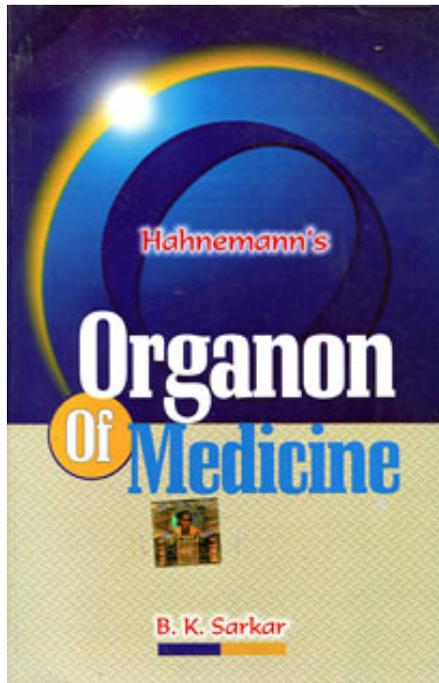


B.K. Sarkar

Hahnemann's Organon of Medicine

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Disease—Acute and Chronic

Hahnemann observed that the diseased processes might be classified into two broad divisions *viz.*, acute and chronic. The acute cases lead either to recovery or death; with the chronic cases lead nowhere except life-long suffering unless they are counteracted by homoeopathic application of medicines discovered by Hahnemann. The totality of perceptible symptoms manifested by altered sensations and functions at a given time, constitutes the disease for treatment purposes. But Hahnemann had to widen his conception of disease as he came to investigate the nature of chronic disease. He formerly held that "the physician has only to remove the whole of the symptoms in order, at the same time, to annihilate the internal change, that is to say, the morbid derangement of the vital force—consequently the totality of the disease, the disease itself" (Sec 17.).... it follows undeniably that the some of all the symptoms in each individual case of the disease must be the sole guide to direct us in the individual case of the disease must be the sole guide to direct us in the choice of a remedy. And what we find him writing in his book on "Chronic Disease"?—"It was a continually repeated fact that the non-venereal chronic diseases, after being time and again removed homoeopathically by the remedies fully proved up to the present time always returned in a more or less varied form and with new symptoms or reappeared annually with an increase of complaints. This gave the first clue that the Homoeopathic physician with such a chronic case, yet in all cases of chronic diseases, has not only to combat the disease presented before his eyes, and must not view and treat it as if it were a well-defined disease, to be speedily and permanently destroyed or healed by ordinary homoeopathic remedies, but that he has always to encounter only some separate fragments of a more deep-seated disease.....They must therefore all have fore their origin foundation constant chronic miasms whereby their parasitical existence in the human organism is enabled to continually rise and grow." Hahnemann's Chronic Disease pp. 5 and 9, second Edition.)

Thus we find that the difference between an acute and a chronic disease implies something more than the time-duration of illness. Clerk's remarks regarding the particular meaning attached to the word "Chronic" by Hahnemann in the phrase "chronic diseases", are to be borne in mind : Hahnemann did not use it in the ordinary sense of "long-lasting" ; he meant a disease which was due to a poison (or

miasm) which had a chronic evolution (in the manifestation of symptoms). Syphilis is a chronic disease in his sense whether the manifestations are acute or whether they are long lasting. 'Psora' is a chronic disease in this way though sometimes its manifestations are intensely acute." Hahnemann's classification of disease into acute chronic is, from first to last, one of practical import.

The Real Significance of Acute and Chronic Diseases

The acute cases lead either to recovery or death ; while the chronic cases lead no where except life-long suffering unless they are counteracted by homoeopathic application of medicines discovered by Hahnemann. By the time he talked of acute and chronic diseases he came to form a clearer and more definite conception of the Life-principle as having a substantive entity though belonging to an order of existence different from that of matter and yet somehow integrated with the material body in its surface existence. It is the force of the Life-substance that animates the body, keeps the different parts of the body in a harmonious functioning order, preserves the body from death, disintegration and decay and automatically reacts with an attempt at repair against any inimical agent threatening the Integrated existence of the body, life and mind. Disease 'per se' consists in the disorderly functioning of the Life force—preceding, add co-existing and ultimating in structural changes of the materials parts of the organism. Thus, in acute disease the Life-force, though disordered to a great extent or even to the point of extinction still retains an inherent capacity to set itself right with or without medicinal help; whereas, in chronic diseases, the life-force of the life-substance, though altered an Insidious way, gets deranged in a somewhat peculiar manner so that it seems to loose that inherent property of self-adjustment. This was the problem which Hahnemann set for himself to solve.

In acute cases, the life-force is changed but that is more or less a superficial change compared to what happens in chronic cases. Here we may not also Hahnemann's conception of 'Infection' which has been discussed before. We should try to explain the matter with the help of an example from physical science. Every student of physics is aware of "induced" magnets and 'permanent magnets.' Any piece of soft-iron rod behaves as a magnet (*i.e., exhibits* the general properties of a magnetised body) so long as it is placed and kept in front of a permanent magnet. But it loses its magnetic properties as soon as the

inducing magnet-piece is withdrawn. But if that piece of soft-iron rod is permanently magnetised by a magnet (stroking along it in particular manner) it retains its magnetic properties even when the other magnet is withdrawn from its presence. This shows a more or less permanent change in the configuration of the molecules of the piece of soft-iron rod, that has taken place; and a special process is needed to demagnetise it. Might it not be an analogous condition with acute and chronic infection?

With the passing of years and growth in experience Hahnemann came to regard man more as an organism than as a machine. A machine is composed of many parts, originally separate. Once these parts are put together, its manifoldness becomes unity. Like the human individual, it is assembled for a specific purpose. Like him, it is both simple and complex. But it is primarily complex and secondarily simple. On the contrary, man is primarily simple and secondarily complex. He originates from a single cell. His growth means multiplication and self-differentiation of the primitive cell to form diverse tissues and organs. Thus an organism is not artificially made but grows—not put together by the force from outside but evolved by a single power working from within—a self-evolving, self-realising unity. The plan or idea contained in the evolving force from the beginning, manifests itself as the energy of life, the unifying and controlling power of the whole over the parts, differentiating and co-ordinating the parts and making them co-operate together for its own more perfect realisation. The parts derive their form and function from the whole; and the whole makes itself to be what it is by evolving and sustaining the parts as its organs. In other words, the evolving power reacts from the whole upon the parts, making them subservient to its own plan or idea and thus raises itself into being the life of the organism. It is beginning because it is the power which evolves it from the primordial cell onwards. It is the resultant because the organism is the system of means by which it completes and perfects itself and makes itself to be concrete life. As there is a central life-mechanism corresponding to the whole, there is life in the parts, tissues or organs and there is life in every cell. Life is a scale of energy forming a sort of hierarchy from cell-life to collective or central life. Disease is disorder in any plane—material, vital or mental—as a whole or as a part constituting or conforming to the whole. In acute diseases the disorder starts from the lower scale of life in the tissue-cells or organ-cells and this disorder acts on the

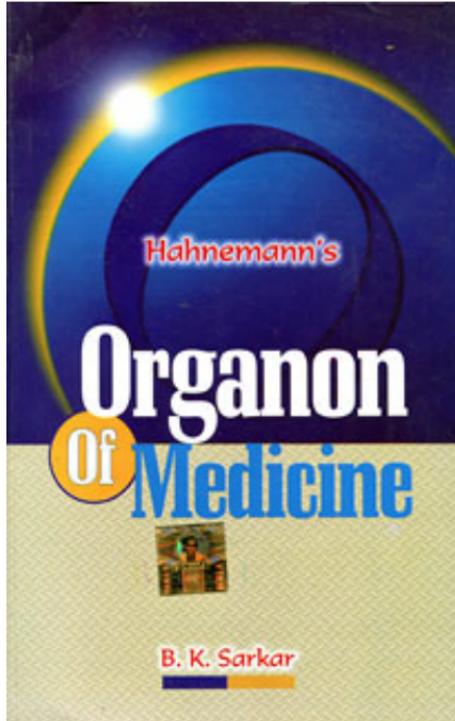
whole or central life-force; here the disease-process is the resultant of the action of the part and the reaction of the whole to it. Here the disease-process seems to start from outside within or in the ascending order in the hierarchy of life. The central life-mechanism is disturbed eventually but the change is of a more superficial nature analogous somewhat to the condition of "induced magnetism". Whereas in Chronic cases the whole or central life is attacked and disturbed first by some morbid agent of a miasmatic nature; the central disturbance is in the life of the tissues, organs or cells. Here the disease process seems to start from within outwards or in the descending scale of life. That is why in chronic diseases, constitutional symptoms (*i.e.* symptoms indicative of the disturbance of the central life-mechanism) are more marked; whereas in acute cases the structural and functional changes of the tissues and organs overshadow the constitutional symptoms. Here in we get a clue for evaluation of symptoms in case-taking to treat a patient homoeopathically. Hahnemann's description of symptoms corresponding to what he calls as Latent Psora. Secondary psora and Tertiary Psora becomes intelligible if we bear in mind the course and evolution of the disease-process from the central to the periphery or from the whole to the parts. At first we find the disturbance located in the central life-mechanism, which is manifested through perceptible sensorial and functional changes of the organism as a whole; here nosology fails to be applied as the symptoms do not refer to any particular organ or tissue; and the man though showing deviations from the healthy state, is not termed as specifically diseased. This is the stage of Latent Psora. In course of time the disharmony of the whole or central life is reflected on to the disharmony of life in the organs and tissues; and the disorder is manifested more in the functional plane related to tissues and organs. This is the stage of Secondary Psora—when the disease is mainly confined to the functional plane without proportionate structural changes in the tissues and organs. This is followed by the tertiary stage of Psora when the gross structural changes in the tissues or organs appear—the domain of pathology proper and nosology. Central functional changes precede functional changes of individual tissues or organs and gross anatomico-pathological changes of individual tissues or organs ; this seems to be the order of progression in the chronic diseases. Here the disease process starts in a simple way and ultimately develops in multi-lateral directions according as different tissues or organs (though originating from a

primordial cell) are affected simultaneously or successively in course of time. Hahnemann contends that the miasms responsible for psora, syphilis and sycosis are of such a nature as the attack the central life-force at the outset and the primary derangement of the central life-force thus produce, makes the organism susceptible to many other agents to develop functional and structural changes in individual tissues or organs—thus providing occasions for diverse naming or labelling of diseased conditions corresponding to diverse tissues or organs predominantly damaged. So in chronic cases the central life-force is primarily disturbed from within (not withstanding the cause being exogenous) similar to the condition of a permanently magnetised piece of soft-iron rod. Hahnemann further maintain that there are three fundamental ways in which the central life-force may be deranged—psoric syphilitic and sycotic; and there are three specific miasms, corresponding to such of them.

We can also differentiate acute diseases from chronic ones from the pathological point of view, *e.g.*, the pathological changes in acute cases are more inflammatory and reversible in character so that complete recovery is possible; whereas the pathological changes in chronic cases are more of degenerative and irreversible in character so that permanent damage to the tissues takes place. As for example, in acute lobar pneumonia a good part of the lung or both the lung or both the lungs may undergo inflammatory changes which might threaten the very existence of the patient but there is always a chance of the tissues coming back to original healthy condition if recovery takes place; whereas in chronic diseases, *e.g.*, tuberculosis of the lungs the pathological changes may begin very insidiously but in case of recovery the degenerative disease-process might get checked but the tissue already affected would be fibrosed or calcified permanently. The change which starts from within out is slow but sure and irreversible.

Herein we also find explanation of the fact as to why the recently discovered so-called wonder-drugs of modern medicine, though efficacious in many acute cases, fail to radically cure the chronic ones. In acute cases, where the central life-mechanism is not primarily effected, these drugs serve to remove the obstacles to recovery (to talk in Hahnemannian language) and indirectly give the central life-force a chance to readjust itself to the original normal condition. So the treatment with these drugs are at best indirect medications more against the offending morbidic agents than against the diseased condition of

the organism. The procedure is fraught with dangers and uncertainties as the specific reactions of the human organism to these drugs cannot be predicated beforehand. The chemotherapeutic and antibiotic measures seem to be of great help in certain cases but they have certainly complicated matters which the allopathic physicians are slowly but surely on the way to realisation much at the cost of the patients. (Sir John Wier's Presidential Address.)



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