



Fever: Healing Power Of Nature

Fever, like headache or bodyache is a symptom, a sign too, but no definite illness. In the homoeothermic human, it is an alteration in favour of the higher, from the assumed normal of 98.4°F or 37°C. As but a manifestation of human body's wisdom down the millennia, fever has had a pitched battle with pathys of all sorts, to the detriment of the human body and defeat of this benign expression of body's healing potential.

Homoeothermy, it needs to be iterated, is that evolutionary faculty that allows birds and mammals to stay euthermic in the bitter chill of Siberia and the hot-as-hell air of the Hyderabad summer.

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Human being are so much used to this euthermia that they and their physicians go crazy condemning and curing this all too common malady.

How common? The *Darland's Dictionary* lists 300+ varieties of fevers – infective, aseptic, reactive. Each fever brings in its wake a sense of unease, malaise, intolerance, of being useless. And herein lies the forte of the therapist. The patient is made to pop in a pill or a potion, and presto, the fever plummets down more often than not. That is how reputations and riches are made. The credit lies not so much with the magic of the medical man, as much as in the readiness of the thermostatic centre in the brain to respond to an antipyretic or febrifuge. A desirable dialogue gets disturbed and disarrayed. Hippocrates of Cos, Greece (60-370 BC). Thomas Sydenhem the English and Bigelow of USA (1818-1890). Hippocrates (1624-1689 AD), pleaded that fever itself is a benevolent instrument of Nature. Alas, the plea fell on deaf ears of humanity and the

deaf ears of doctors, to the detriment of both.

Each pyrexia is a plaint – the body needs a higher temperature to manufacture its antibodies, to lower the circulating iron (ferritin) so that microbial multiplications is halted and to confine the “victim” to bed, so that the healing process stays undisturbed and the body's resources are not overstrained, as also that the “victim” does not spread the infection far and wide.

But the plaint goes unheeded. Fever is deemed a crisis, that is resolved by lowering the temperature. Antibody production gets hit hard. The circulating iron goes up, and the microbes make merry on multiplying. The infection that would have left the body in a few days, now stays longer and warrants antibiotics, that were not needed in the first place. Resistance to antibiotics follows, the microbes gets more human homes to visit, and the general principle—“Friendship between microbes and men is a rule, enmity an exception-gets brutally flouted. No wonder that Professor Raeburn, of Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith, London, in his “Antibiotics and Immunodeficiency”, *Lancet* 2: 954, 1992 concluded that “In years to come, the story of antibiotics may rank as Nature's most malicious trick on mankind.” As far as we know, Hahnemannian Homeopathy has been free of this cardinal sin.

Thermometer, sphygmomanometer and the ECG machine-the 3 undying totems of medical practice-have played havoc with the human body politique, by diagnosing mere symptoms as illnesses and then blindly fighting them without care for the most ordinary canons of science. Dr Rustom Jal Vakil, the pioneer cardiologist of Mumbai and winner of the Lasker award, declared that the ECG machine had done more harm than the atom bomb, a regret echoed by Harrison of the *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine* fame.



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