

HEALTH, THE GREATEST GIFT



Sunday study at the United Lodge of Theosophists UK, 28th February 2021

Health is the greatest of gifts; contentment is the greatest wealth; trust is the best of relationships; Nirvana is the highest happiness.

Hunger is the worst of diseases, personal existence the worst of sufferings. To him who has known this truly, Nirvana is truly the highest bliss.

The Dhammapada, Ch15 Happiness v.7&8, plus footnotes 203 &204

“Hunger” and likewise “health” in these verses refer not only to the physical body, but to psychic and mental hunger and health also.

True science and medicine is not a science of illness, but of health.

Hippocrates, the ancient Greek “Father of Medicine”, believed that the body must be treated as a whole, and not just a series of parts.

The Tao is the way of Nature – we are Nature, the natural order of growth and harmony – the Way of the Universe.

“Experience alone will scatter the clouds, and shed light on this important truth: that nature affords a universal means of healing and preserving men.”

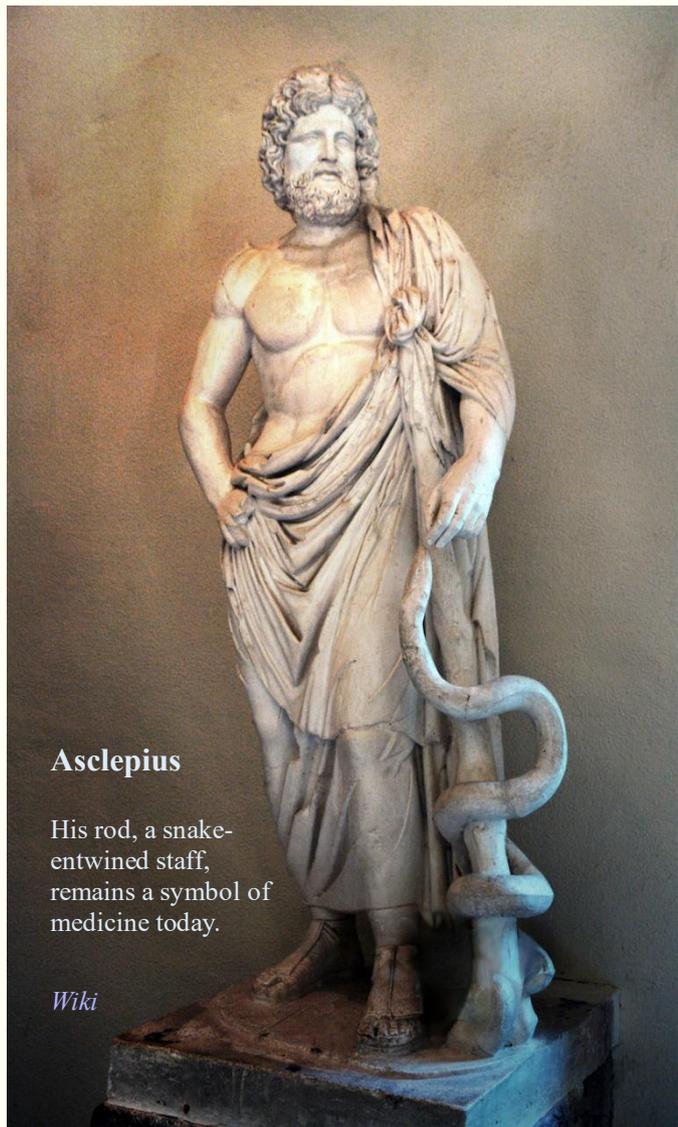
Anton Mesmer, from his book, *A History of the Discovery of Animal Magnetism*. 1779

“If we wish to restore health, we should be able to use the virtues contained in all the four elements of the celestial and terrestrial realm. Man's organism is composed of many parts; if one part is diseased, all the other parts suffer, and one disease may be the death of the whole.”

“Man has in him the whole firmament, the upper and lower spheres; if his organism is sick it calls for help to heaven and to the earth. As the soul must fight against the devil with all her strength, and call God to her aid with her whole heart, her whole mind, and all her powers; so the diseased physical organism calls to its aid all the celestial and terrestrial powers with which it has been invested by God to resist the cruel and bitter death.”

Paramirum or the Book of the Causes & Beginnings of Diseases, i. 2, by Paracelsus

There is only one universal and eternal cause of everything, which is God, and if we were to write in a true Christian spirit, we should not make any divisions; but for the sake of helping our finite understanding, which is not able to grasp the power of the Infinite, we are forced to accept the theory of a variety of causes, hoping thereby to sharpen our intellect for the comprehension of finite things, until by the illumination of Divine Wisdom we shall become able to behold with the eye of Faith the eternal Unity of the All.



Asclepius

His rod, a snake-entwined staff, remains a symbol of medicine today.

Wiki

We have therefore divided the cause of all diseases into five classes, which are as follows: – Ens Astrale, Ens Venenale, Ens Naturale, Ens Spirituale, and Ens Deale;[1] but the latter is the fundamental cause of everything that exists.

[1] This means: astral causes or origins, causes from poisons or impurities, causes that spring from morbid conditions in the body, spiritual causes, and such as come through the action of the moral law (Karma).

Ibid

If man were in possession of the perfect knowledge of self, he would not need to be sick at all.

Paracelsus

[All] the teachings of Theosophy are directed to the “healing of the nations” – are for those sick of the Spirit and of the Soul, from which proceed all our mental, moral, and physical well- or ill-being.

The psychological afflictions of the race are the inevitable outcome of the misuse of psycho-physiological powers in former times in previous incarnations. Present-day psychiatrists, who admittedly have only “descriptive knowledge,” know little of the dangers in their methods and experimentations. The “mental healers” who mask by a glamour of mystic jargon and alluring promises their ignorance of the human body and its normal processes invade a field about which still less is known—the psychic nature. Serious organic disorders are often overlooked in these methods, particularly with diseases in their incipiency, which may be driven inward by “mental healing.” The few real healers who have natural mesmeric powers are such despite, not because of, what they may have read in books. In Occultism, the *sine qua non* of the healing art is perfect personal health and moral purity, and altruism unmodified by self-interest of any kind. Where are there healers of this kind in the world today?

This is not to deny the good done by those doctors whose methods are aids to the body’s natural course of recovery. Each of the schools of medicine has made constructive contributions within the limits of its legitimate field. There are benefits to be derived from the intelligent use of drugs and herbs, from sensible dietetics (the maligned food faddists, in spite of extremist tendencies, have aroused a much needed attention to diet on the part of both the profession and the public), and from the various forms of manipulative therapeutics. The wise physician finds some good in every natural method. Like Paracelsus, he is a true eclectic. Each school of medical thought should recognize that whatever knowledge it may possess is but a fragment, and that all of them together offer only palliative measures in treating the physical body for ills **which have their fundamental causes on the moral and psychic planes.**

The Laws of Healing Physical & Metaphysical p4

SOME STATEMENTS BY H. P. BLAVATSKY

Of recent years there has been noticeable a strong infiltration of psychological applications into allopathic medicine. The methods of many physicians are a mixture of orthodox allopathy, osteopathy, and psychological suggestion, the latter tending to encompass a wider and wider field. The “faith healing” of the “cultists” is distinguishable from some of the practices of orthodox medical men only in the use of different “fetishes” or objects or ideas of suggestion. Medicine is

literally being driven along this course by the increasing cases of diseases the causes of which are purely psychological, and which therefore can be effectively treated only from that basis. Many doctors testify to the actuality of the Lourdes “miracles.” In that case the “fetish” is the environment of a noted grotto. In others it is the hypnotic suggestion of the “healer’s” office surroundings. In still others it is the glitter of the surgeon’s instruments or the awe-inspiring “professional atmosphere.” In some it is the “faith” inspired by a coated bread pill. In all these instances the principle is exactly the same – Suggestion.”

H. P. Blavatsky wrote with clear-seeing frankness on the dangers inherent in the rapid rise and spread of all those forms of psychological treatment of disease which, disguised under many high-sounding names, are in fact disastrous experiments in Hypnotism and Mesmerism—the more insidious because of the apparent results achieved. Whether orthodox or unorthodox, whether physical or psychological, any system of purported Healing which makes the patient more and more dependent on the Healer and his ministrations, less and less reliant on Nature and himself, must of necessity be dangerous—must lead away from a sound mind in a sound body.

For the orthodox practitioner of medicine, she wrote:

“If magnetism were true, medicine would be an absurdity.” Magnetism is true! An intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies, a familiarity with their effects in and upon the animal kingdom and man, is especially necessary. There are occult properties in minerals and plants of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant. Our purest water would be found to yield, instead of its two declared simple elements of oxygen and hydrogen, many other constituents, undreamed of by our terrestrial modern chemistry. He who would allotropise sluggish oxygen into Ozone, reducing it to its pure essence (for which there are means) would discover thereby a substitute for an “Elixir of Life” and prepare it for practical use.

Nor was she less direct and clear-speaking on the nature of the Power invoked by the psychological as well as the physical practitioners and experimenters in Healing. She wrote:

One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will. The adept can stimulate the movements of the natural forces in plants and animals in a preternatural degree. Such experiments are not obstructions of nature, but quickenings; the conditions of intenser vital action are given. Thousands of years ago the initiated priests, spoken of as the “magicians and exorcists of sickness,” healed diseases by magnetic processes. Animal magnetism (now called Suggestion and Hypnotism) was the principal agent in the healing temples of Aesculapius, where the patients were treated magnetically, during their sleep. This creative and life-giving force (once called theurgic magic) is now called Hypnotism, Suggestion, or “psychology”. Instead of healing diseases – the only legitimate use of this power – they often inoculate subjects with their own physical as well as mental ills and vices. This is as bad on the moral plane as the artificial introduction of animal matter into the human blood is on the physical plane. New forms of diseases, mental and physical, can be transmitted through this abuse of psychic will!

'Imagination' is a potent help in every event of our lives. Imagination acts on 'Faith', and both are the draughtsmen who prepare the sketches for 'Will' to engrave. This is all the secret. Half, if not two-thirds of our ailments and diseases are the fruit of our imagination and fears. Destroy the latter and give another bent to the former, and nature will do the rest.

from *The Laws of Healing Physical & Metaphysical* pp 6-8

The origin of diseases is in man, and not outside of man, but outside influences act upon the inside and cause diseases to grow. There is no disease in the elements but the disease starts from the centres..... A physician who knows nothing about Cosmology will know little about disease. He should know what exists in heaven and upon the earth, what lives in the four elements and how they act upon man; [in fact] he should know what Man is, his origin and his constitution; he should know the whole man, and not merely his external body. If man were in possession of a perfect knowledge of self, he would not need to be sick at all.

Paracelsus, from *The Great Theosophists* (a TM series)

To minds engaged with universal ideas, such as the self of all creatures, the Divine Law of Justice, the evolution of all grades of beings, the great cycles of men and planets and universes -ideas of healing these temporary bodies appear very, very small. For what does healing mean? Getting rid of the effects which we ourselves have produced, consciously or unconsciously. What does a diseased body mean but that we have ignored our own natures and acted as though we were [only] bodies, and broken every law of hygiene that we know of? If we lived according to the Laws of Hygiene as we know them, these diseases would not be upon us.

from the article *Mental Healing and Hypnosis*

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MICROBES

Microbes are part of the inner milieu of the organism; microbes assist the metabolic processes of the body. Microbes only become pathogenic, when the organism is out of balance.

Antoine Bechamp (1816-1908) – renowned French scientist & chemist

Le microbe n'est rien, le terrain c'est tout.

The microbe is nothing, but the [internal] terrain is everything.

Claude Bernard (1813-1878) – renowned French scientist & physiologist

No theosophist should deny that science is right in saying that microbes produce disease and also prevent it. For it is an old theosophical, and once secret, doctrine that the microbes –then called lives – are divided into two classes, one called builders and the other, destroyers. These, it was held, warred with each other, and whichever side won, the result was disease and death, or health and life. This, too, the old theosophists held, was the cause of man's term of life. For if the builders won all the time up to maturity, they again divided themselves into two classes and, beginning to devour each other, at last brought about the death of the body at about 70 years of age. The theosophists also assert that this microbe theory obtains in the mental and moral spheres, and that epidemics of a moral character may break out among men, causing sudden changes of character in persons who

before that were very discreet. The French Revolution, in which rivers of blood ran, was brought to its awful pitch by the sudden increase of *mental microbes*, which produce moral disease sweeping over vast numbers of men.

W.Q.Judge on 'Microbe Theory' 1892

Mental epidemics also exist that produce effects such as diseases, individually and collectively. There are also 'moral epidemics', e.g. materialism, communism, atheism, and nihilism, which have been described as mental/moral diseases. If there were not already some weakness, something lacking in the [human] system, these epidemics could not have spread so far.

from *Man the Bridge Between Two Worlds* by Franz E. Winkler

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO EPIDEMICS

As theosophical students, we have to consider the various fields in which effects are observed and experienced. These fields are, the body and its circumstances; the mind and intellect; the psychic and astral planes. The medical schools do not treat diseases from any other point of view than the physical one, generally speaking, and thus can apply only alleviative remedies at best, without destroying causes. The schools of mental healing ignore the bodily field, and place their reliance on prescribed modes of thinking, taking it for granted that the mental plane is the seat of causation.

So far, none of the many schools has realized that Man is not his body, his mind nor his circumstances, but the Thinker within, who by his ignorance and desires is the cause of all the sorrow and suffering and disease which he experiences. Each one therefore suffers in any event from causes set in motion by himself, as well, as from causes which he in common with others have set in motion. All this is under the Law of Karma, or "sowing and reaping." The Thinker, or real man, is the experiencer of the various effects produced, whether these be psychical, mental or physical.

Theosophy shows that there is a state of subtle substance that surrounds our earth, as it does every other, an envelope as it were, which is the receiver and container of the moral and physical emanations of the earth and its inhabitants; these are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics—moral, psychic and physical. Persons subject to epidemics, or any disease, are the very people who had a hand in producing them, either in this or a previous life.

Considering these facts, it would hardly be correct to assume that fear in itself is a predisposing cause. I think it will be found that many who fear and many who have no fear at all are overtaken by epidemics. Fear arises from doubt and ignorance, and it may be that those who fear disease or epidemic have a psychic perception of their liability under the law. Again, those who have no fear at all place their reliance entirely upon their supposed bodily immunity; yet the law works regardless of fear, or the lack of it.

Another angle to the question lies in the fact that every human being contains in germ every defect that exists anywhere in the race, any one of which may spring into activity under favourable conditions; in this the imagination or image-making power of the Thinker may at any given time fertilize a germ that otherwise would remain latent. When we study the question from every point of view, we will not be disposed to place our reliance on phrases, but rather upon the inexorable law of our own being, which, however we may presently think, desire or feel, will bring us weal or woe as we have earned them. Thus relying we really fear nothing, but accept what comes as our just deserts.

Those, who on the pretext of living more intensely or agreeably fail to respect the laws of physical life become ill and die. Excessive smoking, drinking, drug taking, over-eating and general over-indulgence or excess in anything go against the virtue of moderation [and balance], and become self-destructive. You must decide which form of life you prefer.

Hence the great sages have always said we have to let the Karmic effects roll on while we set new and better causes in motion, and that even the perfect sage has to endure in his bodily frame that which belongs to it through Karma. The inner anatomical structure should also be known. The ethereal body has its own currents—nerves, for want of a better word, changes and method of growth and action, just as the gross body has. It is, in fact, the real body, for it seldom alters throughout life, while the physical counterpart changes every moment, its atoms going and coming upon the matrix or model furnished by the ethereal body. The inner currents emanate from their own centres and are constantly in motion. They are affected by thoughts and the reflection of the body in its physiological changes. They each act upon the other incessantly, (every centre of the inner body has its appropriate correspondent in the physical one, which it affects and through which it is in turn acted upon). It is by means of these subtle currents called 'vital airs' when translated from the Sanskrit—that impressions are conveyed to the mind above, and through them also are the extraordinary feats of the seance room and the Indian Yogi accomplished. And just as one may injure his body by ignorantly using drugs or physical practices, so can the finer currents and nerves of the inner man be thrown out of adjustment if one in pride or ignorance attempts, uninstructed, to deal with them. The seeds of disease being located primarily in the mind, they begin to exhaust themselves through the agency of the inner currents that carry the appropriate vibrations down upon the physical plane. If left to themselves—aside from palliations and aids in throwing off—they pass out into the great crucible of nature and one is free from them forever. Therefore pain is said to be a kind friend who relieves the real man of a load of sin. (...) The world could get along with what disease there is, if it only turned attention to high ethics and altruistic endeavour. For after a few centuries of right living the nations would have purged themselves and built up a right moral 'building', well founded on the 'rocks' of true philosophy, charity, and love.”

WQJ Article *Replanting of Diseases* from pamphlet no 22 *Questions of Health* pp18 & 20

EXTRACTS FROM “*THEOSOPHIC DIET*” by W. Q. JUDGE

“What, then, is the true theosophic diet? It is that which best agrees with you, taken in moderation, neither too much nor too little. If your constitution and temperament will permit vegetarianism, then that will give less heat to the blood; and, if it is practiced from the sincere conviction that it is not true brotherhood to destroy living creatures so highly organized as animals, then so much the better. But if you refrain from meat in order to develop your psychic powers and senses, and continue the same sort of thoughts you have always had, neither cultivating nor practising the highest altruism, the vegetarianism is in vain. **The inner nature has a diet out of our thoughts and motives.** If those are low or gross or selfish, it is equivalent to feeding that nature upon gross food. True theosophic diet is therefore not of either meat or wine; it is unselfish thoughts and deeds, untiring devotion to the welfare of “the great orphan Humanity,” absolute abnegation of self, unutterable aspiration to the Divine—the Supreme Soul. This only is what we can grow upon. And vain are the hopes of those who pin their faith on any other doctrine.”

SOME LAST IDEAS...

“*You are what you eat!*” – an old proverb

“*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!*” – an old proverb

“A transgression of moral law is necessarily a transgression of physiological law as well.”

Disease means primarily either too much or too little in some department of our being—over-eating or undernourishment of some of our principles. Unbalanced diet for an ascetic will be as deadly as gluttony or epicureanism for the gross or gourmand. Every man is his own physician in the last resort – and his own assassin and undertaker! *Physician, heal thyself!* Diet, fasting, purgation, rest, exercise! The virtues are medicines; self-sacrifice is a purgation, calmness a prescription, patience a sovereign remedy, altruism the Great Physician. The mind and moral nature thus fed, and exercised, natural physical means will restore the body. As with blood transfusion, the introduction of foreign matter into the system could have possible negative effects. The body is constructed and held together by virtue of the affiliations of its central entity with the biological forms of matter in all their various stages. It has its own barriers against harmful substances taken in through the mouth. There is also a natural resistance to infections from wounds... but there is no protection against material injected into the body; still less when introduced directly into the bloodstream.... Theosophists have no desire that vaccination be prohibited... There is however no valid reason for making it compulsory..... In view of the highly questionable merits of immunisation, and the admittedly unknown hazards of the practice, Theosophists hold that the only just course for legislatures is to establish unequivocally the right of self-determination.

The Laws of Healing Physical & Metaphysical, (Immunisation) p. 23 & 29