Samuel Hahnemann’s theoretical work, *Organon of the Rational Art of Healing*, later to be called *Organon of the Healing Art*, was first published in 1810 and four successive editions were published during his lifetime, each edition expanded and altered. He completed a sixth edition of *Organon* by the end of his life, but this was not published up to 1921. It is in this important work that the major elements of the homeopathic method are explained in 294 numbered paragraphs; in this work Hahnemann first used the word homoeopathy. Throughout the *Organon*, he discusses the role of the ‘vital force’ in illness, health and cure, and outlines all the details of the homeopathic method; the need for an exact procedure of doing provings; the smallness of dosage and the preparation of remedies and their administration. Crucial to the *Organon* is the theory of the ‘dynamis’ in medicine and detailed information on the nature of the increase of strength by dilution, trituration and succussion of the remedies. Hahnemann observed and maintained that by this process (potentization or dynamization) each successive ‘potency’ increased its medicinal power. Thus, the therapeutic action of the medicinal substances increases with progressive dilution – considerably contrary to common ‘scientific’ thought – (due to “the development of the latent dynamic powers previously imperceptible and as if they were lying hidden asleep in them” as Hahnemann puts in §269 of the *Organon*.)

The vital force is a most important concept to understand in homeopathy. Hahnemann says of the vital force early in the *Organon*:
In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force, the dynamis that animates the material body, rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can fully employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purpose of existence… the material organization, without the vital force, is capable of no sensation, and performs all the functions of life solely by means of the immaterial being (the vital force) which animates the material organism in the health and in disease.¹

Thus the vital force is deranged by the morbific agents of the illness, and the morbidly affected vital force alone that produces diseases, so that the morbid phenomena perceptible to our senses express at the same time all the internal change, that is to say, the whole morbid derangement of the internal dynamis; in a word, they reveal the whole disease; consequently, also, the disappearance under treatment of all the morbid phenomena and all the morbid alterations that differ from the healthy vital operations, certainly affects and necessarily implies the restoration of the integrity of the vital force and therefore, the recovered health of the whole organism.²

However, Hahnemann points out that the disturbed vital force cannot overcome this disturbance by itself; rather, it needs the aid of the correctly chosen remedy to do so.

The vital force was given to us to sustain our life as long as we are healthy, not to heal itself when diseased…. when afflicted by disease agents, our vital force can express its untunement only through disturbances in the normal functions

² Ibid., § 22 footnote (a).
of the organism and through pain, whereby it calls for the help of a wise physician.³

He amplifies this further in later writings, to show the reaction of the vital force and its role in curative process:

By giving a remedy, which resembles the disease, the instinctive vital force is compelled to increase its vital energy until it becomes stronger than the disease, which, in turn, is vanquished.⁴

And as stated more fully in the *Organon*:

So in homeopathic cure this vital principle, which had been dynamically untuned by the natural disease, is taken over by a similar and somewhat stronger artificial disease, through the administration of a potentized medicine that has been accurately chosen for the similarity of its symptoms. Consequently the (weaker) natural dynamic disease is extinguished and disappears; for then on it no longer exists for the vital principle, which is controlled and occupied only by the stronger artificial disease; this in turn presently wanes, so that the patient is set free and cured. Thus delivered, the dynamis can again maintain the organism in health.⁵

We only require to know, on the one hand, the diseases of the human frame accurately in their essential characteristics, and their accidental complications, and on the other hand, the pure effects of drugs, that is, the essential characteristics of the specific artificial disease they usually excite, together with the accidental symptoms by difference of dose, form etc., and by choosing a remedy for a given natural disease that is capable of producing a very similar artificial disease we shall be able to cure the most obstinate diseases.⁶

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⁶ ibid., § 108
Thus, the principle of the ‘Law of Similars’ became the foundation of homeopathic practice from then onwards.

Hahnemann knew there was virtually no knowledge of the effects of the medicines on the healthy; he therefore carried out extensive series of ‘provings’. He put forward the idea that the most useful way to discover the full and exact curative powers of all medicines was to give them on healthy human beings. That’s the accurate meaning of proving.

As he was to state to his *Organon of Medicine*:

There is …no other possible way in which the peculiar effects of medicine on the health of individuals can be accurately ascertained. There is no sure, no more natural way of accomplishing this object, than to administer the several medicines experimentally, in moderate doses, to healthy persons, in order to ascertain what changes, symptoms, and signs of their influence each individually produces on the health of the body and of the mind.\(^7\)

While using and experimenting with appropriate medical agents Hahnemann observed that, if substantial amounts were administered according to the law of similars, severe aggravation of the symptoms occurred. Thus he reduced the dosage to smaller and smaller amounts, eventually formulating the methods of dilution, trituration and succussion to create the smallest and more active doses. Hahnemann introduced the principle of infinitesimal dose in 1799. He says of this process in *Organon*:

For its own special purpose and by its own special procedure, never tried before my time, homeopathy develops the inner, spirit-like medicinal powers of crude substance to a degree hitherto unheard of and makes all of them exceedingly, even immeasurably, penetrating, active, and effective, even those that in the crude state do not have the slightest medicinal effect on the human organism.

\(^7\) ibid., § 9
This remarkable transformation of the properties of natural bodies through the process of trituration and succussion on their tiniest particles (which are diffused in an inert dry or liquid substance) develops the latent dynamic powers previously imperceptible and as it were lying hidden asleep in them. These powers electively affect the vital principle of animal life. This process is called dynamization or potentization (development of medicinal power), and it creates what we call dynamization or potencies of different degrees.\(^8\)

What is important is that Homeopathy is a system of medicine that can approach disease in its totality, encompassing the mental, emotional and physical, as well as the spiritual aspects of each individual. Hahnemann put it so clearly in the *Organon*:

> All diseases are, in fact, diseases of the whole organism: no external malady … can arise, persist, or even grow worse without … the cooperation of the whole organism, which must consequently be in a diseased state. It could not make its appearance at all without the consent of the whole of the rest of health, and without the participation of the rest of the living whole (of the vital force that pervades all the other sensitive and irritable parts of the organism); indeed, it is impossible to conceive its production without the instrumentality of the organism connected together to form an invisible whole in sensations and functions.\(^9\)

Underlying this very clear concept is Hahnemann’s initial aim stated at the beginning of the *Organon*:

> The highest ideal of therapy is to restore health rapidly, gently, permanently; to remove and destroy the whole diasease in the shortest, surest, least harmful way, according to clearly comprehensible principles.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) ibid., § 269  
\(^9\) ibid., § 189  
\(^10\) ibid., § 2