

Correlational Interface of Ancient Clinical Wisdom and Contemporary Mind-Body Medicine

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Brief Description/Abstract: The synergetic correlation of ancient wisdom statements from the Proverbs with the findings of contemporary Mind-Body Medicine.

One of the most fascinating documents of ancient clinical wisdom is the Proverbs or Mashal Collection of the Old Testament literature corpus.

Scholars have noted the remarkable thematic resemblances between the Proverbs and the Instruction of Amenemope (ca. 1300-1075 BC) another book of ancient clinical wisdom.

The Proverbs emphasize wisdom as foundational for success in life. Indeed, the term Proverbs is a transliteration of the Hebrew word Mashal which literally means superior mental action for successful living.

There is considerable evidence in Proverbs to demonstrate the dynamic synergy of the spiritual and the emerging paradigms of science and bio-behavioral medicine.

The Proverbs elucidate the power of cognition or thought to create either positive or negative conscious states or the vital necessity of choosing healthy thinking over negative and self-destructive thinking.

Within the ancient clinical wisdom of the Proverbs this compelling statement is given:

"A sound heart gives life to the body, but envy (jealousy) rots the bones (Prov. 14:30)."

This particular wisdom statement is obviously an example of antithetical parallelism in which a positive assertion is elucidated in the first strophe and its contrast demonstrating an opposite reality is given in the second strophe.

A casual perusal of this statement would possibly yield a superficial assent to its truth, but this is not merely a philosophic aphorism. There is a wealth of psychoneuroimmunological insight provided for the serious reader. For instance, the word '*sound*' is the transliteration of the Hebrew word '*marpe*' and it means healthy, healing, or cure and the root of this word is '*rapha*' which means – to heal.

The Hebrew word for heart is '*lev*' which means: the inner person, or the spiritual essence embracing the mind, emotions, conscience, and memory.

A highly perceptive and astute differential diagnosis is given by the writer of this particular Proverb. He knows that a healthy inner being will result in an equally healthy outer being. He does not wrestle with the limitations of Cartesian Dualism.

He understands the intrinsic unitary nature of persons. His insights

are cogently perspicuous and the result of disciplined observation.

Contemporary Bio-behavioral medicine mirrors the remarkable insight of the ancient clinical wisdom saying given above. For it has found this insight of the ancient wisdom clinician to be scientifically true.

Just as the wisdom writer knew that a healthy mental attitude is the cornerstone for optimal physical health, he was equally alert to the destructive consequences of a negative mental attitude on the body.

He knew that envy or, more accurately, jealousy, created tremendous emotional harm to the individual – “...but envy (*jealousy*) rots the bones (*Prov. 14:30b*).”

Envy or jealousy as the result of the prosperity or even sexual jealousy creates stress for the body. Jealousy creates rottenness or “*decay of the bones.*”

Yakir Kaufman, M.D., defines stress as: “...an extraordinary demand on the physiological and psychological defenses and adaptation mechanisms with concomitant neuro-immuno-endocrine responses.”

He further states: “...first, the endocrine pathway causes secretion of several stress hormones, including CRH, ACTH, and Cortisol. Cortisol has a potent wide range effect on many organs. After being secreted it is distributed throughout the body via the bloodstream. It enters the cells and affects the DNA within the cellular nucleus, thus changing the functioning of the cells, organs, and bodily systems.”

Additionally, “too much cortisol in the body can deplete bones of vital calcium, magnesium, and potassium. It can lead to bone loss.” Don Colbert, M.D..

The Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine has several articles on the emotional impact of *jealousy* on the body. The following articles all appeared under the key word *jealousy*.

- Emotions and Gastro-duodenal Function: Experimental Studies on Patients with Gastritis, Duodenitis and Peptic Ulcer *Psychosom Med* January, 1942 4:5-61.
- John A. P. Millet, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in Raynaud’s Disease *Psychosom med* November, 1956 18:492-505.
- Edward Weiss, Cardiovascular Lesions of Probable Psychosomatic Origin in Arterial Hypertension *Psychosom Med* Jul, 1940 2:249-264.

It is therefore highly important to seek the help of a competent professional if one is at risk for stress related jealousy and or envy.

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