

## The Gift of True Health

Misha Norland discusses healing beyond the body/mind and into the transpersonal level according to homeopathic principles.



Photograph courtesy: [www.sxc.hu/profile/ayla87](http://www.sxc.hu/profile/ayla87)

Homeopathy as we know it today was the brainchild of Samuel Hahnemann, who was born in Meissen, Saxony in 1755. Hahnemann studied medicine but abandoned his career after five years, disillusioned with the medical theories and practices of his day. He made his living chiefly as a writer and translator, at the same time resolving to investigate the causes of medicine's errors.

While translating William Cullen's *Treatise of the Materia Medica*, Hahnemann encountered the claim that cinchona, from which quinine is derived, was effective in treating malaria because of its astringency. He knew that other astringent substances were not effective against malaria and, doubting Cullen's explanation, he began to research cinchona's effect by using himself as a guinea pig. The drug induced malaria-like symptoms.

This experiment, conducted in 1790, marked the beginning of Hahnemann's investigations into homeopathy, leading him to re-present the ancient healing principle "That which can produce a set of symptoms in a healthy individual can treat a sick individual who is manifesting a similar set of symptoms." The healing principles of his new 'like cures like' medicine are described in his *Organon of Medicine*, first published in 1820.

Paragraph nine of Hahnemann's book gives a description of health, the rest of the work being dedicated to the practice of *heilkunst* (literally 'healing art'). Here is the Dudgeon translation of 1893: In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purpose of our existence.

In 1948, the World Health Organization [WHO] wrote that health is "not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing". This definition begins to set the individual within a social context, yet when we compare Hahnemann's view, written about 140 years earlier, we get a sense of having moved backwards as if towards a simplification that is not only static (as contrasted with dynamic) but without a spiritual dimension. The WHO makes no reference to "the higher purpose of our existence", which, according to Hahnemann, arises as a function of being healthy. Such awareness would surely direct our species towards integration and ecological sustainability. I shall return to this point later.

In paragraph nine, Hahnemann examines the role of the dynamis (from the Greek word for 'force' in the sense of continuous change, activity and vigour) that animates the material body, calling it the "spiritual vital force". It is the animating, vital principle that bestows life upon the physical organism; it is an immaterial force whose role is like a ruler exerting influence over the material body. Hahnemann uses the

word 'organism' to drive the point home. An organism is defined as a living being composed of mutually dependent parts with separate functions. In other words, the spiritual vital force is the organising principle that holds the parts in mutually beneficial coexistence.

A comparison can be made between Hahnemann's and the WHO's definition of health in respect of social wellbeing. Although Hahnemann does not mention social wellbeing, I would like to make my own point here. Looking beyond the individual, we see that the role of healthy vitality, while working within the organism, also transcends it, allowing the environment to partake of its influence. As the organ or system belongs within the organism, so the individual belongs to his or her milieu. In this way an interactive, mutually dependent and beneficial coexistence can be established and maintained.

Parading under the name of rational science, a purely materialistic view of the world extends itself only as far as its fractions and divisible parts. Simultaneously our perception of the continuum or flux that holds all these parts together is degraded. This external vital flux can be viewed as an extension of the internal one, permeating all beings and joining them together into an interactive network that extends beyond species barriers. This is the energy vector of the ecosystem: the invisible hand of Gaia.

When one part of an ecosystem is sick, or society is sick, other parts are affected. There will be compensatory mechanisms, but if disease is not attended to effectively, these compensatory moves start failing. By contrast, health in one part conveys health upon another. In the light of this holistic bond, in which all parts and all creatures are linked by vital interdependency, it becomes contrary to good sense for humans to continue to pursue goals that are focused on peripheral wellbeing alone. For instance, goals driven by the many "I want" impulses of the childlike psyche, driven by hankering after the new and fashionable, inevitably lead to disappointment and a renewed cycle of desires and disappointments. This wasteful personal goal seeking, epitomised by capitalism, leads to periodic destabilising of the economy, and to many forms of social injustice, as well as to wasteful deployment of natural resources. The point that I am making is that health, leading to recognition of a higher purpose, would modify this trend.

Homeopaths recognise that a deviation of the vital force underlies all pathological expressions. This view, which looks for remedies within the natural world, centres the derangement of the vital force here. It is by renewing our relationship with a specific organ of the natural world's material body – mineral, bacterial, fungal, plant or animal – that we heal. We direct this healing agent to the vital force, which, being the ruler of the organism, is both unbalanced by the sickness and restored by the correct homeopathic remedy. As Hahnemann explains elsewhere in the Organon, it is the dynamised, potentised, spiritualised dose that most effectively does this.

The vital force "retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions". Sensations and functions represent an input/output relationship. Firstly the organism experiences via the senses and cognition processes, and secondly it responds: with emotions and actions, or with physical symptoms such as discharges and fevers.

In health, input as sensations is matched by appropriate functional responses, or output. This maintains homeostasis (the process by which internal balance is assured despite changing external conditions). The reciprocal relationships of sensations and functions not only maintain balance but also give rise to awareness, because one without the other is static, non-dynamic and dead. Metaphorically these are dancing partners in the organism, moving with the ever-changing rhythms of life.

When taking the case of a sick person, it is good to remember the reciprocity of sensations and functions, enquiring about the sufferer's experience, the sensation it engenders, and how the person is affected by it

and reacts. To continue: “so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purpose of our existence”.

In health our awareness is self-generating, because the vital force is free of the need to drive compensatory and healing activities. However, in disease our vital responses are tied up with the needs of basic survival, thus limiting them in their availability for our higher awareness.

Humans turn their consciousness inward, giving rise to self-awareness. This can then evolve into enquiry about purpose, and therefore the higher purpose of existence. A focus upon a higher purpose directs “the reason-gifted mind to employ this living, healthy instrument” to that end.

It has often been commented that we become that which we regard. It is clear that Hahnemann considered purpose to be intrinsic, an essential higher aspect of human intelligence. Being in true health offers to humans a gift enabling their “higher purpose of existence” to flourish, both as individuals and as members of larger groups and ecosystems in the world.

***Misha Norland is the Founder and Principal of The School of Homeopathy, Devon, England and a founder member of the British Society of Homeopaths.***