

Article 218: Asava Massage -part 3

While these ancient beliefs in good and evil spirits and forces seemed to explain all of the known, observed, and assumed facts of life and disease, these “perceived facts or truths” only obscured, withheld, and delayed understanding, for even into the nineteenth century, “learned doctors” believed that diseases and sicknesses were caused by “bad humors” of the body and conditions of the environment, ...and only later was it seen that diseases were caused by bacteria ...and later by even tinier pathogens called viruses. In this have we really progressed beyond the ancient’s belief in demons merely because they are now referred to as bacteria, viruses, and pathogens? ...and the good spirits are now called modern medicine? The medicine man’s rattles, tambourines, drums, and other accruements are today’s x-rays, CAT scans, MRI’s, therapy devices, and other treatment tools, ...and the medicine man’s manipulation of his patient’s body is similar to much of our massage-therapy today; ...it seems we are still trying to drive evil, painful demons out of the body.

And though we are preventing the spread of bacteria or viruses ...or the expansion of body infections and malfunctions, is this really any different than stopping the spread of evil spirits and forces?

When hunting, men saw animals eat the rotted flesh of dead animals without ill- effects, in fact, many animals seemed to thrive on such food, yet, when men ate rotten food, he usually became ill. It seemed, they reasoned, that the spirits and forces acting against man did not always affect scavenger birds and animals. People could eat the same flesh when it was fresh, but if rotted, man’s evil spirits attached themselves to the flesh ...and then to those who ate the flesh. Man, it seems, was slowly learning to recognize and avoid certain plant and animal foods ...and conditions in life as not being good or nourishing, maybe as he thought, “because the food and conditions contained bad spirits or evil forces”, ...but “civilized” people today do not seem to make direct associations between personal attitudes and actions and the consequences of those feelings and behaviors, ...probably because all people are not affected in the same way, while bad spirits and evil forces seemed to act against everyone equally. Today’s patients and physicians are seeking a fundamental “common cause”, evil spirit, or unwholesome force for each disease and illness ...which they mistakenly believe must be common to the ailment ...not to the infinite variety of individuals with a single disease, ...unless of course there is a common cause in each patient’s DNA or

pattern of genes which makes some evil spirits or forces deadly for one person and not for another.

People today still believe that unpleasant•undesirable foods and conditions indicate the presence of bad energies, while agreeable matters indicate the presence of nourishing substances and fine energies, ...the problem is that all unpleasant matters are not bad ...and all pleasing and enjoyable matters cannot be relied upon to be nourishing and satisfying. It seems that the world today is a very different place for each person than it was for ancient people ...and no reliable commonality of threat or goodness can be discovered or relied upon. Demons and forces are different for everyone!

While some ancient medical concoctions, herbal remedies, and physical treatments were somewhat effective, most were completely worthless. It appears that early medications and treatments were effective more because people believed in them than because they offered an effective cure. In the same way today, many useless therapies appear to be beneficial only because the patient believes in them, ...this is the “placebo effect”. Or maybe belief is more-effective than treatments and medications, for there are many examples of cures and remissions which can only be attributed to the patient’s change of beliefs, attitudes, and way of life. The commonality of diseases and healings seem to be patients’ beliefs, either in themselves or the treatment, which are strong enough to support their changing from illness-believing•living to believing in and living their enriching wellbeing as they truly desire.

No matter how carefully you look at body ailments, you will never find a commonality of causes ...or actions of evil spirits or bad forces; no uniformity of symptoms ...or effects of pathogens; no dependably effective treatment for driving out “causative forces or agents”; and certainly no consistency of recovery. Can it be that life is completely arbitrary? ...or consistent with, completely supportive of, and a full revelation of each person’s self and life?

Medical science declares that if certain bacteria are always found within the body of an afflicted person ...and the bacteria always precede the infection, then it is reasonable to assume that the bacteria causes the sickness, ...is this different than the medicine man always discovering evil spirits? Yet many people carry the bacteria~or the evil spirit~without being sick. Why? And though many individuals get well following a particular medication or therapy, it does not follow that they recovered because of the therapeutic measures applied, for it is just as reasonable to assume

they would have improved without those treatments ...as frequently occurs. What could have destroyed the bacteria, evil forces, or bad spirits ...or driven them away?

If you feel better or get well after a massage, is it at all reasonable to assume that the massage created the change? Think again! ...for even though modern medical and physical treatments and medications have been shown by scientific tests to be effective, this does not mean they “caused” the cure, just as a massage frequently does not relieve the pain or trauma.

Just as the medicine man used physical activity and baths, the application of hot coals and dunking in cold streams, and frequently tried to manipulate or pound evil spirits out of the body, physical treatments today~aka physiotherapy~use exercise, baths, the application of hot and cold packs, and body massage as treatments and remedies, ...but are these rubbings, handlings, and treatments really different than the ancient actions to drive evil spirits out of the joints, muscles, and fleshy tissues where it seemed they most-desired to reside in a patient’s body? Even the ancient practice of leeching and bloodletting ...or getting bad blood and impurities~like evil forces~out of the body is still practiced today, ...though this treatment is obviously not as common or extreme as it was.

What do you suppose would happen today if we follow the old custom of requiring healers to keep their patients healthy ...and pay them only when they succeed in that task ...or suffer the penalty if they fail? It was not a matter of driving demons out ...it was one of keeping them out. Following this pattern, the focus of Asava Massage is to strengthen patients and endow them with the awareful empowerment and freedom to live as they truly desire without, as we might say, letting evil spirits/bad forces/judgments into their body and life! Asava Massage is a new and different approach to medical treatment, ...yet, at the same time, it is a return to the old practice of keeping patients’ mindfully embodied self~mind-body~and life fully empowered, fault-free to serve as they truly desire.

Medicine men viewed cuts, wounds, and broken bones differently than internal diseases or illnesses or misfunctions, for physical hurts were quite obvious ...and the area and problems needing attention were easily identifiable, while diseases were mysterious, unseen, and generally unknown. It was not until 500 BCE, during the great philosopher/physician-era of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Parmenides that the main focus of most healing treatments turned, somewhat, from spiritual actions and

exorcising demons and evil spirits to dealing directly with the physical body.

In ancient yet somewhat enlightened Greece of this period, hospitals or treatment centers were Sanatoria, which were stone temples with beautiful courtyards, cooling shade trees, and great fountains ...all of which were intended to provide a pleasant, soothing atmosphere in which healing could take place, ...in other words, the Greeks were beginning to focus upon and respond to patients' mental-emotional/physical/life needs and desires instead of only driving sickness and evil spirits out, ...or maybe they were creating a desirable internal and external environment for "good spirits" to happily reside in. In either case, medical treatments were changing to empower patients to deal, somewhat, with their own problems.

During this period, most people wanted their pains and illnesses attended to and relieved directly ...and would not accept the philosophizing or sermonizing that their illnesses occurred because of evil causes, ill-winds, improper or unbalanced humors, being in disharmony with good spirits and strong life-forces, not living a righteous or moral life, or that their internal organs and fluids were too wet or dry ...or too hot or cold; ...though, in this regard, Aristotle speculated that the brain was actually a radiator for maintaining a proper body temperature and internal environment. He also proposed that the heart heated the blood and added "vital spirits" ...and the lungs cooled the blood, ...while others taught that the vascular system carried life-giving air to every part of the body. While these functions were not exactly correct, these theories helped move the focus of medical care away from demons and outer causes and treatments to directly repairing or relieving individual body malfunctions. Healers were beginning to see a direct relationship between individuals' lives, their illnesses, and their recovery ...or continuation of their problems and ailments.

Disease and healing were beginning to separate from superstition, religion, and spirituality ...and move toward individual physical and personal functions and misfunctions. This was also the time of Hippocrates (460-370 ACE), "the father of modern medicine" ...who taught his physicians to ask questions of patients about their sleeping habits and conditions, the directions of prevailing winds at night, their previous illnesses and family medical history, their job and working situations, their eating habits, and what diseases they may have been exposed to, ...and only then did his physicians fully examine patients ...not merely the area of complaint. From this procedure, his physicians were

accumulating a rather complete medical and personal history of each patient before proceeding with a treatment ...or course of curative medications and therapies. Many healers and therapists, ignoring this vital step today ...or not knowing what patient-information to gather ...and what it might mean, blindly treat their patients, ...and if some minor relief or change is observed, consider their practices effective and well-performed. Don't you believe it!