

# A Mental Diet for Health

by  
Ernest Holmes

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## March 1939 Science of Mind Magazine Articles

### A Mental Diet for Health by Ernest Holmes

(From a talk delivered at the Wiltern Theatre, Sunday morning" December 11,1938)

It might have sounded very strange to speak of a mental diet twenty-five years ago, but it does not seem at all strange today. The idea of physical diet, which has largely been a fad, is gradually being reduced to a science. We all know that certain foods affect us in definite ways. But any physician will tell us that diet is largely an individual thing and that, generally speaking, one should eat what he likes, be glad to eat it, and not worry while he is eating it.

The newest contributions to the subject of diet are those of biochemistry, the chemistry of the human body, which deals largely with glandular deficiencies. It is very interesting that today the theory is that many physical troubles are results of glandular deficiencies and psychological upsets. We have no doubt that back of many glandular deficiencies there is an emotional unbalance, which, of course, is what the psychiatrist and the psychoanalyst tell us. They do not deny the physical deficiency; they merely affirm that in many cases, at least, it arises out of a psychic disturbance.

David Seabury, in his new book, "Adventures in Self-Discovery," speaks of "psychic pus" as we would speak of a boil, a cancer, or any other morbid secretion in the human body. But this means a subjective, a subconscious, and primarily a mental state. So while the physician and the biological chemist are telling us what is good to eat to compensate for our chemical deficiencies, we can go a step farther and co-operate with them in providing a mental diet, for without a proper mental attitude, a physical diet is seldom complete enough to do anything other than produce a temporary cure.

We affirm that causation is invisible and, like the psychologist, largely emotional. We also affirm that spiritual inspiration and spiritual realization are necessary to a well-regulated psychic life. The physician diagnoses the body and prescribes a remedy; so does the psychologist. Both are good, each is necessary, but I thoroughly agree with Seabury, Link, Jung and some other leading psychologists, that unless the soul or the psyche is more nearly spiritualized, there cannot be any permanent healing. There is a growing tendency in the field of psychology to return their patients to some field of religion. This is an amazing confession that the psyche does not live by bread alone.

What thoughts and emotional states, then, are back of certain types of disease? I have noticed, for instance, that in many cases of pernicious anemia we find a psychic emotional unbalance, and just as they tell us in biochemistry about a chemical deficiency, we may speak of a psychic deficiency - a lack of a sense of being appreciated. There can be no permanent healing, as Jung says, without a

restoration of faith; and in this case the faith must be in that quality, the lack of which produced the deficiency - there must come a specific faith in love. God is love - a consciousness that within the Infinite Love is included all finite love. And the demonstration of this will again produce affection, co-operation, human companionship and affiliation in the life of the individual who has this kind of faith. He will have reorganized his psyche. The mental deficiency there, which was primarily an emotional one, will be changed.

It is common belief that many heart afflictions are the result of hypertension. What is the psychic deficiency here? A lack of that kind of faith which knows that everything is going to be all right. The tension will be released and the person will be helped, in every instance, if we treat to heal him of the sense of strain. But what thought could accomplish this desired result other than the thought that "underneath are the everlasting arms; beneath are the girders of the Almighty"? As Browning said, "It is thou, God, who givest; it is I who receive."

In our field we do not treat the physical body. This is left to the physician, while we try to get more nearly at the mental cause of the trouble, and I have noticed that those who suffer from bladder troubles can be helped if we heal them of the thought of irritation, agitation and inflammation. We work not on the bladder, but on the thought. But you have to build a spiritual equivalent, a prototype of peace, of a sense of completion - there is no over-action or wrong action or irritation or agitation or inflammation in the mind of this person, which must be healed. We believe the Spirit or the Ego is perfect. We believe the psyche is not an entity but merely a mental reaction and the body a form. And it is very evident that that which can be changed is subject to the thing that changes it. It is the engine being driven by the engineer. Neither the human form nor the psyche back of it, are things of themselves, which is evidenced by the fact that we can change the emotional stream of the psyche, and also by the fact that when the soul deserts the body, the body at once begins to disintegrate.

We are convinced that the majority of people who have trouble with their throats, if they could be healed of having their feelings hurt, would be helped and probably most of them healed. Just as we find that stomach ulcers are seldom developed by phlegmatic, unemotional people; nor do we often find phlegmatic, so-called callous, hard-boiled people having nervous prostration. We find that many physical ailments are the result of a mind that turns in upon itself. Why do people's minds turn morbidly within? Because they are not adjusted to the universe in which they live.

We believe that just as there are physical diets, there are mental diets for health. You remember Coue's axiom that when the imagination and will are in conflict, the imagination always wins. The imagination and feeling are creative where the will is only directive. So the will, the imagination and the feeling must come into conjunction, into mutual agreement, before there is a right mental life. And the only thing that has ever brought them into mutual agreement is something man considers bigger than himself, which is a belief in the spiritual universe in which he lives. It is just as impossible to divorce spiritual values from a well-ordered mental

world as it is to take the heat out of fire and have fire hot. The body is not an entity nor is the psyche an entity neither could be changed if they were - therefore, we must believe in the supreme Ego and in God.

It must be that back of all physical manifestation there is some psychic cause. If we watch the type of the physical manifestation we will at least be partly able to diagnose the psychic cause and anyone who can diagnose the psychic cause can prescribe a mental remedy which will at least be helpful. Such mental remedy would necessarily be a thought that is not only opposite, an emotional reaction that is not only directly opposite to the one that produced the sick soul, which produced the sick body, but one which is built on a complete conviction to the contrary. We are dealing with law and we cannot fool it, therefore, the conviction must be both deep and sincere. For all the words we use in our analysis are meaningless unless they convey that meaning. The power of Jesus was not in the particular words he used, but in that consciousness back of those words which had the knowledge of the full significance and the meaning of them.

Hence the practitioner who is prescribing a mental health diet must, himself, have drunk deeply at the fountain of his own life; he must, himself, first have caught fire from heaven in his own imagination, for "if the blind lead the blind shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

We shall never escape from the dynamic power of thought and consequently we should learn to think upon those ideas which we wish to experience. Every new creation emerges from the invisible fully equipped with the necessary law to project itself into form. This is the central teaching of our Science of Mind. If every creation carries its own law into the execution of its desire, we can stop with the contemplation of the unity of love and law and work out our salvation with the assurance that "if God be for us, who can be against us."

Ernest Holmes

## Commentary on Browning's Poem "Rabbi Ben Ezra" by Ernest Holmes

BROWNING was a great mystic, a spiritual genius and a prophet. His poems are saturated with an atmosphere, the sweep of which is tremendous - quiet waters and turbulent streams uniting the currents of human life with the oceans of the Infinite. All nature is alive with the Spirit; God dominates. Man is ever reaching into the Infinite, ever changing, ever advancing. A divine love and purposefulness justifies all human experiences and Truth rises triumphant over every evil.

Browning lived, loved and rejoiced in the consciousness that every part leads back to the Whole; that the thread of life is eternal; that the majesty of the soul is transcendent.

In analyzing his thought we are dealing with the mind of a great thinker, a true mystic, a mental giant and a spiritual genius, the depths of whose vision the average man can but poorly estimate. Like many other great poets, his inner vision penetrated those realms which are invisible to most of us and brought back the answer, "All's right with the world!"

Browning believed in God, in man, and in a divine destiny, the outcome of which is inevitable. Being a man of inner vision, he realized that the little of life experienced over a run of a few years, discloses at best but a short line in our eternal evolution. Having confidence in the Spirit, he lived happily in the present moment, never doubting that the future would unfold before him a still greater life and experience. He was not afraid of the passing years, nor of the inevitable and of that which is human. Therefore, he was able to say: Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be.

In the first stanza of "Rabbi Ben Ezra," Browning emphasizes the importance of an accumulative experience. The present moment, which is the link between the past and the future, opens the doorway to great opportunities. The justification for our being is through the expansion of the mind. We may trust that Divinity which shapes our ends and believe that Its plan for us is perfect and reliable. We should place ourselves entirely under the guidance of Divine Providence, Our times are in His hand, Who saith, "A whole I planned."

In the second stanza, Browning intimates that the perfect pattern includes all experiences. To choose one experience alone, while excluding others, is impossible. The rose plucked by the wayside, or the lily, symbolic of purity, are but two among many. Jupiter and Mars cannot satisfy the imagination of man.

Mine, be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!

We cannot be satisfied with fragments of truth. We must find the Original Flame, in whose brilliant light all figures dance. The Flame Itself is the Infinite Originator, the Parent Mind or Universal Spirit. The artist is greater than his art, the thinker greater than his thoughts; we must penetrate the imagination of the artist and the mind of the thinker before we can estimate the worth of either, so we should recognize the coordinating unity running through everything in nature. We have an

inner awareness, which enables us to do this, a spiritual perception which is the gift of God.

Stanza three draws attention to a low order of evolution, a state of mind, Untroubled by a spark - as the mentality not yet awakened to a realization of itself and its relationship to the Original Flame, the spark of the human is not yet fanned into a blaze divine. But even in this low state of evolution the questions persistently asked of the soul must be answered. The doubt referred to in this stanza, which Browning prizes above the brief years of youth with its hopes and fears, is the eternal interrogation: "What is the truth? Where is reality to be found?"

By "youth's brief years," is meant that soul which has not yet come into a realization of itself. Its vision is external and it views the "finished and finite clods" as though they were entities of themselves. The spark of divinity has not yet been struck.

The external life is fraught with hopes and fears, all of which are annulled as the youth passes into manhood, as the soul transcends the limitations of a finite sense and reaches up to the Original Flame.

Earthly possessions alone will never satisfy the great craving of the soul. In the midst of our earthly possessions, in the midst even of a surfeit of earthly joy, when the feast is ended and the cup apparently running over, we still thirst, we still hunger, we still sense an incompleteness.

A spark disturbs our clod which means an inner joy beckons us onward. We find no completion in that which is external.

..... we are allied

To that which doth provide -

and no matter how vast the external possession, how exalted the human may be, this inner alliance is still the dominating note of our lives. We must still seek for greater countries to conquer.

The vast territory of the unknown lies before us. The persistent urge to accomplish and attain, to understand spiritual values and . . . . bids not sit nor stand but go! - and whatever the cost, we must progress. We should hold the cost cheap since the prize is worthy of the price paid for it. Obstacles are opportunities, the leveled mountains prove that we are on a vast plane. Pain and anguish tell us we are on the wrong track, that we must blaze our trail in another direction and the hardships of the wrong road are lessons which the soul must learn on the pathway of its evolution.

Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:

By renewed effort the failure is turned into success, the lesson of experience well learned, again points us to that far country from which we came. We are continuously confronted by an inner vision, a spiritual sense.

What I aspire to be,

And was not, comforts me.