

1 **The Enigma of Vital Force: Delving Deeper into a Long-Ignored Paradigm**

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13

14 **Abstract**

15 One of the primary questions and objections that have persisted since the inception of
16 homeopathy more than two centuries ago is the validity of the concept of the Vital Force
17 (VF). This fundamental principle of homeopathy has been consistently disregarded and
18 dismissed by conventional science as a fictitious idea lacking empirical support. Terms such
19 as VF, Life Force, Vital Energy, Living Power are fundamental to alternative healing
20 philosophies but remain unrecognized within the paradigm of contemporary physics and
21 medicine.

22 Nevertheless, scientific advance has progressed so that we are investigating subtle sub-atomic
23 energies. Despite our limited comprehension of their origin and purpose, it is indisputable
24 that we inhabit an intricate web of energies that connects us all. This web, potentially under

25 the aegis of a higher, governing force, sustains life beyond the realm of individual volition or
26 consciousness.

27 Our inability to comprehend the profound enigmas of existence constitutes a considerable
28 constraint, affecting both our understanding of reality and the fundamental principles of life
29 and health. Conventional medical paradigms must evolve as mankind approaches a new era
30 where the laws of the "material world" may be deemed subordinate to the principles
31 governing subtle energies.

32 Defining the nature and function of subtle energy is not merely an idle pursuit; it is an
33 imperative necessity for the survival and evolution of medicine.

34

35 **Keywords:** Homeopathy, biofield, vital force, vital energy

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39 **1. Introduction**

40 It must be stated at the outset that certain concepts discussed in this work, while significant
41 within specific belief systems, do not conform to the prevailing scientific understanding of
42 medicine or physics.

43 Since ancient times, the question of how life was created has boggled the best of minds. One
44 thing that all cultures evolved into thinking was that there is a supreme governing force that
45 commands life activities, and under which subordinate forces governing different aspects of
46 life operate. This idea was so mainstream that the physiology textbooks of the 18th century
47 had dedicated chapters on the 'Vital Powers'.¹ The qualities of the vital force were studied as
48 part of medical education. With the Cartesian thought dominating medicine, and medicine
49 being reduced to the idea that the whole is a sum of its components, this important aspect of

50 understanding life itself vanished from mainstream medicine. However, the holistic
51 approaches maintained this idea as central to understanding the human organism in health,
52 disease, and treatment. The Life force or Vital force (VF) has been known by many different
53 terms in different cultures, viz

54 *Chi*,²

55 *VF*,^{3,4}

56 *Essential Force*,⁵

57 *Primal Energy*,⁶

58 *Dynamic Essence*,⁷

59 *Vital Essence*,⁸

60 *Biofield*,^{4,9}

61 *Bioenergy*,¹⁰

62 *Bioplasmic Energy*,¹¹

63 *Cosmic Force*,¹²

64 *Universal Energy*,¹³

65 *Prana*,^{4,14}

66 While many attempts have been made to measure this energy and characterize it, much is yet
67 to be discovered. Hahnemann, the discoverer of homeopathy, placed this VF at the centre of
68 this medical system. He explained that it is the VF that governs the organism since its
69 conception, and it is the VF that leaves the organism at death. All activities in between these
70 two events are primarily affected through the agency of VF alone. Over the past century,
71 homeopathy has been dismissed by labelling its concept of a governing life force with
72 pejorative terms such as “occult-vitalistic,” implying that this concept is merely an illusory
73 construct.^{15,16}

74 This work attempts to bring back this idea to the forefront of medical thought in light of
75 recent discoveries.

76

77 **2. Energies operating in and around the Human Organism**

78 Before delving into the enigma of the Vital Force (VF), we may first examine the numerous
79 energies/forces that interplay and interconnect within and around the human body.^{9,17}

80 Science has discovered that the human body is an extraordinarily complex system involving
81 multiple interacting forces and mechanisms that control various functions, maintain
82 homeostasis, facilitate movement, regulate metabolism, and promote overall health. The
83 complex yet harmonious interaction of these forces is indispensable for the continuation of
84 normal life.^{9,18} These forces may be divided into fundamental forces and biomechanical
85 forces-

86 2.1 Fundamental forces: These are the four forces that physics recognizes as fundamental in
87 the universe, viz., gravitational, electromagnetic, and the strong and weak nuclear forces.

88 a. Gravitational force: Gravity shaped the way biology organized itself on Earth as the
89 only constant force exerted. Gravity-sensitive pathways influence genetics (cell
90 division, signal transduction, etc), biochemistry (metabolism), and functionality
91 (movement, posture, bone density, circulation) of the living organism.¹⁹⁻²¹

92 b. Electromagnetic force: The living tissue is electrically charged and uses the magnetic
93 field thus generated for various functions. Protein behaviour is regulated by
94 electromagnetic force in the living organism, too. There appears to be a close
95 relationship between the biofield and the biostructure, as they seem to change when
96 an organism transitions from a healthy to a pathological state.²² Heartbeat (detected
97 by electrocardiograms, ECG) and brain activity (monitored through
98 electroencephalograms, EEG) produce electromagnetic fields.^{23,24}

99 c. Nuclear forces: The strong and weak nuclear forces are operational in living beings,
100 just as they are in all matter. They hold the atomic nuclei together and are responsible
101 for chemical reactions.²⁵

102 2.2 Derived and Mechanical forces: These are the forces exerted or experienced by living
103 organisms during their interaction with the environment. These involve sensing the forces
104 and executing movement. The field of biomechanics deals with the mechanical principles
105 involved in the functioning and movement of our body on a macroscopic scale. Recently, a
106 whole new world of biomechanics at the nano-scale level has been discovered and
107 experimented with, leading to a deeper understanding of the function and motion at the micro
108 level.²⁶ The cells are equipped with a cytoskeleton that is capable of resisting the external
109 forces and producing them by itself, too.²⁷ Basically, they may be divided into internal forces
110 and external forces -

111 a. Internal forces: Include the electrical force that is responsible for the execution of all
112 movement in the living organism, through the attraction and repulsion of static
113 electrical charges. Muscular movement and neurological transmission are all
114 electrical in nature and account for most of the activity in a living organism.^{28,29} The
115 neurological transmission of electric charges helps us sense our environment and
116 move accordingly.^{30,31} It also controls many involuntary systems, such as blood
117 pressure, by sensing the environment.

118 Static forces are also internal forces, including hydrostatic and osmotic pressure,
119 which help regulate the movement of fluids within the body.^{32,33}

120 Intermolecular forces are weak internal forces, but they are essential for the molecular
121 structure and function. Hydrogen bonds, van der Waals forces, and ion-dipole
122 interactions are examples of the forces operating in processes such as protein folding,
123 DNA structure and replication, and enzymatic activity.³⁴

124 Intramolecular forces are the strong bonds between molecules that are necessary to
125 hold atoms together. These consist of covalent, ionic, and metallic bonds. The
126 structural integrity of DNA is maintained by the covalent bonds, and protein structure
127 is maintained by disulphide and covalent bonds.³⁴

128 b. External forces: Frictional Forces exerted externally on the body influence the motion
129 and functional interactions within the cardiovascular system (e.g., blood flow), joints,
130 and the gastrointestinal tract.³⁵⁻³⁷ Friction impedes joint movement, which is
131 compensated for by the body with the synovial fluid in the joints.³⁷ The same goes for
132 all internal organs that are in a constant state of motion. Externally applied forces,
133 such as being pushed, also influence the human body. Similarly, air resistance makes
134 it difficult to move.³⁸

135

136 Delving deeper into the realm of particle physics, we find that forces are mediated by specific
137 subatomic particles known as “force carriers” or “gauge bosons.” These particles are
138 indispensable for the interactions that orchestrate the behaviour of all matter and energy.
139 They are integral to the Standard Model of particle physics, the theoretical framework that
140 elucidates the electromagnetic, weak, and strong nuclear forces.^{39,40} However, it appears
141 naive to believe that the discoveries of the fundamental particles of the Standard Model are
142 confined solely to those that have already been discovered. Future investigations may unravel
143 additional levels of existence for subatomic particles, potentially offering insights into the
144 nature of the fundamental life force.

145 Beyond their significance in the quantum realm, the interactions mediated by these forces are
146 essential in biological systems. They govern the interactions between atoms and molecules,
147 ultimately determining the structural and functional properties of all biological matter.^{3,40,41}

148 The existence of life would be impossible without these forces.

149

150 **3. The Homeopathic Perspective: The VF as a Unifying Principle**

151 Homeopathy posits that all these fundamental forces are parts of a greater, dominating force
152 that supervises and regulates them—referred to here as the VF. This concept suggests that
153 beyond the well-documented physical interactions, an organizing principle governs life,
154 influencing health, disease, and healing processes. The deeper understanding of the role of
155 the VF in these processes forms the basis of the homeopathic therapeutic approach.^{3,42}

156

157 **4. The Enigma of the VF**

158 Understanding how basic chemical components organize themselves into complex structures
159 capable of sustaining life remains a key scientific pursuit to date. This process entails the
160 aggregation of atoms into molecules, which subsequently form cells – the fundamental units
161 of life.⁴³ Atoms, molecules, and cells collectively embody the profound and elusive essence
162 of life. Whether this essence is solely a consequence of physical interactions or is influenced
163 by a deeper, unifying force remains an unresolved question that continues to challenge the
164 limits of scientific comprehension. Understanding the nature of VF may provide insights into
165 many questions about the origin of life and disease.

166

167 The harmonious interaction of the fundamental forces is essential for maintaining the body's
168 health and is influenced by factors such as genetics, environment, and lifestyle. But, after
169 discovering that so many small particles and forces interact within the physical body, a
170 fundamental question arises: *“Is it possible that all these forces work independently without a*
171 *primary force to synchronize and regulate their actions?” “Is it conceivable that there is a*
172 *force that is the master of all these forces, a force that is the most significant but has been*

173 *largely disregarded by science and medicine thus far?” and if such a force exists, what are its*
174 *main qualities and functions?*

175 *If the **Life Force** is understood as the central force unifying all other forces, many enigmas*
176 *concerning life may potentially be explained.*

177 This is not a mysterious or obscure force. It is the most common, the most familiar, the most
178 obvious, and the most important of them all. It encompasses all other forces, carefully
179 supervises them, and regulates their interactions. We may say that this is the subtle energy
180 that has been recognized by the homeopaths for over two centuries as the VF, the one that
181 sustains our existence.

182 *The question is: What do we know about the origin and functions of VF?*

183 Practically nothing from a scientific point of view because it has largely been ignored or
184 scarcely investigated in scientific research, let alone in medical practices.^{16,44} Nevertheless,
185 complementary and alternative medicine modalities, particularly homeopathy and
186 acupuncture, have recognized its significance and unique attributes, utilizing it in therapeutic
187 practices.^{4,45,46} These integrative models of health and medicine digress from the
188 conventional reductionistic view and acknowledge that the whole is more than the sum of its
189 parts, and there can be emergent phenomena that cannot be related to the behaviour of its
190 parts.⁴

191 4.1 Origin of the VF

192 The concept of “life force” originated from diverse philosophical perspectives, positing an
193 energy or force that animates living organisms and differentiates them from non-living
194 matter. This vital force is conceptually described as an electromagnetic counterpart to the
195 physical body. The concept of a ‘subtle body’ and an all-pervading “Prana” or life force has
196 been around since the Vedic times in Indian tradition and has similar perspectives in the
197 Tibetan (rlung, La), Chinese (Chi), and Greek (pneuma, anima mundi) perspectives as

198 well.^{4,11} It seems strange to doubt its existence when the universal phenomenon of life is
199 intuitively evident to all cultures of the world.

200

201 4.2 Nature and Function of VF

202 The VF is enormously complex, yet it operates in an exceptionally ordered way with
203 remarkable intellect and great sensitivity. It is through this primary force that all other forces
204 draw energy.^{11,41} Therefore, it is evident that this force connects the individual with the
205 cosmic energy that supports the existence of all living creatures or entities.^{9,41,42} Below are
206 some key characteristics attributed to this force:

207 1. Intangible and Non-Physical

208 The VF exists as an energy that animates life. It cannot be detected through conventional
209 scientific methods and is generally perceived as an immaterial, immeasurable essence.^{5,8,46}

210 2. Dynamic and Self-Regulating

211 This force is believed to be in a constant electromagnetic flux, adapting and self-regulating
212 in response to both internal and external conditions. This adaptability enables the organism to
213 maintain a state of dynamic homeostasis.^{3,4,42}

214 3. Life-Sustaining and Essential for Health

215 The VF sustains life and promotes vitality. While this force's optimal flow denotes health
216 and harmony, illness or disease is frequently viewed as a disruption or imbalance of it.⁴⁷

217 4. Healing and Restorative Power

218 The VF is said to have inherent healing capabilities (the healing power of nature). When an
219 organism is imbalanced or diseased, this force drives the entire constitution towards recovery
220 and restoration.^{5,14}

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224 5. Subject to External Influence

225 External factors such as lifestyle, diet, environment, and mental-emotional states affect the
226 flow or strength of the VF. ⁴⁶

227 6. Unique and Individualized

228 The VF is considered a uniquely expressed attribute in each individual, varying in its
229 strength, resilience, and responsiveness. This idea underpins holistic approaches in systems
230 like homeopathy, acupuncture, and ayurveda, where treatment strategies are individualized to
231 address each patient's particular VF dynamics. ^{45,48}

232 7. Integrative and Holistic

233 The concept of VF encompasses physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions and
234 approaches health holistically. ^{42,47}

235 It can be asserted that the state of VF is the determining factor in all aspects of health and
236 disease.

237

238 **5. Hahnemann on VF**

239 Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, was of the opinion that VF is the force that
240 resides within all atoms of the body and is the central energy that promotes and maintains
241 life. It responds to the minutest mental, emotional, or physical stimulations, and consequently
242 to all pathogenic influences or disease-causing conditions, endeavouring to re-establish order
243 and harmony within the whole organism. ^{3,41}

244 According to him, derangement or disturbance of the VF is the underlying cause of all
245 ailments. ^{3,41,42} He taught that the potentized homeopathic remedy acts on this level of
246 bioenergy, thereby restoring order and promoting health. ^{3,49}

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249 **6. The Neglect of VF by Conventional Medicine**

250 In 1932, a professor at Yale Medical School, Harold Saxton Burr, conducted experiments
251 leading to the discovery of the existence of individual energy fields encompassing every
252 living organism. He called them *Life Fields*. His student Leonard Ravitz further elaborated
253 these experiments and recorded the influence of moon phases and that of the individual's
254 thoughts and emotions on these Life Fields. He could even detect variations in the
255 electromagnetic signals from the genital tract before the clinical onset of cancer in females.⁵⁰
256 These findings were in line with Hahnemann's work. By disregarding the existence of the
257 VF, conventional medicine has neglected the very core of life that could have aided it greatly,
258 for the benefit of mankind. Further, the exclusion of holistic approaches on presumed
259 grounds of being unscientific leaves millions of individuals suffering from acute or chronic
260 diseases without the opportunity for true relief. Admittedly, this subject is so nuanced that it
261 is vulnerable to exploitation and misrepresentation, but the responsibility for rectifying this
262 situation falls on the authorities concerned.

263 An official recognition of the existence of VF holds the potential to establish novel guidelines
264 for an orderly approach within medical practice. Its timely recognition is also crucial in
265 paving the way for a fundamentally reformed system of medical education. Such an embrace
266 promises to foster sound physical and psychological well-being, in contrast to the focus on
267 'fixing symptoms' approaches that are prevalent currently.

268 Furthermore, a comprehensive study of the homeopathic approach may yield valuable
269 insights for diverse scientific disciplines, including biochemistry, physics, and quantum
270 physics, by offering an alternative perspective for comprehending the underlying mechanisms
271 of health and disease.

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273

274 **7. Conclusion**

275 To conclude, we may say that the **VF** is a key governing principle that orchestrates bodily
276 functions, maintains equilibrium, and preserves health through environmental adaptation.

277 Despite the acknowledged complexity of life's origins and the multitude of forces involved,
278 the scientific community has surprisingly not prioritized the study of this concept, often
279 disregarding its importance.

280 If the scientific community cannot empirically validate the seemingly evident existence of
281 this life force, then collective human experience warrants consideration as compelling
282 evidence.

283

284 **Author contributions**

285 **George Vithoulkas:** Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Project Administration, Resources,
286 Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

287 **Seema Mahesh:** Data curation, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Visualization,
288 Writing – original draft, review, and editing.

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