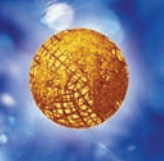


# *The Homeopathic Universe: Disease and Healing as Manifestations of Consciousness*

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NICK ROWE/GETTY IMAGES



**H**OMEOPATHY IS A 200-YEAR-OLD system of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) developed by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann. With its European origins, homeopathy is one of the few complete CAM systems that emerged within a Western context. Despite its lengthy history, many lay people still confuse the term “homeopathy” with alternative medicine in general, or herbal medicine, or Bach flower remedies. True classical homeopathy is none of the latter, although it uses herbs and flowers as some of the thousands of source materials for its medicines (remedies), involving both a unique process of preparation and a comprehensive, systematic, philosophy-driven approach to the selection of a single individualized medicine for the person as a whole dynamic being.

By the simple process of serial dilution and succussion (vigorous shaking) in water or a water-alcohol mixture, homeopathic pharmacies create their remedies. In contrast with herbal supplements, manufacturers prepare such remedies in accord with specific published standards (e.g., the FDA-regulated Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States). When choosing a specific remedy, the homeopathic practitioner seeks to address the highest organizational level of the person (i.e., the core spiritual dynamic disturbance that manifests in mental, emotional, and/or physical symptom patterns). The remedy addresses not one symptom or body part in isolation or an emotional state (as in Bach flower essences) but shifts fundamentally the pervasive rut of being in which the patient has become stuck.

The optimal role for homeopathy in the larger scheme of health care may be after symptoms develop but before a conventional diagnosis is locked in place. During successful homeopathic treatment over periods of months to years, people become unstuck from their recurrent dysfunctional disease patterns and establish healthier ways of living in the world. Leading homeopaths from various countries have all emphasized that health is a dynamic process of freedom at every level of being. In our own study of individualized classical homeopathy in cases of fibromyalgia, for example, the responders to active remedies exhibited a progressive increase in scores on a spirituality subscale for self-actualization, whereas the nonresponders went up and down or down and up, ending without a gradual improvement in self-actualization after six months.

Thus, a homeopathic remedy is not a pharmaceutical drug, even though both carry the term “medicine.” And even when it does not produce clinical improvement, a remedy is not necessarily a placebo, given the evidence. Furthermore, unlike with drugs, the pattern of changes that providers and patients report with homeopathy (as in acupuncture) extends far beyond the original chief complaint or local condition. Homeopathic changes are inherently general or “nonspecific” and involve global improvements in energy and sense of well-being, as well as a gradual lessening and resolving of multiple symptoms throughout the whole person. In addition, the direction of a remedy’s actions depends on the state of the individual receiving it in the present time. That is, as Hippocrates noted in his articulation of the Law of Similars, the remedy can either cause a pattern of symptoms in a healthy person or cure (reverse) a similar pattern of symptoms in a sick individual.

### BRIDGING THE NON-PHYSICAL AND THE PHYSICAL

Most of the discussion about homeopathy in the mainstream medical and scientific literature has focused on the molecular nature of, or lack of molecules in, homeopathic remedies. At the same time, most of the attraction that homeopathy holds for its practitioners and serious students is in its holistic worldview, comprehensive philosophy, and practical capacity to translate the consciousness of a remedy source into physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual healing. In short, homeopathy affirms the unity of consciousness and the living physical world.

Consequently, the unique place for homeopathy in the noetic sciences may lie in its potential to bridge the non-physical and physical realms of existence. Hahnemann wrote that all disease begins as “mistunement” at the spiritual level and ultimately manifests at the physical level. Homeopathic remedies begin at the physical level as material sources from the nonself environment (plant, mineral, animal, synthetic) but ultimately, through their preparation process, gain the ability to speak to the spiritual level of the individual consciousness, in service to healing the person in a deep and integrated manner. As a result, homeopathy implicitly integrates “top-down” (spiritual) and “bottom-up” (material) approaches to understanding the origin of disease and the nature of healing. ➔

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Although many people who use CAM may have taken a few common homeopathic remedies for acute illnesses—and received some benefit, even if the remedy is incompletely matched to their individual situation—they rarely learn or need to learn about its more profound implications. The far more powerful way to use homeopathically prepared remedies is to select the single agent whose essence pattern matches that of the patient at the highest level of integration possible—that is, the spirit. For such sophisticated remedy selection, usually for chronic disorders and diseases, professional consultation with a well-trained and experienced homeopath is essential. True homeopathy involves a highly non-allopathic worldview.

Mainstream scientists and physicians, however, see homeopathy as little more than a placebo or a joke because of its reliance on remedies prepared by serial dilution of source materials beyond Avogadro's number (the point at which original source molecules are no longer physically present in a solution). The skeptics' biased assumption is that the dilution part of the manufacturing process renders homeopathic remedies into placebos, where provider-patient relationship, ritual, symbolism, meaning and/or expectation within the patient—but not the remedies themselves—may mobilize self-healing. Without doubt, such factors can and should contribute to healing with most patients during most types of treatment, including homeopathy. So is there something beyond these factors that underlies homeopathy? The answer is far more interesting than it would first appear, invoking conceptual models and empirical evidence drawn from complex nonlinear systems theory and entanglement findings in quantum mechanics.

## MEANINGFUL MOLECULES

Open-minded scientists have begun to recognize that it is the succussion in combination with the dilution that makes a homeopathic remedy more than plain water.

Such preparation apparently leads to an ordering of the molecular network of the water solvent that should not be possible under traditional scientific theory, which posits that water molecules do not organize in liquids. When disrupted—under experimental conditions—by an outside influence such as x-rays, the diluted and succussed remedy liquid solution releases more heat or light than plain water/solvents. Where did that extra release of energy come from? The most logical answer is, from the ordering that occurs via the unique preparation process, which somehow captured the energy from the succussing. One replication study using heat-release measurements even hints that this process of ordering water molecules may continue over time after the initial preparation of the remedy, as though there were a seeding or progressive amplification process going on throughout the liquid.

Can a network of solvent molecules carry meaningful information? The materials science and basic science data suggest that they can, although skeptical scientists unaware of the evidence will reflexively answer “no.” A potentially more interesting question is, What is the interface between the spiritual and the physical planes? Water comprises roughly 70 percent of our physical bodies. If it is possible to seed the restructuring of the (not necessarily physical) network of water molecule interactions first in the test tube and then throughout the body—water with a homeopathically prepared remedy, the therapy would be modifying the function of the single largest hub—water—of the body's biochemistry as a whole system. Even artificial life researchers—such as Chris Langton, PhD, who uses complex systems theory as an aspiritual, bottom-up framework for modeling the self-organizing origins of life—have focused on water as a key player in their simulations.

Changing the way water in every cell acts and interacts within the body's biochemistry could help mediate the

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## IN HER LATE FIFTIES SHEILA WAS DIAGNOSED WITH A MILD CASE OF ADD.

She was struggling with the most basic tasks at work, so her psychiatrist prescribed Ritalin, which she found gave her some relief. Sheila also began working with a psychologist who suggested she try taking a combination of flower essences—Cosmos, Peppermint, Rabbitbrush, Rosemary, and Shasta Daisy—to address her concentration, focus, and bodily awareness. In time she found she could stop taking the Ritalin and that a longstanding case of eczema disappeared as well. Her psychologist observed that the flower essences had affected the underlying anxiety that is common to ADD and eczema.

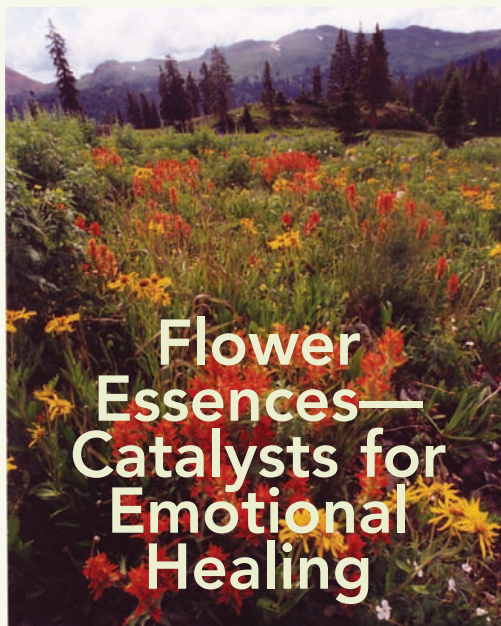
Flower essences were first developed in the 1930s by Edward Bach, whose work in medicine led him from surgery to immunology (where he developed intestinal vaccines) to homeopathy (where he developed his vaccines into homeopathic nosodes) and finally to his discovery of 39 flower remedies. His insight that feelings and thoughts are intimately related to one's health predated the findings of psychoneuro-immunology and holistic health informing health care's transformation today. Bach, however, grew to distrust the reductionist-materialist science of his day, so that his writings about flower essences do not provide a scientific basis. He relied on the experiences of his patients and others to validate the efficacy of his remedies.

Following Bach's death in 1936, flower remedies steadily grew in popularity among health professionals and family caretakers seeking holistic approaches to wellness. In recent decades, numerous reports of clinical success with flower essence therapy have led to increasing interest among innovative researchers to include flower essences as subjects of scientific study. Richard Katz, who founded the Flower Essence Society in 1979 to promote flower essence research and education, observes that "Bach's distrust of science is understandable, if by 'science' we mean a system of thought which insists that only that which can be quantified is real and that human beings are mere products of biochemical and genetic mechanisms. Bach did not anticipate the possibility of a new science, one that is fully compatible with a spiritual understanding of the human being and the world of nature."

Flower essences are liquid, potentized (highly diluted) plant preparations formulated to convey the distinct etheric pattern of a specific flower. They are not a biochemical medicine but a diluted, energetic remedy akin to homeopathy. Unlike homeopathic remedies, however, flower essences are not based on the Law of Similars, and they are made exclusively from the fresh blossoms of plants. The preparation of flower essences requires careful attention to the purity of the flowers' environment, the vibrancy and potency of the blossoms, celestial and meteorological conditions, and the physical and energetic properties of the plant's growth cycle. Once the plant's vibrational pattern is infused into water and potentized to a dosage level, drops of the infusion can be used topically in a cream, spray bottle, or bath, but are

more commonly ingested under the tongue. Although highly diluted from a physical point of view, the essences are believed to work vibrationally as catalysts for emotional awareness and change that in turn affect the physical body.

To date, a scientific understanding of the essences has been approached through clinical outcome studies, double-blind placebo studies (see both [www.flowersociety.org](http://www.flowersociety.org) and [www.edwardbach.org](http://www.edwardbach.org)), and clinical reports from flower essence practitioners in many countries. (In 1999 Cuba's Ministry of Public Health officially recognized flower essence therapy as a valid medical



modality to be integrated into its national health-care system.) Evidence that water can be a carrier of information—the subject of Jacques Benveniste's controversial studies in homeopathy and Masuro Emoto's investigations with water—might offer a partial explanation for the effects of flower essences, indicating another avenue for research. "If we consider the development of physics, from relativity to quantum mechanics and chaos theory, it is clear that science has already broken through the boundaries of Newtonianism, even if mechanistic thinking still dominates medical science," says Katz. "So it isn't unreasonable to suggest that scientific inquiry can be applied to the life forces of plants and their interaction with human energy systems."

—Vesela Simic  
Associate Editor



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types of pervasive changes reported in homeopathic treatment. In fact, homeopaths routinely describe healing during homeopathic treatment as a process of whole-self-reorganization. The pioneering homeopath Constantine Hering, MD, observed that natural healing of the whole person follows a “Law of Cure.” That is, the individual heals from inside out (from more important to less important organs, e.g., from lungs or heart outward to skin), from above downward (from head to toes), and in reverse order in time of appearance of symptoms. Homeopaths routinely use Hering’s Law to judge whether or not the remedy they have chosen was correct, i.e., acting in a comprehensively beneficial way for the patient, apart from the patient’s conscious interpretation of any changes in the moment.

## THE HOMEOPATHIC UNIVERSE

Homeopathic philosophy is both global (macro) and local (micro) at once—holistic and individualized. The remedies carry information from the surrounding environment that mobilizes healing in the individual person. A leading contemporary homeopath from India, Rajan Sankaran, MD, has written: “Our remedies are plants, animals, and minerals, represent the spirit of the source they come from, and must have a character of that source” (<http://www.thespiritofhomeopathy.com/insight/article01a.htm>).

Sankaran has pointed out that the global living style of an individual can fall into one of the three major nonhuman kingdoms: animal, mineral, or plant. Broadly, animal remedies express themselves in terms of survival, minerals in terms of structure, and plants in terms of sensitivity. From there, homeopaths seek additional clinical information to determine the specific remedy family and, ultimately, the specific remedy.

The Sankaran approach involves combining a grasp of the deepest quality of experience that a person expresses in their disease (i.e., “the sensation”) with the qualitative nature of how they cope with life challenges. Sankaran looks for the action in the case: The key is often a patient’s nonverbal gestures (e.g., choking, squeezing, spinning, unfolding, tapping) during history-taking that encapsulate the essential core experience of the disease dynamics. This model relies on some fundamental spiritual assumptions: (a) each person has a unique

individual, dynamic place and purpose in the universe; (b) the individual’s place and purpose share a unity with some other specific manifestation of the universe—that is, an animal, mineral, or plant—at both physical and spiritual planes of existence.

For the mineral kingdom, contemporary homeopath Jan Scholten, MD, from Holland, has generated a detailed schema of homeopathic clinical correlates for each of the elements in the periodic table (minerals). He sees generalized themes of life challenge for each row and specific patterns of coping with life challenges, including stages of life from childhood to death in each of the 18 columns. For example, Kalium (potassium) is in the fourth row (worker series) and first column (stage 1). Its issues revolve around doing one’s duty with a single-minded approach. Arsenicum (arsenic) falls into the 15th column or stage, where the issues are around job loss. Similarly, Sankaran has proposed a detailed schema of homeopathic clinical correlates for specific plants. At this point, the information on the animal kingdom is not as well developed.

For a skeptic, such a clinical approach to homeopathy is, at best, a nice story, and perhaps it is. But if clinical experience in this physical reality supports such “stories,” then it is important to explore their implications. Studies on homeopathy could offer a practical test for various models of universal consciousness. Indeed, some theoreticians have raised the possibility that the homeopathic remedy creates a bridge between the physical and nonphysical via symbolic mechanisms such as quantum entanglement, morphogenic field, energetic, biofield, bioelectromagnetic, and/or chemical. Evidence for any of these possibilities is limited, but the overall body of data suggests that the will not be the familiar physical structural ones of pharmaceutical drugs.

The work is still in progress, but the homeopathic practice models share and apply the concept that the physical and nonphysical worlds are ultimately one. They see a simultaneous unity between the human experience and that of the nonhuman remedy. Homeopathy in clinical use constitutes a practical application of this spiritual perspective. 🌐

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