



# **The Soul - Foundation of Health and Cause of Obstacles to Treatment**

**by Camilla Fischer, Naturopath**



*Nine-tenths of our happiness is founded on good health alone. If we have that, everything becomes a fountain of enjoyment; however, without it no external good thing can be enjoyed, of whatever kind ...*

Arthur Schopenhauer

## **Introduction**

The human being is a whole, a unity of body and soul. It is only when these resonate in harmony with each other that we are in a state of health. Whenever the balance is disturbed, this favours the development of disease.

Disorders may affect both psyche and physis, as well as one another reciprocally.

The specialisation which divides medicine and psychology into different disciplines means that often too little attention is paid to these connections. In holistic treatment, however, both aspects are taken into account, so as to achieve true healing rather than mere palliation.

## **The nature of health and disease**

The Roman poet Ovid coined the phrase: "A healthy mind in a healthy body".

This statement seems hardly applicable if we look, for instance, at the life of the astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, who contracted amyotrophic lateral sclerosis at the age of 20, and later lost his voice following a tracheotomy. Since then he "speaks" with the aid of a speech computer and sensor, which he directs via his

buccal muscle. Hawking has a brilliant mind at his disposal, but not a healthy body.

So what is health, anyway? What does our health consist of? And what purpose do illnesses serve?

## **Health**

The WHO defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". If this is true, then there are very few "healthy" people around today, unless they feel "ill" at the same time. Two people in similar physical, mental and social situations may each subjectively experience their state of health and well-being completely differently. It is quite conceivable that a person such as Stephen Hawking may consider himself healthier than somebody else with less serious physical impairment. It is here that our individual mental state, our mind and emotions, come into their own. However, they elude any measurement, and - in the truest sense of the word - are intangible.

In Chinese Medicine, "health" means being in harmony with oneself and one's environment.

## **Disease**

The homöopath Edward Whitmont ascribes a positive aspect to disease, regarding it as a form of expression for the human being, which can serve as a learning experience, helping to develop individuality in life. Viewed in this way, diseases no longer represent a hostile attack by alien powers

or energies, and certainly not a punishment. Rather we are dealing with factors which have an effect on us, corresponding with our inner shortcomings, so that we can integrate them.

This means that the constant alternation between disease and health is thoroughly necessary and logical for our ongoing development and maturation, even if most indispositions are experienced as a superfluous nuisance.

Health is not a static state, but rather a dynamic process. Persistent good health leads to boredom and a lack of tension. This is borne out by a study carried out at the University of Minnesota on a sample of 50 men in "normal mental health": they were home-loving, stable, reliable, successful at work, but equally they were unimaginative and socially apathetic, even in the development of their own children. "Normal health" brings with it a certain lack of creative ability, originality and imagination.

In our lives we need the polarity of health and disease in order to keep us on the move and developing further.

The word "stress" (Lat. stringere) originally denoted an effort, a physical or mental demand made on the living body, to which it reacts by adapting to the new conditions.

Neonates are initially in a situation of sheltered dependency and a certain passivity. However, this state would not be realistic for the whole of their lives, and there-



fore standing erect and movement are "programmed", as it were, into their development, and are triggered by external stimuli. Again and again a child will practise standing up and accepts the falling down as a necessary opposite without making a value judgement as to whether one or the other is better or worse. Viewed from this angle, stress or illness is a necessary physical and/or mental effort, in order to experience and learn what health is.

At present, however, stress tends to have a more negative connotation.

Genuine health is much more like a pendulum, which is given an initial push and then executes greater or lesser swings around a central point. These external stimuli may impact more on the emotional or on the physical level, and reciprocal effects may ensue.

### **Body and soul**

Even though it may seem the obvious thing to do, to address a person's easily accessible and visible, tangible physical complaints first, in holistic treatment the other side of the coin, the soul, must not be overlooked.

Among the Teutons the souls of the dead and of the unborn were believed to consist of a watery substance; this finds expression in the Old High German lexical root "se(u)la" = belonging to the lake. The ancient Greek equivalent is the "psyche" or "pneuma", in Latin the "anima" and in Middle High German "geist" = ghost or spirit.

These various concepts: soul, psyche, spirit are frequently used synonymously.

Within the totality, the mass of the body (Lat. corpus, Gr. soma) represents the complement of the spiritual.

### **Body and Soul in modern medicine**

A treatment can only be successful if justice is done to both aspects.

The human organism is a gigantic, flexible miracle, whose many possibilities we shall never be able to comprehend.

In spite of all the helpful and beneficial progress and developments made in modern medical science, sometimes one cannot avoid the impression that the human being is a collection of "organs which ideally function well with their biochemistry correct, with the individual parts able to be repaired or even replaced" (Lown). For some considerable time now, transplants have enabled missing or worn out body parts to be exchanged or replaced. Occasionally, recipients of donated organs report having experienced changes since the transplant in their previous preferences, aversions or feelings, which are demonstrably those of the donor. Clearly, then, it is not only physical substance that has been transplanted, but also immaterial information.

Many old and "modern" forms of treatment follow the strategy of endeavouring to eradicate disease root and branch, and in so

doing they resemble the most modern forms of warfare. As in politics, any misgivings about the sense of destruction, or the quest for integrative peaceful solutions, are given short shrift. Any idea of becoming healthy is discarded.

### **The Soul/Psyche as a cause of illness**

Below we shall examine the main points of the emotional aspect. However, we must never lose sight of the fact that the obverse side of the coin - the physical level - is of course always involved.

Each person is settled in an environment which suits him or her to a greater or lesser extent, or to which he or she has adapted. Thus, the Eskimo lives in conditions in which a southern European would find it hard to cope, and vice-versa.

If a person is under pressure and stretched in his everyday life (family, work, money....) then they must be able to withstand or resist this pressure. Otherwise they will suffer both physically and emotionally. They will harden themselves (e.g. pain in shoulders or back, emotional rigidity) or suffer breakdown (weakness, organic insufficiency, emotional susceptibility). This rigidity results in e.g. fragility of bones, our supportive framework, i.e. that which gives us external shape.

There is an old proverb which is very apt here: "When the head is sick, the limbs are in mourning."



The soul experiences insults, and these develop into illnesses in the body.

Thus, having been thrown off balance, the soul cannot let the body recover, until it has itself recovered. The physical symptoms of illness are urgently needed, in order to demonstrate their own neediness, whether the need is of help, self-recognition or punishment. (Ulrich Schaffer)

The amount of pressure that is tolerated varies from person to person, but short-term stress is better tolerated than ongoing stress. People who are in a position to counter unavoidable daily onslaughts of stress with inner structure and calmness - these are the ones who tend to stay healthy.

The tremendous significance of the psyche in our physical reactions and how we feel, both in the inhibited sense and in the progressive sense, is illustrated by the following examples:

- In India, the following experiment was carried out in a jail: A prisoner who had been sentenced to death by hanging agreed to the proposal that he should bleed to death instead. He was blindfolded and tied to the bed at his hands and feet. Then the skin of his extremities was slightly scratched, but without drawing blood. By the bedpost, water was dripping from containers into vessels on the floor, rapidly at first, then more and more slowly, until finally, it stopped.

Parallel with this, the singsong of the attending physician got softer and softer, while the prisoner got weaker and weaker. By the end of the experiment the man was dead, without having lost a single drop of blood. (Bernhard Lown)

- Hospital patients who are able to look at a tree make a more rapid recovery, need fewer analgesics and are discharged sooner.
- If people who have been given a diagnosis of "HIV+" are tested a week later to ascertain their immune status, the results are significantly worse than they were before. However, if patients suspected of being HIV+ are given psychological care during the period from the first blood test to the communication of the result, the immune levels remain stable. This shows the part played by the emotions in susceptibility to infection.

Using our five senses (aided by diagnostic tools) we can measure the body and its functions; the psyche, however, is more difficult to comprehend and - in some cases - can only be indirectly grasped, e.g. via the immune status of patients with HIV.

Various reciprocal actions are possible between the body and the emotions:

1. Primarily physical weakening may find expression either somatically or emotionally.

Thus, a poor nutritional state, meaning either too little or too much, may possibly come out in the form of either organic or emotional complaints. We see this, for instance, in the onset of type II diabetes as a result of overeating, or in increased susceptibility to infections when there is a zinc deficiency. In schizophrenics a copper deficiency is often found, and the onset of depression may be favoured either by over-acidity or by a deficiency of omega-3-fatty acids.

2. A weakening which is primarily emotional may manifest on the emotional or the physical level.

If a child is overly protected and sheltered, it lacks the conflicts with and experience of its environment. On the emotional level this may result in e.g. anxious behaviour when faced with anything new, or it may be expressed physically in the form of allergy or of neurodermitis (also known as "perpiration of the soul").

Every person has a certain tendency towards, or affinity for, one of these kinds of manifestation, i.e. they will express an imbalance in their life by showing a preference for one of these. Every person has an unquenchable longing for what he or she lacks or believes is missing from their life.

It may be found helpful to "allocate" the patient to one of these categories, because this can have consequences for the choice of suitable treatment measures.



While doing this, we can differentiate between the two poles of somatisation and 'psychologisation', and between them we may find many hybrid forms.

### **Somatisation**

Here the left side of the brain, the reasoning side, is dominant. Disorders are experienced on the physical level and the possibility of an emotional element is denied on a massive scale. If a person denies any emotional involvement whatever in their complaint, then it is because they live by the motto: "Only what I can see exists and counts." Such patients are in most cases very tough, determined people who appear to suffer their health problems without complaint, or who trivialise them. They don't make a lot of fuss about their person, in some cases because a lot of fuss was never made about them. Emotions are suppressed, they seem unquantifiable or threatening. The quarrel with their emotions could shatter the structure of their world. The person who somatises everything has accepted this state, or simply learned to accept it. They will not recognise the fact that about 90% of our perception takes place unconsciously.

This means that such a person can only subscribe to illnesses/diagnoses which have measurable or tangible complaints.

If we speak to such a patient regarding possible emotional causes for his illness, he will deny this vehemently or even truculently. Such a dismissive attitude confirms the therapist's suspicions,

but any probing will arouse the patient's opposition and result in refusal and hardening of attitude towards any well-meant treatment initiatives.

Thus it will make sense initially to meet the patient on "his own" somatic territory and to begin treating the emotional disorder on a loop-line, as it were. In the process, hands-on treatments such as massage or similar may help with the softening-up.

### **"Psychologisation"**

In this case it is the right side of the brain, the intuitive, emotional side, that is affected; however it needs assistance from the left side, the reasoning side, to express itself.

By contrast with the somatising patient, this person tends to substantiate every physical symptom with an emotional origin. Unconsciously, in his life he feels a lack of affection, in the form of emotional "strokes". This means that he reacts to an almost seismographic extent to situations in which he does not feel that he is being paid sufficient attention, and will develop emotional symptoms rather than physical ones. (Cancer of the soul is the psychosis.)

From the point of view of his complaints, this patient is often more difficult to grasp than the somatic patient, because his disorders are enacted on the unconscious plane.

The person concerned may even be disappointed and feel mis-

understood if the therapist tries to present him with a simple organic origin of his complaints. Here too we will come up against truculent denials.

Frequently, this type of patient does not want to let go of his illness, because to some extent it guarantees him affection, consideration and attentiveness. Even if the therapist initially meets him on this level and treats him, care must be taken in the long term not to become the patient's accomplice.

MUSCARSAN, produced from *Agaricus muscarius*, the Fly Agaric, can tone down the aggressive side in cases of this sort.

### **Hybrid forms**

In between the poles already described, somatisation and 'psychologisation', there are shades of difference.

Thus, in this "age of the barrage of information from the internet and of heart attacks" it seems reasonable to suppose that every episode of chest pain should quickly and appropriately be self-diagnosed as "heart disease", and that we should live on in continual fear of a heart attack. In such cases, it is the therapist's task to take the case carefully and investigate matters, getting to the root, and to point out to the patient - so long as no organic problems are found - the connection between emotional tension and the reaction of the cardiovascular system, and to recommend suitable treatments (relaxation exercises, etc.)



Elderly people in particular are often afraid that their forgetfulness is a sure proof that they have Alzheimer's (another spot diagnosis common among lay people these days), and that this will threaten the continuation of their life as they know it. In this respect, especially at a more advanced age, drinking too little water, or too low an oxygen intake, play a considerable part in triggering weakness of memory.

Patients who come under these intermediate stages tend rather to exhibit anxiety regarding their health, and are considerably more open to explanations and suggestions from their therapist. In this way, they may be distinguished from the stubbornness of somebody who only wants to perceive their illness through a somatic or emotional filter.

### **Treatment initiatives**

Since body and emotions have a reciprocal influence on each other, it is possible to access one of these levels by treating the other.

On the somatic level, as is well known, a stable milieu is a precondition for remaining healthy and for recovery from illness. In a figurative sense the same is true of health and recovery of the emotions.

In treatment three factors need to be borne in mind. In one way they sound quite banal, but they are of enormous importance:

1. The patient and his/her social surroundings

2. The method of treatment employed
3. The therapist

### *Regarding (1). The patient*

According to the Latin root, the patient is one who endures or suffers something; to this we can add the English word "patient", implying patience.

Admittedly an illness may appear to us to be a nuisance; however it is not without a purpose: rather it forcefully brings us to make a pause in stages of our lives in which we have overexerted or overloaded ourselves. Healing takes place when we manage to accept our illness, to understand the reason for it, and to be reconciled to it. According to Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, we experience illness in five stages, irrespective of how serious it is:

1. Not wanting to admit it: expressed in sentences such as "but that can't be true".
2. Anger: "Why now?" "Why me, of all people?"
3. Refusal/Negotiation: "the therapist made a mistake", or "if only I had ... earlier"
4. Depression: "what use is it taking medicine? There's no point."
5. Acceptance: "It's no use lamenting, there must be ways of relieving it or curing it."

This thesis is also supported by a survey of cancer patients who had considerably outlived their

prognosis. They had learnt to accept their illness, instead of struggling with their fate. They were able to take over the responsibility for themselves, their illness and their treatment, had decided to manage without burdensome treatments, had changed their way of life and style of eating, and the way they regarded them, and had obtained psychotherapeutic support from their families, friends, self-help groups and suchlike. These people learned not to come to terms with what appeared to be unalterable, but rather to largely take over their own responsibility for themselves, their illness and their development.

This is all the more admirable, since in this age when we are inundated with information we tend to accept everything we hear, see or read as gospel truth. If we are fed the message for long enough and often enough that from the age of 20 physical decay sets in inevitably, then this belief can become an obsession and we staunchly fulfil the prophecy.

There are primitive peoples where the 70-year-olds are far superior to the young adults in cross-country running, thus proving that ageing does not necessarily involve forfeiting physical integrity.

"One of the myths surrounding the ageing process says that we can no longer do all that we used to be able to do. But the actual concomitant of ageing is that we stop doing all the things that we once used to do. If life signifies movement and death the absence



of movement, then it must be acceptable to assume that more movement signifies more life, and less movement less life." (Thomas Hanna)

Looking at things in this way should encourage us in giving treatment.

Tense, cramped posture when under stress brings about tension in the sympathetic nervous system and results in hyperacidity and lack of oxygen in the tissues. In the long term this causes a lack of both physical and mental flexibility. Thus acidity creates not jollity, but rigidity. In Isopathic medicine the tendency to induration corresponds to an increase in aspergillic, tuberculinic complaints. These find expression, for instance, in stiffening of the joints, myalgias, arteriosclerosis, and also in anxiety neuroses or bouts of depression.

Measures aimed at de-acidification contribute to a balancing of the autonomic nervous system on both physical and emotional levels; these include, inter alia, food with a high alkaline content, ALKALA, SANUVIS and CITROKEHL, relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, but also going for walks, sports, and meetings and chats with friends. MUCEDOKEHL has a balancing action on the autonomic nervous system.

*Regarding (2).*

*The treatment method*

It is not only emotional or physical blocks (see above) that can spoil the progress of a course of

treatment, but also an unsuitable treatment method. For instance, the type of patient who likes to regard his complaints as having an emotional basis will inwardly rebel if he is given treatment which is physically oriented.

Many kinds of treatment simply bypass the actual needs of the patient.

Thus, in the 1950's, treatment for coronary infarction consisted mainly of several weeks of strict bed-rest. To find oneself taken from active life into complete passivity and dependency on strangers represents a tremendous emotional stress, which is not conducive to recuperation. At that time the American doctor Bernard Lown began seating the heart patients on his ward in armchairs, instead of "tying" them to their beds, and in so doing he achieved strikingly rapid recoveries.

In her story "The Yellow Wallpaper", the American writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) describes her own story. After her daughter's birth she suffered from bouts of depression and was sentenced by a specialist to absolute inactivity. This kind of procedure assumes that the emotions can be set in plaster like a broken bone, so as to rest it for healing to take place. Instead of recovering from her problem she became an emotional wreck. In the end, Charlotte Gilman committed suicide on developing breast cancer.

Nowadays needs of this kind are met with successful treatment measures such as movement therapy, elimination of dietary errors and supplementation with omega-3-fatty acids, as well as other micro- and macro-nutrients. Nonetheless, even in modern times we are not free from forms of treatment whose non-sensical nature may only become evident decades from now.

*Regarding (3). The therapist*

The success or failure of a treatment also depends to a certain extent on the therapist's knowledge, manner and ability to empathise. But apart from that, he or she is never untouched by their own experiences, which it is all too easy to apply to someone seeking advice.

For instance, one may tend to prescribe something for which one has an affinity oneself: the chilly type much more frequently recommends heat application than cold ones.

Therapists themselves can act as a remedy or placebo, which is very cost-effective and basically free of side-effects. The word "placebo" comes from Latin and means: "I shall please". Unfortunately, Allopathic medicine mostly tends to look askance at this.

There have been various experiments in which patients with e.g. knee or heart complaints were given a pretend operation, following which they exhibited the same recuperation process as those who had actually been



operated on. Science smiles at magic operations, invocations or ritual healings; however, orthodox medicine appears to make use of the same healing mechanisms in its own successes, even if this is involuntary.

This means that every action of the therapist has an effect which is both tangible and physical as well as being not directly measurable. Since patients often feel helpless or unsure regarding their complaints, it is all the more important for the therapist to impart a certain security and structure. This is particularly true in so-called "end-of-the-line" cases, in which orthodox medical science has exhausted all its possibilities. "Heal now and then, alleviate often and comfort always" (Dr. Edward Trudeau) is a good motto for everyone who treats the sick.

If the writing of a prescription is accompanied by cheering words, the medicine works better than it would do if written to a background of morose mutterings.

After all, a good therapist is a systematic craftsman.

One British study shows that 75% of the information leading to a correct diagnosis is obtained from a detailed case-taking, 10% from physical examination, 5% from simple routine testing and 5% from invasive procedures. In 5% of cases there was no diagnosis.

Thus a holistic treatment will not only try to take account of all aspects of the patient, but also of his or her surroundings and the interplay between patient and therapist.

### **Basic principles of treatment**

Holistic treatment is a far more complex event than we realise. The aim is to trace the original wound and the consequences arising from it, and to eliminate them. Illnesses where physical and emotional problems are especially closely intertwined require particular care in selecting the treatment best suited to the current level of the lesion.

### **A basic plan for treating emotional imbalances**

This can only serve as a rule of thumb, so that the therapist has a helpful structure to hand.

- **Milieu adjustment** for healing and remaining healthy

De-acidification with ALKALA, SANUVIS, CITROKEHL

- Make good nutrient deficiencies:  
As an example, depressive conditions can be alleviated by taking omega-3-fatty acids (LIPISCOR capsules) or Tryptophan as a Serotonin precursor (in sunflower seeds, oats). It has been proved that schizophrenic patients have strikingly high levels of copper (the same is true in Parkinson's disease), and they are low in lithium;

the latter is also often true of people at high risk of suiciding.

- Remove excesses:  
The high phosphate content of many convenience foods results in a high acidity level in the organism, contributing to hyperactivity.
- Detoxification: Heavy metals, medicines, geopathic stress, etc.
- Take account of individual aspects.
- **Specific regulation** of emotional/physical disorders depending on causative or triggering factors.

Where complaints have a strongly emotional focus: medicines indicated by homeopathic case-taking, e.g. MUCEDOKEHL, MUSCARSAN.

As an example of disorders on a physical level, Candida mycoses should be mentioned, and these may also play a part in the development of depressive changes, chronic fatigue syndrome and the like. Here a suitable intestinal cleansing programme needs to be carried out.

- **General regulation**

MUCOKEHL, NIGERSAN support the regeneration and stabilisation of the organism.



## - **Immunomodulation**

The choice of immunomodulation always depends on the basic problem, and should therefore be attuned to the remedies previously taken.

Examples:

- **REBAS:** to regenerate the Peyer's patches in the gut, when chronic dietary errors have resulted in a deficiency.
- **SANUKEHL** Cand: if mycosis is present.

## **Bibliography**

Bernard Lown: "Die verlorene Kunst des Heilens [= The lost art of healing]; Schattauer Verlag

Oliver Sacks: "The man who mistook his wife for a hat" ; Rowohl Verlag (or English publisher)

Baldur R. Ebertin: "Wenn die Seele den Körper nicht gesunden lässt" [= When the emotions do not let the body recover]; Chiron Verlag

Thomas Hanna: "Das Geheimnis gesunder Bewegung" [= The secret of healthy movement]; Junfermann Verlag

Lothar Hirneise: "Chemotherapie heilt Krebs und die Erde ist eine Scheibe" [= Chemotherapy cures cancer, and the Earth is flat]; Sensei Verlag

**First published in the German language in the SANUM-Post magazine (82/2008)**

**© Copyright 2008 by Semmelweis-Institut GmbH, 27318 Hoya (Weser), Germany**

**All Rights Reserved**