

HOMAGE TO HAHNEMANN

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The eleventh day of April is a red letter day in the annals of medicine. It was a day on which was born the Messiah of Rational Medicine, Samuel Hahnemann. The prejudiced practitioners of Modern medicine may not acknowledge the indisputable greatness of the Master or their unconscious indebtedness to him. But the followers of Homœopathy will recognise him as the repository of all medical wisdom and commemorate the day on which he was born with feelings of devotion and gratitude. I wish to pay my homage to the Great Master on this memorable day by a brief survey of his personality and achievements.

In the firmament of medical luminaries Hahnemann shines as a star of the first magnitude. He belongs to that class of outstanding leaders, the great pioneers of human progress who blazed a trail for others to follow. He was the torch bearer of Truth, the bearer of an immortal message. He has therefore become one of the immortals. It is a monument to his genius that his discoveries in medical science, far from being modified or discredited by the latest developments in medicine, stand firm and unassailable to this day. A galaxy of eminent Homœopaths of the World, second only to Hahnemann in their grasp of the Homœopathic system, men like Boenninghausen, Hering, Dunham, Lippe, Allen, Nash, Kent, Farrington, Sirkar have acknowledged him as their master and interpreted and propagated the Homœopathic system with consummate ability. It is interesting to note that many of the brilliant exponents of Homœopathy were eminent practitioners of the Allopathic system who later became converts to Homœopathy—Dr. Skinner and Dr. Burnett of England, Dr. August Bier and Dr. Schulz of Germany, Dr. Hering and Holcombe of America and Mahendralal Sircar of India. Some of these like Skinner and Holcombe were bitterly hostile to Homœopathy but were forced to acknowledge its superiority by personal experience. Hering's example is a classical one. He was commissioned by his master, Dr. Robbi of Leipzig to write a book exposing Homœopathy, but Hering experimented with Hahnemann's methods and became a total convert to Homœopathy with the result that he contributed to Homœopathic literature his monumental work "The Guiding Symptoms". Crompton-Burnett in his booklet called "Fifty Reasons for being a Homœopath" and Holcombe in his booklet "How I became a Homœopath" have described the interesting stories of their conversion. Hahnemann's unique greatness consists in the fact that he was the founder of a complete and integrated system of medicine, revolutionary in all its aspects but absolutely scientific in character. Out of the chaos of irrational theories and barbarous practices in medicine he evolved an admirable system of therapeutics based on law and experience. In one sense he was himself a

convert. He was a learned representative of the orthodox system but increasing dissatisfaction with its unscientific and harmful character drove him to abandon it. Hahnemann was an "Extra-ordinary man" in the words of Dr. Forbes, the great British Allopath. His intellectual powers were unequalled in his time. Paul Richter, the great German poet called him "that double-headed prodigy of genius and learning". He was said to be 'a man of indefatigable industry and dauntless energy'. Hufeland the Nestor of orthodox medicine in Germany speaks of Hahnemann as "one of the most distinguished physicians in Germany". But neither fame nor professional income satisfied Hahnemann. He was after Medical Truth. He left off practice and devoted his time to scholarly pursuits. It was during this time that chance led to his discovery of the great therapeutic law "SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURENTUR". Dissatisfied with the explanation of the action of Cinchona given in Cullen's *Materia Medica* he was then translating, Hahnemann took a large dose of Cinchona and got an attack of intermittent fever. This phenomenon appealed to his inventive mind like the falling apple of Newton and the swinging Chandelier of Galileo and led to the revelation of the Homœopathic law. Though the law of Similars was recognised by the ancient Hindu physicians and Hippocrates the Greek physician and later by Paracelsus and others it was only Hahnemann with his intuitive genius who saw in it the sole and invariable law of cure. Like a true scientist he carried on *A Posteriori* investigations on the records of medicine and *A priori* experiments on the action of drugs on the healthy and the sick and at last established the Therapeutic Law on the bedrock of practical experience. Hahnemann defines medicine as "a pure science of experience, like Physics & Chemistry". Adherence to this law as the Universal Law of Cure is a distinctive feature of the Homœopathic System.

The most revolutionary doctrine of Homœopathy which made Hahnemann and his system the target of uncompromising attack by the co-called 'Rational School' of medicine is his Dynamic Theory of Disease with its corollary, the dynamic action of drugs. This doctrine was part and parcel of Hahnemann's philosophy of Vitalism. Hahnemann believed in the primacy of the Vital Principle, the immaterial simple substance that animates the material body. While the orthodox system took a materialistic view of the human body and its diseases Hahnemann maintained that disease is a derangement of the Vital principle and hence dynamic in its nature. The real cause of disease cannot therefore be detected by microscopic observation, the pathogenic microbes being at best only proximate causes.

The application of the dynamic medicine is organically related to the Law of Similars on the one hand and the dynamic theory of disease on the other. The medicine being pathogenic requires an attenuated dose to avoid dangerous aggravation. Careful observation and experiment carried Hahnemann to greater and greater degrees of attenuation. His followers have taken it to undreamt of levels of dynamisation thereby establishing the spiritual charac-

ter of the medicinal art, while the materialistic followers of Modern Medicine got confirmed in their view that Homœopathy is "transcendental medicinal moonshine".

Hahnemann's proving of drugs to find out the pure action of drugs on healthy human bodies was a unique contribution to scientific medicine and the basis for the reliable Scientific Materia Medica of Homœopathy that is superior to the Allopathic Materia Medica filled with accidental symptoms of poisoning and the facts of clinical experience. The provings of potentised drugs revealed to the incisive intelligence of Hahnemann the surprising phenomenon of drug pathogenesis presenting counter-parts of complete disease conditions. This led him to discard the administration of mixtures and give only single medicines which were found to be quite competent to remove even complicated diseases.

With the images of symptom pictures of drugs in his mind Hahnemann was able to prophesy during a great epidemic of Asiatic Cholera in Europe that Camphor, Cuprum and Veratrum Album would be the suitable medicines for that disease. These medicines have proved to be almost specific in their action against this fatal disease in different stages.

The Similimum, the Single Drug and the Minimum Dose are the three pillars on which stands the edifice of the Homœopathic system—a system which in spite of the indifference and hostility of medical vested interests and the ignorance of the common man "stands four square to all the winds that blow". Homœopathy is based not on the shifting quick-sands of medical theories and opinions but on the solid bedrock of practical experience and unchanging principles deduced from them. These principles are in perfect conformity with the Law of Nature as formulated in modern science. Homœopathy is thus an empirical inductive science. Many of the medical discoveries of modern medicine were anticipated by Hahnemann. Being a great genius, endowed with extraordinary depth of insight and breadth of vision, he was far ahead of his times and therefore had to encounter bitter opposition. The principles of Homœopathy are being vindicated with the advancements in modern medicine. The mechanistic view of the human organism has led to the fragmental approach in therapeutics and the growth of specialists. It has also led to excessive surgical interference in non-surgical cases of disease. The propagation of the Homœopathic system in its purity will be a wholesome corrective to the errors of modern medicine. The followers of Homœopathy have a sacred duty to perform in this context. We have to be true to the teachings of the Master, to true Hahnemannian Homœopathy. It is worthwhile to remember what Carol Dunham, a great follower of Hahnemann said in this regard: "We have received from the generation of pupils and successors of Hahnemann, the blazing torch which the Prometheus of our System lighted at the altar of Eternal Truth. Our honour depends on the care with which we cherish it, and the state with which we in turn transmit it to those who follow us."