically to have a glimpse of him throw sufficient light on the intense urge within him to procure knowledge. So intense was the motivation in him to learn that he was not deterred by the poor state of health he was maintaining due to prolonged hours of study and occupation. Nor did he submit himself to the wrath and displeasure of his parents whose watchful eyes he managed to escape by extending his days to the dead hours of the night by engaging himself with books in a quiet corner of the house under light of a

self-made clay lamp when the whole household was fast asleep. That he was a prodigy leaves none in doubt for, by the bare age of twelve his critical analysis of Greek excelled that of his teacher who regarded his views to be superior to his own. It is equally enigmatic how by the age of twenty he could develop concomitantly the faculties of both art and science and could have more than superficial knowledge in a wide range of subjects extending from linguistics, humanities, mathematics, astronomy, botany, chemistry, geology, metallurgy and geography. His lust for reading could be judged from the fact that he accepted to serve von Brukenthal, the Governor of Transylvania as a caretaker of the latter's large library which he could use with advantage to further his own knowledge. Throughout his life he remained studious, for had it not been for that quality in him, Homoeopathy would not have been discovered and presented by him to the world as a rational system of healing.

Hahnemann was a complete physician in the sense of the term as it has been used by him in the first six aphorisms of the *Organon of Medicine*. His sensitivities find their expression in the essay on 'Medical Observer'. His regard for life as a mission and his being the instrument in the Divine hands for bringing succour to the sick humanity depicts his humility and noble thoughts. Truth was his only goal in life and he lived for it drawing inspiration from the philosophy with which he identified, "Never to learn or listen passively. To act and to be oneself without vain display. Never to act contrary to the sublime conception of the first principle of Creation, of the dignity of mankind or its lofty destiny". He was a Protestant by birth, but did not let the religion stand in between him and truth. To him truth encompassed all religions and he drew the good points from all of them to adapt to a way of life which was his own. He was a free thinker and made no secret of his experiences of nature. His expression was clear and emphatic and reflected the clarity in his thinking. His immense industry is recorded by his works he made available to the world in medicine, chemistry, literature, translations besides attending to the duties of an immense practice. If there has been one field which did not attract him in life it was politics. (Alas! it is the only field that attracts most of his followers today who swear by his name).

That was Hahnemann in his totality. Haehl in his biography of Hahnemann has aptly summed up his life as, "Hard, strict youth, through the struggling years of manhood to the peaceful days of an old age crowned with great achievements" which enabled him, "To say tersely of himself at the end of his life—*Non inutilis vixi*—I have not lived in vain."

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