

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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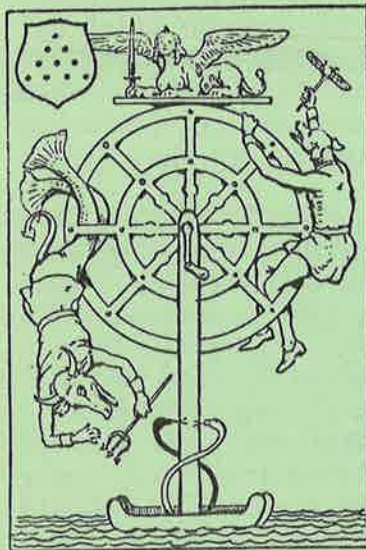
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CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN - AUGUST 1977

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL SECURITY



DEAR FRIENDS:

Out of the wisdom of the past, there have descended to us the impressive words: "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." We are inclined to think that madness is a synonym for insanity, but it can also mean anger or vindictiveness of mind. More inclusively, it is any extreme agitation which impairs our inner control of thoughts and emotions. Among the Greeks there was a sect called the Stoics, the members of which cultivated placidity and refused to give way to dispositional outbursts. To them, human dignity was a virtue appropriate to the thoughtful person. Furthermore, they discovered from painful experience that loss or lack of self-control was uncomfortable and expensive. Rash attitudes led to foolish actions, resulting in sorrow for all concerned.

Today, a placid temperament is often regarded as a sign of weakness. Patience is looked upon as an infirmity and impatience shows that we are properly "involved" in the miseries of the moment. Referring to prevailing conditions one commentator observed, "If you are not upset, frightened, perturbed, and anxiety-ridden, perhaps you do not understand situations as they are today." Some Oriental philosophies have been downgraded because they advocate internal quietude. Those seeking peace within themselves are considered selfish and self-centered, while those who fume from morn 'til night without accomplishing anything useful are viewed as public benefactors. Actually, fretful and irritable persons are merely victims of emotional or mental instability. They are parlor activists and, if they do gain a wider sphere of influence, their attitudes are for the most part destructive.

The art of Judo has been built into the Japanese philosophy of life. Students of Judo are expected to learn that when their feet are planted solidly on the ground a short distance apart, they should imagine themselves as standing in a circle. The head of the upright individual must always be within the circumference of the circle, based upon the position of his feet. The moment he is lured to allow some part of his body to stand outside the circle, he is vulnerable. One way to hazard his own equilibrium is to attempt to strike his assailant. We can lose even a verbal argument if we become excited and attempt

to defend our opinion by an emotional outburst of rhetoric. We win most of the battles of life--not by aggressive strength, but with quiet judgment. Outbursts of dispositional intensity are often defenses against opinions contrary to our own. In the desperate desire to be always right we may violate good judgment and common sense. This is another area of activity in which self-discipline is most rewarding. One of the most irritating circumstances which we are sometimes forced to face is the irrepressible talker who insists on pontificating on subjects about which his ignorance is sublime. We can hardly wait for him to stop (if he ever does stop) so that we can correct his mistakes and reveal our own superior insight. It is the wiser course to rest in quiet detachment until the verbal tempest subsides.

It sometimes happens, of course, that the voluble talker may have something really important to say--or reveals some peculiarity of temperament which we should learn to avoid. The listener is always in a favorable situation. He can weigh, analyze, and correlate without internal stress or tension. He can hold fast to that which is good without defense mechanisms arising within himself. He is nearly always a social success because listeners are few.

In Indian philosophy, much is made of the symbolism of a chariot wheel. It is carried by the god Vishnu and occurs in Buddhist emblemism as the wheel of the law. In Platonic thinking all things turn on the spindle of necessity. The wheel rotates, but the axle in the center does not move. In European moralisms there is the concept of the wheel of fortune with humankind clinging to its spokes. As Aesop, the fabler, reported long ago, the principal labor of the gods is to lift up the lowly and cast down the great. The wheel turns endlessly, and there is no peace, permanence, or security except the axle tree. The immovable mover of all things appropriately symbolizes man's spiritual core, that power within himself which is his enduring strength in times of stress. We can all venture along the diverging spokes, but we must never permit the center of consciousness to be lured away from its natural center. We must always be able to return to our spiritual core when need arises.

The axle of our existence is our basic conviction about the meaning of life and our relationships to the circumstances arising in life. We must have an inner sense of meaning that never fails to support our mental and moral integrities. All disturbances must be recognized as secondary factors, whereas calmness of spirit is a first consideration. The search for reality is always a questing after the axle of universal law, upon which we must depend for proper orientation. To find this one must experience the inner mystery of the "peace of God." We must be still if we wish to know the source of ourselves. Small children should be taught to appreciate the privilege of being alone with themselves for a few moments every day. There are always occasions when it is necessary to relax away from the passing pressures of the day and take an inventory of our mental and emotional assets. We must stand as observers of ourselves, rather than as merely participants in the confusion of pressing events. This is not an escape from reality, but a pilgrimage toward truth. There is abundant evidence in support of such a realization. We are most likely to seek solitude in moments of intense joy or deep sorrow. It is trivia that keeps us in a state of perpetual agitation.

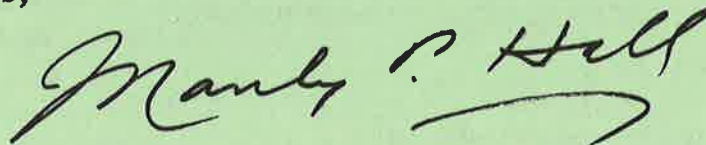
The axle of our being is like the high altar of a great church. It is the sanctus sanctorum which the master builder entered each day at high noon to receive from the hand of God and the trestleboard of the labor of the day. The ancient mystics, inspired probably by the wisdom of the old Egyptians, declared the human heart to be the Matchless Altar of the Soul. One enters this holy place in quietness and humility, free from all disquieting thoughts and emotions, and gently receptive to the words spoken by the voice of silence.

By cultivating inner peace, we come to understand the mystery of eternal mercy. The whole vast pageantry of creation is sustained, not by a divine autocrat, but by a gentle and mysterious principle with all the attributes of a kindly parent, ever solicitous for the happiness and well-being of its creations. We can see the splendor in the wonders of space, but the deeper miracle of Divine Love can be found only in the deepest parts of our own souls. Doubts grow in the mind; fears arise in the emotions; but perfect acceptance of the Eternal Purpose comes directly from the heart and vanquishes the anxieties caused by ignorance. We are all more or less ignorant, but there is a wisdom available at all times if we have faith and hope.

Rather than increasing our knowledge of arts, crafts, and sciences, it is better to improve the level of personal insight. No man can serve two masters, and if he is completely devoted to material concerns, his soul languishes in darkness--it is the natural guardian of our happiness. As the Greeks pointed out, the nutrition of the body is derived from the foods that we eat, but the soul is nourished by beauty and the noblest of our aspirations. We must attempt to discipline all attitudes that are painful to the soul, which means that we must cultivate a condition of internal harmony.

To the degree that we overcome mental and emotional disturbances, we conserve our natural resources and reduce psychic fatigue. The tired, harrassed, and worry-ridden personality remains insecure until these intemperances are overcome. The wear and tear on the body ultimately contributes to the general confusion. Physical functions are under the management of the person inhabiting the body. If this leadership is weakened by discord, nearly all normal functions are disarranged and contentment of spirit is virtually impossible. Sleep is a panacea for physical exhaustion and disciplined quietude is the best remedy for the fatigue of the heart and mind. It is a mistake to assume that inner relaxation is a waste of time. In reality it is a conserver of the human being's energy allotment. When we are relaxed and at peace with ourselves, our decisions will be more honest and our feelings less burdened with prejudices and worthless opinions. There is an old saying that haste makes waste, and tensions lead to inefficiency in nearly every area of activity. In quietude one can think things through, reflect upon the consequences of decisions, and weighing all things in a kindly way cling to that which is best. These quiet moments also provide the proper opportunities to evaluate daily experience, thus building a better future through what we have learned from the past.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Maury P. Hill". The signature is written in dark ink and features a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.



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