

# The homœopathic science of healing domestic animals: a rediscovered manuscript by Samuel Hahnemann

*Translated from the German by Hela Michot-Dietrich. Edited by Daniel Kaiser*

Most distinguished Gentlemen:

Please permit me, in my capacity as an old member of the Royal Economic Society, to present before you some thoughts regarding the use of the homœopathic science of healing in the hitherto so much neglected art of veterinary medicine, and in so doing to also contribute a mite to the altar of the fatherland.

No one will dispute my contention that veterinary medicine in general must be considered in a similar manner as medicine for humans, and that the same ideals govern the former as the latter. They are first: the exact observation of any given case of illness in the suffering animal and second: the careful investigation into the pure effects of known medicaments on the various kinds of healthy domestic animals, in order to gain insight into the morbid changes each medicine is capable of producing in the state of the healthy animal, so that for each given case of illness in an animal we may select, from this store of positive, pure effects, a remedy that produces similar suffering in the healthy animal and will thus become the surest, fastest and most helpful remedy for the illness at hand.

For it is only through their tendency to induce similar suffering that medicines can overrule a given illness in the animal body, extinguish it and, in one word, cure with certainty and permanency.

This is nature's path and the purest and most reliable experiences bear it out. This law of nature is infallible and there are no exceptions to it - so few that it is the only way by which we can expect to establish a reliable science of healing for humans and animals alike.

Since this approach is irrefutably correct, as true and well-founded as any truth that can be found outside the realm at the mathematical sciences, I would like to like to first of all try to clear the path of the obstacles that might stand in the way of your introduction to this procedure. Afterwards, I will show you how this method can be put into practice. The greatest difficulty in the execution at this approach is its novelty.

Man is accustomed to follow his habits. This tendency was implanted in us originally for our own good. It facilitates all of man's labours in an exquisite, beneficial manner in all cases in which traditional procedures have their foundations in nature and truth. In this case, and only in this case, the master is certain of the art of his trade, certain that his work must succeed, provided he follows the traditional approach exactly. It is thus that the master builder is confident of his

success when he constructs his edifice from the best materials known, according to certain rules based on reasoning and experience, and according to the plans submitted to him. He does so to the great astonishment of all who are not privy to the application of this unchanging information, and his edifice rises not only to please the eye, but it also combines usefulness with comfort, symmetry with durability. He knew what he wanted to build, he knew the means that lead to the successful accomplishment of his goal, he used them, and his edifice stands for all to see. And the same holds true for all the masters of all the other arts based on solid foundations: they can accomplish in confidence what they set out to do. The required learning is strengthened by frequent practice and the habitual application of it has resulted in their having attained great facility in executing their work.

It would not only be presumptuous to suggest or to want to impose another completely new procedure that would contradict the well-founded and consummate prevailing arts: it would even be ridiculous to want to replace with conjectural and at any rate less proficient and less well-founded projects a procedure founded on irrefutable rules based on truths that always attained the projected goals. There is not even a desire for doing so, since the old and established procedure has proven to be reliable in achieving the envisioned results with ease and certainty.

Although veterinary medicine can hardly be compared to these reliable crafts, since despite the fact that it treats sick animals with medicines, it does so without any certain foundations, entirely according to blind authority and yet with so little success, with so little certainty, that it is to be considered a case of good luck if one of them is cured under such treatment. Yet, even the veterinarian believes to be following certain rules and regulations leading him to the attainment of success in his endeavours. He shows us the notes taken during his professors' lectures, or some books according to which he treats and in which a lot of ready prescriptions are indicated at the end behind the various names of the animal diseases. Consequently, he believes that all he needs to do is to combine and administer them in order to perform his duty well. The frequent practice of this deceptive procedure has led him to attain such facility in this kind of treatment that he finally regards these established things as the best that can happen, although the bad experience should have taught him through failure so often the contrary, and very likely it has.

In other words, the tradition passed on from father to son to grandson to great-grandson has become second nature and so indispensable to his existence that every new, albeit incomparably superior approach seems to be the most

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horrendous thing anyone could impose on him.

He would like something better, at course, since he daily sees how little if anything can be achieved with his routine. But because it is something new, unusual and extraordinary to him, he resists it with all his might and prefers not to have anything better rather than to be forced to break with habit, with the familiar ideas, with his books that require mere parroting, in one word with the craftsman-like procedure he has been able to apply without deliberation, without any effort to speak of. He resists rather than lending an ear to the new and better procedure and applying it thoughtfully and with carefulness. This he deems impossible because, unfortunately, the new system has no similarity at all to the old routine.

This is the way of the mindless worker of lowly standing. A tanner bent on holding on to his old customs would, for instance, prefer to let his cowhides rot more than they tan for twelve months in the pit, covered with coarse oak bark shavings in the manner he has seen his masters and fellow journeymen do. He would opt to produce poor quality leather at high and pointless expense rather than to acquire the new, fast tanning procedure based on comparatively correct knowledge and experience, according to which he could produce a much superior quality leather within three months, in one fourth of the time, thus turning over his capital four times faster and providing his customers with a still better product and with more of it than what he was able to produce with the miserable old procedure.

Yet he sticks to his guns, as the saying goes, because he is not of a mind to give up his routine. He abhors the new, be it ever so admirable and superior.

Would we expect the ordinary veterinarian to think otherwise? Would he not oppose a new yet infinitely better procedure just as stubbornly only because it is new, that is to say, because it is advocating a different approach unknown to him, which would require that he combine carefulness with observation, something that his old method did not require of him?

With the old approach and regardless of the circumstances, when a horse got ill, he would perform copious bloodlettings, stick a seton of leather on its chest, filling it with a purge made of ten or twelve ingredients, on occasion even pouring the concoction through a horn into the nose. It was thought that some evil matter was hidden in the animal's body which had to partially be extricated with the bloodletting, to be diverted to another part of the body with a seton, and the remainder was to be flushed out massively through the intestines. The animal would become sluggish and exhausted, and if the illness was an old one, it usually remained as before. Only a short, transitory illness was sometimes conquered by the horse's strong constitution at the time of the cure. But this happened more slowly than would have been the case without the wrong kind of intervention.

If the disorder remained, he knew how to excuse by formulating a disease name that could be found in the medical books for horses, the signs of which would have a faint similarity to the case at hand.

One or several of the prescriptions would be copied and prepared at the apothecary's, to be administered by mouth, as a rub, an enema, as a compress, or by inhalation. If this did not help, all the other long drug formulas printed in the book would be given, and if this still did not help, another disease name would be devised, according to which another treatment would then be required.

This and similar procedures were so familiar to him that there was no need for any research, thinking or particular observation. It was a pleasure to be a horse doctor. But now, they want to teach him a new approach according to which expensive medicines were no longer going to be prescribed at haphazard, from printed formulas and squandered at random, usually to the detriment of the animal. One worthwhile medicine is to be selected for reasons, lying in each individual animal's total condition, which cures with certainty within a short time and permanently.

When he hears of this new approach, cold sweat pearls on his brow. Be it ever so reliable and easily applied by the conscientious unprejudiced observer, be it even more profitable for his business and helpful for the purpose, he will stubbornly oppose it with all his might. He is shocked at novelty, at the unfamiliar, even if it is a thousand times better than his old routine.

Knowing the terrible power of habit we exhibit when carrying out even the most ineffective types of action, it is my conviction that from among one hundred cartwrights or horse doctors, some of whom have carried out their craft routinely and for long time, scarcely one will be found *cui ex meliore tutor finxerit praecordia Titan*. Scarcely one, who would be unprejudiced enough, have enough resignation and humility, who would have enough doubts about the incompetence of himself and of his old books, in order to lend an ear to the new and only safe and certain homœopathic procedure, so to be guided to a rational method of curing these noble domestic animals who are so useful and indispensable to us.

Only the young, those apprentices who have not yet been spoiled by the routine, can become true practitioners of this safe and propitious art. This beneficial reform can only be realized by teaching the young unspoiled minds still free of prejudice, malleable like wax and set to receive all impressions.

They hear the natural simple principles, they see them applied effectively in the stable for the sick and they wish nothing more than to be able to become such helpers, such benevolent men. And when eventually they will get to see the routine of the old horse doctors, they will turn away with pity and consider themselves lucky to know a method based on reason and convincing certainty, and to be able to offer assistance in cases where the others torture the poor animals with borrowed prescriptions and inappropriate medicines to no end.

The ultimate prerequisite for the creation of such a school of veterinary medicine, established entirely in view of the benefits it has to offer, is a dedicated teacher and instructor well versed in the principles of the homœopathic doctrine of healing, who is convinced of the dignity of his beneficial art, who diligently and seriously devotes his life to it and whose exquisite faculty of observation let him combine humaneness with a clear and accurate presentation.

He would have at his disposal a testing stable of healthy animals on whom he tries out the most effective simple medicines under the eyes of his students, in order to first make out what signs of illness the given medicine provokes in several of these animals. They observe the particular type of fever and the noticeable changes it produces, the kind of attitude in the eyes, what internal sensations the animals hereby communicate, in what manner the pupils become dilated, in what position they put their ears, their tail, the general position of the whole body, how they move individual parts, their respiration, the moisture of the nose or mouth, the evacuation of the stool and urine, the temperature of the

individual parts. They would observe the changes in the animal's frame of mind and mood, what foods it refuses or desires, how it reacts to all exterior influences, in what manner it communicates pain in one or another part.

Once all the symptoms of disease each of the strongest remedies produces in all the animals present will have been observed and recorded exactly, they will constitute a *materia medica* based on nature and experience (not on assertions and deceitful conjectures). We will then possess a store of simple medicines, the true and positive medicinal effects of each which are known with certainty.

They will no longer be misused blindly and randomly in lengthy prescriptions of mixtures that torture the animals. Only one remedy for each illness will be administered; precisely the one that was observed to bring on specifically those symptoms in healthy animals that need to be cured now in the present animals disease. The more closely the morbid symptoms of the selected remedy correspond to the symptoms of the sick animal, the greater the certainty to cure the animal and the more quickly and permanently the cure will be effected. This will take place with almost mathematical certainty.

Only an inexperienced and dull observer could deny that animals can communicate the symptoms of their illnesses as aptly and certain as humans. Although they have no language, the abundance of noticeable exterior changes, their comportment, the manner in which their natural bodily and vital functions take place are perfect substitutes for language. Unlike humans who have often been spoiled by their education, whose morality has often been corrupted and whose passions change them in one way or another, animals are unable to simulate. They do not exaggerate the expression of their pain, conceal their feelings or report fictitious complaints. The animals' symptoms of disease are thus very obvious to the observing eye and are a true expression of the inner state, a pure and true image of their illness.

Aside from this, the animals are subjected to our will; they must observe the diet we prescribe for them during the cure. They do not lie to us or deceive us, as humans do when they indulge secretly in what is harmful to them without letting the physician know it.

In one word, animals can be cured homœopathically at least as safely and certainly as humans. At another time I may have the honour to speak before this esteemed audience again, to deliberate in detail on the organization and handling of the sick animals' stable.

So much for today. At least I will have spoken the first watchword for effectively freeing our domestic animals from disease who are so precious to us.

Because even these poor animals, unable to call their torturers to account deserve the compassion of humane world citizens.

## DISCUSSION BY DANIEL KAISER

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The publication in its entirety of a hitherto unknown manuscript by Hahnemann has been made possible thanks to the permission given by the Library of the University of Leipzig. The document consists of twelve handwritten pages. They were prepared by Hahnemann as the script for a lecture on *The Homœopathic Science of Healing Domestic Animals*.<sup>1</sup>

### SOURCES

In 1956, Bentz discussed the work and published excerpts from the manuscript.<sup>2</sup> In 1960, Grieser wrote a dissertation in which the manuscript is mentioned and Bentz is indicated as its source.<sup>3</sup> Grieser further referred to Hahnemann's manuscript in two other publications.<sup>4</sup> Wolff also quoted parts of the manuscript from Bentz' publication, including the formerly unpublished last paragraph of the manuscript.<sup>5</sup> This was followed by another publication in which Wolff<sup>6</sup> again reproduced parts of the manuscript. Finally, in 1982, Stanek discussed the manuscript, listing Wolff as his source.<sup>7</sup>

At present it is not clear if Hahnemann actually presented the lecture and at what occasion this might have occurred. The manuscript addresses the members of the 'Royal Society of Economists', which most likely meant the Society of Economists of Leipzig, of which Hahnemann was an honorary member.<sup>8</sup>

Bentz opined that Hahnemann wrote the manuscript at an advanced age, but he did not document his contention.<sup>9</sup> Grieser<sup>10</sup> initially dated it as having been written in 1829 and indicated Bentz and the manuscript itself as his sources, despite the fact that the manuscript is not dated. Later, Grieser<sup>11</sup> replaced the indicated time frame with the supposition that the manuscript dates from Hahnemann's 'days in Leipzig', but he did not document his statement. He probably meant Hahnemann's third and last sojourn in Leipzig between 1811 and 1821, that is the time period during which the first edition of the *Materia Medica Pura* appeared and during which Hahnemann lectured on homœopathy at the University of Leipzig.<sup>12</sup> Wolff<sup>13</sup> thought the manuscript to have been written shortly after the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, and he indicated Leipzig as the place where the lecture was delivered. But he, too, failed to document his statements.

The above-mentioned authors voice different opinions on the document. Bentz and Wolff who had seen the manuscript, quoted from it to let it speak for itself. Bentz<sup>14</sup> pointed out that Hahnemann requested the provings of remedies to be carried out on healthy animals. Wolff compared Hahnemann's ideas on the protection of animals in the last paragraph of the manuscript with those of Goethe. He considered Hahnemann's remarks on remedy provings on animals to be a suggestion.<sup>15</sup>

Grieser and Stanek judged the manuscript less favourably, although they never did see it in its entirety and knew only excerpts from it. Grieser<sup>16</sup> wrote that it:

merely contained some thoughts on the applicability of homœopathy in animals and some suggestions for their practical execution.

Grieser mentioned the existence of the manuscript again in later publications,<sup>17</sup> but did not evaluate it. Stanek<sup>18</sup> contended that Hahnemann's contact with veterinary medicine was minimal, and that none of Hahnemann's other publications, including the *Organon of the Rational Art of Healing*, were concerned with the treatment of animals.<sup>19</sup> Stanek further speculated that Hahnemann got the idea for veterinary homœopathy on the basis of experiments carried out on animals from A von Haller whose *materia medica* he had translated. Finally, Stanek judged the manuscript as being

not a genuine, albeit a theoretical discourse on veterinary medicine

and declared it to be merely a suggestion.

This is sufficient concerning the authors who have dealt with the manuscript.

## COMMENTARY

In this lecture, Hahnemann formulates the basic principles of homœopathic veterinary medicine rather than merely suggesting it. Hahnemann presents his audience with significant directives for the practical application of homœopathy to animals:

- 1 the precise knowledge of the illness at hand, and
- 2 the precise knowledge of the medicines.

Concerning the provings on healthy animals, he goes into quite some detail, mentioning a stable for the provings and the observation of the changes in the animals' condition that take place during the provings. He even emphasizes this essential aspect of homœopathy. As in his *Materia Medica Pura*, Hahnemann points out the advantages of provings carried out on animals.<sup>20</sup> As far as I know, to this day there have been no provings done on the different kinds of healthy animals. It is customary to base the prescriptions of homœopathic medicines for animals on the provings carried out on healthy human beings. This raises the question as to whether the symptoms from the provings on humans are really so similar to those of sick animals that they can be transferred unqualifiedly from humans to animals without resulting in inaccurate prescriptions.

3 Hahnemann further mentions the applicability of the homœopathic law of similars when prescribing for animals. The closer the symptoms of the single remedy chosen are to those of the sick animal, the faster and more permanently the cure takes place and, according to Hahnemann, almost with mathematical certainty.

In his lecture, he does not mention the preparation and dosage of the homœopathic medicines. Neither does Hahnemann speak of the obstacles that might arise when treating sick animals. This is an important consideration in our days of industrial animal farming.

Hahnemann does, however, elaborate on the obstacles that habits, traditional ways of thinking and deep-rooted medical routines present when it comes to daring to accept the homœopathic 'novelty'.

This represents a parallel to our contemporary situation, Hahnemann criticized the medical routine of his time, the bloodletting, the purging and the heroic mixtures of substances. Today, the majority of physicians is used to the exact routine of the natural sciences, narrowing down symptoms to isolated and measurable items, thus losing sight of what really needs to be cured, namely the individual totality of a given disease of an animal or human being.

The true reform in medicine that sets as its goal to heal according to principles and with compelling certainty is still outstanding as ever. This is why Hahnemann attached particular importance to the formation of the future generations of veterinarians. It would be great to know that teachers as Hahnemann described them could be found on the faculties of veterinary and human medicine.

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- 8 Hachl, R. *Samuel Hahnemann*. Vol.1. Leipzig 1922 p.41.
- 9 Bentz *AIIZ* 201, 1956, 25.
- 10 Grieser *TU* 29, 1974, 570.
- 11 Grieser *Prakt. Tierarzt* 58, 1977, 547. & Grieser, 1980, 8.
- 12 Hachl 1,1922, pp.108, p.113.
- 13 Wolff *AIIZ* 224, 1979,108.
- 14 Bentz *AIIZ* 201, 1956 25.
- 15 Wolff *Prakt. Tierarzt* 58, 1977, 556, & Wolff, 1980, 19, & Wolff *AIIZ*, 224, 1979, 109.
- 16 Grieser 1960. 7.
- 17 Grieser, *TU* 29 (1974) 570, & Grieser, *Prakt. Tierarzt* 58, 1977, 547. & Grieser 1980. 8.
- 18 Stanek *Prakt. Tierarzt* 63, 1982, 914.
- 19 Yet, Hahnemann did concern himself with the consequences of bites of rabid dogs and translated Taplin's *The Gentleman's Stable Directory; or, Modern System of Farriery*. London 1796 (*Stallmeister oder neuere Roßarzneikunde*). Schmidt, J.M. *Die Publikationen Samuel Hahnemanns*. *Sudhoffs Archiv* 72, 1988, 20, 23, 33. Hahnemann, S. *Reine Arzneimittellehre*. Vol. 2., Dresden 1816. (*MMP*), Vol.2, 1816. IIO, note 2. 'For the sake of comparison, I am referring to the story of a horse poisoned with arsenic, as reported in the Newsletter of the Leipzig Society of Economists ...' (the description of the symptoms from the poisoning follows) ... 'If we had many similar (more carefully executed) experiments carried out on these valuable domestic animals with several simple medicines, we would have a pure materia medica for them also, and we could cure them rationally (homœopathically) quickly, permanently and with certainty, instead of having to use the prevailing crippling quackery with a lot of inappropriate complex mixtures.'
- 20 *MMP* Vol.2,1816. IIO, note 2.