

Homeopathy: Curing the Personal and the Collective

By Manjula Nanavati

Homeopathy as a system of healing has always generated considerable controversy and deeply divided opinions. On the one hand there are those who refuse any other form of medicine, and swear by homeopathy from personal experience. There are others that decry it as a sham, calling all homeopaths charlatans. Intellectuals and scientists have publicly denounced it as a viable healing system, despite the admission that patients do seem to *somehow* benefit from it.

Nonetheless Homeopathy has seen tremendous resurgence in the last few decades, with an estimated over 200 million people being treated in over 40 countries worldwide.⁽⁹⁾ Today it is included in the National Health Systems of a number of European, South American and Asian countries as a legitimate practice of alternative medicine.

Lubina Mohamed Agarwal, licentiate from The College of Homeopathy (London), has been practicing for the past ten years. In addition, she provides supervision and support to students of Homeopathy, and runs AVESA, a monthly group therapy and meditation class. Over several conversations she shared her views and philosophy of Homeopathy built upon her academic background and nearly 20 years of experience with her patients. Armed with books from her own personal reference collection, and a multitude of scholarly articles which she guided me through, the fascinating history, methodology and philosophy of Homeopathy emerged.

In the late 18th century the promising young German Dr. Samuel Hahnemann gave up his practice of medicine, disillusioned and disturbed. The medical profession at the time was immature and dangerous, employing dangerous techniques such as bloodletting, use of blood sucking leeches, and highly toxic substances such as mercury, lead and arsenic, which were all standard procedure. Ironically, patients often died from the treatment rather than the disease.

Modern allopathic medicine treats the body as a collection of discrete parts that become diseased and in need of treatment or healing; much like a machine, which because of wear-and-tear needs its components to be oiled, refurbished or replaced.



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Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann

Disgusted with these practices, increasingly concerned about causing harm, and helpless in the face of his own children's suffering, Hahnemann began translating foreign medical texts into German to earn a living. One day, a text about the use of Cinchona bark (today known for its high quinine content) in the treatment of malaria caught his eye. It stated that its bitter and astringent quality was what cured the disease. Hahnemann knew from experience, however, that other bitter and astringent medicines did not cure malaria. And so, it was clear that Cinchona bark had some other unique property that had not yet been highlighted.

In an experiment whose ripple effect would continue over the next two hundred years, he decided to test Cinchona bark on himself. To his surprise he found that the bark produced in him the exact symptoms of malaria: fever, muscle and joint pain, drowsiness, anxiety and palpitation. Could this be the reason it was an effective cure?

Over the next 6 years Hahnemann set out to document many different substances testing them on himself, and on others. Finally, he released his findings to the medical community, explaining the Law of Similars: *Similia Similibus Curentur*, or "like may be cured by like", a concept earlier theorized by Aristotle and Paracelsus. Homeopathy was born.

"A substance that causes, in a healthy person symptoms similar to those of a disease state, can cure a sick person in that diseased state." (Hahnemann)

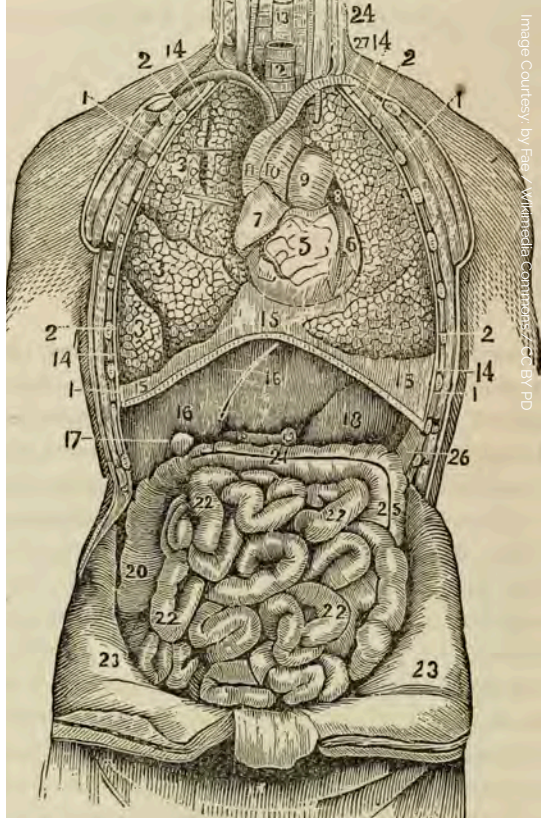
Hahnemann continued to refine his theory and practice over the next few years. Concerned with the side effects of his doses, he experimented with diluting them but found that this also decreased their healing power. In the course of his experiments he stumbled upon the process of POTENTISATION which involved TRITURATION (grinding an insoluble substance with lactose to make it soluble), DILUTION (precisely calibrated formulas involving dilutions to the powers of multiples of 10, 100, and 50,000), and SUCCUSSION (agitating the solutions violently between successive dilutions).

Hahnemann found that while diluting the substance reduced its toxicity, succussion released its dormant energy, so that the more dilute the solution the more powerful its potency! How does a solution so dilute that it contains not even a molecule of the original substance, affect healing? If it does not act chemically, then what is the healing mechanism involved?

The exact answer to this question is still being debated, but what is generally accepted is that, much like a magnet that transfers its magnetic power to a paperclip upon contact, electromagnetic information is passed from a substance to the liquid in the course of dilutions and succussions. This energetic information is the key.

Hahnemann believed that all living things have a vital energy that maintains life. Different cultures have called it *Qui*, *Chi* or *Prana*. Hahnemann called it the Vital Force; that energy that attunes the functions of the entire body so that it integrates into a harmonious whole.

Says Lubina, "At the root of most healing practices, is the principle that the human body and all life processes arise from a nonmaterial vital principle that cannot be explained entirely as physical and chemical phenomena. The dynamic vital force vibrates at a specific frequency to keep the body in order, and free from disease. Illness only results when this force is disturbed by some external or internal stress, environmental toxins, poor lifestyle, diet or inherited problems. When the body produces symptoms, these symptoms are the body's way of restoring order. And cure can only come from a drug or a symbol that can resonate at the same frequency as the life force, causing an amplification to occur, enabling it to heal again."



Modern allopathic medicine treats the body as a collection of discrete parts that become diseased and in need of treatment or healing; much like a machine, which because of wear-and-tear needs its components to be oiled, refurbished or replaced. Usually, all diseases are treated in accordance to Aristotle's Law of Opposites. So, if you have diarrhoea, a doctor might prescribe a drug that induces constipation to relieve the patient of the symptoms of diarrhoea.

Homeopathy looks at the symptoms as a result of a much deeper malaise, a disruption of the energetic Vital Force, which can be corrected only via energetic medicine, in order to trigger the Vital Force into a self-healing response.

Says Lubina, "Homeopathy is holistic in its methodology. As a homeopath my task is to apply the Law of Similars. When a patient visits me for a consultation, first they undergo a physical examination, which is followed by an in-depth interview. I spend time counselling them to help them understand the process. I view disease as a conflict. And getting the patient to understand and transform the conflicts they face can be empowering and critical to good health. I require subjective information about the patient's illness, medical history, lifestyle, belief systems, fears, dreams, family history, habits, relationships, significant life events, emotions, desires etc...information they may never have shared with anyone else. Thus, I am able to build an individual pattern, or a symptom picture, which I can then match to a remedy picture.

This method applies whether it is bronchitis or a chronic illness like arthritis. The patient's individual symptoms, not the disease, is treated because we are only susceptible to disease if the life force is not flowing with vitality. Susceptibility is unique to each individual. It is our ability to defend ourselves and keep our equilibrium, when exposed to stimuli. The bacteria or virus can only affect the body with a weakened vital force; they are not the cause of disease. If a particular bacteria or virus was solely responsible for particular symptoms, everyone would be 'susceptible' to that disease and present the exact same symptoms. So, strengthening the life force is paramount."

Although sceptic science today demands measurable, replicable, empirical proof, we do not yet have the instruments or knowledge to fully comprehend healing at the energetic level. What is irrefutable, however, is that electromagnetic signals comprise the basic language of communication between atoms and molecules, between cells and tissues. Furthermore, electromagnetic waves can impart energy to the material with which they interact.

Modern Science has often lagged behind, plodding slowly to gather verifiable data. On the other hand, intuition has swiftly and unerringly flown into the heart of the answer. Intuition is what drove Archimedes to run naked down the street shrieking "Eureka!" before he painstakingly worked out the mathematical formulae that led to the concept of specific gravity. Intuition is what led Newton to recognize what really was happening when he saw an apple falling off a tree, which led to the formulation of the idea of the Earth's gravitational force. But it was 111 years later that his theory was finally experimentally proved.

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A vast amount of cross-disciplinary scientific research in such varied fields as Biophysics, Biochemistry, Physiology, Pharmacology, Botany, Zoology, to name just a few, is still underway to 'scientifically' explain the mechanism of the action of Homeopathy. The Information Medicine Hypothesis investigates the biophysics of water, storage of information by water and the ability of biological systems to process that information.⁽²⁾ The phenomena of "Resonance and Chaos Control" suggests that the human body is composed of multiple harmoniously interacting systems, each with its unique inherent vibrations. Symptoms of disease are displayed when one or more of these systems get stuck in a dissonant repeated pattern loop. To effect a cure, only a very small amount of energy that resonates with the affected system is enough to amplify the vibration needed to break out of the rigid loop.

Says Lubina, "There are several challenges facing those testing Homeopathy. Primarily, as you can now appreciate, it is an individualistic method and one size does not fit all. Even with what you might call a fairly universal condition like the flu, the homeopath will prescribe a remedy that is individual to the patient's symptoms. This remedy choice relies on the practitioner's skill and experience. Therefore, meta-analyses, (a statistical approach of combining the results of several studies), outcome studies, and epidemiological research like The Linde Study, (Lancet 1997) are being preferred, which found that on average homeopathy was 250% more effective than a placebo. A rare and enviable result for any medicine test."

Today a multitude of blind, placebo-controlled studies and clinical trials based on emerging research and knowledge are being reviewed. Yet the theory and philosophy of Homeopathy (far from being "new age") can be traced back to medieval alchemists like Albert Magnus, Agrippa Von Nettsheim and Paracelsus. Many of the metals, acids and minerals proved by Hahnemann were originally introduced into medicine by Paracelsus in his *Law of Signatures*. Aristotle was

the first to speak of invoking a Vital Principal, though Hippocrates before him believed that the human body was capable of rebalancing and healing itself. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the title of Hahnemann's life work, *The Organon of Medicine*, echoes Aristotle's *The Organon*. Indeed, Hahnemann's *Law of Similars* resonates with the Hermetic Law of Correspondence which states, "As above, so below".



As a Freemason, Hahnemann was likely familiar with Western Esoteric Traditions like the Knight Templars and the Rosicrucians. He was well-read, spoke English, French, Italian, Greek and Latin, and was proficient in Arabic, Syriac, Chaldaic and Hebrew. Though he never publicly acknowledged any mentors it seems clear that Hahnemann, using experience, intuition, and scientific experimentation, conceived his system of Homeopathy, which is completely synchronous with a weighty body of work postulated by a long line of eminent philosophers, alchemists and physicians before him.

Since antiquity, almost all ancient traditions have recognized that human beings are far more than just what appears on the physical plane; that at our essence exists something invisible and incorporeal, which manifests on in the physical. We are much more than flesh and bone, indeed more than the thoughts and emotions that drive us. The ancient Greeks spoke of the interaction of the Soma, Psyche and Nous as the Body, Mind and Spirit, whose balanced interaction was essential for a healthy, vital life. Many Eastern esoteric traditions speak of the sevenfold constitution of man, a complex of *rupa* and *arupa* planes, of which the physical plane is only the most gross and dense aspect of ourselves. If Life and growth and health are an inter-play of the material and spiritual, should we not be turning to cures that heal ruptures at much deeper, much finer, much subtler levels, rather than simply react to symptoms?

Perhaps there are life lessons that we can distill from Hahnemann's principles of healing. How might we apply to our lives a law such as "Like amplifies Like"? As if curing an ailment manifesting in the physical body, in order to construct a world with more love, perhaps the key lies in bringing love from within, rather than fix external symptoms! In this manner, if we recognize that what we lack in ourselves is harmony, and in our societies is the spirit of unity, we can take heart that bringing them into our lives, in even the smallest most subtle ways, can amplify and have a powerful and dynamic outcome, potentially changing our world. ★★★

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