



## PERSPECTIVE

# Homoeopathy during one hundred years of LMHI (1925–2025) – Part 1: Philosophical perspectives\*

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## ABSTRACT

The celebration of 100 years of “Liga medicorum homoeopathica internationalis” (LMHI) in 2025 gives reason to reflect on the philosophical essence of Homoeopathy as well as its historical development within a dynamic, changing world up to now.

From a philosophical perspective, in this first part, it is pointed out that Hahnemann, the founder of Homoeopathy, needs to be understood in his entirety – not only as a keen discoverer, practitioner and thinker, but also in his spiritual shape, i.e. in his ethical, religious and humanitarian attitude and conviction.

Only thus may one grasp the significance of the schism pervading Homoeopathy’s history since the split of a major part of his “critical” pupils, adhering to a different, more relativistic and agnostic style of thinking, still during Hahnemann’s own lifetime.

What followed was an antagonism in the history of Homoeopathy that still exists today – between so-called “true” “Hahnemannians” and so-called “free” and “scientific-critical” homoeopaths.

On this paradigmatic basis, the history of the LMHI may be assessed and studied in a new (proper) light.

**Keywords:** History of Homoeopathy, Homoeopathic philosophy, Spirituality, LMHI (Liga medicorum homoeopathica internationalis), Kentianism

## Introduction

At present, research on Homoeopathy is being performed mainly in terms of clinical trials and laboratory studies, collecting, processing and evaluating data, statistics, meta-analyses, etc. The scientists seem to take it for granted that Homoeopathy may be an object of research like many others, being clear-cut and well-defined over the course of time.

The celebration of the centennial of the “Liga medicorum homoeopathica internationalis” (LMHI), the umbrella organisation of homoeopathic medical associations of more than 70 countries, in 2025, gave reason to reflect the philosophical essence of Homoeopathy as well as its historical development within a dynamic, changing world up to now.

Amazingly, most people today seem to have only an unclear conception of what Homoeopathy really is, in terms of its dimensions and implications. In fact, its definitions and assessments differ widely, not only between adherents and adversaries, but also among homoeopaths themselves.<sup>1</sup> But how, then, could we track its development throughout history, its dependence on the *Zeitgeist* (the genius of the time), etc., without having a true concept, a kind of standard or ideal, from which we might appraise its appearances during the past centuries?

However, the endeavour to search for something that might really be true may today be an immediate cause of indignant scepticism and rejection. In the wealthy, liberal, falsely democratic and free states, in

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the 20<sup>th</sup> century people have systematically been educated and conditioned to believe that, as a corollary of freedom of opinion, speech and press, everybody is entitled to think, talk and act in his or her idiosyncratic way, as long as they do not violate bourgeois law, i.e. as long as ownership rights and commercial rules etc. are being respected. Accordingly, nobody should ever dare to claim to have found something like the truth or declare opinions of others to be wrong. To be sure, in such a relativistic frame of thinking and believing, it seems impossible to ever arrive at a concept of Homoeopathy that could be authoritative and generally accepted. On the contrary, one might expect as many different “homoeopathies” as there are homoeopaths.

The only hope to settle the matter may seem to be the trust in science, which in secular pluralistic societies has the status of a substitutive authority, after all others, such as religion, tradition, kinship or the like, have been abandoned. But even modern science has been shaped, and since then works, within this general frame of relativism. Since the time of David Hume (1711–1776), the theory of science declares and even demonstrates that inductive empirical science can, as a matter of principle, never arrive at something like truth, but is always restricted to the realm of suggestions and probabilities. As a result, any modern scientist who may not want to be ostracised will meticulously avoid claiming to have discovered a truth that might not be contested by others.

But what if we really like and need to know what Homoeopathy is? Where might we get help and orientation? Contrary to so-called evidence-based medicine, which moves forward from one outcome of a study to the next, without ever attaining final security, homoeopaths are in the privileged position that they have an example, a paradigm, a real man representing Homoeopathy at its best. In the person of its founder, Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843), we might, if ever and anywhere, find the real essence of Homoeopathy, so to say, incarnated in its original, unspoiled form.

It may be puzzling that a preliminary reflection on the history of Homoeopathy and its dependence on the *Zeitgeist* soon arrives at basic philosophical considerations, reminding of the first questions with which Socrates (469–399 BC) tried to define e.g. what bravery, piety, prudence, justice, etc. are. After many *aporias* and new starts, he eventually came to the classical conclusion: “Virtuous is what a virtuous man does”, suggesting that there may be no way to rationally define any virtue without considering the person who performs it. What may sound like a tautology to us today is, in classical antiquity, considered

to be the highest wisdom: In order to know what virtue is, one needs to know a virtuous person.

Applied to Homoeopathy, this would mean: We have to be acquainted with a true homoeopath; in fact, we have to learn from the truest homoeopath ever. And here we are lucky, to know its founder, Samuel Hahnemann, very well. His ample written legacy has been handed down to us solidly and researched in depth.<sup>2</sup>

## Hahnemann and the paradigm of true Homoeopathy

Hahnemann, however, lived at a time 200 years away from us today, under different economic, political and cultural circumstances, especially within a different frame of thinking and belief. In his time, e.g. specialisation of sciences was just at its beginning. Medicine, especially, had not yet been acknowledged to be a science, but rather a learned tradition or a craft. A fortiori, apart from surgery and wound healing, medicine still had no sub-disciplines.

Hence, physicians could not, when confronted with a patient, excuse themselves (and withdraw from treatment) due to being a specialist for heart, kidney or liver diseases. They were thrown back on their own resources, challenged as entire persons, with all they knew, with all they had, with all they were. On the other hand, physicians were much less constricted by professional codes, expert guidelines, fee numbers, state of the art textbooks, insurance policies, legal requirements, etc.

Thus, there was less bias and disciplinary constriction to a physician when he was – like Hahnemann, in the first aphorism of the *Organon* – reflecting on his task and mission. Hahnemann’s wording was: “to heal sick humans” (“*kranke Menschen gesund zu machen*”), because he was looking at them as only a free and noble person is able to look at fellow human beings: not in a reductionistic or utilitarian, but holistic way. For Hahnemann, humans had, of course, a physical body, but were also, first and foremost, spiritual beings.

Human beings were considered to be creatures of a wise and benevolent creator and sustainer of his children. Accordingly, humans have (and will forever have) a high and sublime destiny and calling. Everybody should strive to come close to the eternal spirit that governs the world, while behaving worthily.

## Hahnemann’s spiritual shape

Hahnemann’s spiritual shape or religious attitude may be characterised in terms of so-called natural

religion, a typical conception of religion prevailing at the time of enlightenment in Europe among educated men of honour. It rests on the claim that its principles are universal, as they lie in the nature of man. So, everybody in the world, from whatever confession, may join in and comply with them. In a nutshell, its basis is 1) the acknowledgement of a higher being, 2) the commitment to adore it, 3) by moral behaviour, 4) penance of sins and 5) believing in future reward.<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to modern materialists and atheists, for Hahnemann there was no doubt that he himself, besides having a physical body, was a spiritual being, living both in a physical and spiritual world. For a spiritual and righteous being, however, it is of the utmost consistency to postulate, and feel attracted by, the highest spirit of benevolence and wisdom, by rapprochement of which one would perfect one's own virtue. Concretely, by doing good deeds and developing knowledge to help fellow humans, one would act as a co-worker of God in caring for his beloved creatures.

Hahnemann himself had learned and received his spiritual orientation from his father, who had transmitted the noblest self-found concepts of determination of man, as he stated in his biography. Again, Hahnemann's spirituality was inspired by a living example, an existing visible paradigm, embodying invisible values, via the principle of emulation of similars. In Hahnemann's case, the high ideals of his father fell on the fertile ground of his well-disposed son.

Besides being a citizen of the world of spirit and morality, which is structured and governed by the principle of kinship and similarity, Hahnemann was just as at home in the physical world. In his youth, e.g., he was interested in materialism, proved to be an expert in chemistry, and used terms like "clock-work" or "machine of the body" in his early medical writings. His advice on dietary and surgical matters was entirely down-to-earth, and with regard to economics, he managed not only to successfully earn his living and raise a large family, but also to leave his children a decent inheritance.

To be sure, Hahnemann's spiritual conviction and attitude were crucial for his entire life and achievements, including the founding of Homoeopathy. Without his striving for perfection of virtue as well as medicine, the rules and laws of Homoeopathy could never have been discovered. Also, in his *post hoc* argumentation for Homoeopathy, teleological reasoning played a significant role.<sup>4</sup>

Just as the benevolent and wise creator of humankind was a reality for him, i.e. not a belief, opinion, or hypothesis, but the ultimate truth, so were the principles of similars and infinitesimals

considered eternal laws, and their revelation to him (and through him to humankind) a gift and grace of providence.

### The split of Homoeopathy into different schools

Having realised this, we may now have the chance to comprehend the history of Homoeopathy in a new (and proper) light.

Contrary to his first disciples, who followed his teachings in this pious spirit, it was still during Hahnemann's lifetime, in the 1820s and 1830s, that a new generation of students arose with another mindset. Due to economic, social, and cultural shifts in Europe, such as industrialisation, mechanisation, and commercialisation, materialistic and quantitative thinking began to predominate in everything, especially the new emerging sciences. Without a spiritual dimension, which was about to be neglected and finally abandoned, however, the world lost its stability and anchor in the form of a benevolent and wise creator.

Accordingly, also so-called laws of nature were no longer considered to be eternal realities, having existed forever, just waiting to be discovered by brave researchers. But, on the contrary, former "eternal laws" were assigned the status of hypotheses only, ideas or suggestions by human brains, that might be temporarily consented to, until nothing contradictory interferes, but never to be proven permanently.

Hahnemann did also advocate this empirical approach of modern science, but only as long as it concerned material and technical things, such as the preparation and proving of remedies or the testing of doses and intervals of their administration. But regarding the truth of basic principles or underlying laws he remained unswerving until the end.

When self-proclaimed "critical" and so-called "free" homoeopaths were demanding their rights to prove the validity and correctness of the principles of similars and infinitesimals from case to case, i.e. submitting it to the trial of materialistic science, Hahnemann refused this uncompromisingly, denouncing them as "half-homoeopaths" or "bastard-homoeopaths". Obviously, they appeared to him to have no sense for the other half of Homoeopathy, of Hahnemann, of human life and of the world, namely the spiritual world, as a reality.

In short, for Hahnemann, humans are living in a physical and spiritual world simultaneously. While the spiritual invisible world is eternal and imperishable, including the eternal laws which pertain to it, the physical world is transient and unstable, but can be explored and controlled by science. The

law, however, that suffering can be healed by a similar suffering, even by a minimal dose of a similar remedy, was for Hahnemann an eternal law, as true and real as the benevolent and wise creator.

## History of Homoeopathy in terms of paradigms

The insights collected so far may now help us to better understand the history of Homoeopathy at large.

In Europe, up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the so-called scientific-critical school of homoeopaths predominated the field. Driven by the wish to be acknowledged by the established modern-science-based medicine, they only used low potencies, refrained to apply Hahnemann's theory of miasms, and agreed to clinical trials and scientific studies, though to no avail.

The United States of America, however, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was still the land of unlimited opportunity. There, religion had a higher relevance than in Europe, and Homoeopathy flourished like nowhere else in the world. In its heyday, e.g. in 1898, the country listed around 20 homoeopathic colleges, 140 homoeopathic hospitals, 57 homoeopathic dispensaries, 9 national, 33 state and 85 local homoeopathic societies and 31 homoeopathic journals. Every seventh medical doctor had graduated from a homoeopathic college.<sup>5</sup>

Tellingly, many of the leading homoeopaths, like Gram, Wesselhoeft, Hering, Hempel, Holcombe, Farrington, Boericke, Kent, etc., were Swedenborgians.<sup>6</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish mystic and scientist of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, considered the spiritual world, where different spiritual entities are connected by relations of similarity, as truth or reality. It may be discovered by initiated suitable adepts but never be disproven by means of material science or logical rebuttal or the like. Besides communicating with spirits of the spiritual world and having prophetic visions, Swedenborg was also a recognised scientist, engineer, polymath and inventor.

James Tyler Kent (1849–1916) was an American Baptist and eclectic doctor who, in 1878, converted to Homoeopathy. In 1888, he moved from St. Louis to Philadelphia and in 1900 to Chicago, where he was listed as a member of the Swedenborgian community (since 1894 and 1900, respectively). In his teachings, Kent was very strict on the fact that Homoeopathy is based on principles and laws that every homoeopath has to acknowledge and must never violate.

Inspired by Swedenborg, Kent was convinced that Hahnemann, in the first aphorism of the *Organon*, when referring to the object of healing ("to heal the sick"), meant first and foremost the spiritual "inner

man". From this followed the rest of Kent's doctrine, such as hierarchisation of symptoms, priority of mind symptoms, single remedy, high potencies, etc. Crucial, however, was Kent's insistence on the spiritual dimension of Homoeopathy.<sup>7</sup> Since one "cannot divorce medicine and theology", as he said in his Aphorisms, "a man who cannot believe in God cannot become a homoeopath".<sup>8</sup>

In Europe, Kentianism took its first roots in Great Britain around the turn of the century. Robert Gibson-Miller (1862–1919) had studied with Kent in St Louis in 1884 and afterwards settled in Glasgow, and with the help of a scholarship funded by Henry Tyler in 1907, several English doctors studied with Kent in Chicago between 1908 and 1913.<sup>9</sup>

After World War I, Pierre Schmidt (1894–1987), after having visited all Swiss and many prominent French homoeopaths, set out to get to know the famous Kent (in 1920). On his way to the USA, he also visited some English Kentian homoeopaths, like John Henry Clarke (1853–1931), John Weir (1879–1971), Margaret Tyler (1857–1943) and others.

In New York, he studied with Rabe and Alonzo Eugene Austin (1868–1948), the favourite disciple of Kent, and in Philadelphia with Fredericia Gladwin (1856–1931), another true pupil of Kent. Although Kent, being the original goal of his trip to America, had already died in 1916, Pierre Schmidt received personal and authentic instruction of Kentian philosophy and practice, including his emphasis and insistence on spirituality. On his way home to Switzerland, Pierre Schmidt in fact made a "pious visit" at the tomb of Hahnemann in Paris, thankfully laying down a wreath of flowers, as instructed by his teacher Austin.

Back in Switzerland, inspired by his introduction into the spiritual dimension of Homoeopathy, Pierre Schmidt started to teach Kentianism, including repertorisation, to many doctors who themselves became eminent homoeopaths like Elizabeth Wright-Hubbart (1896–1967), Jost Künzli von Fimmelsberg (1915–1992), etc.<sup>10</sup>

At that time and till the 1960s, however, European homoeopaths were still stuck in a "scientific-critical" frame of thinking, only using low potencies (up to 6x) and prescribing combo medicines for proven indications. Regarding Kentianism, they ridiculed high potencies and had no sense of his spiritual philosophy.

## Outlook

So, in order to spread and disseminate what Pierre Schmidt now considered true Homoeopathy to a larger, more open-minded public, it became paramount to found an organisation that could

connect and gather doctors from all over the world to give the cause of Homoeopathy a bigger stage. Hence, in 1925, at the International Congress of the World's Homoeopathic Convention in Rotterdam, Pierre Schmidt and some other doctors founded the LHI (Liga Homoeopathica Internationalis; renamed to LMHI, Liga Medicorum Homoeopathica Internationalis, in 1966), to provide, on an annual basis, a platform for an exchange of thought and experience, even from continent to continent. As history shows, this was a wise decision. It turned out that, unlike in "old Europe", e.g. in India and Latin America Kentian Homoeopathy was falling on fertile ground.

To be continued.

## Conflict of interest

None.

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## L'homéopathie à travers le centenaire de la LMHI (1925-2025) - Partie 1: Perspectives philosophiques

La célébration du centenaire de la « Liga medicorum homeopathica internationalis » (LMHI) en 2025 est l'occasion de réfléchir à l'essence philosophique de l'homéopathie ainsi qu'à son développement historique dans un monde dynamique et en constante évolution jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

D'un point de vue philosophique, cette première partie souligne la nécessité de comprendre Hahnemann, fondateur de l'homéopathie, dans sa globalité : non seulement comme un découvreur, un praticien et un penseur de talent, mais aussi dans sa dimension spirituelle, c'est-à-dire dans son attitude et ses convictions éthiques, religieuses et humanitaires.

Ce n'est qu'ainsi que l'on peut saisir l'importance du schisme qui a marqué l'histoire de l'homéopathie depuis la scission d'une grande partie de ses élèves « critiques », qui adhéraient à une pensée différente, plus relativiste et agnostique, et ce, du vivant même d'Hahnemann. Il s'en est suivi un antagonisme, toujours présent aujourd'hui, entre les « vrais » hahnemanniens et les homéopathes dits « libres » et « scientifiques-critiques ».

Sur cette base paradigmique, l'histoire de la LMHI peut être évaluée et étudiée sous un jour nouveau et pertinent.

## Homöopathie im hundertjährigen Jubiläum der LMHI (1925–2025) – Teil 1: Philosophische Perspektiven

Die Feierlichkeiten zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der „Liga medicorum homoeopathica internationalis“ (LMHI) im Jahr 2025 geben Anlass, über das philosophische Wesen der Homöopathie sowie ihre historische Entwicklung in einer dynamischen, sich wandelnden Welt bis heute nachzudenken. Aus philosophischer Perspektive wird in diesem ersten Teil aufgezeigt, dass Hahnemann, der Begründer der Homöopathie, in seiner Gesamtheit verstanden werden muss – nicht nur als scharfsinniger Entdecker, Praktiker und Denker, sondern auch in seiner spirituellen Gestalt, d. h. in seiner ethischen, religiösen und humanitären Haltung und Überzeugung. Nur so lässt sich die Bedeutung des Schismas erfassen, das die Geschichte der Homöopathie seit der Abspaltung eines Großteils seiner „kritischen“ Schüler prägte. Diese wandten sich noch zu Hahnemanns Lebzeiten einem anderen, relativistischeren und agnostischen Denkstil zu. Es folgte eine bis heute andauernde Gegensätzlichkeit in der Geschichte der Homöopathie – zwischen sogenannten „wahren“ Hahnemannianern und sogenannten „freien“ und „wissenschaftlich-kritischen“ Homöopathen. Auf dieser paradigmatischen Grundlage kann die Geschichte der LMHI in einem neuen (angemessenen) Licht betrachtet und untersucht werden.

## होम्योपैथी: एलएमएचआई के सौ वर्षों के दौरान (1925-2025) - भाग 1: दार्शनिक परिप्रेक्ष्य

वर्ष 2025 में "लीगा मेडिकोरम होमियोपैथिका इंटरनेशनलिस" (एलएमएचआई) के 100 वर्ष पूरे होने का उत्सव, होम्योपैथी के दार्शनिक सार के साथ-साथ एक गतिशील, परिवर्तनशील विश्व में इसके इतिहासिक विकास पर चिंतन करने का अवसर प्रदान करता है। दार्शनिक परिप्रेक्ष्य के, इस प्रथम भाग में यह बताया गया है कि होम्योपैथी के संस्थापक हैनिमैन को न केवल एक प्रखर अन्वेषक, चिकित्सक और विचारक के रूप में, बल्कि उनके आध्यात्मिक स्वरूप, अर्थात् उनके नैतिक, धार्मिक और मानवतावादी दृष्टिकोण और दृढ़ विश्वास के संदर्भ में भी समग्र रूप से समझा जाना चाहिए।

इसी तरह, होम्योपैथी के इतिहास में व्याप्त उस विभाजन के महत्व को समझा जा सकता है, जो उनके "आलोचनात्मक" शिष्यों के एक बड़े हिस्से के अलग होने के बाद से मौजूद है, जिन्होंने हैनिमैन के जीवनकाल में ही एक भिन्न, अधिक सापेक्षवादी और अज्ञेयवादी चिंतन शैली को अपनाया था। इसके परिणामस्वरूप होम्योपैथी के इतिहास में एक ऐसा टकराव उत्पन्न हुआ जो आज भी मौजूद है - तथाकथित "सच्चे" "हैनिमैनवादियों" और तथाकथित "स्वतंत्र" और "वैज्ञानिक-आलोचनात्मक" होम्योपैथों के बीच।

इस प्रतिमान के आधार पर, एलएमएचआई के इतिहास का एक नए (उचित) दृष्टिकोण से मूल्यांकन और अध्ययन किया जा सकता है।

### **La homeopatía durante los cien años de la LMHI (1925-2025): Perspectivas filosóficas- Parte 1**

La celebración de los cien años de la Liga medicorum homeopathica internationalis (LMHI) en 2025 invita a reflexionar sobre la esencia filosófica de la homeopatía, así como sobre su desarrollo histórico en un mundo dinámico y cambiante hasta la actualidad.

Desde una perspectiva filosófica, en esta primera parte se señala que Hahnemann, el fundador de la homeopatía, debe ser comprendido en su totalidad: no solo como un entusiasta descubridor, practicante y pensador, sino también en su faceta espiritual, es decir, en su actitud y convicciones éticas, religiosas y humanitarias.

Solo así se puede comprender la importancia del cisma que impregna la historia de la homeopatía desde la separación de gran parte de sus discípulos "críticos", quienes adoptaron un estilo de pensamiento diferente, más relativista y agnóstico, incluso durante la vida de Hahnemann. Lo que siguió fue un antagonismo en la historia de la homeopatía que aún persiste hoy en día, entre los llamados "verdaderos" "hahnemannianos" y los llamados homeópatas "libres" y "científico-críticos".

Sobre esta base paradigmática, la historia de la LMHI puede evaluarse y estudiarse desde una nueva perspectiva (adecuada).

### **LMHI百年历程中的顺势疗法（1925-2025）- 第一部分：哲学视角**

2025年是“国际顺势疗法医学联盟”（LMHI）成立100周年，这促使我们反思顺势疗法的哲学本质及其在当今瞬息万变的世界中的历史发展。从哲学角度来看，第一部分指出，我们需要全面理解顺势疗法的创始人哈内曼——不仅要了解他作为一位敏锐的发现者、实践者和思想家的身份，还要了解他的精神形态，即他的伦理、宗教和人道主义态度与信念。唯有如此，我们才能理解自哈内曼生前其大部分“批判性”弟子分裂以来，顺势疗法历史上一直存在的裂痕的意义。这些弟子坚持一种不同的、更为相对主义和不可知论的思维方式。由此，顺势疗法历史上出现了一种至今仍然存在的对抗——所谓的“真正的”“哈内曼主义者”与所谓的“自由的”和“科学批判的”顺势疗法医师之间的对抗。基于这种范式基础，我们可以用一种新的（恰当的）视角来评估和研究LMHI的历史。