

The Psychological Nature of Diseases

Causes of Diseases

The psychological nature of diseases can be explained as being the lack of life, either because of insufficient matter in the body or because of excess of matter that leaves no scope for the spirit. It is also the impression of pain that the mind holds. Pain is not always physical. There are physical causes; but as soon as the mind knows of discomfort, out of fear it holds it. This is called pain. Disease is often caused by lack of rhythm, be it in thought or feeling, in the breath, in action, or in one's everyday life. For instance, to stay up in the night when one is accustomed to sleep, to change the dinner-hour, to take a nap when one is not accustomed to, to do anything that one is not accustomed to do, puts one out of rhythm. People who are accustomed to be angry or to quarrel would become ill if they were not allowed to do that. There is a story told in India that a person who could not keep any secret was compelled to keep quiet; in the end, he became ill, and the doctor had to cure him by permitting him to tell the secret. All this signifies rhythm; every habit forms a rhythm.

The fear of catching a disease is also a cause of illness. There are people who wonder if they are ill, and try to find out if there is something wrong with them. Some enjoy self-pity or the sympathy of others. These invite disease. Some entertain disease when they are to a certain extent unwell. They wish to be treated like a patient, or try to take to a lazy life. By so doing, the mind naturally holds the disease longer, since it is allowed to do so.

There are many other causes of illness. Among them, the most unfortunate is the impression: "I have got an illness that can never be cured," for this impression is worse than a disease. In reality, the soul of every individual, whether healthy or ill, is pure from any pain or disease. The soul constantly heals mind and body; if it were not for the mind and body creating its own illness, a person would always be well. It is natural to be healthy. All illness, pain, and discomfort are unnatural.

Magnetic Power

The health of both mind and body depends upon a magnetic power that may be called in metaphysical terms the power of affinity in elements and in atoms. It may be pictured as scattered grains of rice united by being attracted to one another. This power attracted them and shaped them into a certain form. Both mind and body are made of atoms. The former of mental atoms, the latter of physical atoms. The power that gathered them and made them into one body or one mind is the magnetic power.

Lack of this power causes all pain, discomfort, and disease, while development of this power secures health of body and mind. By physical practices, this power is developed in the body, and by mental exercises, the same power is improved in the mind. It is generally found that the ill lose their magnetism to a certain extent. A healthy person often seeks to escape from the presence of the sick. This is natural, because it is person's magnetism to which humanity is attracted. Its lack causes repulsion. This also explains the reason for the attraction of youth and childhood, although in childhood this magnetism is not fully developed. The lack of this is felt in age for the same reason.

In Sufi terms, this magnetism is called *Quwwat-i-Maknatis*. It springs from every atom, physical or mental. It may be called strength or energy. It is a wealth. Just as one person can enjoy wealth for a longer time if he is careful with it, and another may spend it thoughtlessly following his fancies, so does a man do with this magnetism. Either he attracts others or he is attracted to others. In one case, he is better off, in the other case he loses. Man, of whatever evolution, whatever disposition, in whatever condition of Life, needs this magnetism more than anything else; for health, which is the greatest of all gifts in life, depends greatly on magnetism.

Breathing

In Sanskrit, breath is called *Prana*, which means life. This *prana* not only gives life to oneself but it gives life to another person too. Sometimes the presence of someone fills you with life, and sometimes the presence of another so to speak takes away your life from you. One feels tired, depressed, and eaten up by the presence of one person, while another person's presence gives added strength, life, and vigor. This is all accounted for by the breath. The one who has more life gives life, while the one who has less life takes it from the one who has more. However, there is a contrary process too. Sometimes the stronger one takes away what little life is left in the weaker one, and sometimes the weaker one gives out his life to the stronger one. A person who takes away life in fact absorbs the life from another. In the presence of that person, even flowers fade sooner and plants die. Many deaths occur and many lives are retained by the phenomena of the breath. Therefore, for the healer there is no greater source of healing. He can throw his breath upon the affected part of the patient as easily as he can cast his glance upon a painful part. Even eatables and objects that a healer's breath has magnetized carry with them the power of healing. If touch makes certain finger-marks through perspiration upon a thing, why should not the breath, the very essence of life, live in an object and give the object some greater part of life, producing in it an effect which may be a greater cure than medicine

When the breath is developed and purified it is not necessary for the healer even to make an effort to throw his breath upon the patient, but the atmosphere that his breath creates, the very presence of the healer brings about a cure, for the whole atmosphere becomes charged with magnetism.

Insanity

There are, no doubt, many physical causes of various aspects of insanity, but a keen study of the subject will prove that insanity is mostly due to mental causes. Some lack of balance caused by the intensity or excess of a certain thought and feeling is found to be at the root of every cause of insanity. The physician fails to cure such cases, especially he who traces the cause of insanity in its outer manifestations and in the physical body. Every cause has an external effect, and yet it is a mistake to take the effect for the cause. It is not generally medicine or even surgical operations or any external applications that can be of great use. It is more the work of a healer than of a physician to cure insanity.

Like every disease, insanity could easily be cured in its earlier stage. It is again the work of the healer to recognize the signs of insanity in their primary state. Mostly such signs are not noticed in a

person, or they are passed over as 'something funny' or "queer." The first step towards healing insanity is to get at the root of the complaint by association with the subject. As soon as the root of the complaint is touched, a great relief is brought, even before healing. Naturally, insanity being a mental disease, thought-power alone is the remedy for it.

Loss of memory, confusion, puzzlement, instantaneous temper, and passion, are signs of the beginning of insanity. Insanity is inherited from the family, but it can also be traced in several weaknesses and vices, among which drink and fondness for drugs, unnatural habits, too much worry, anxiety, and allowing melancholy thoughts to develop in the nature. These are all things that cause insanity.

The work of the healer is first to detect the primary indication of insanity, and that is loss of memory. It is caused by weakness of the mind. The mind has not sufficient power to bring forward the thought entrusted to it at the command of the will. It is this that may be called loss of memory, and it must be healed and cured in its very beginning. The primary stage is marked by an extreme activity of mind that results in extreme thoughtless anger or passion. Then when its spell is passed, repentance comes. This should be avoided at its beginning. Guilty conscience, fear of consequences, and doubting tendencies all act as fuel to the fire of insanity. A pure, thankful, useful life, a constant thought of appreciating things and avoiding blaming things and people and conditions, all these help to keep away the germ of insanity.

Spirit

There is a part of one's life that can only be called life. There is no other name appropriate for it, and the English phrase, "to pull oneself together," means to set that part of life to work. It might be called spirit, as this part in itself is both intelligence and power. It is intelligence because any part of the body and mind or every part of both in which it dwells, it makes sensitive. It is powerful because whatever part of the body and mind it touches, it strengthens that part.

In games and sports, when people jump down from a great height, what is it that protects them from hurt? It is this spirit, and they have made it their habit to call this spirit to their aid. When people throw balls to each other, and even in boxing, the receiver of the blow awakens this spirit in that part on which he receives the blow. The sportsman does not know what this spirit is, though he takes refuge in it. The mystic understands it by his meditation, also by research into metaphysics. When a person awakes from a deep sleep, the first thing that rises through his mind to his body, when the tendency of stretching and contracting comes and of twisting and turning, and of gradually opening the eyes, is this spirit. It rises, so to speak, and spreads.

By the mastery of this spirit, diseases are cured, age is mastered, and even death is conquered. When this spirit is lacking, energy is lacking, intelligence, joy, and rest are lacking. When there is this spirit, there is hope, joy, and rest, because the nature of this spirit is to hold the body of atoms and vibrations intact. Comfort lies in its being held, discomfort when that spirit is not sufficient to hold the body intact. Thus, it is the lack of this spirit that is the cause of a great many diseases. By the development of this spirit in himself, the healer can give a part of his spirit to another, and that becomes the best source of healing.

The Origin of Diseases

Almost every disease originates in the mind, even when one catches infectious diseases. It does not mean that it must always be wickedness of the mind. If it were so, good people would never be ill. Yet it cannot be overlooked that it is a weakness of the mind, in some way or other, that allows the disease to enter. Besides this, negligence, oversight, irregularity, mental and physical weaknesses also cause diseases. Life and death are two forces, constructive and destructive, and there is continual fighting between these two forces. There are times when one power wins, and the success of that power means either better health or disease and death. The body must be ready and fit to fight this battle; but the mind has a still greater part to perform. When the mind fails to perform its part the body with all its fitness is incapable of retaining health. However, if the mind is capable of keeping health, the body largely obeys it. Still, harmony of both mind and body is needed to fight the battle of life.

The Effects of Food

It is the secret of nature that life lives upon life, as all carnivorous animals live on the flesh of other animals, and sometimes on their own kind. This shows that life sustains its body by the same element of which it is made. Man's body is made of the food he eats. It is according to the life in the food he eats that his life develops. Little insects that live on flowers create the beauty of the flower in their body. Insects that are fed on leaves sometimes become green and beautiful like a leaf, but insects living in the earth and in dirt have a similar body. This teaches that man's body depends upon the food he eats. Any decay in the vegetables he eats and any disease in the animal whose flesh he uses, all have their effect on man's health.

Brahmins, who have been the most scientific and philosophical people in the world, have always considered this subject. One always finds in the race of Brahmins intelligent and superior minds. In the West, although there is continual scientific discovery and discussion on hygienic life, important things concerning food are overlooked, and this can be explained in a few words as due to the lack of home-life. Many have to take their food in public places where it is impossible for special consideration to be given in this way. There are, moreover, differences in the animal foods one eats. Some animals are clean, others unclean. Their flesh differs accordingly. This has a great influence on the health and the mind of a person.

The question as to what the mind has to do with bodily food may be answered thus, that as an alcoholic drink has an effect on the mind, so every atom of food even has a particular effect. There are foods of three kinds: *Sattva*, which gives nourishment with calm and peace; *Rajas*, which gives stimulus to work and move about; and *Tamas*, which gives sleep, laziness, and confusion.

A healer must become aware of all kinds of foods and their effects so as to prescribe for the patient, and to see whether the food is the cause of the illness, which is so in many cases, and to keep himself in such a condition that he may be able to heal successfully.

Self-control

There are many people who may be said to be of nervous temperament. They have a tendency to walk quickly, to work hurriedly, to talk fast, so fast that they may drop words and make the hearer confused. Their tempers may rise suddenly and they are inclined to laugh or to cry easily. This condition in a way gives a kind of joy, but it weakens a person and takes away his self-control, in the end, resulting in nervous diseases. It begins as indulgence in activity and ends in weakness. Many mental diseases are caused by this negative state of mind and body. From childhood, there is an inclination to this, especially among children of nervous temperament. If it can be checked at that time, there is a sure result. No disease can be worse than an increasing weakness of the nerves, which is lack of self-control. Life is not worth living when control over the self is lost.

Man's Being

Man is not only constituted of matter in his being but also of spirit. However well built his body may be, with its mechanism in good working order, there is still something that is wanting in him. For the physical body is sustained by material food and drink, breath by the air, mind by thoughts and imaginations and impressions; but that is not all, there is something besides mind and body that man possesses in his being, and that is his spirit, which is light, a divine light. It is for this reason that sunshine makes one feel bright. However, it is not only sunshine that is needed for the spirit. Man's soul is like a planet. As the planet is illuminated by the sun, so man's spirit is illuminated by the light of God. In the absence of this, however healthy and joyful a man may look, he is not truly healthy. He must have some spiritual touch, some opening in his heart that will let the light of God come in

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