

Article 219: Asava Massage -part 4

Does your massage therapist ...or do you as a massage therapist gather a clear understanding of patients before proceeding with a massage or other treatment? If not, no matter how much you may know about anatomy and body functions, you are likely to treat the wrong ailment or exacerbate the problem ...even if a muscle is relaxed or a pain is relieved, ...if only because patients, believing that pains and tensions can be eased, are likely to return to “life as usual” ...and struggle even harder to control life and situations ...and gain or possess what they want; ...and they are likely to continue in these ways until even more-severe body pains and illnesses occur ...and other problems and afflictions take root in their lives. This is not an imaginary example of occurrences, it is the observed path of thinking and actions normally taken by individuals seeking relief without changing their own beliefs and way of life.

Hippocrates correctly knew and taught that the most successful treatment is to build patients’ strength through many means, including diet, hygiene, rest, and lifestyle changes to create the best conditions within which natural healing and restoration can take place. At the time, Hippocrates’ techniques stressing patient history, intervention, and care were in contrast to the, then, popular school of medicine which stressed only detailed study of diseases ...which were presumed to act upon the body independent of the patient.

Unfortunately, Hippocrates’ teachings were not continued and built upon, for though, Galen, a physician and writer (c.160), added greatly to the knowledge about the pulse, brain, spinal cord, and nerves, when he demonstrated that arteries carried blood instead of air, many physicians had reasons to continue the practice of drawing off “bad blood” as a supposed beneficial treatment of illness, ...and since Galen’s authority was virtually undisputed at the time ...and for hundreds of years, this misunderstanding and medical practice formed a primary treatment until the 16th century ...and was continued into the 19th century. It seems that old theories and misunderstandings, once accepted by some “authority”, are very difficult to change ...simply because individuals following those false beliefs and treatments have a great deal of self-interest and reputation invested in continuing those practices. The idea appears to be that “if the majority of physicians follow these treatments ...and believe them to be effective, it cannot be wrong to continue them”, ...the only mistake, it seems, is for a physician to apply “an unproven or unaccepted treatment”!

Do you see the error in all of this? The general practice of bleeding was of no actual value ...but these “experienced physicians” seeing and experiencing only what they “wanted to believe”~like many healers and therapists today~saw benefits where none really existed, ...and, in most instances, the death of patients who did not benefit was blamed on “other causes” ...so the physicians could continue their false beliefs~just as witch doctors and medicine men had been doing for centuries~and patients suffered because physicians, healers, and therapists would not truly reconsider the “assumed rightness” of their beliefs and treatments which had prevailed even for centuries. But there were physicians who saw healing in a different light ...or you might say by the light of Hippocrates.

One notable example was Doctor Wood Baker ...who practiced medicine in London at the end of the 1700's. Dr. Baker, a man of short sentences, was pithy, sharply focused, direct, and to the point. He was tall and slim, and capable of playing a role or acting a part ...and making people think that his motives were entirely different than what they really were.

Doctor Baker was a very forceful, independent, and challenging individual, but he had a very light touch when it came to medicine, ...and he was very popular with his patients, because he related so well to their thoughts and feelings ...and to each patient's way of life. But he was also a great bluffer, and if he didn't have the knowledge he needed, he could quickly improvise it.

People, coming to be healed by ordinary medicine, were helped by Dr. Baker in unique and unusual ways, but they felt that was all right because their fears and pains and illnesses were relieved, ...but his fellow physicians condemned him as a charlatan ...and a hoaxer. They felt he was providing medicines and treatments and advice which offered only temporary relief ...and which, in the long run, were detrimental to his patients. They accused him of harming his patients and undermining the medical profession through corruptive practices ...and they brought him up on charges before a Board of Governing Physicians.

"Well," he replied ...in defense of his ideas and treatments, "if what I do is so wrong ...yet the results are right, can you truly say that what I'm doing is wrong? And if my patients are healed, can we not say then that maybe ...just maybe, what I'm doing is right? And if your patients are not healed of their illnesses, can we not declare then ...with some degree of certainty, that what **you** are doing is wrong?"

"There's nothing your patients will not submit to, ...and there's little you've not done to them in the name of easing their pain and discomfort, restoring their energy and health, and even saving their lives. How well have **you** succeeded? Well, ...let's see.

"You've examined, poked, and prodded them unmercifully. And when that did not succeed, you invaded their bodies and rummaged around inside. You rubbed, squeezed, kneaded, disturbed, and tormented them, ...but seldom did you ever stroke, massage, soothe, or comfort their suffering minds and bodies.

"You've twisted, rotated, and manipulated their limbs without success ...except to irritate and aggravate their ever-worsening condition. They've even allowed themselves to be half drowned, frozen in ice, almost boiled alive, steamed in hot gases, roasted in stifling ovens, buried in mud, and seared and cauterized with red-hot irons, ...and if that wasn't enough, they were singed, roasted, toasted, and scorched. They were wantonly cut with dirty knives and pricked with poisonous needles ...all in the name of healthful medicine.

"They have been stretched, drawn out, hung upside-down, and forcefully struck; after which, they were squeezed and crushed, compressed, flattened, and almost smothered to death.

"They've been sensitized, brutalized, and stupefied. They've been dehydrated, rehydrated, then dried out until they shrank. You made them retch, cough-up, excrete, discharge, and void their insides, so you could make them swallow, inhale, or otherwise ingest all sorts of abominable medications and so-called miraculous cures.

"Then they've been dripped, drained, and made to pass-off their blood, sweat, tears, and other body liquids and vital secretions ...either willingly or by way of cuts, drains, or even leeches. Then, ...well, they're made to exhaust, exhale, or otherwise pass gas, vapors, stench, and odors.

"And finally, if that isn't enough of an insult, you make them pay for all of this as if it were a wondrous privilege and a blessing conferred upon them by God..."

Well, ...no doubt about it, the assembled physicians were outraged at Dr. Baker's words ...as well they might be, ...and they would not listen any further, for they, not he, were to determine what was right in medicine ...and the way it was to be performed. And, of course, if a patient died, that was the patient's doing ...or undoing, not theirs, ...they were administering things correctly. And if Dr. Baker reversed some of life's processes and

helped long-suffering patients, it was only because God in His infinite goodness and wisdom had granted them His grace ...and a severance from Dr. Baker's wicked healing practices. They declared that God had looked upon his victims favorably ...for a while, but, truly so, they would surely succumb.

The Board of Physicians declared that it was **only** God's benevolence and mercy and forgiveness, in essence, which healed his patients, and it had nothing whatsoever to do with Dr. Baker or his "wicked treatments" that they even survived. The Board condemned the "wild and insane" things he was doing. They accused him of dispensing "unproven and ineffective potions; following untrue and untried treatments; and improperly speaking to his patients and giving them hope, and falsely telling them to deal with themselves and their lives". The Board determined that his practices were "evil". Throughout this trial, Dr. Baker got an even clearer and stronger ...and happier picture of himself and his treatments ...which he wrote about to pass on.