Healing and the Nature of Man

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts." *Buddha*

I. The art of healing is the most important and the most necessary of all arts, for upon its success that of all others largely depends. All the evils which befall mankind may be looked upon as diseases - of states, of nations, of communities, and of individuals. But the healing of nations depends ultimately upon the healing of the individual men and women who compose them, for no organism can be truly healthy if a part of it is diseased. The art of healing, therefore, must begin by restoring the individual to health before the greater task of healing collective mankind can be attempted.

True healing is not merely the restoring to health and efficiency of the organs of the physical body, for man is not only a corporeal being: he has a subjective and inner as well as an objective and outer nature. The art of healing, if it is to be complete, must embrace both these, and must give due measure to the healing of each. But the outer nature depends upon the inner, for the mind or the soul expresses itself through the body and is, therefore, superior to it. Moreover, the body depends for its life upon the immaterial principle or soul. If this principle subsists before its entrance into the physical organism at birth, it must also persist after that organism has dissolved and must therefore be immortal, being only dependent upon the body as a means for contacting the external world and manifesting its powers.

II. The Purpose of Healing, therefore, is to restore and preserve the harmony which should exist between the corporeal and incorporeal natures of man by bringing each nature into the state in which it can function normally. Disease, whether mental or physical, is not a positive thing, for although it may appear to have an active principle of its own, its origin can always be traced to a lack of harmony between the various constituents of a body or the energies which act upon and through them. Such a lack of harmony enables one set of forces to become unduly active at the expense of others, so that a lack of balance and the state known as 'disease' results. The purpose of the healer is to restore and preserve the harmony and balance which have been lost, by quieting that which is too active and stimulating that which is too lethargic.

III. The process by which this harmony is restored depends upon a complete knowledge of the nature of man and the relations of his various principles to each other. Man is fundamentally threefold, for he is composed of body, soul and Spirit. The art of healing, in order to be fully effective, must take into account all these three principles and the manner in which they affect each other.

The body is man's most obvious possession and that which usually receives most attention in the practice of the healing art. But the healing of the body can never be entirely satisfactory unless the relations of the body to the soul are taken into account. Since the body depends on the soul, its condition, however frequently restored to health and harmony by physical remedies, will always be liable to relapse if the soul itself is in an unhealthy condition, for there is a perpetual reaction between body and soul. Diseased conditions of soul consciousness impair the harmony of the bodily functions more than the most rigorous hardships.

The faculties or modes of activity of the soul are primarily three: emotional, volitional and mental (or intellectual). Of these the third alone can, in the strict sense, become diseased, for the health of the soul depends upon the state of its consciousness.

Although the inhibition of desires or the frustration of purposes (representing the emotional and volitional functions of the soul) may cause unhealthy states of consciousness, these may be removed through the action of the mind. The healing of the soul, therefore, depends upon the

training or direction of the mind in such a way that morbid and brooding states become impossible. The right release of all energies and the right use of all faculties are only possible when all are consciously controlled and directed by the mind, so that the first necessity of health is, according to the proverb, *mens sana in corpore sano.*

The Spirit as such does not need to be healed, for it is completely immune from and unaffected by all the diseases of the body and the inharmonies of the soul. Although the term "spiritual healing" has been misused it has nevertheless its legitimate place in the art as a whole, for it is through the Spirit that the other two principles, soul and body, are ultimately restored to perfect harmony and health. The principle of spiritual healing is therefore that of deliberately turning the whole nature to the Divine, so that it may receive life and health and strength from the Source itself.

Therefore, the art of healing may be described as that of restoring the harmony of the body by natural means, the restoring of health to the soul by the right direction and control of all energies by means of a properly trained mind, and the opening of the whole nature to receive Divine Health through the principle of Spirit.

IV. The criterion of the art of healing is its integrality, upon which will depend the permanence of its effects. A cure which is merely temporary is not a true cure, nor is the restoration of the harmony of the physical nature of much avail if the subjective causes which have given rise to the disease are left untouched. The real healer is one who can penetrate to the root causes of disease and by eliminating them make any recurrence impossible.

The harmony between the body, soul, and Spirit of man, when once thoroughly established, cannot be impaired or lost, even though the physical body is laid aside when it has served its purpose, for if this were possible there could be no such thing as integral healing: all that would be within man's power would be the temporary alleviation of suffering. Whereas when the art of healing is applied to its fullest extent the cure effected may be real and lasting.

The art of healing does not depend, however, merely upon mechanical processes or the application of set formulae. Although knowledge is the foundation of the healing art, its perfection, like that of all other arts, depends upon inspiration, or that mysterious something which may enter into all human activities and carry them a stage further than would be possible by the unaided human faculties.

By applying the fundamental principles upon which all true health must ultimately depend, the healer is able to effect a real and permanent cure. The work of the healer becomes more and more sure as he approaches ever nearer to the One Source of Health – the Fountain of Healing Itself.

Quotations:

"The presence of the Gods imparts to us health of body, virtue of Soul, purity of intellect, and in one word, elevates everything in us to its proper principle." *Proclus*

"The ancient philosophers were induced to assert the soul's immortality, together with its incorporeality or distinctness from body. No substantial entity ever vanisheth of itself into nothing. But the soul is a substantial entity, really distinct from the body, and not the mere modification of it; and therefore when a man dies, his soul must still have being...That soul and life that is now fled and gone from a lifeless carcass, is only a loss to that particular body or compages of matter, which by means thereof is now disanimated; but it is no loss to the whole, it being transposed in the universe, and lodged somewhere else. "

Ralph Cudworth

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