



“FRANZ ANTON MESMER & THE HISTORY OF MESMERISM”

Homeopathic

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ABSTRACT

Different Non- Medicinal Therapeutic Measures, also called “Ancillary measures”, as mentioned by Hahnemann in Organon of Medicine are as follows:

- **Animal Magnetism** or Mesmerism
- Magnetism
- Electricity & Galvanism
- Massage
- Bath

Mesmerism: Mesmerism, also known as Animal Magnetism, named after German practitioner, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). It was one of the most popular medical theories of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, because of the theories put forth on the functioning of the body and the soul.

Franz Anton Mesmer

Franz Anton Mesmer was a German Physician who theorised "animal magnetism".

Born: 23 May 1734, Swabia

Died: 5 March 1815, Meersburg, Germany

KEYWORDS

Animal Magnetism, Mesmerism, Ancillary

DISCUSSION–

• 288 (Sixth Edition):

I find it yet necessary to allude here to animal magnetism, as it is termed, or rather Mesmerism (as it should be called in deference to Mesmer, its first founder) which differs so much in its nature from all other therapeutic agents. This curative force, often so stupidly denied and disdained for a century, acts in different ways. It is a marvellous, priceless gift of God to mankind by means of which the strong will of a well intentioned person upon a sick one by contact and even without this and even at some distance, can bring the vital energy of the healthy mesmerizer endowed with this power into another person dynamically (just as one of the poles of a powerful magnetic rod upon a bar of steel).

It acts in part by replacing in the sick whose vital force within the organism is deficient here and there, in part also in other parts where the vital force has accumulated too much and keeps up irritating nervous disorders it turns it aside, diminishes and distributes it equally and in general extinguishes the morbid condition of the life principle of the patient and substitutes in its place the normal of the mesmerist acting powerfully upon him, for instance, old ulcers, amaurosis, paralysis of single organs and so forth. Many rapid apparent cures performed in all ages, by mesmerizers endowed with great natural power, belong to this class. The effect of communicated human power upon the whole human organism was most brilliantly shown, in the resuscitation of persons who had lain some time apparently dead, by the most powerful sympathetic will of a man in full vigor of vital energy,¹ and of this kind of resurrection history records many undeniable examples.

If the mesmerizing person of either sex capable at the same time of a good-natured enthusiasm (even its degeneration into bigotry, fanaticism, mysticism or philanthropic dreaming) will be empowered all the more with this philanthropic self-sacrificing performance to direct exclusively the power of his commanding good will to the recipient requiring his help and at the same time to concentrate these, he may at times perform apparent miracles.

¹ Especially of one of such persons, of whom there are not many, who, along with great kindness of disposition and perfect bodily powers, possesses but a very moderate desire for sexual intercourse, which it would give him very little trouble wholly to suppress, in whom, consequently, all the fine vital spirits that would otherwise be employed in the production of the semen, are ready to be communicated to others, by touching them and powerfully exerting the will. Some powerful mesmerisers, with whom I have become acquainted, had all this peculiar character.

• 289 (Sixth Edition):

All the above-mentioned methods of practicing mesmerism depend upon influx of more or less vital force into the patient, and hence are termed positive mesmerism.¹ An opposite mode of employing mesmerism, however, as it produces just the contrary effect, deserves to be termed negative mesmerism. To this belong the passes which are used to rouse from the somnambule sleep, as also all the manual processes known by the names of soothing and ventilating. This discharge by means of negative mesmerism of the vital force accumulated to excess in individual parts of the system of undebilitated persons is most surely and simply performed by making a very rapid motion or the flat extended hand, held parallel to, and about an inch distant from the body, from the top of the head to the tips of the toes.² The more rapidly this pass is made, so much the more effectually will the discharge be effected. Thus, for instance, in the case where a previously healthy woman,³ from the sudden suppression of her catamenia by a violent mental shock, lies to all appearance dead, the vital force which is probably accumulated in the precordial region, will, by such a rapid negative pass, be discharged and its equilibrium throughout the whole organism restored. So that the resuscitation generally follows, immediately.⁴ In like manner, a gentle, less rapid, negative pass diminishes the excessive restlessness and sleeplessness accompanied with anxiety sometimes produced in very irritable persons by a too powerful positive pass, etc.

¹ When I here speak of the decided and certain curative power of positive mesmerism, I most assuredly do not mean that abuse of it, where, by repeated passes of this kind, continued for half an hour or a whole hour at a time, and, even day after day, performed on weak, nervous patients, that monstrous revolution of the whole human system is effected which is termed somnambulism, wherein the human being is ravished from the world of sense and seems to belong more to the world of spirits – a highly unnatural and dangerous state, by means of which it has not infrequently been attempted to cure chronic diseases.

² It is a well known rule that a person who is either to be positively or negatively mesmerised, should not wear silk on any part of the body.

³ Hence a negative pass, especially if it be very rapid, is extremely injurious to a delicate person affected with a chronic ailment and deficient in vital force.

⁴ A strong country lad, ten years of age, received in the morning, on account of slight indisposition, from a professed female mesmeriser, several very powerful passes with the points of both thumbs, from the pit of the stomach along the lower edge of the ribs, and he instantly grew deathly pale, and fell into such a state of unconsciousness and

immobility that no effort could arouse him, and he was almost given up for dead. I made his eldest brother give him a very rapid negative pass from the crown of the head over the body to the feet, and in one instance he recovered his consciousness and became lively and well.

MESMERISM :

Definition:

The therapeutic method of communication of human power upon the human organism by a well intentioned person, powerfully exerting his will, is called Mesmerism.

What is “Pass”? : The means by which the power is communicated is called Passes.

Qualities required for performing The Mesmerism:

- Well intentioned person
- Great kindness of disposition & perfect bodily powers
- Very moderate desire for sexual intercourse

Cautions:

- It is a well known rule that a person who is either to be positively or negatively mesmerised, should not wear silk on any part of the body.
- A negative pass, especially if it be very rapid, is extremely injurious to a delicate person affected with a chronic ailment and deficient in vital force.

Therapeutic objective:

- To restore an equilibrium & harmony in body functions through the vital force.
- It appears to be quite in conformity with homoeopathic principles & even conducive when properly done.

Types:

Positive Mesmerism (Aph 288 in Sixth edition)

Negative Mesmerism (Aph 289 in Sixth edition)

Positive Mesmerism:

Definition: It is characterized by influx of more or less vital force into the patient by positive pass. Positive pass made without much exertion of will, with the palms of the hands, not too slowly, from the top of the head to the tips of the toes.

Use:

- To distribute the disturbed vital force uniformly all over the body
- Extinguish the morbid vital force & replaces with the healthy vital force
- Treating old ulcers, amaurosis & paralysis of single organ

Negative Mesmerism:

Definition: Another method of Mesmerism characterized by the discharge of the Vital force which is excessively accumulated in individual parts of the system of undebilitated persons by negative pass.

Negative passes consists of making a very rapid motion of the extended flat hand from the top of the head to the tips of the toes, placing the hand parallel to and about an inch away from the body of the patient.

Use:

- In raising the somnambulists from sleep
- Counteracting the bad effects of positive mesmerism.
- Useful in discharging the unevenly accumulated vital energy in the body

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