

Homeopathy—Part 2

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The Basic Errors of Homeopathy (Continued)

Irrelevant Additions to Diagnosis

A fourth major flaw in Hahnemann's method was his assumption that a host of unrelated issues were important to the diagnosis and treatment of a particular illness. What most people would consider irrelevant information was for Hahnemann crucial. He discusses how the homeopathic physician must be concerned with a nearly endless number of issues which a modern doctor would simply ignore. For example, Hahnemann explains that,

the physician sees, hears, and remarks by his other senses what there is of an altered or unusual character about him [the patient]. He writes down accurately all that the patient and his friends have told him in the very expressions used by them....¹

He begins a fresh line [of questioning] with every new circumstance mentioned by the patient or his friends, so that the symptoms shall all be ranged separately one below the other.²

The questions asked are often unrelated to any physical problem. For example, the homeopath may ask, "In what position do you like to sleep?" Or, "When do you become dizzy?" He will want to know how the person feels before a storm—or how they feel when their collar is unbuttoned. He thinks it important to know if they walk in their bare feet or whether they like or dislike having a belt around their waist. Questions will be asked concerning susceptibility to heat and cold, about times of sadness, frustration, or anger.

The homeopath will want to hear about the person's fantasies and aspirations, their dreams and fears. Homeopath Dr. Jacques Michaud comments, "Dreams are a mysterious but important aspect of the personality.... The information we draw from them is sometimes precise enough to indicate a remedy."³

The homeopath will also want to know the exact location or pattern of pimples and itches. He will observe the physical appearance of the patient, including the complexion and manner of dress. The homeopath observes patient idiosyncrasies and wants to know what the patient thinks concerning how others think of him. He wants to know how he behaves during sleep; whether he snores at in-breathing or exhaling. Does he lie only on his back or on his side? Which side? Does he sleep covered up; what does he wear to bed?⁴

What any of this has to do with medicine has never been demonstrated by the homeopathic community. That homeopaths might be good counselors who ask picturesque questions may explain their popularity, but it does little for their medical standing.

Experience Determines Truth

A fifth major problem in the birth of homeopathy was that Hahnemann's experiences alone convinced him of the truth of his theories. Nor was he concerned with a proper explanation of what he experienced; the fact that it "happened" was sufficient proof. Hahnemann emphasized, "... pure experience [is] the sole and infallible oracle of the healing art."⁵ Concerning his results, "... it matters little what may be the scientific explanation of how it takes place; and I do not attach much importance to the attempts made to explain it."⁶

This basic approach of Hahnemann has been the model of homeopaths since the beginning. It illustrates the inherent flaw of homeopathic practice: To rely wholly upon experience can be misleading. By relying on one's experience—that homeopathic medicines *seem* to cure, and never asking the reason why—homeopaths have done nothing more than perpetuate Hahnemann's own error. They have never proven that the homeopathic substance itself is the reason behind the cure. As we have repeatedly emphasized throughout this text, it is not good enough that something seems to work; it must be proven to work.

Susceptibility to Magical Thinking

The sixth major error undergirding the birth of homeopathy was Hahnemann's susceptibility to magical thinking. Hahnemann discovered that certain substances produced severe and unwanted reactions in some patients. He therefore sought to reduce the dosages given. In attempting to find the smallest effective dose for his substances, he thought he encountered a curious phenomenon. The more he diluted a given substance, the more powerful it seemed to become. In fact, he believed the medicines were *immensely* powerful when not even a single molecule of the original substance remained.⁷

Thus, homeopathic medicines were and are prepared according to what are called "succeeded high dilutions." As noted earlier, homeopathic substances or "medicines" are diluted according to a standard scale of measurement. One part of the original substance is mixed with nine parts of water or other inert solution. This may be termed potency one or 1X. To get a potency two or 2X, one part of this diluted mixture is added to nine parts of the neutral substance and again shaken. In other words, at potency 2X, the original substance has been diluted one hundred times. At 3X the substance has been diluted one thousand times; at potency 4X it has been diluted ten thousand times and at potency 6X one million times, etc. Sooner or later, a limit must be reached where there is not even a single molecule of the original substance left. This occurs at approximately 24X and is known in chemistry as Avogadro's number.

Remember, with each dilution the mixture is shaken, which allegedly "potentizes" it, making it effective. As Dr. James Michaud, a modern homeopath, observes, "Dilution means diminishing the quantity of the substance, according to a geometric progression, to the point to where there are no more detectible molecules, and even beyond. But although there's less and less matter as dilution increases, there is more and more energy."⁸ In homeopathic medicines, dilutions where not even one molecule of the original substance remains are common.⁹

These dilutions are identified in homeopathy according to a *decimal* scale or a *centesimal* scale.

In the *decimal* scale the scale is 1:10. The starting point is one drop of the original substance mixed with nine drops of water, identified as D1. Mixing one drop of this solution with nine drops of water is identified as D2, etc.

In the *centesimal* scale the scale is 1:100. This involves the mixture of one drop of substance

with ninety-nine drops of water, and is identified as CH1. Then, one drop of this liquid mixed with ninety-nine drops of water produces CH2, etc. Thus, the centesimal scale involves much higher dilutions. For example, a D3 solution would represent one part per thousand of the original substance; a CH3 solution would represent one part per million of the original substance.

What is certain is that by dilution CH12 (or D24) there is simply nothing left of the original substance.

But as noted, homeopathy often uses medicines that go far, far beyond these figures, even to the point of greater absurdity:

This process continues, usually to the thirtieth decimal, but often as far as the one-millionth centesimal, and there is no reason to assume it should stop there. This amount of dilution is beyond comprehension.

There is nothing left at the twelfth centesimal, and yet that substance continues to be diluted, one to a hundred, one to a hundred, one to a hundred, almost a million times more to produce the millionth centesimal. Furthermore, there is another scale, called the millesimal, in which substances are serially diluted one part to fifty thousand of neutral medium up into the hundreds of thousands of times. It is worse than putting a sugar cube in the ocean. A bewildered Abraham Lincoln called it the "medicine of a shadow of a pigeon's wing." Yet we are in the "other" [hermetic or occult] science and a different law holds....

It is no wonder that homeopathy finds little acceptance in mainstream medicine.¹⁰

But Hahnemann was actually convinced that diluting medicine was the key to its power. In his own words: "Modern wiseacres have even sneered at the thirtieth potency... [but] we obtain, even in the fiftieth potency, medicines of the most penetrating efficacy...."¹¹ Hahnemann's experience with allegedly making substances more powerful by diluting them into oblivion leads us to his seventh major error.

Rejection of Physical Medicine and Acceptance of Energy Model

No wonder Hahnemann did not want to try and scientifically explain how homeopathy works! What could possibly be discussed scientifically when you are dealing with medicines that don't even exist? But he did offer a suggested explanation. This was his seventh major error. He reasoned we must be dealing with energy, not matter. If one can really produce dramatic healings with virtually no physical medicine, then we must be dealing in the realm of a vital force, or some spiritual power that resides within matter itself.¹² He concluded that homeopathy must produce spiritual medicines, not physical ones.

But if so, how could spiritual medicines affect and cure *physical* diseases? Apparently, they could not; the only way a spiritual medicine could work on a physical illness was if a physical disease was only a symptom of a much deeper *spiritual* disease. Hahnemann thus concluded that disease was not ultimately physical in nature but "spiritual." Therefore, because disease represents an improper function or imbalance of vital force or energy, it must be cured by a like healing or realignment of energy. This, he believed, was accomplished by medicines prepared homeopathically.

Therefore, homeopathic medicines are spiritual, energetic medicines, not physical medicines, and the homeopath works ultimately with energies, not physical disease. In his *Organon of Medicine*, Hahnemann declares the following:

The diseases of man are not caused by any [material] substance,... any disease-matter, but... they are solely spirit-like (dynamic) derangements of the spirit-like power (the vital principle) that animates the human body. Homeopathy knows that a cure can only take place by the reaction of the vital force against the rightly chosen remedy that has been ingested.¹³

*Thus, the true healing art is... to effect an alteration in... energetic automatic vital force... whereby the vital force is liberated and enabled to return to the normal standard of health and to its proper function.... Homeopathy teaches us how to effect this.*¹⁴

But once Hahnemann believed he had discovered that the true cause of illness and disease was based in energy not matter, his hostility toward the medical profession re-doubled.

They only fancied that they could discover the cause of disease; they did not discover it, however, as it is not perceptible and not discoverable. For as far the greatest number of diseases are of dynamic (spiritual) origin and dynamic (spiritual) nature, their cause is therefore not perceptible to the senses; so they [doctors] exerted themselves to imagine one....¹⁵

Unfortunately, once Hahnemann entered the realm of “spirit,” all bets were off; he could never really know the true cause of disease. He could never again practice medicine based on the physical body in the way the average physician does. He even confessed,

*It is the morbidly affected vital energy alone that produces diseases. ... How the vital force causes the organism to display morbid phenomena [symptoms], that is, how it produces disease, it would be of no practical utility to the physician to know, and will forever remain concealed from him....*¹⁶

Thus, for Hahnemann, “There was nothing he would ignore except the immaterial, meta-physical sources of illness” for nothing could be ever known about how disease originates.¹⁷

Here we see the fundamental problem between classical homeopathy and modern medicine. Physicians are trained to painstakingly uncover the root cause of disease. But Hahnemann maintains the entire procedure is worthless. Hahnemann again confessed,

*It is unnecessary for the cure to know how the vital force produces the symptoms. To regard those diseases that are not surgical as [physical] ... is an absurdity which has rendered allopathy so pernicious.... It is only by the spiritual influences... that our spirit-like vital force can become ill; and in like manner, only by the spirit-like... operation of medicines that it can be again restored to health.*¹⁸

The spirit-like operation of medicines is how homeopathy claims to cure. Hahnemann taught that:

*Homeopathic Dynamizations are processes by which the medicinal properties, which are latent in natural substances while in their crude state, become aroused, and then become enabled to act in an almost spiritual manner on our life;...*¹⁹

In speaking of the “healing energy” of his medicines, he freely admitted such energy did not reside in the “corporeal atoms” of the substances themselves:

That smallest dose can therefore contain almost entirely only the pure, freely-developed, conceptual medicinal energy, and bring about only dynamically such great effects as can never be reached by the crude medicinal substance itself taken in large doses.

*It is not in the corporeal atoms of these highly dynamized medicines,... that the medicinal energy is found.*²⁰

Finally, he confessed that homeopathy alone could restore the vital force to its proper functioning, increase its energetic powers for healing, and that such powers had divine origin;

Only homeopathic medicine can give this superior power to the invalidated vital force....

We gradually cause and compel this instinctive vital force to increase its energies by degrees, and to increase them more and more, and at last to such a degree that it becomes far more powerful than the original disease....

*The fundamental essence of this spiritual vital principle, imparted to us men by the infinitely merciful Creator, is incredibly great....*²¹

In essence, Hahnemann taught that diseases are simply too profound and spiritual for any physician to ever locate them by scientific instruments or specific tests; furthermore, classical homeopaths would claim that any modern “scientifically oriented” homeopathic physician who does so is only deceiving himself. Diseases are the result of energy imbalance, and it is the energy imbalance that must be corrected.

(to be continued)

(from *Can You Trust Your Doctor* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991) pp. 270-283, 315-319)

Notes:

- ¹ Samuel Hahnemann, *Organon of Medicine*, 6th edition, reprint (New Delhi, India: B. Jain Publishers, 1978), p. 173.
- ² Richard Grossinger, *Planet Medicine: From Stone Age Shamanism to Post-Industrial Healing* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980), p. 180.
- ³ Evelyn deSmedt, et. al., *Life Arts: A Practical Guide to Total Being—New Medicine and Ancient Wisdom* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1977), p. 143.
- ⁴ See David S. Sobel, ed., *Ways of Health: Wholistic Approaches to Ancient and Contemporary Medicine* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1979), p. 196.
- ⁵ Hahnemann, *Organon*, p. 110.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- ⁷ Samuel Hahnemann, *The Chronic Diseases, Their Peculiar Nature and Their Homeopathic Cure—Theoretical Part*, trans, Louis H. Tafel (New Delhi, India: Jain Publishing Company, 1976), p. 19; Whorton, “Holistic Revolution,” p. 33.
- ⁸ deSmedt, *Life Arts*, p. 142.
- ⁹ Daisie Radner, Michael Radner, “Holistic Methodology and Pseudoscience,” in Stalker and Glymour, p. 154.
- ¹⁰ Grossinger, *Plant Medicine*, p. 195.
- ¹¹ Hahnemann, *Chronic Diseases*, p. 19.
- ¹² Hahnemann, *Organon*, pp. 112-113; Yogi Ramacharaka, *The Science of Psychic Healing*, reprint (Chicago, IL: Yogi Publication Society, 1937), p. 104.
- ¹³ Hahnemann, *Organon*, p. 18.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 102, final emphasis added.
- ¹⁷ Martin Gumpert, *Hahnemann: The Adventurous Career of a Medical Rebel* (New York, NY: L. B. Fisher, 1945), p. 137.
- ¹⁸ Hahnemann, *Organon*, p. 21, cf. p. 112.
- ¹⁹ Hahnemann, *Chronic Diseases*, p. 17.
- ²⁰ Hahnemann, *Organon*, p. 101.
- ²¹ Hahnemann, *Chronic Diseases*, pp. 14-15.