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THE VIRTUE OF HAPPINESS

MARY LAMOREAUX BURNELL

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By

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Let extend
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PART I: PRISONERS OF
THE LORD

A poet might declare that the ocean is intoxicated upon itself, for it seems to ride its own waves and delight in its own action and to be drunken upon its own movements.

In the same way, the mind is caught in its own ecstatic movements, to the forgetfulness of what should be appealing, enticing, delighting, and causing ecstasy. Forgetful of that, it is drunken upon itself. And it is drunken upon a poor wine, upon a poisonous wine. As it is declared by the old prophets, The nations are drunken with a dark wine and a poisonous drink.

Therefore, one who is all the time companioned by his own mind, has no way of making his escape, because he is entangled in his own convolutions. He is held spellbound by the movements that excite the mind and give it the spells, put it under the spells of sorcery.

And while the mind is so entrapped by itself, it would seem that there is no possible way of escaping. That is an obvious conclusion: apparently there is no way of escape by the mind from the mind. So we do not look for deliverance in the mind itself. We do look to the mind for certain properties and principles and actions. And these principles which are laid down as constitutional in the mind are for an advantage, are for a gain, for a purpose; they serve the proper end; but they do not deliver one to the absolute truth.

All who are familiar with the process of reasoning know that at its best it will deliver the mind into a state of pure negation, by which one is able to appreciate the fact that all that has been laid out before the mind and has been the action of the mind, is as nothing, vanity of vanities, dreams and unrealities. The reason will deliver one to this certainty, and thereby to an escape which

is called Nirvana, the place of rest, the place of no vibration, the place of stillness. But after that must come the acquaintance with the Self, which can come only by being.

It is quite true that one cannot know another person except in as far as he is that other person. One does not know another by standing off and observing his ways, his disposition, his actions. One knows another by entering into his life, his heart, his soul, and thereby being the other. It is a divine practice to know how to be another. The divine practice of sympathy, the divine practice of friendship, the divine practice of the knowledge of unity, is not a form of theorizing, of giving pleasure to the mind by its ability to perceive adjustments and harmony and close relationships. But it is an action of the divine Self, by which unity is not sought, but is known; where being is not experienced by searching, but is experienced by its own nature of being.

It is difficult, perhaps, to make clear in speech how it is that one experiences being by being, for there seems to be no step forward in such an announcement; as though one stood upon being, and then made no further advance to being that being. But there is no advance toward becoming being. It must be a union which has existed forever, and is not to be created.

So in this perception of unity, we deal with something that the mind is not capable of assisting in. In the meantime, while one is really active about the main thing, which is the experience of being, the mind may be devoting itself most properly, most directly, and in a superlatively perfect way, to produce the image, to make the picture, to establish the idea, to exalt itself into its best presentation; and entertaining itself in this way, it is properly engaged. But in the meantime, the main work, the main action, the main spirit, the chief good, as it was called in ancient times; the chief good

consists in that which is not approached by mind.

The mind is like a dance that goes on before the king while the king sits enthroned. Who is the king? The great Self, Life, Being. The I AM. And the dance that goes on before, which the king may observe or may not observe, in the various formations, transformations, turns, circles, graceful movements of mind. It goes on like the dancing girl, like a band of dancers, like a group of entertainers. But the king sits, like one not engaged, witnessing, or not seeing, according to his wish, his will, his inclination.

Now, there is a property which every one in the world aims to possess. And whether he is properly engaged in obtaining that or not, does not matter to him. He seeks for something. Perhaps he is not wise enough to know whether he is seeking it in the right way or not. Nevertheless, he searches. And that quest is for happiness. It may

be called by different names. Some call it happiness, some call it wealth, some call it health. Some say it is success. Some say it is the furtherance of one's plans, the attainment of new relationships, engagement in affairs. But it is always the quest for happiness. And as one searches for it in the world he is compared to the one who pursues the ignis fatuus; it leads him over the swamps, it leads him up and down the hill-sides, it leads him at nighttime. He becomes a wanderer, a pursuer, his mind, his heart, his interest bent in a certain direction-- under happiness, under whatever name he may call it.

But happiness is not attained by following the will-o'-the-wisp; nor is there anything held out before the mind of man to entice him, that will lead him into happiness. But he will search for happiness, because happiness is crowding upon him, not from without, but from within. Happiness is knocking at the door of his heart. Happiness is

insisting upon entrance. And it will not leave one at peace until this happiness has been admitted.

But the quest for happiness is not where men think, nor in the direction they look. One might be told, as the sentence has been given over and over, that happiness is within. But that is not sufficient; for when one hears that happiness is within, he tries to conclude within his mind that he is already happy, and that the things taking place in his outer world do not affect him, and that he cannot be made to grieve or to be discouraged or disheartened on account of things that transpire. So he looks within himself to persuade his mind that he is in a state of happiness.

Now, this attempt to persuade one concerning his own happiness is futile. It may go a little way to intoxicate the mind, or to cover it over for a little while, so that one may imagine himself happier than he was. But

happiness is not found by philosophizing. It is not found by cultivating sentences within the mind, making affirmations and denials, trying to persuade one's self that he is all right no matter what his conditions are. Happiness is something altogether different. And it is stated by those who are altogether wise that happiness will never be found until that one thing be found which is happiness. And that one thing which is happiness is not a thought about happiness, and is not the words about it; but is a thing and is a fact and is a substance, a veritable reality which may be handled, which may be felt, experienced. And that substance which is happiness is immortality, and no one finds happiness until he finds immortality.

Does that not seem as though happiness is now farther removed than ever before, if one cannot obtain it until he has immortality? That would be so if immortality did not now exist, or was not a thing of the present instant, but something to be made or to be found out or be created or discovered.

Now, the purpose of all instruction is to bring the hearer of the instruction, the partaker of the instruction, close to reality. There is no other purpose in instruction.

When Pythagoras was asked what he was, he said, I am a philosopher. And some of the contemporaries of his day said that he gave himself that name because he would not admit that he had absolute wisdom; for the meaning of philosopher is, a seeker after wisdom. And that was the beginning of the expression, a philosopher. And since the time when this great mind named himself a seeker after wisdom, all who have been in the same pursuit, in the same search, have been called philosophers.

Now, instruction does not aim to make one a philosopher. It would seem, on the face of it, at the beginning, that it does make one a philosopher, that that is the high calling. But to be a philosopher is to be one in search of happiness, to be one

chasing over the trails of the marshes and the hillsides after something, in hopes of its reward as permanent satisfaction. Instruction is not to make one a wanderer. Instruction is more like an imprisonment. So the Disciples, the Apostles called themselves prisoners of the Lord. And they loved to be prisoners of the Lord. They wished to be bound hand and foot, they wished to be chained down, so that they might no longer wander in search of something.

How long is a search? There is no calculating the aeons and aeons of ages that lie ahead of one who starts on a quest. And no divine teacher will ever start a student on a quest; but he takes him--if he is so willing to be taught, the instruction takes him and makes him a prisoner. To what? To a fact. To what fact? To the fact of immortality. Not an immortality to be obtained, not an after-death immortality, but an endless life, which was brought by the Christian Sage more abundantly to one's notice.

The reason that immortality is happiness is because there is no change in immortality and there is no death in immortality, there is no ending, there is no termination. And where there is the unchangeable and the eternal, there is happiness found.

If one were to sit down before a temple and gaze at the idol, or gaze at the great surface of the temple itself, concentrate upon it, to attain an inward happiness called vacuity, absence of the world, parting from experience, the loss of everything transient, he would not thereby find happiness or immortality. And if he were to practice all the things that have been given since the beginning of the world to bring about unity, he would not attain happiness or immortality.

So when the student is instructed, he is taken in the midst of his affairs. If he were plowing, he is taken from his plowing. Whatever his occupation, he is drawn out of it.

And this drawing out of occupations is not taking the hand from the plow, it is not dropping all labor, it is not laying aside skill and action; but it is a translation into another world; so that one may plow the field, and while he plows the field, his heart and mind and soul may dwell in the perfect world, and his body dwell in the perfect world.

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Part II: EXIT FROM THE LABYRINTH

There has been the great attempt made on the part of the wise teachers of the world, and a successful attempt, to make it clear that immortality does not pertain to a Spiritual existence, but it pertains to everything--principally to the body. Now, it is interpreted as pertaining to the body for this reason: that the body is the place where one imagines that he lives, and wherever one imagines he lives is the place for the translation to take place. If he imagines he is made of clay, that is the place where he is translated into the Spirit. Some may miss the point that this is an actual translation. Some may think that it is an expression, that it is a form of speech, a bit of philosophy or theory. But it is a fact, it is a truth, and is experienced by those who know.

Now, the great teachers have said it in this way: that all things shall be construed to be one thing. All the things that now seem to be distributed and scattered about in creation called the many objects, the many bodies, many people and things, shall all, in the light of knowledge, be construed to be one body; and that this one body shall not be as though it were broken up in fragments, but as though it were completely whole, each part every other part.

They who taught healing by a very superior method, a method which transcends all operations of the mind, outwitting the mind, outrunning the mind, too clever for the mind to reach, too wise for the mind to conceive of; they said, The meditation upon the perfect body, which is for the healing of the body, is a recognition that the heart is not located in any particular part, but that it is everywhere in the body; that lungs are not in any particular location, but they are distributed through the body; and the brain

is not in the head, but it is as well in the hands, the tips of the fingers, the feet, and pervading the body; and every organ in the body is in the place of every other organ.

To some extent, modern science has tried to experiment along this line. It has tried to discover that the brain is in the nerves and carried throughout the body. And it has also tried, by its experiments, to prove that the breathing is throughout the body as well. But there is no end to experiment; nor does experiment carry sufficiently far to satisfy those who have wisdom on the subject of the divine body. And what would pertain to the body that one calls his own personal body, his individual self, pertains to the cosmic body; for that is the body of man.

Through work which has been given in this Instruction, the knowledge has been conveyed that the ears are not upon a limited body, but they extend throughout the universe; the eyes likewise;

all the senses. They are keen and alive, witnesses of everything taking place throughout creation. For that is the sensitiveness of man: that he pervades his own body.

Then it comes to this fact: that the instruction concerning happiness and immortality is not a thing of speech, but is a thing of substance. Possibly when one hears the word "happiness" and the word "immortality" associated, and the word "substance" likewise associated, he may feel within himself the power of that union. And it may be borne in so strongly upon his mind that his mind bows down before it, giving up its own pretensions, willing to be nothing before that great fact by which one could acknowledge to himself, I am happiness, I am immortality, I am substance. And in doing this properly, he would not merely be uttering an affirmation, but it would be as though the very substance and veritable reality of that truth were grinding its way out of him. Sometimes it seems that the Spiritual truths are borne out upon one by an

inward compression, a force that seems to drive them out to realization.

The great healers in this world have spoken their words of truth by a language that is not mental, not an articulated language, but by a language that is carved in the stone of substance. It is called the white rock of revelation. Then one feels, when he utters words of truth, that he is handling stones, the Rock of Ages, so solid does the word seem to him, so far removed from that intangibility called philosophy, and that invisibility called theory. It is as though he had laid his hands upon the very Being of truth when he speaks the Word; for the Word is Substance, the Word is God, the Word is the only Reality. Then when the word "health" is spoken, it is not a means to an end; but that health is a substance, the substance of the body, When the word "perfection" is spoken, perfection tingles along the nerves and feels its way into every particle of substance; for

the body is the true substance. Then one does not speak the word "perfection" as though it were to light upon him, possibly to regenerate or to heal or to fix over conditions; but he speaks that word "perfection" as though he were announcing the staff, the adamantine substance of which he is made. And that word is "Reality."

The best that a teacher can do for a student is to deliver him from his own mind; and the most difficult portion of the mind to deliver him from is that portion of the mind which is called philosophy or religion or optimism or theory. For somehow every mortal being has persuaded himself that he has rare possessions, worth cultivating and preserving, in what he calls his ideals and his philosophies. But the great teachers of the world have always said to the students, Come down from the winds of philosophy. Come down and put your feet upon the earth, the pure earth, the divine earth, the solid earth, the

substance of God. Come down to that which is.

As long as one is engaged with his own mind, he is distracted, so distracted that he cannot be shown any truth. And in this distraction he becomes afraid, he is lost. He is afraid because he has lost his way, he is confused. The mind is always confusing. The mind will put up discussions, one discussion after another. It will throw out opinions, persuasions, and convictions. And it all becomes a great jumble, from which one cannot select, to know what he really should believe, or who he is, or what is true.

Sometimes the great teachers have said to the students, Do not discuss, do not argue, do not present opinions, do not try to carry the point, do not try to make your way, to be respected in mentality. Lay it all aside. Dissolve it, escape from it, and live in that great open place where Spirit is Life and Being and Truth.

I wish to read you this description of the mind, given by the great Gregory Tahumaturgus, who, by his understanding, carved a way through experience, in which he walked and in which his followers walked--a way of happiness and a way of health. But he understood that all the meanderings through experience are mere delusion and lead nowhere.

*...we might take the similitude of a labyrinth, which has but one apparent entrance, so that one suspects nothing artful from the outside, and goes within by the single door that shows itself; and then, after advancing to the farthest interior, and viewing the cunning spectacle, and examining the construction so skilfully contrived, and full of passages, and laid out with unending paths leading inwards or outwards, he decides to go out again,

*Ante-Nicene Christian Library,
Vol. XX., page 72

but finds himself unable, and sees his exit completely intercepted by that inner construction which appeared such a triumph of cleverness.

The schools are full of those who admire the construction of mind, its inner courts and its outer passages and its wonderful avenues of information, its great construction of ideals and principles. But he who is caught in this triumph of cleverness is lost, however much he may have admired the construction.

Is it any wonder, then, that the sages have come to individuals in this world to explain to them that they cannot ever attain happiness or immortality while they are involved in the constructions of their own minds? For then they are subject to meanderings, and they cannot hope to come to anything, but only to disappointment, only to blighted hopes, only to hopelessness and despair and weariness and pain.

There is a very nice point of distinction drawn between two words with which we are very familiar--the word "discovery," and the word "instruction." The word "discovery" always presupposes a method. The method of discovery is always from an outer position; that is, the position of the senses; like one lost in the labyrinth, hoping by search and methods which he may employ, to arrive at some exit by which he could make his escape to freedom. So the method of discovery always works from the place where one seems to be involved--which is the plane of his sense operations--outward, to something which seems to lie beyond, in a great nature, nature representing that which we have not yet seen into, to which the senses have not yet reached. So the method of discovery is from here where I am sensitively alive to a world of appearances, to discover something that might be far superior and freer and greater.

Now, the word "instruction" is the reverse of the method of

discovery. It does not begin with the senses. It begins with the great outside, the great nature, the great place of freedom, where nothing has been turned over to the senses and explored--wonderful in the glory of freedom. From that, instruction comes--from the unexplored, which man has not peered into with his sense-observations and investigations. From that, down to the man who seems to be involved with his senses, comes the great instruction. It is as though one stood without the labyrinth, and he sent into the labyrinth an instruction, and that instruction was like the silver thread leading from the outside, which one might follow and discover the way.

So instruction has been compared--or at least these two, the method of discovery and the method of instruction, have both been compared to seeking and hiding. The attempt to discover is always a seeking, a setting out, a sailing over the seas: preparation, large preparation beforehand, to discover a new country. But instruction is

a hiding, in this way: He who has hidden a thing away knows where it is; and to him the search is not what it is to the one who did not hide it away and does not know where it is. And that is the difference between illumination or instruction, and the methods called philosophy in the world, by which people try to find out and try to make their way to freedom.

He who gives instruction is the one who concealed the mysteries. He knows where they are, he knows what they are. And his word is an announcement of that which he knows veritably the extent of, the location of, the nature of. And if he says, The Word is substance and health is substance and perfection is substance, he knows whereof he speaks. His word is law and his word is life--life to them that find it, and health to all their flesh.

There was a man, one time, who was very, very wise in philosophy. There was no one who could talk him down in his philosophical principles, no one who

could compare with him in the ability to elucidate ideals and theories and comprehensive discussions of the views of all the philosophers who have ever existed in the world. One day, as he was walking along, he came upon a group of people who well knew his ability in discussion and oratory, and they saw him hold converse with a single individual who stood in the group. And they noticed that this man who was so gifted with profound speech and so marvelous in his discussions, was bowing his head in the presence of this one to whom he spoke. And those who knew him best came about him, and they said, How is this, that you seem to be confused? You seem to be confounded, you seem to be silent. How is it? And the man answered, I have held much speech with all the wise of the world, with the greatest of philosophers, and I am familiar with all their words; but I never spoke with one who talked like this man who says he is a Christian; for verily his words are not words, but they are virtues. And before the virtue of speech, he was silenced.

Sometimes the student is very glib with his answers and very sure of his ideas, very capable of expressing his opinions. But, verily, when the virtue of speech comes upon him, it will be like silence. And in the presence of instruction he will be silent. For he will know the power of the Word: that it is an action taking place irrespective of thoughts and words and possessions and people, but living Substance in Itself. And its actuality will be the flesh and the mind and the will and the heart and spirit--entirely the all of him. For the virtue of the Word is that it is real. The virtue of the Word is that it is true. And he who can speak the Word of Truth, however simply, speaks virtue. And that virtue goes out as it did from the hem of the garment, as it goes out from the touch of the hand--from the eye, from the presence, from the being of truth, and he who knows himself to be truth, the one Being.

Therefore, it comes again to the sentence: Life is Being, Life

is immortality. Life is happiness. And he who finds immortality finds happiness, for immortality alone is happiness. And this contains all things. He who receives this at the point of knowledge, receives all gifts and all virtues, all healing, illumination. All things are given to him who receives the knowledge of immortality.

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