

Homeopathy: Working with Nature's Laws

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Homeopathy is a specific school of holistic medicine with a unique philosophy and approach to the treatment of disease. The basic system was devised and clinically verified by the German physician, Samuel Hahnemann, over 180 years ago. Hahnemann became disenchanted with the common medical practices of his day, which included strong purgatives, bloodletting and large doses of toxic chemicals. He was also critical of the state of knowledge concerning how to ascertain the therapeutic sphere of a medicine.

When in one text it was explained that a certain herb was effective in malarial fever due to its bitter taste, Hahnemann's dissatisfaction led him on to the experiment that became the basis of his revolution in medical thought. Hahnemann reasoned that the only way to properly assess the value of a medicine in disease was to thoroughly test it on healthy people. He then decided to take a series of doses of the herb himself and observe the effects. Much to his surprise, he developed symptoms very similar to those of intermittent malarial fever.

He went on to initiate a series of similar experiments, called provings, in which he gave known medicines to healthy people and noted all of their physical, emotional, and mental changes. Repeatedly, he discovered that the medical conditions for which he gave known medicines to healthy people and noted all of their physical, emotional and mental changes. Repeatedly he discovered that the conditions for which a herb or mineral was indicated in common folklore, would be reproduced on healthy provers.

Hahnemann expressed his discovery with the phrase *similia similibus curentur*. "Let like be treated with like." This fundamental law of healing, known as the law of similars states that any substance capable of producing symptoms on the healthy can cure these same symptoms in the sick.

Hahnemann's observations continued to reveal other significant healing principles. He noted that substances given to the healthy provers produced a broad array of symptoms affecting all levels of the individual. Similarly, ill health showed itself by an array of physical and mental symptoms other than the major complaint. Hahnemann concluded that nothing less than the total symptom picture of the patient represented the disease in its entire extent; the visible manifestation of the inherent defines mechanism in its attempt to restore and maintain health. To counter each symptom individually as if it were the disease process itself, was to stifle the voice of the dynamic organism. In homeopathy one must match the totality of the patient's symptoms to the remedy most similar in its action on the healthy. In this way the physician acts in concert with the defence mechanism.

Homeopathy quickly spread throughout Europe reaching North America in the 1820's. It comes as a great surprise to many to learn that at one time there were twenty two homeopathic colleges in the U.S. and over fifteen thousand physicians using homeopathic remedies. However, due to powerful social and economic forces that emerged early in this century, the homeopathic movement in the U.S. was severely undermined. In Europe, South America, and India, homeopathy has continued to flourish. It is well known that England's Royal Family are devoted patrons of homeopathy, and for years have had homeopathic physicians attached to their staff. How then does the homeopathic practitioner choose the correct remedy from among

the several thousand available? It is the unique picture obtained by reference to the totality of physical, emotional, and mental symptoms expressed by the patient that guides to the remedy selection. A patient's encouraged to speak about many areas of his or her life in order that limitations to freedom at all levels can be elicited. Peculiar and highly individualized information which may be of little or no value in regular medicine, can be of supreme importance in the homeopathic case. Food likes and dislikes, weather and temperature sensitivities, and other similar types of information are of particular significance as they help to individualize the patient, leading to the selection of the most similar remedy. In recent years homeopathy has again reemerged as an important force in health care. Hanhemann's discoveries were not merely the conjuring of a fine mind, but observations about fundamental natural principles of health, disease, and the healing process, which are as true now as they ever were. Since Hanhemann's time the great among his followers have continued to develop and refine his work; expanding our understanding of the natural laws governing physical life, as well as increasing our knowledge of the effective application of medicine. For those that believe that health is more than just a physical state and seek truly holistic health care, homeopathy offers a distinct and vital alternative.