

CAN A HOMOEOPATHIC DRUG POSSESS CURATIVE PROPERTY?

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The basic requirement for a rational practice of homoeopathy is a correct understanding of the nature of a homoeopathic drug. Without this knowledge how will it be possible for one to intelligently employ the drug during the course of his treat-

ment of diseases. Among the homoeopaths there are at present a large number of persons who believe that the homoeopathic drug is one with curative property. There are a few others who believe that it has no curative property. Anyhow both the views cannot be correct. The truth is that this fact, viz. whether a homoeopathic drug is one with curative property or whether it is one without curative property is still in a state of uncertainty, though two hundred years have passed since the birth of this novel science of treatment. Our literature is also such that both the parties will be able to quote profusely in support of their respective views. Whatever may be our claims with regard to the efficacy of the homoeopathic method of treatment, so long as this very fundamental question remains unsettled, how can one practise homoeopathy scientifically. This is a matter that deserves the at-

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. T.G. Ravindran is presenting here an article on a topic which is very controversial, whether homoeopathic drug does possess the curative property or disease-producing property. Readers may recollect his article on the same topic in the Autumn '93 issue of QHQ. The writer establishes that homoeopathic drug does not possess any curative property quoting the relevant paras of Organon. May I request the readers to go through this article which is very interesting and instructive, at least three times.

tion of all homoeopaths. To view it lightly and allow it to pass unnoticed is really an error. The question has to be examined in detail so that we may know which of the two views represents the correct position. In fact, the materials provided by the Organon of Medicine itself are quite enough to arrive at a correct decision in the matter. This article is a very humble attempt to examine this question in the light of the facts contained in the Organon of Medicine.

Points under discussion

1 It is from the nature's technique of cure that Dr. Hahnemann got the inspiration as to how a disease producing substance can be profitably employed to bring about cure of diseases exactly on the lines of the nature's method of cure.

2 The fundamental difference between the nature's method of cure and the method of cure with which man

is familiar is that while the former accomplishes its task without the employment of any curative agency, the latter has to resort to the use of drugs with curative property to bring about a similar result viz. cure.

3 It is by increasing the disease for a short period that nature produces its cure. The production of a homoeopathic aggravation, whether perceptible or not, of the existing disease for a short period, is the basic principle of the homoeopathic mode of healing. Thus from the point of view of the underlying principle, both the techniques are in no way different from one another. In fact they are one and the same.

4 The difference, if it can be so called, between the nature's technique of cure and the homoeopathic method of treatment lies in the fact that while nature brings about the aggravation of the disease through an automatic working of the diseased organism, the homoeopath produces a similar aggravation of the disease artificially through the administration of a suitable disease-producing agency.

5 To find out the best and the most conclusive evidence in support of this

conclusion, one need not make any search anywhere other than the pages of the Organon of Medicine itself.

6 The effort of a curative drug is always to reduce the disease. It is, therefore, illogical to employ a curative drug where what is needed is an increase of disease, though such increase be for a temporary period

There are two sentences in the Organon of Medicine, which are specially noteworthy, sentences which arrest the attention of any reader and make him think for a while before proceeding further. They are the following :-

"In such cases we see how a cure can be effected by the operations of nature, and we get a lesson as to how man ought to cure. (Paragraph 43)"

"Now however, in all careful trials, pure experience the sole and infallible oracle of the healing art teaches us that all medicines, cure without exception, those diseases whose symptoms most nearly resemble their own and leave none uncured" (paragraph 25)

If the first sentence indicates the source from which Dr. Hahnemann got the clue for the development of the homoeopathic technique of cure, the second one is a firm assurance to his followers of the efficacy of the symptomatological method of treatment. Nature is the greatest among the teachers of the world and it is to nature that man ultimately turns when confronted by problems difficult to solve. Hence there is no wonder if a person of the type of Dr. Hahnemann also resorted to this age-old practice of seeking the help of nature in his effort to build up a new system of treatment that will be free from the vagaries that characterised the allopathic way of treatment that

existed during his period. In the first sentence he refers to certain Cases of natural cure which he had occasion to see during the course of his observation of nature with a view to learn about the nature's method of curing. The questions that may arise, naturally, in this context are these! What exactly was the method that he followed in order to understand the nature's process of curing? What is it that he actually saw at that time? What is the basis for his exhortation that it is the nature's method of cure that man ought to follow for purposes of treatment. For one, who is desirous of knowing the nature's method of cure, the best way to accomplish this task is to closely watch the behaviour of diseases in human beings when the activities of such diseases are not interfered with, by the administration of man-made drugs. In fact, this was the procedure that Dr. Hahnemann also followed. The fact that came to his notice during the time of his observation of such cases, he has lucidly described in paragraphs 34 to 50 of the Organon of Medicine. What he has described in the said paragraphs can be summarised thus :-

1 When two dissimilar diseases meet together in one person the stronger will suspend the weaker, but they will never cure one another

2 It is only very rarely that two dissimilar diseases join together to form a complex disease. Even when it happens, they will continue to occupy their respective places of affinity.

3 When two similar diseases meet together and if one of them is stronger than the other, a cure is mostly likely to follow provided the stronger disease does not linger long i.e. if it disappears soon after its appearance. Ofcourse, the most important factor

is the level of vitality itself of the patient. It is paragraph 43 that deals with the said automatic curing process that Dr. Hahnemann saw in nature. It is quoted below :

"Totally different however is the result when two similar diseases meet together in the organism, that is to say, when to the disease already present a stronger similar one is added. In such cases we see how a cure can be effected by the operations of nature and we get a lesson as to how man ought to cure"

Two diseases of the same kind can never function separately in the same body They are in fact one and the same disease affecting the same parts, Hence, the statement, to add a stronger disease of the same kind to the existing disease simply means to aggravate the disease already present. This is the plain meaning of the sentence. The statement that an aggravation of the existing disease will produce cure is not one that can be readily accepted. Sometimes it may continue showing no sign of any abatement. An aggravation can never be taken as a sure sign of an amelioration that can be expected soon. Whatever it be, the idea sought to be communicated through this paragraph is neither clear nor complete, but if this paragraph is read together with paragraph 45, especially the last line, a better idea will emerge. That line is as given below :

"The life principle henceforth is affected only and this but temporarily by the new, similar but stronger morbidic potency".

This line clearly states that the life principle is affected by the stronger morbidic potency i.e. by the stronger disease only temporarily. It means that the aggravation of the existing

disease is only for a short period. So the addition of the stronger disease to the existing disease i.e. the aggravation of the stronger existing disease as stated in paragraph 43 has to be understood as one lasting only for a limited period. In short what Dr. Hahnemann wants to make us understand is that it is by an extraordinary process that nature brings about the cure of diseases and that the curious technique that it employs for that purpose is to increase the intensity of the existing disease for a short period. Even now the matter is not totally free from doubt. Whether it is for a limited period or not, an aggravation is always aggravation and not an amelioration. Even assuming that the aggravation is only for a limited period, common sense will tell that it is only the aggravation that has ceased to exist and not the original disease. If the original disease will also come down with the disappearance of this aggravation, then, it becomes necessary to explain the logical connection between the temporary aggravation and the subsequent amelioration. In other words it has to be plainly stated in a manner that will appeal to our sense of reasoning how this aggravation by virtue of its temporary existence can be the legitimate cause for the gradual disappearance of the existing disease also. Dr. Hahnemann does not give a direct answer to this question. Whatever that be, the topic under discussion in this article is not the modus operandi of a homoeopathic drug. What is proposed to be examined here is whether a homoeopathic drug has curative property or not. For that purpose a study of paragraph 28 in the light of paragraphs 25, 43 and 45 will be useful. Paragraph 28 is as follows :

"As this natural law of cure manifests itself in every pure experiment and

every true observation in the world the fact is consequently established, 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. But the following view seems to commend itself as the most probable one, as it is founded on premises derived from experience".

If the question, how does a homoeopathic cure occur is put to a homoeopath who believes in the curative property of the drug, the answer will come instantly- 'it is due to the curative power of the drug'. An answer to this effect alone can be expected from a homoeopath, whoever he may be, if he is one who has real faith in the curative property of the drug; but see how evasive is the explanation of Dr. Hahnemann on this point. In the paragraph quoted above he says that the scientific explanation as to how the cure takes place is not a very significant matter at all, that he does not attach much importance to his attempts to explain the law of cure and that the probability is that the process of cure may be as state in paragraph 29. Dr. Hahnemann is not prepared to say that the cure is the result of the working of the curative property of the drug. The peculiarity that one can notice in the Organon of Medicine is that whenever it becomes necessary to talk of the theory concerning cure, Dr. Hahnemann's language becomes vague, but when he begins to deal with other matters the language becomes lucid. This difference can be seen clearly in paragraph 28. With regard to the validity and efficacy of the law of cure he says that this law can be seen to be manifesting itself in all pure experiments and observation in the world and therefore, the reliability of this law is a matter that stands established. The

meaning of the statement is clear. What he has said is just this. In the case of patient who is not under any type of treatment, if his disease tends to aggravate for a short period, one can notice a downfall of the disease after the disappearance of the aggravation. Similarly in the case of patient in whom a homoeopathic aggravation of the disease has been brought about through the administration of the required drug in the required potency i.e. the similimum and if drugging is discontinued after this aggravation, then also one can find a receding of the disease. These results he has seen in many cases and it is from his own intimate personal experience that he asserts that this law can be seen to manifest itself in all natural cures as also in all homoeopathic cures. Hence his conclusion is that nobody need have any doubt about the efficacy or operation of this law and that it can be taken to be one that stands established once for all. This statement is enough to emphasise the validity of this technique of cure whether it be on the natural side or on the side of the homoeopathic treatment. But Dr. Hahnemann is not still satisfied. With a view to instill faith in his followers in the acceptability of this technique, Dr. Hahnemann goes a step further and states in paragraph 25 that pure experience is the sole and infallible oracle of the healing art. Oracle means a divine declaration that can never go wrong. What Dr. Hahnemann wants to stress here is that there is no knowledge that can surpass the wisdom gained through experience and that it is as good as divine wisdom itself in so far as its intrinsic merit is concerned. The implication is that his symptomatological method of cure is one that has been forged in the cru-

cible of experience and there is no question of its ever proving false. See how emphatic he is in asserting the validity of his technique.

In nature there is no arrangement for the administration of drug to its ailing members. That process is impracticable. Because we do not find any perceptible arrangement in nature to make available medical help to those in need, it would be a folly to assume that in nature there is no plan or device for this purpose. If there is no such arrangement, the possibility is for all beings except men and those animals under their protection to perish with the first onslaught of disease. The Lord has His own laws and techniques both for the preservation of health as also for the restoration of impaired health of his creation. The outstanding characteristic of the nature's method of cure is that it is without the employment of drugs. The cure with which man is familiar is through the administration of drugs having curative property. Curing of diseases through the administration of drugs having curative property is a practice that has come down from generation to generation. Moreover, the logic behind this method is also very clear. Thus the notion, that for a cure a curative drug is necessary, is one that man has inherited through blood. This idea is so deep-rooted in the mind of man that it will be almost impossible for many to entertain the notion that cure is also possible without the application of drugs. The Lord's technique of cure is by increasing the patient's disease for a short period. It is certainly a very fantastic method, a method of reducing disease by producing disease. It is really difficult for human mind to easily comprehend the divine logic behind the divine technique. So there is nothing surprising if people cling

to the notion that the drug has curative property also. It is not without proper reason that Dr. Hahnemann refers to the homoeopathic technique of cure as the divine technique of cure. Every step in his technique has been so designed as to produce a temporary aggravation of the individual's disease as in the case of the nature's method. For the implementation of this technique the most important prerequisite is a reliable method of producing disease artificially. This could not have been a difficult matter to Dr. Hahnemann, for, he was aware of the disease-producing properties of many substances. The method of drug-proving, that of individualisation, that of selecting the similimum, that of potentisation etc. must have been discoveries made by him at different stages of his investigation in this matter, to bring his technique nearer and nearer to perfection. A disease is a force. A force, as for example electricity, when it manifests itself through different types of equipments, its outward expression will vary in each case depending upon the nature of the equipment. Naturally, when a disease activates and manifests itself through different individuals, its outward expression can never be of a uniform type. There will certainly be many symptoms of a similar nature; but along with this similarity, it is possible to find symptoms of a peculiar nature also in the case of each individual depending upon the nature of the constitution of each. What is to be produced is an aggravation of the individual's disease and that is the reason why top-most priority is given to the concept of individualisation in the homoeopathic technique of treatment. In the following note that has been added under paragraph 4, Dr. Hahnemann has stressed the importance of this matter leaving no room

for any doubt whatsoever :

"Every physician who treats disease according to such general character, however, he may affect to claim the name homoeopath, is and ever will remain, in fact, a generalising allopath, for, without the most minute individualisation, homoeopathy is not conceivable"

Now the position in brief is this.

A temporary aggravation of the disease of the patient is the only condition necessary for the nature's law of cure to operate and produce cure. In the case of the Nature's cure, this temporary aggravation is brought about by nature itself through an automatic process of the diseased organism. The homoeopath brings about a similar aggravation of his patient's disease through the administration of a disease-producing agency. Thus in both cases what is produced is a temporary aggravation of the patient's disease. This difference lies only in the means employed for the purpose. What is really important is the effect viz the temporary aggravation of the patient's disease and not the means. The effect is exactly the same in both the cases. So the question for consideration is this :

If a temporary aggravation of the existing disease can exert a pressure on the organism of the patient to augment its curative activity in a case of natural cure and can thus pave the way for a radical recovery from the disease, is it not necessary for the temporary aggravation of the disease of the patient also brought about by the homoeopath, to function in a similar manner. If the help of a curative agent is a real necessity for cure in the latter case, how is it that the cure takes place in the former. Further, the behaviour of a homoeopathic drug is

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in no way similar to that of the curative drugs of other systems. In the case of curative drugs of the other systems, after the administration of the proper remedy what follows is a gradual amelioration of the disease and the repetition of the drug at this stage is necessary for a speedy recovery. In the case of the homoeopathic drug its behaviour is just the reverse. After the administration of the similimum what follows is an aggravation and at this stage drugging should be stopped if the ameliorative process is to continue. If a drug is to be treated as having curative property, it must show this property from the beginning of its application till recovery becomes complete. The curative drugs of the other systems behave like this; but the homoeopathic drugs do not behave like that. So can it be treated as a real curative drug. Even now the person who believes in the curative property of the drug will not change his stand. He will raise the contention that if the drug has no curative property what is the meaning of administering it to the patient. The answer is simple. The

drug has only one property viz that of producing disease. The homoeopathic method is one exactly similar to the nature's method. In the nature's method cure is produced by increasing the disease temporarily. So our attempt also must be to increase the disease and not to decrease the disease. A curative drug will serve only to bring down the disease. For the purpose of increasing the disease we must use a substance that is capable of increasing the disease and not one that is capable of reducing the disease. This is simple logic. If a drug with curative property is given to the patient, certainly, it will produce cure. That is a different technique that is followed everywhere. The homoeopathic method is not that method. It is the divine method of reducing disease by producing disease. So what is required is a substance that produced disease and not one that reduces disease. A curative drug will only reduce the disease and it will be totally impossible to work out the homoeopathic technique with a drug with curative property. Dr.

Hahnemann has stated clearly that the efficacy of the homoeopathic technique of cure is one that stands established. If that is a fact the homoeopathic drug must be one without curative property because a drug with curative property will not increase the disease. It will only reduce the disease. Dr. Hahnemann was well aware of the fact that the body has the power to protect itself from diseases without the help of any curative drug. He has explained this matter in some of the articles which he has written. His essay 'On the present want of foreign medicines' is an example. The following is a passage from it.

"Do not the poor, who use no medicine at all, often recover much sooner from a similar kind of disease than the well-to-do patient, who has his shelves filled with large bottles of medicines."

When facts speak like this, on what basis can we say that a homoeopathic drug has curative property.

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