

THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS

Vol. L

SEPTEMBER 1983

No. 9

EDITORIAL

THE SCOPE OF HOMOEOPATHY

Successful homoeopathic practice largely depends upon sound knowledge of principles of Homoeopathy and its practical mechanics. In other words, knowledge of scope and limitations is essential. Curiously, this aspect of Homoeopathy is not well-developed in the teaching programme in our institutions with the result, a student is unaware of its potentiality.

Some carry superficial or hazy ideas about the scope of its application and attempt the impossible, thus bringing ridicule to themselves and to the science; while some others, not knowing the full potentialities of this therapeutic art, undertake unhomoeopathic measures which otherwise could have easily been tackled by homoeopathic application, thus bringing discredit.

In practice many of us do not know how in a particular case one succeeds and fails in other. Haphazard cures do not justify our superiority.

For therapeutic efficiency and accuracy the law of similars must in all cases be operative. This can be taken as a basic guide to the scope of Homoeopathy.

What we need is cleancut scientific work which can be rationally explained and results obtained by the intelligent application of definite principles.

To understand the scope of Homoeopathy it is necessary to know the difference between the disease and its end product or the material result in which the disease process ends.

Disease *per se* is "Nothing more than alteration in the state of health of a healthy individual caused by the dynamic action of external inimical forces upon the life-principle of the living organism making itself known only by perceptible signs and symptoms, the totality of which represents and for all practical purposes constitute the disease."—Hahnemann.

It is, therefore, necessary to separate out the primary functional symptoms of the disease from the secondary symptoms which represent the pathological end products of the disease. For example, in case of a new growth developing in a patient, we prescribe for the patient a remedial agent guided by the symptoms which represent the morbid, vital processes

which precede, accompany and ultimate in the development of such a new growth.

Hahnemann affirms that the totality of the symptoms is the only guide to the selection of a remedy, because the totality of symptoms is the outwardly reflected picture of the internal image of deviated vital force, the removal of these perceptible symptoms, removes disease itself and restores health.

Hahnemann distinguishes, therefore, between the disease itself and its cause, occasion, conditions, products and phenomena and while doing so clearly shows the limitations of Homoeopathy, primarily to functional changes from which the diseases arise.

Gross pathological changes, organic lesions, morphological or anatomical disproportions, neoplasms and physical effects of mechanical causes are not brought under the domain of similia and, therefore, do not come under the purview of homoeopathic treatment. However, the morbid processes from which they arise or to which they lead are amenable to homoeopathic treatment.

Homoeopathic remedies having power to control the vital functions and increase resistance, often exercise favourable influence upon physical development as well as on tangible products of disease or accidents. Thus the growth of a tumour may be retarded or arrested, absorption and repair promoted even to its total removal.

The sphere of similia is thus limited to those morbid functional conditions and processes which result primarily from the dynamic action upon the living organism of morbid agents inimical to life.

The dynamic causes of disease mean those agents influence primarily the vital force and disturb the vital functions of mind and body and only such agents come under the sphere of similia.

Homoeopathy successfully treats all such diseases pertaining to specific virus. However, in only most urgent cases where danger to life and imminent death allow no time for homoeopathic remedies to be selected and to be acted upon, is palliation advocated.—*Organon*, note to para 67.

The principle of palliation can be applied to conditions characterised by shock or collapse, unbearable pain where collapse is threatened, such as myocardial infarct, severe diabetic state, in cases when the gravel or calculi is passing through the renal passage. Analgesics may be used in such exceptional cases for a temporary relief as is used in post-surgical and dental operations.

With all said and done, it is not possible to demarcate a line between therapeutics of Homoeopathy and its related sciences. It is left to the individual physician to be governed by his judgment and the circumstances of the case.

Disease is an evolutionary phenomenon. The process of disease formation begins at the dynamic level and follows through functional and struc-

tural state to degeneration. The patient is seen by the physician at any one of these states. The duty of the physician is *to assess* the state of the evolutionary phase and to determine the prognosis of the case at that point.

The physician has a moral obligation and the welfare of his patient is most important. Whatever he feels fit in the interest of his patient without falling prey to pride and prejudice, he would perform in the times when his professional skill is required to be demonstrated. A strategic retreat is sometimes necessary for a decisive victory and hence if one has to yield one's ground under the matter of principles he should do it in the best interest of the patient but with a full justification that he is not doing anything dishonest.

The quality of the patient is also an important part which adds up to the scope and limits of practical Homoeopathy. They have to be educated in the principles of Homoeopathy by discussion, instruction and demonstration and this needs time. But once they are convinced of the competence of the art and that of the physician, they will be hard to be dislodged. But there are some class of patients who are careless. They want quick results and such will be difficult to continue with a conscientious homoeopath.

Yet there is one more class which fall in between the two, and such class will stick to you for all the normal harmless conditions but as soon as something serious appears they will compel you to resort to unhomoeopathic methods. In such cases it is better to withdraw and keep your conscience clear.

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