

# QUESTIONS ABOUT HEALTH

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*Articles by William Q. Judge*

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CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION (PART II)

THEOSOPHIC DIET

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WILLIAM Q. JUDGE SERIES • No. 22  
THEOSOPHY COMPANY (MYSORE) PRIVATE LTD.  
BANGALORE 560004

## OF “METAPHYSICAL HEALING”

**T**HE time for temporizing or for silence in respect to what are severally styled “Mind Cure,” Mental Science,” “Christian Science,” and the like has now come to an end, and the moment has arrived when something definite should be said on these as well as some other subjects. The first note was sounded at the theosophical convention for 1890.<sup>1</sup> when in the message sent by H. P. Blavatsky she wrote that some of these practises were of the nature of black magic as explained by her in that message. She says “In other words, whenever the healer interferes—consciously or unconsciously—with the free mental action of the person he treats, it is Black Magic.” At that time many persons were hurt, some on their own account and others on account of the feeling they had that people of the class who believe in and practise these so-called sciences would be thus driven away from the Society. Several members accordingly studiously refrained from mentioning the matter, and in many quarters it fell into silence absolute.

In the first place, it cannot be said that no cures have ever been accomplished by means of the practises referred to. There have been cases of cure. For, indeed, one would have to be blind to the records of the medical profession to say that the mind has no part to play in the cure of diseases. That it does have, as any physician knows, for if the patient continues to be depressed in mind there may be a failure or even a death. But this is not “mind cure” nor “mental cure.” It is an assistance to the regular treatment. And as very many of the troubles

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<sup>1</sup>Dept. of Conv., 1890.

of people are imaginary, sometimes in the acute form because of imagination, it does happen in those cases that a cure may be effected by the schools we are speaking of. Some nervous derangements may be thus cured. And if that is brought about by directing the mind of the patient to high thoughts, there can be no objection to it. But if the mind is filled with wrong philosophy, or if the affirmations and denials found in these “sciences” are used, or the “construction of the divine and spiritual form” be gone into, the whole thing is bad.

And here it is well to state our position about the cure of bodily ailments. It is that inasmuch as they are of and in the body, those that come from a wrong attitude of mind will disappear when we are contented and self-centered, while those that are chronic, being mechanical and physical, ought to be treated by such means and not by an attempt to drag the spiritual and divine down to this plane of being. In none of the ancient schools was it permitted to one to use for himself, or to sell, the divine or spiritual powers. Furthermore we see that the savages are the most healthy of men. Yet they know none of these things and do not care for such ideas. Yet although the Red Indian of the early days did much murder and lived not righteously, he was a fine specimen of physical health. This shows that health may be maintained by attention to the ordinary laws of nature on the material plane by attending to hygiene and exercise. Yet again, looking at the prize-fighter and the athlete, it is plain that they, by attending to the same rules and wholly disregarding the fine theories of the mental healers, become well and strong and able to bear the greatest fatigue and hardship. It was the same in the days of the athletes of Rome and Greece.

A number of fallacies have to be noticed in these systems. Using the word “thought,” they say that our diseases are the product of our thought, but they ignore the fact that young children of the tenderest age often have very violent diseases when no one will say they have had time or power to think. Babies have been found to have Bright’s disease and other troubles. This is a fact that looms up before the arguments of the mental healer and that never will down.

But regarding it from the theosophical side, we know that the

thoughts of the preceding life are the causes for the troubles and the joys of this, and therefore those troubles are now being exhausted here by the proper channel, the body, and are on the way *down and out*. Their exit ought not to be stopped. But by the attempt to cure in the way of the healer they are stopped often and are sent back to the place they came from, and thus once more are planted in the mind as unexpended causes sure at some other time to come out again, whether in this or in another life. This is one of the greatest of dangers. It will in many instances lead to insanity.

The next fallacy is in the system of affirmations and denials. To assert as they do that there is no matter, that all is spirit, and that there is no evil but that all is good, and that “this my body is pure and sweet and free from trouble,”\* is philosophically and as a mere use of English false in every respect. “Spirit” and “Matter” are terms that must exist together, and if one is given up so must the other disappear. They are the two great opposites. As the *Bhagavad-Gita* says, there is no spirit without also matter. They are the two eternities, the two manifestations, one at one pole and one at the other, of the absolute, which is neither matter nor spirit but wholly indescribable except as said—it is at once spirit and matter. Likewise Good and Evil are two opposites mutually existing, the one necessary in order to know the other, for if there were no evil we should not know what to call the good. One might as well say that there is no darkness but that all is light. By these foolish affirmations all relativity is abolished, and we are asked to abandon all proper use of words in order to satisfy those who wish to show that optimism in all things and at all times is the right position. The “Christian Scientist” goes further and says God is all good, the argument being in fact nothing at all but a play on the word god. It would not work in Spanish, for there good is *bueno* and god is *dios*. This assertion calmly refuses any admission of the patent fact that if God exists he must be evil as well as good, unless we revert to the old Catholic idea that the devil is as strong as God. And even if we say that God made the devil and will one day stop him, the evil is a part of God unless in some respects he is not responsible for the world and beings. But the last affirmation, that

one's body is sweet and pure and free from disease, is degrading as well as false. It may be true that bodies are illusions, but they are not the illusions of single individuals but of the great mind of the race, and therefore they are relatively real—as they are now constructed—for the minor beings who make up the race. No one has the power to escape from this great illusion of the total mind until he has risen to an actual conscious realization of that mind in all its departments. The affirmation has its refutation in itself, for if one person can thus destroy this relativity so far as he is concerned by merely affirming against it, how is it that the illusion still remains for and has sway over the remaining millions?. Still more we know that the body is a mass of things that are not good nor pure, and that in the abstract sense of these affirmations the most unnoticed physiological operations are actually disgusting.

The line of demarcation between black and white magic is very thin, but it is quite plain when one sees the art of healing by means of .such high forces as are claimed by these schools practised for purely selfish ends or for money in addition. There is danger in it, and all theosophists ought to look well that they do not fall themselves or cause others to.

The great danger is from the disturbances that are brought about by the practise. It is a sort of yoga without any right knowledge of method; it is blind wandering among forces so subtle and so violent that they are liable to explode at any moment. By continuing in the way taught a person actually from the first arouses latent currents of the body that act and re-act on the astral and physical and at last bring about injury. I have in mind several cases, and some of them those of actual insanity due wholly to these practises. Of these I will say more at another time, and may be able to present a record that will astonish those who, merely to cure some ailment that medicine is fully able to deal with, go aside instead and play with forces they have no knowledge of, and put them also into the hands of others still more ignorant, all the while deluding themselves with the idea that they are dealing with high philosophy. The philosophy has nothing to do with it except to act as a means to centre the thought so that inner

currents may come into play. The same result might be brought about by any system of talk or thought, no matter how erroneous.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

*Path*, January, 1892

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[A *Path* reader found fault with the foregoing article, proposing that "Divine Science" did not deserve the criticisms Mr. Judge had made. He responded by publishing the article, making the following Editor's Note.]

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The PATH has no desire to seem unfair, and hence the foregoing article is inserted at the request of a friend. It cannot be considered as a reply to the article in January issue, nor does it deal with the important points then raised and which will be further discussed at a later date. Very few earnest theosophists will share with Mrs. Gestefeld, however much they respect her, the assumption made in her second paragraph that because they give time and attention to the study of Theosophy they "also therefore" do not give attention "to the teaching covered by the term Divine Science." Such assumption assumes the total non-existence of Theosophical literature. *Divine Science* is a term used ages ago in Indian writing, and is well understood to cover a real science of psychology, physiology, and spirit; but if a number of people in America appropriate the term to cover a few half-truths from the whole, it does not necessarily follow that others who are not of that cult do not study the real thing. There is no sequence between her premise and her conclusion.

The next point on which we must differ from our contributor is where she says this "Divine Science" of which she speaks—and which is different in her opinion from Mental Science, etc., as promulgated illogically—must be studied by throwing away all standards save those adopted by its exponents, "accepting for the time being the terms as used with the meanings attached to them" (by its exponents), and "following them" to conclusion "without weighing and measuring them by another standard than their premise." This is just the difficulty. The terms used are strained in general, and thus false conclusions are arrived at if we thus throw away right

standards long ago fixed by the use of English by wiser and better educated people than most of us can claim to be. We cannot do that, even to show that “Divine Science” is the same as theosophy; nor can we with the same object in view abandon words from foreign tongues to express ideas for which materialistic English has no counters. By such a process the students of Modern Divine Science may be saved the trouble of investigating and classifying the manifold divisions in man’s personality—and which even now the celebrated hypnotists call number 1, 2, and so on. The resulting calm ignorance of these vital matters might be pleasant, but it would not destroy the existence of the subtle form of matter called akasa, nor the subtle body temporarily called sukshma sarira, nor the Mayavi rupa, nor those negative and positive astral currents known as Ida and Pingala but not yet perceived distinctly by either scientific men or “metaphysical or divine healers.” When, diving into Greek or Latin, the authorities of the day shall have adopted distinctive terms for these things as they discover their existence, use, and function, then we will take those more familiar terms and drop Sanscrit. For, digressing, we may remind our readers that it is a tradition in the Lodge “which seeth all, holding all, as it were, in its eye,” that our language will creep slowly back by way of Greek and Latin to the ancient Sanscrit.

*Path*, February, 1892

## AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS

**I**N the *PATH* of January a discussion on the subjects of “Mind Cure” and the like was begun. Since then we have had some letters from and conversations with those who think that the article is not right, or that it takes a wrong view, or that it does not state all the views of all the schools, and when we referred the enquirers to publications of “professors” of these schools we were told that they do not represent the thing properly, and so on. In this article it is purposed to refer to some of these published utterances of the said professors, so that they may be examined.

In a journal called *Christian Science* for the month of January, published in Boston apparently under the auspices of a college of the cult, is the following from an article entitled “My Healing Message,” by Minna Peckham:

I now declare all pain, sickness, or death to be nothing— nothing. There is no sickness. I deny that there ever was any sickness. I do not believe in poverty; I know there is no poverty; there never was any poverty; there never will be any poverty. We have great stores of wealth; every man, woman, and child is rich. They want for nothing. I do not believe in storms. I know there are no storms. There never were any storms; there never will be any. I deny the reality of storms henceforth and forevermore. I do not believe in accidents, I know there never were any accidents and there never never shall be any.

And all this raving is uttered in serious earnest, winding through many more paragraphs, and ending as follows: “I am a messenger of God’s love and a bearer of good tidings of what is true.”

But we are told by some that this sort of thing “is not the Simon pure straight; it is not representative.” The difficulty is that the different

“metaphysicians” say the same of each other, and when they are cornered by something like this they say “O that is not the proper thing.” But a still greater difficulty is that the folly just quoted is the exact outcome of the other systems, for they all have a system of affirming and denying that must, if carried to its logical conclusion, lead to just what Miss Peckham says. She is evidently not afraid to boldly go to the end and reduce herself and all other things and beings on this plane to nothing. Indeed, it is quite proper to go still further than her “message” in order to carry out the line of argument laid down, in this way: “There is nothing; I do not think, I never did, I never will, and the thoughts I have just uttered have no existence, and therefore all that I have said is nothing, and hence all that I have denied is just the opposite.” This is quite logical and proper, and reduces the whole matter to its right position. The whole set of affirmations and denials reminds one of the passages in the writings of the great Seer Swedenborg, where he describes those souls who affirm and deny anything at all and reduce any statement to the very opposite of what may have been said. We are not joking, but are in sober earnest and call on all forms of argument and all schools of real literature to support our position. Of course some will not agree, but we are willing to rest the case with those who have been educated to understand the true course of an argument. There are rules of logic which must be followed unless we are come upon an age when all these things have passed away. And the “Healing Message” has been taken up now because the publication appeals to theosophists and advertises theosophical books.

#### RELATIVITY

As soon as the Absolute began to manifest itself, or, if you like, immediately that Almighty God created things and beings, relativity begins, and all minds are caught in its net and are obliged to look at things relatively. And so it comes about that we have to say “good” and “evil,” as well as all the other words that cannot these relative things and ideas. If there were no matter there would be no spirit, and also if there were no evil there would be no good. It is therefore

wrong in logic and common sense to say there is no evil. It is only the desire of the optimist, who will not look at things as they are, that causes people to affirm that all is good or that there is no evil. It is all relative, and there is both evil and good, just as light and darkness exist. For if there were not the one we would never know anything about the other, since these ideas arise from contrasts.

In the so-called metaphysical arts or “sciences” the relativity of things and ideas is constantly ignored from the desire to have everything right and *just as we want it*. But how can these optimists know they are right when they sweep away relativity? and how shall any of us say that sorrow and poverty do not exist? Poverty is a fact—the fact of being without means or the things that can be bought with means, and this is so whether the general wants of the nation you live in are small or large. It is in no sense a sentiment or due to imagination. Hence poverty here will be riches for the man in India, and so on, but all the time there is poverty in any land, no matter how the relativity in respect to that sort of poverty alters in another.

So it is against the experience of all to say there is no poverty, and it is also contrary to logic. But it is not wrong to say that the *effect on your mind* may alter as you look at the matter; and so you may be poor yet at the same time be contented. This, though spiritual or moral richness, is none the less actual poverty. But proper contentment does not come from violations of logic and fact, but from a right view of this universe of relativity. And such right view will never be attained by denials that can not be sustained.

Many of the objections made to the views in the January article were wide of the mark, for they took the ground that the writer held, as they said other members of the Society do, the opinion that we should go on thinking we are sick when we are not, and that we are miserable when it is only a result of morbidity of mind. Such is not the position at all. Much of our misery is due to discontent and to selfishness, and will disappear as we grow contented and whole-souled. Many of our bodily complaints fade away when we have restored the mind to normal action. But this normal action is not secured by bad logic and worse statistics. It is done by recognizing the fact that “the mind is its

own place, and can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell.” As we see that one set of circumstances make one man happy and another the very opposite, we know that much depends on the way in which we look at our surroundings; but this is an old idea, one always held by the most ancient of the ancients. What right have the “metaphysicians” to arrogate it to themselves? All good physicians have said that much depends on the mind of the patient, but that does not do away with the necessity for good physicians; it only calls for more sense on the part of the patients.

Let us suppose a nation imbued from birth to death with the absurd denials and affirmations we have quoted, and try to imagine what would be the effect on the next incarnation of such a people. Probably Miss Peckham does not believe in reincarnation, but, if she did, might say the effect would be good. But would all the poverty and the storms and earthquakes have come to an end? Hardly, since in the case of the natural throes of mother Earth what thoughts may cause them are beyond our purview and unaffected by our denials. Would the contrasts that really constitute poverty, no matter what the sphere of being, cease to have existence? We think not, unless everything by the remarkable process outlined in the paper quoted from had been reduced to one dead level. But we know at least this, that evolution is the law of nature in all departments and that no dead level is possible, and under the law of evolution there must be these contrasts, no matter how high we go or how long continue in the great stream. Hence if these affirmations and denials should have the effect of removing us from this sphere to another, there the deniers and affirmers would have to begin the weary process over again of plunging themselves into a sea of illusionary thought devoid of logic and merely optimistic. If this picture be correct, is it wise to continue the system or in any way to give it moral support?

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

*Path*, March, 1892

## THE CURE OF DISEASES

**M**ORTAL ills and the needs of the stomach rank next after the instinct of self-preservation among all the subjects which engage the attention of the race. If we do not go on living we cannot do the work we think there is to do; if we remain hungry we will lose the power to work properly or to enjoy, and at last come to the door of death. From bad or scanty food follows a train of physical ills called generally disease. Disease reaches us also through too much food. So in every direction these ills attack us; even when our feeding is correct and sufficient it is found that we fall a prey because our Karma, settled by ourselves in some previous life, ordains that we enter on this one handicapped by the hereditary taint due to the wickedness or the errors of our fathers and mothers. And the records of science show that the taint in the blood or the lymph may jump over many lives, attacking with virulence some generation distant very far from the source. What wonder, then, that the cure of disease is an all-absorbing subject with every one! The Christian knows that it is decreed by Almighty God that He will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth generation, and the non-believer sees that by some power in nature the penalty is felt even so far.

All of this has given to the schools of mental and so-called “metaphysical” healing a strong pull on the fears, the feelings, the wishes, and the bodies of those to whom they address themselves, and especially in the United States. That there is more attention given to the subject in America seems true to those who have been on the other side of the Atlantic and noticed how small is the proportion of

people there who know anything about the subject. But in the United States in every town many can be found who know about these schools and practise after their methods. Why it has more hold here can be left to conjecture, as the point under consideration is why it has any hold at all. It is something like patent medicine. Offer a cure to people for their many ills, and they will take it up; offer it cheap, and they will use it; offer it as an easy method, and they will rush for it under certain conditions. Metaphysical healing is easy for some because it declares, first, that no money need be paid to doctors for medicine; second, that medical fluids and drugs may be dispensed with; and third, that it is easily learned and practised. The difficulties that arise out of the necessities of logic are not present for those who never studied it, but are somewhat potent with those who reason correctly;~but that is not usual for the general run of minds. They see certain effects and accept the assumed cause as the right one. But many persons will not even investigate the system, because they think it requires them to postulate the non-existence of that which they see before their eyes, The statements quoted from the monthly *Christian Science* in March PATH are bars in the way of such minds. If they could be induced to just try the method offered for cure, belief might result, for effects indeed often follow. But the popular mind is not in favor of "mind cure," and more prominence is given in the daily papers to cases of death under it than to cures. And very full reports always appear of a case such as one in March, where "faith curers," in order to restore life, went to praying over the dead body of one of the members of a believing family.

During a recent tour over this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back, I had the opportunity of meeting hundreds of disciples of these schools, and found in nearly all cases that they were not addicted to logic but calmly ignored very plain propositions, satisfied that if cures were accomplished the cause claimed must be the right one, and almost without exception they denied the existence of evil or pain or suffering. There was a concurrence of testimony from all to show that the dominant idea in their minds was the cure of their bodily ills and the continuance of health. The accent was not on

the beauty of holiness or the value to them and the community of a right moral system and right life, but on the cure of their diseases. So the conclusion has been forced home that all these schools exist because people desire to be well more than they desire to be good, although they do not object to goodness if that shall bring wholeness.

And, indeed, one does not have to be good to gain the benefit of the teachings. It is enough to have confidence, to assert boldly that this does not exist and that that has no power to hurt one. I do not say the teachers of the "science" agree with me herein, but only that whether you are good or bad the results will follow the firm practice of the method enjoined, irrespective of the ideas of the teachers.

For in pure mind-cure as compared with its congener "Christian Science" "you do not have to believe in Jesus and the gospels, yet the same results are claimed, for Jesus taught that whatever you prayed for with faith, that you should have.

Scientific research discloses that the bodies of our race are infected with taints that cause nearly all of our diseases, and school after school of medicine has tried and still tries to find the remedy that will dislodge the foulness in the blood. This is scientific, since it seeks the real physical cause; metaphysical healing says it cures, but cannot prove that the cause is destroyed and not merely palliated. That there is some room for doubt history shows us, for none will deny that many a pure thinking and acting pair have brought forth children who displayed some taint derived from a distant ancestor. Evidently the pure individual thoughts had no power over the great universal development of the matter used by those human bodies.

Turning now to medicine, we find the Italian Count Mattei promulgating a system of cure by the homoeopathic use of subtle vegetable essences which may well give pause to those who would make universal the curing by faith or mind alone. Some of his liquids will instantly stop violent pain, restore sight, give back hearings and dissipate abnormal growths. His globules will make a drunken man sober, and, given to the nurse who suckles a babe, will cure the child who takes the milk. The drunkard and the child do not think about or have faith in the remedies, yet they cure. Is it not better to restore

health by physical means and leave the high teachings of the healers, all taken from well known sources, for the benefit of our moral nature?

:And if Christian healers read these lines, should they not remember that when the prophet restored the widow's son he used physical riearis—his own magnetism applied simultaneously to every member of the child's body\* and Jesus, when the woman who touched his garment was cured, lost a portion of his vitality-^not his thoughts—for he said “virtue” had gone out from him? The Apostle also gave directions that if any were sick the others should assemble about the bed and anoint with oil, laying on their hands meanwhile: simply physical therapeutics following a long line of ancient precedent dating back to Noah. Moses taught how to cure diseases and to disinfect places where contagion lurked. It was not by using the high power of thought, but by processes deemed by him to be effectual, such as sprinkling blood of animals slaughtered in peculiar circumstances. Without declaring for or against his methods, it is very certain that he supposed by these means subtle forces of a physical nature would be liberated and brought to bear on the case in hand.

The mass of testimony through the ages is against healing physical ills by the use of the higher forces in nature, and the reason, once well known but later on forgotten, is the one given in the article of January, 1892,—that diseases are gross manifestations showing themselves on their way out of the nature so that one may be purified. To arrest them through thought ignorantly directed is to throw them back into their cause *and replant them in their mental plane*.

This is the true ground of our objection to metaphysical healing practises, which we distinguish from the assumptions and so-called philosophy on which those methods are claimed to stand. For we distinctly urge that, the effects are not brought about by any philosophical system whatever, but by the practical though ignorant use of psycho-physiological processes.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

*Path*, September, 1892

## REPLANTING DISEASES FOR FUTURE USE

**T**HE ills I wish to speak of now are those of the body. Our moral nature will be purified and ennobled, widened and strengthened, by attention to the precepts of the saints and sages who through all the ages continue speaking for our benefit. And I refer to these with a view to “mind-cure” and “metaphysical healing.”\*

In the article on the “Cure of Diseases” I stated our real ground of objection to the practice demonstrated variously, as the practitioners have been Theosophists, Christians, or followers of mind healers, to be directed to methods which in fact introduce a new sort of palliative that throws back into our inner, hidden planes of life diseases otherwise *passing down and out* through the natural gateway, our bodily frame.

A consideration of this subject requires that we enquire awhile into the complete nature of man. This inquiry has been made before by much greater minds than mine, and I only hand on what they have found and what I have corroborated for myself. Mind-healers and Spiritual Scientists and the rest do not make any reference to this subtle nature of ours except to admit thought to be powerful and to say that the “spiritual body is pure and free from disease.” Mind itself is not described by them, nor is it stated that the “spiritual body” has any anatomy possible of description. But the field of Theo-sophic research is not devoid of an anatomical enumeration, so to say, of the parts of the inner body—the “spiritual body” of some of these schools—nor of the “mind” spoken of by them all.

The mind is *manas* of the Hindus. It is a part of the immortal man. The “spiritual body” is not immortal. It is compounded of astral

body with the passions and desires. *Mind* is the container of the efficient causes of our circumstances, our inherent character and the seeds that sprout again and again as physical diseases as well as those purely mental. It is the mover who is either voluntary in his motion, free if it will, or moved hither and thither by every object and influence and colored by every idea. From life to life it occupies body after body, using a new brain instrument in each incarnation. As Patanjali put it ages ago, in mind lie planted all seeds with self-reproductive power inherent in them, only waiting for time and circumstances to sprout again. Here are the causes for our diseases. Product of thought truly, but thought long finished and now transformed into cause beyond our present thought. Lying like tigers by the edge of the jungle's pool ready to spring when the hour arrives, they may come forward accompanied by counteractions due to other causes, or they may come alone.

When these seeds sprout and liberate their forces they show themselves in diseases in the body, where they exhaust themselves. To attack them with the forces belonging to the plane of mind is to force them again to their hiding place, to inhibit their development, to stop their exhaustion and transfer to the grosser levels of life. They are forcibly dragged back, only to lie waiting once more for their natural expression in some other life. That natural expression is through a body, or rather through the lowest vehicle in use in any evolutionary period.

This is a great wheel that ever revolves, and no man can stop it. To imagine we can escape from any cause connected with us is to suppose that law and order desert the manifested universe. No such divorce is possible. We must work everything out to the last item. The moment we evolve a thought and thus a cause, it must go on producing its effects, all becoming in turn causes for other effects and sweeping down the great evolutionary current in order to rise again. To suppose we can stop this ebb and flow is chimerical in the extreme. 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 centers 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 center 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 Sanscrit—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.

Now the moment the practises of the mind-curer are begun, what happens is that the hidden inner currents are violently grasped, and, if concentration is persisted in, the downward vibrations are thrown up and altered so as to carry back the cause to the mind, where it is replanted with the addition of the purely selfish desires that led to the practice. It is impossible to destroy the cause; it must be allowed to

transform itself. And when it is replaced in the mind, it waits there until an opportunity occurs either in this life or in the next rebirth.

In some cases the physical and psychological structures are not able to stand the strain, so that sometimes the return of the downward vibrations is so great and sudden that insanity results; in other cases disease with violent characteristics sets in.

The high tone of thought enjoined by some schools of healers has the effect of making the cause of trouble sink deeper into hiding, and probably adds to concentration. But any thought would do as well, provided concentration is persisted in, for it is the concentration that makes the effect, and not the philosophy. The system of affirming and denying makes concentration easier.

For when the practitioner begins, he immediately brings to play certain inner forces by virtue of his dwelling on one thing. The veriest savages do the same. They have long taught it for various purposes, and their ideals go no higher than food and sleep, fetishes and superstitions.

When one is thus operating on another who is willing, the change of inner nerve currents is brought about by sympathy, which in these cases is the same as the phenomenon so well known in physics by the name of *induction*. When a person is operated on—or against, I call it—the effect is either repelled or produced. If produced, it is by the same induction brought about without his knowledge and because he was not stronger than the operator.

Here is the danger again. The schools of hypnotists are teaching how to do it. The mind-curers and “metaphysicians” are doing the same. An army of possibilities lurks under it all: for already there are those practitioners who deliberately practise against their opponents, sitting day after day to paralyze the efforts of other people. It is like dynamite in the hands of a child. Some day it will explode, and those who taught it will be responsible, since instead of being taught it ought to be warned against. The world could get along with what disease there is, if it only turned attention to high ethics and altruistic endeavor. 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.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

*Path*, October, 1892

## IF METHUSELAH EXISTED, WHY SO SHORT OUR LIVES?

**A**T a Theosophical Society meeting the other day, it was stated that in the early races, say the second and third, referred to in the *Secret Doctrine*, man had a much more ethereal body, which lived many more years than Methuselah, the aged. In elaborating this, the objection was advanced that the body of man is now much more compact and stable than it was in those early races, because the atoms of which it is composed know their business better now than then, have greater affinity for certain combinations and for each other, and are not so readily scattered and disintegrated; and, if so, how is it explained that the length of human life now is only three-score and ten years, against several hundred in primitive times?

At first sight this seems to be perhaps a strong objection, but a careful consideration will dissipate it.

In the first place, when the human body was in a nebulous state the friction between the particles was much less than when they had drawn closer together. If the theory of ultimate atoms is admitted, we must also assent to the law that there is friction between them which will develop heat or tend to reduce the cohesive power. The heat evolved will have a tendency to destroy the intervening medium, or at least to so alter its state as to make it useless as a medium for cohesion to act.

Further, if we suppose, as is perfectly justifiable, that there are large and small combinations of atoms in each of which the units are closer to each other, the heat evolved will destroy the constitution of the element, whatever it may be, that is between that combination of atoms and the adjoining one. And, still further, the friction between

any two such bodies will also tend to rub off or draw off atoms from either of two to unite with the stronger, or be thrown entirely out of both collections.

Such a process as described will in the end bring about the disintegration of the entire mass of atoms. Thus at first, the atoms being farther removed, the destructive means can only act at intervals or more slowly than when the union is more intimate, and from this we reach the reason why the age of the combination of atoms would be greater in the one case than in the other.

Coming down to the present period we find that, in addition to the closer association of atoms in the physical frame, there is also another disturbing element tending to destruction of the union, that is, the force of the mind and the emotions.

It is well known that as man increases his brain use and power and the play of his emotions, he is able to affect his physical frame thereby. Today many hold that the American people are becoming too nervously organized. This reacts upon the atoms in the body, and must make the average age less than those ancient races when the mental and emotional natures did not have such sway over the human being.

This is perfectly in accord with the *Secret Doctrine*, as it is shown that in the early ages everything went slower in all departments and that now in Kali Yuga all things move with great rapidity.

So it may be properly concluded that the great law of conservation of energy, of correlation of forces, makes it now out of the ordinary for men to live to the age of Methuselah.

F. T. S.

*Path*, May, 1891

## WHY YOGA PRACTICE IS DANGEROUS

A GOOD deal has been said in Theosophical literature about the danger of pursuing Yoga practice, such as regulating the breathing, assuming certain postures of the body, etc., and several persons, not satisfied with simple declarations by such writers as H. P. B. that these practices are prejudicial, have frequently asked for reasons. Many of the reasons given in the PATH and elsewhere have been merely further declarations. I have instituted some experiments for the purpose of showing what is the effect, if any, upon the physical system of a certain sort of breathing used in Hatha Yoga practices, and desire to record one for the benefit of inquirers.

The persons present were myself, a well-known physician whose name I can give, and the practitioner. The physician first took the person's pulse for three minutes and found it to be running at 96 beats per minute, and then the experiment began with the practice with the following result:

First minute. Pulse fell to 91 beats.

Second minute. Pulse fell to 81 beats.

Third minute. Pulse remained at 81 beats.

A delay of five minutes then occurred, when the practice was begun again for six minutes, with the following result;

First minute. Pulse running at 91 beats a minute.

Second minute. Pulse fell to 86 beats.

Third minute. Pulse remained at 86.

Fourth minute. Pulse fell to 76  
Fifth minute. Remained at 76.  
Sixth minute. Remained at 76.

This shows a reduction in the pulse action of 20 beats in 14 minutes. It also shows that after the first three minutes the intermission of five minutes was not enough to enable the pulse to go back to 96 beats, at which it started. The first three minutes showed a fall of five beats in the first minute and ten in the next minute, making fifteen beats reduction for the three minutes.

It therefore appears that one of the accompaniments of this practice is a distinct effect upon the action of the heart, and as all the Hindu books invariably state that great caution should be used and that there are dangers, we can see here a very great danger found in an effect upon the heart's action, resulting in a reduction of pulse beats of twenty beats in fourteen minutes. The Hindu books to which I have referred, and which are the only works through which inquirers have heard about these practices, also say that a guide who is fully acquainted with the subject is necessary for each student, and that every one of these practices requires an antidote for its effects through other regulations tending to neutralize the bad physical effects. Students have been too anxious to try these experiments without prying any attention to the cautions given out, and I know of some cases in which, while well remembering that the cautions had been uttered, persons have pursued these practices by themselves without assistance. I hope that the above record will not only justify the cautionary remarks which have been so often made by sincere Theosophical writers, but will also serve to warn off Theosophical students from this dangerous ground.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

*Path.* March, 1891

## CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

### PART II

[PART I APPEARED IN JULY, 1888, PATH, p. 116]\*

IT is now over one year since I sent in Part I to the Editor of the PATH. Since then I have heard that some students expressed a desire to read Part II, forgetting to observe, perhaps, that the first paper was complete in itself, and, if studied, with earnest practice to follow, would have led to beneficial results. It has not been necessary before to write No. II; and to the various students who so soon after reading the first have asked for the second I plainly say that you have been led away because a sequel was indicated and you cannot have studied the first; furthermore I much doubt if you will be benefited by this any more than by the other.

Success in the culture of concentration is not for him who sporadically attempts it. It is a thing that flows from "a firm position assumed with regard to the end in view, and unremittingly kept up." Nineteenth Century students are too apt to think that success in occultism can be reached as one attains success in school or college, by reading and learning *printed words*. A complete knowledge of all that was ever written upon concentration will confer no power in the practice of that about which I treat. Mere book knowledge is derided in this school as much as it is by the clodhopper; not that I think book knowledge is to be avoided, but that sort of acquisition without the concentration is as useless as faith without works. It is called in some places, I believe, "mere eye-knowledge." Such indeed it is; and

such is the sort of culture most respected in these degenerate times.

In starting these papers the true practice was called Raj Yoga. It discards those physical motions, postures, and recipes relating solely to the present personality, and directs the student to virtue and altruism as the bases from which to start. This is more often rejected than accepted. So much has been said during the last 1800 years about Rosicrucians, Egyptian Adepts, Secret Masters, Kaballah, and wonderful magical books, that students without a guide, attracted to these subjects, ask for information and seek in vain for the entrance to the temple of the learning they crave, because they say that virtue's rules are meant for babes and Sunday-schools, but not for them. And, in consequence, we find hundreds of books in all the languages of Europe dealing with rites, ceremonies, invocations, and other obscurities that will lead to nothing but loss of time and money. But few of these authors had anything save "mere eye-knowledge." 'Tis true they have sometimes a reputation, but it is only that accorded to an ignoramus by those who are more ignorant. The so-called great man, knowing how fatal to reputation it would be to tell how really small is his practical knowledge, prates about "projections and elementals," "philosopher's stone and elixir," but discreetly keeps from his readers the paucity of his acquirements and the insecurity of his own mental state. Let the seeker know, once for all, that the virtues cannot be discarded nor ignored; they must be made a part of our life, and their philosophical basis must be understood.

But it may be asked, if in the culture of concentration we will succeed alone by the practice of virtue. The answer is No, not in this life, but perhaps one day in a later life. The life of virtue accumulates much merit; that merit will at some time cause one to be born in a wise family where the real practice of concentration may purchase begin; or it may cause one to be born in a family of devotees or those far advanced on the Path, as said in *Bhagavad-Gita*. But such a birth as this, says Krishna, is difficult to obtain; hence the virtues alone will not always lead in short space to our object.

We must make up our minds to a life of constant work upon this line. The lazy ones or they who ask for pleasure may as well give it

up at the threshold and be content with the pleasant paths marked out for those who “fear God and honor the King.” Immense fields of investigation and experiment have to be traversed; dangers unthought of and forces unknown are to be met; and all must be overcome, for in this battle *there is no quarter asked or given*. Great stores of knowledge must be found and *seized*. The kingdom of heaven is not to be had for the asking; it must *be taken by violence*. And the only way in which we can gain the will and the power to thus seize and hold is by acquiring the virtues on the one hand, and minutely understanding ourselves on the other. Some day we will begin to see why not one passing thought may be ignored, not one flitting impression missed. This we can perceive is no simple task. It is a gigantic work. Did you ever reflect that the mere passing sight of a picture, or a single word instantly lost in the rush of the world, may be basis for a dream that will poison the night and react upon the brain next day. Each one must be examined. If you have not noticed it, then when you awake next day you have to go back in memory over every word and circumstance of the preceding day, seeking, like the astronomer through space, for the lost one. And, similarly, without such a special reason, you must learn to be able to go thus backward into your days so as to go over carefully and in detail all that happened, all that you permitted to pass through the brain. Is this an easy matter?

But let us for a moment return to the sham adepts, the reputed Masters, whether they were well-intentioned or the reverse. Take Eliphas Levi, who wrote so many good things, and whose books contain such masses of mysterious hints. Out of his own mouth he convicts himself. With great show he tells of the raising of the shade of Apollonius. Weeks beforehand all sorts of preparations had to be made, and on the momentous night absurd necromantic performances were gone through. What was the result? Why only that the so-called shade appeared for a few moments, and Levi says they never attempted it again. Any good medium of these days could call up the shade of Apollonius without preparation, and if Levi were an Adept he could have seen the dead quite as easily as he turned to his picture in a book. By these sporadic attempts and outside preparations, nothing

is really gained but harm to those who thus indulge. And the foolish dabbling by American theosophists with practices of the Yogis of India that are not one-eighth understood and which in themselves are inadequate, will lead to much worse results than the apochryphal attempt recorded by Eliphas Levi.

As we have to deal with the Western mind now ours, all unused as it is to these things and over-burdened with false training and falser logic, we must begin where we are, we must examine our present possessions and grow to know our own present powers and mental machinery. This done, we may proceed to see ourselves in the way that shall bring about the best result.

**RAMATIRTHA**

*Path*, February, 1890

## THEOSOPHIC DIET

**T**HE question “whether to eat meat or not to eat it” is one which is uppermost in the minds of many theosophists today. Some will eat no meat, while others still use it, and a few who are vegetarians seem to think that the meat eaters are sinners and cannot be spiritual.

Although I belong to the Spanish-speaking people, I am a vegetarian and a theosophist; and I hope that the difference in race will not have any effect on my American readers, brother theosophists.

Let us examine the different standpoints taken, and look at the matter without any bias in favor of either vegetarianism or carnivorous diet.

The meat eaters say that in nature we find cows and elephants eating no meat, and yet they seem to have no additional spirituality as a result, and that among men we often see those who, although they eat meat, are at the same time highly spiritualized. This is their case.

The vegetarians have these arguments: (*a*) that animal food necessarily imparts to the eater the qualities of the animal, and that the eating of meat not only may give us the diseases of the animal, but also tends to inflame the blood and makes the gross envelope of the body more dense than ever; (*h*) that it is wrong to kill animals for food, because, as we did not give them life, we have no right to take it away from them; (*c*) that by living on vegetable food we make the gross body more permeable to higher influences. There may be finer divisions of the argument, but the above will give their case in general.

It must make much difference in the conclusion whether one is speaking of a man belonging to the western nations or of one who,

like the Hindu, comes of a race which for ages has taken no animal food. It is held by many physiologists that the stomach is an organ for the digesting of animal food only, and that in a vegetarian the pyloric valve leading from the stomach is so paralyzed from want of use that the food passes directly into the intestines. It must therefore follow that the western man may be placing himself in danger of fatal derangement of his system when he leaves meat eating and takes up vegetarianism. This has, indeed, been proved in many cases to be a real danger. I have before me the reports of several theosophists who found that it was not possible for them to make the change; at the same time others have made it with perfect safety. The trouble did not arise from weakness following lack of meat, but from imperfect digestion causing disease. This is due to the retention in the stomach of vegetable matter for so long a time that yeast and other growths were thrown into the circulation; these are sufficient to bring on tuberculosis, nervous diseases, and other manifold derangements. It is well known that a man who has melancholia due to systemia cannot expect to reach a high development in occultism.

We next find that there are powerful black magicians in farther India and in many other places who do not deny themselves meat but take as much as they wish, and also stimulants. From this we conclude that power over nature's forces is not solely in the hands of the vegetarian. We need not stop to consider the fate of such magicians, as that has been often dilated upon.

Now although the Hindu has been always a vegetarian, it is a fact that for him the acquirement of knowledge of absolute truth is as difficult as it is for the western man who eats meat. In the books of the Hindoo on the subject of spiritual culture or soul development, the rules laid down are extremely hard to follow. The eating of meat is not definitely referred to, but the attainment of union with the Supreme, *from which alone knowledge of absolute truth results*, is hedged about with difficulties in comparison with which the eating of meat sinks into the shade; but we must remember that it is assumed in India that the student is not a meat eater. The reason for the prohibition, however, is that a man has no right to kill animals for his food or for

any other reason. He must refrain, not because the act is forbidden, but because his whole nature, through the great love and pity that he feels, naturally recoils from such an act. It is plain, if this rule be the correct one—and I think it is—that a person who stops the eating of meat in order that he may by complying with that condition attain to a development he has set before him misses the mark, and has acquired a selfish motive for the line thus adopted. It is an old and true saying that the kingdom of God cometh not from taking or refraining from meat, nor from the refraining from anything whatever, but that it is *within us*. In another place it is said that this kingdom of heaven is taken by violence; that is, it requires all knowledge and all goodness to attain at last to that union with the spirit which is the kingdom of heaven. And such attainments are not in the reach of either those who, on the one hand, long for sentimental religion only, or those who, on the other, work that they may reach the blissful result for themselves. The first, although extremely good, are barred from want of knowledge, and the other by the selfish motive at the bottom of their practice. In the “Great Journey,” translated from the Sanscrit by Mr. Arnold, is a beautiful illustration of the spirit and motive which must actuate us. Yudishthira reached heaven after losing his friends on the way, and was at the gate accompanied by his dog who looked to him as his only friend; and when he was refused admission because the dog was with him, he declined to enter. He was let in, and the dog revealed himself as one of the gods; then the king found that his friends were not there, and was told that they were in hell. He asked to go there, and was sent. He found it an awful place and was on the point of returning, when the pitiful voices of his friends called him back, saying that he gave them some comfort by his presence, and he then said he would stay in hell for them. This was reported to the gods, and they in a body went to hell and rescued all the denizens of the place for his sake. The selfishness or selflessness of the motive will determine the result.

We find, on referring to the great Indian work of Patanjali on the Philosophy of Yogam, that nothing is said about meat eating. The disciple is not met with the regulation at the outset, “You must refrain

from eating meat.” This is not because the people were all vegetarians at the time it was written, because even then permissions were extended to certain classes of men for the eating of flesh. The warrior was allowed to eat meat, and out of the warrior caste arose many who attained to the supreme heights of adeptship. To say that carnivorous diet will *in itself* exclude you from spiritual attainments is of like character with the statement that one cannot attain unless he is of the unsullied Brahmin caste. That was sometimes said by some Brahmins, but is easily met by the fact that the great Krishna was a shepherd by caste.

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 practicing 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.

RODRIGUEZ UNDIANO

*Path*, December, 1888