



The Next Step

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Introduction

When I started the “Walk for Homeopathy” on my 60th birthday (15th of October 2012) it was a response to an inner calling. For reasons unclear to myself I felt I somehow had to make this statement but because one is used to justifying one’s actions, it needed to be put in a format. The project received the name “The Next Step”, nicely covering the physical aspect of walking and the idea of progressing, while I secretly hoped the deeper meaning of this label would reveal itself along the way.

Also the poor situation of homeopathy was one of the reasons I felt a need to make this statement. Homeopathy isn’t just a profession; it is a mission and I wanted to dedicate my 60th year completely to what I love with heart and soul.

A logo was designed and a coordinator found: we created two blogs, a web shop, a Facebook page, some merchandising and started announcing the project. The motto was “Walk-Heal-Link” and the idea was to walk from homeopath to homeopath who invited me for a drink, a talk, a seminar, or a lecture, to see their patients or to host me. Everybody was invited to contribute in any possible way: walk with me, donate or spread the word. As I wanted to walk my talk, everything I’d earn this year would be added to the donations and after my expenses were covered, handed over to homeopathic projects. It was meant to give an example of living in a “gift” mode rather than a “get” mode. I also hoped to attract some positive attention in the media with my action, to counteract the attacks with a positive message.

With lots of invitations from Holland and a heavy rucksack I started my walk last year in Groningen, stepping out of the routine and into the unknown (Fig. 1).

What Preceded?

It also meant a physical stepping outside the established routine, in analogy to what happened in my life a few years before. When Harry, the chief editor of Links wrote in his editorial that Homœopathic Links is a reflection of the articles presented and not a personal selection or preference, it occurred to me that the bulk of the articles consist of either cases or theoretical elaborations on classical topics like potency or totality of symptoms. A few rare articles deal with controversial issues like shamanism or holy cows without provoking much discussion, if any.

One of the reasons could be that it is hard to put words to these more or less “magical happenings” we all encounter in our daily practices. We prefer to think our jargon rests upon solid facts, rules and procedures. Maybe the underlying fear is that we otherwise end up with the fairies, where we don’t have a yardstick to discern between fantasy, imagination, sheer nonsense, intuition or inspiration.

I always considered the faculty of discernment the most important homeopathic requirement and I drew heavily on method and analysis in my teachings. Evaluating students when they came to a remedy selection by dowsing, intuition, dreaming or muscle testing was by definition uncontrol-

lable. Claiming the patient got better by the remedy was a nonargument [1]. Holding on to my reputation of analysing logically and methodically, wasn’t it sheer irony of fate when I became aware, some five years ago, of my ability to know a person’s simillimum without having to see him or know anything about him? Needless to say that it upset me (there goes my credibility and my teaching career as well!) for a period of time. Then I started to test it in all possible ways. It stood the tests.

The only thing I could do was surrender to the fact I didn’t have the direction of my own life in my hands anymore.

Or come to the realisation that I never had, and try to figure out how to deal with the gift: how can the maximum number of people could benefit from it without my getting tarred and feathered?

The other thing I did was to become 60 and start on a Walk through homeopathy-land inside and outside.

A Walk through Homeopathy-land

Now the Walk is over and looking back at the previous year where I put this homeopathic footprint in nine countries, walked about 2000 km, linked lots of people and could donate almost 10000 euros to homeopathic projects, I can’t but have a feeling of accomplishment.

There are over 100 blog posts, articles in journals, newspaper interviews, pictures and video clips: all together they make up “the story”. Supporters could read where I was, who I met, how many kilometres the trajectory was; if it was snowing or hot weather; what I did; how much we collected.

S U M M A R Y

A homeopath decides to dedicate her 60th year to homeopathy by putting homeopathic footprints wherever she goes. It is an answer to a call in a challenging period for homeopathy and an attempt to take the next step, personally and collectively. In this year, many encounters from heart to heart helped me to come to terms with the situation and maybe give a glimpse of the way to proceed.

KEYWORDS Walk for homeopathy, Donations towards homeopathy, Inner call, Challenging, The unknown



Fig. 1 The start in Groningen, The Netherlands.



Fig. 2 Snow in the Eifel, Germany.

As I started on October I walked into winter. And what a winter it was! After a month of autumn woods and heather, snowstorms started in December and the landscapes turned white and magical deep into March (Fig. 2)! In January I walked – alone – in the unearthly splendour of snowfall at the Belgian beach. In February I met *Jeremy Sherr* – whom I worked with in Tanzania for a month – in a white-with-snow-covered Berlin. We visited *Hahnemann's* museum, house and library in Köthen and stood in awe at the Master's death bed, his desk and remedy box with the handwritten names on the corks.

The short visit in the UK gave me the opportunity to meet lots of colleagues at the National Homeopathic Conference, give a lecture at the Education day and meet up with *Peter Chappell*. As usual his inspiring and challenging ideas stretched my opinions and convictions.

In between the trajectories I went home to be with my partner, children, grandchildren, friends and patients, trying to see them all in a few weeks and then take off for the next leg of the Walk. My coordinator, *Christel Lombaerts*, made the arrangements for overnight stays, plane or train tickets and updated the blog daily. In this way people could follow my every move and make appointments to join me on a track or invite me when I was going to be in their vicinity.

From tender blossoms on the English trees I landed in the Middle East heat in Tel Aviv. Visiting Jerusalem was impressive but the whole three weeks the atmosphere was intense, as if walking in the navel of the

world. History and religion everywhere, places soaked with meaning and symbols and people with endless stories. I was hosted by many dear homeopaths, who showed me around in the Golan Heights, at the seashore, the Dead Sea, Galilee Lake and the Negev desert (Fig. 3). *Michal Yakir* welcomed me in her house, where we did some work together and made plans for co-operation in the future. Again talking with all those devoted colleagues strengthened the feeling we are connected in a worldwide network: homeopaths are linked by their love for and dedication to homeopathy. June brought another highlight as I was invited by *George Vithoulkas* and got the chance to speak to the master and to join his "Open Teaching": a living legend at work! July took me to unknown Scotland and August to equally unknown Denmark. To my surprise homeopathy there is permitted but hardly practised. The homeopaths I met, again, were very devoted, eager to study but having a hard time to pay the bills: an unfortunate situation I heard everywhere.

After a trip to Brazil for my private "next step", the last leg of the Walk was planned to Paris and to end at Hahnemann's tomb in Père Lachaise Cemetery. There, some thirty people joined the closing ceremony that was held in nice sunny weather, while Belgium and The Netherlands were virtually flooding with rain. The whole Walk I enjoyed dry days with only a few exceptions, which can't mean anything other than that the gods were with the Walk!

As homeopaths we listen to the story but look for "the message in the story": I'll come back to that later.

Homeopathy-land out there occasionally appeared to be stuck in conservative reflexes while on the other end of the spectrum there seemed to be a lot of magic going on as well. Let me explain this a little. What I would call the conservative reflex seemed to be in resonance with the dominance of the masculine aspect that occurs in homeopathy as it does in the rest of the world: homeopathy is not practised in an isolated bubble but is a product of the society's prevailing myths. Although maybe 80% of the practitioners are women, teachers and writers are almost always men. The reason for this is simple and known to all: the masculine aspect in both men and women is developed and rewarded, at the expense of the female aspect. In the history of homeopathy this resulted in focusing on knowledge, system and structure. In itself this is absolutely indispensable but when unbalanced by the feminine aspect it also leads to competition, rigidity and adherence to rules and methods. Could it be that this divides homeopathy-land and the community of healers in general?

The core of the problem is even deeper imprinted in our very basic assumptions about the world and reality. The dominant paradigm still states that we are separate beings in a material world devoid of meaning or purpose [2], from which follows we have to control nature and our own lower instincts for the sake of progress. This puts us in a conquering mode: we have to wipe out ignorance, superstition, unpredictability and wildness, but since this means an everlasting fight, the result is a state of fear. Looking around us it is clear where this approach led to and if we want to remedy the problems with the attitude that caused



Fig. 3 Negev Desert, Israel.



Fig. 4 A circle is round – back to where I started?

them, our endeavours are bound to fail. So if homeopathy is under attack, this could as well be a reflection of the prevailing collective worldview or state and if we try to fight back or to convince the others we are right, we unconsciously confirm this state. If then, in homeopathy-land, one school or approach wants to prove it is better than another, we thereby prove we are still in the separation story, even when we promote holism and spiritual healing.

The Path of the Healer

In the plethora of mottos and statements of the “Walk for Homeopathy”, this was the most difficult to put words to: the attempt to walk this symbolic walk, a walk of faith, for the sake of the walk, obeying a call without knowing the outcome. From the point of view of doing something practical with a realistic outcome, the “Walk for Homeopathy” wasn’t much of a success.

When we look at it from another perspective though, a more open and receptive one, an allowing of things to take place rather than to make them happen, I felt it served its purpose. True: it might be difficult to formulate or to pinpoint the sense of it all. But when *Satish Kumar* started his walk for peace from India via Moscow, London and Paris to Washington, a few decades ago, peace didn’t all of a sudden descend on earth either. Would we therefore label it a useless, senseless mission?

So the “message in the story” I mentioned earlier, is the mindset in which the “Walk for Homeopathy” was done: following what felt right and just at this moment in time

and place, trusting the “meaning” would unfold as I proceeded. A new story emerged.

From a walking away from where I was firmly rooted, it became more and more an inner quest of where I was heading, and as my own life is so intertwined with homeopathy it is sometimes hard to tell them apart.

The Obstacle to Cure

If we aim at restoring the sick to health, clearly perceive what is to be cured in disease, know about disease and medicine, the obstacle to cure might be our blind spot. Yes, we detox our patients, give remedies to deal with vaccination damage, sequelae of acutes, manage birth trauma and miasms but could it be the obstacle we are blinded for is the one we represent as healers? Could it be our focus on the fight for homeopathy, the fight for recognition, rehabilitation, scientific legitimacy, in short the fight to prove us right? Can we fathom this attitude of otherness leading inevitably to competition (psora), separation (sycosis) and destruction (syphilis)?

What if the homeopaths are the main obstacle to cure? Who’s to blame?

It was predictable that many people would talk with me about the bad situation of homeopathy, pointing to Big Pharma behind all this, or the doctors’ lobby or the politicians, or even the public being misled or uninterested and wanting a quick fix rather than a cure. We then see ourselves before the gigantic task of educating the ignorant

and fighting the power institutions. No wonder we feel desperate. It is the hopelessness resulting from trying to bring the “better and new paradigm” with the old measures. Although I listened and agreed with my companions, I tried to give some counterbalance with my action as well.

In this light one can see the Walk as an attempt to connect from heart to heart, to incorporate compassion, welcome diversity, cooperate and abandon fear when leaving familiar ground.

Integrating the more feminine aspect in men and women alike, we could become more balanced healers and help others taking the next step towards living the oneness in our minds we know is true (Fig. 4).

Now the Walk is Over, What Will Be My Next Step?

In retrospect it becomes clear my own development in homeopathy over the last decades went from the accumulation of knowledge and the refining of method towards an ever-deeper delving into the essence of disease.

Obviously there are several levels of disease and disturbances (intoxication, injuries, epidemics, emotional trauma, delusions) which all can be treated with suitable remedies.

If we aim at health on all levels, say: spiritual healing, it means transcending the dualistic opponents: good and evil, right and

wrong, dark and light, me and you and lifts one to a higher level of existence. And isn't it amazing that Hahnemann already pointed this out in his famous aphorism 9:

"In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force, the dynamis animates the material body, rules with unbounded sway, and retains all 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 purposes of our existence."

(Organon of Medicine, sixth edition.) [3]

In line with the necessity to balance the masculine and the feminine, to combine the individual being with the awareness of oneness, we can encompass the idea of the one remedy with the many.

But somehow I've always been driven to find that one simillimum that addresses the essence, the blueprint, the vital or what I could call the soul of the person. My intuitive ability now allows me to receive this for whomever asks me. More than half of the remedies I now prescribe are unknown, to me or by extension to the homeopathic community. This is for me an indication that knowledge alone would have been in-

sufficient, however hardworking and skilful the homeopath is. This is by no means a phenomenon to homeopathy, far more the contrary: in all specialties of the healing art there are people who tap into the healing forces. It is even likely that as we dare to trust (after we dared to know) all turn out to have this ability.

After having done the Walk I feel confident enough "to out" myself as an intuitive homeopath or a homeopathic medium if you wish (which will again ironically allow me to continue what I'm doing as the new Belgian legislation outlaws homeopathy for therapists like me). May this not only bring healing to the patients but also clear the path for colleagues with more intuitive abilities. May we have the openness to set aside our fear of being ridiculed and excommunicated and welcome this suppressed side of us. Let vast knowledge be combined with common sense, knowledge of human nature combined with introspection and acting combined with receiving. This could take away the obstacle to cure in homeopathy, which stressed its masculine aspect too much as it does everywhere in the culture we live in. We've unlearned to value, to honour and to welcome the feminine side in all of us. This would make us embrace the world, (of which *Mother Amma* is the living example) with all its diversity, creativity and uniqueness. We then

might no longer ignore the most important things in our lives: beauty, intuition, love and healing, and make us all take part in implementing the more beautiful world in our hearts that we know is possible [4].

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