

Crocodile Jaws

I am a Registered Medical Practitioner, engaged since years in my profession at Uravakonda, Anantapur District. Andhra Pradesh. As a result of some unforeseen circumstances and their effect on my mental condition, I got involved in a vicious habit, namely, taking injections of morphia. It began with two injections per day. Within eight days, more correctly, on and from the 20th of June 1968, I fell into the habit of taking four injections per day. In another fortnight, I needed eight, and within a month after that, I was ' forced to give myself 16 injections of morphia. In about a month more, the quantity the body clamoured for, increased to 20 injections. This continued for only three months more, for, later, I had to take thirty injections every day. I could not for the life of me discover any method by which I could reduce the intake.

My income from medical practice was about 800 to 1000 rupees per month. All that income proved insufficient for the morphia I had to give myself. I had to sell off five acres of my lands for 13,000 rupees; this amount plus the money I got from the patients sufficed only for 16 months for me. I sold another 3 acres for 10,000 rupees that pulled me through another 16 months. I had no money remaining with me at the end of that period. Then I sold the building sites I had in the town for 6,000 rupees and spent it on the morphia during the next eight months. The income from the remaining lands I clung to and every pie of my earnings were swallowed by this vicious habit that had `possessed' me.

I have ten children—6 girls and 4 boys. My wife had died. I had never paid any thought during all these years on how the poor things were managing to exist. Of course, they suffered much for want of food and clothing. They went through manifold miseries. They used to wait outside my room and when they saw some patient giving me any little money, they would cry piteously for the same, `Father! Give it to us. We shall purchase some grain with it, some snacks.' I used to drive them away with foul interjections. I never worried over what they ate or how they managed. Some patients who came to me used to pay them now

and then part of the fees they had to give me and with this meagre source they kept flesh and bone together. Nine years passed thus. I was driven to such despair that I started tackling the problem, how to get rid of this vice. For, I could not even reduce the intake, by the slightest. When I had on some days, to take less than on previous days. I suffered extreme agony. Pain all over the body, yawning, sweating, fear,

effusion of saliva, stuttering cramps—these gave me great distress. How could I then stop the injections altogether? How could I escape from the coils of this drug? On account of the high cost of this habit, my family had been ruined. My medical practice declined and dried up. My physical, health also got deteriorated from day to day. Of course, I repented in my heart of hearts for this fault, but, what could I do? I found it impossible to escape.

One of my friends who had fallen victim to morphia had gone to Madras and returned after a cranial operation by which they said his habit could be got rid of. Another doctor friend too had gone to Madras and stayed there for four months; after undergoing treatment there, he had given up the morphia habit. But the first friend had spent Rs. 3500 and the second friend had to spend Rs. 5000. I too desired to go, but, I had no money at all. Yet, I had to continue the injections. I begged, borrowed, and visited hospitals and somehow managed to pull through, with the minimum quota of 30 to 35. Nine years passed by. I had run through Rs. 40,000, during that period. I could not free myself from this habit or even reduce the intake. I realised that one can free himself from the jaws of a crocodile, sooner than from the jaws of morphia.

Meanwhile, a Bhajan Samaja had started working in our town, by the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba; they held their Bhajans at the Subrahmanyeswara Temple, near my house. My friend, Dr. N. Anjaneyulu, M.A., Ph.D. was its organiser. One day, a Thursday, (they did Bhajan there every Thursday) I went into that temple and sat in the far distant corner, listening to the Bhajan Songs. During Bhajan, a desire arose in my mind. That is to say, "Baba! You were my classmate, here, in the High School, years ago. You must be remembering me. You must

be knowing the depths to which this habit has dragged me. There are some who doubt you and many who adore you as God. I am not involving myself in that controversy now. I want to find from my own experience, the Truth. Well. If you can bless me with the mental courage and strength to get out of this vicious morphia habit, I shall believe that you are God." With this vow taken with a full heart, I steadied myself. Within a few seconds, the Bhajan ended. They distributed Vibhuti Prasad to every one. Holding the packets in my palm as a precious gift, and resolving to rely upon Baba for the strength to free myself, I returned home. I decided that, whatever might happen, however hard the conditions, I would not take a single injection, of morphia, for full three days. If on the fourth day I am free from the tentacles of morphia, I shall adore Baba just as those people are doing, at the Subrahmanyeswara Temple, I told myself. The first day, I did not take any injection, no, not even one. I had no calls of nature, that day. I had profuse sweating, cramps in muscles, burning sensation all over the body, wild imaginings, streams of tears, cough; these gave me a terrible time. But, I swallowed small quantities of the Vibhuti and carried on, in spite of everything.

The second day was worse. The urine and faeces were full of blood; frightful thoughts of suicide haunted me. The third day dawned. I had determined and sworn that day too I would not take morphia. I felt that I may not survive the third day. When night came on, I began shouting and wailing aloud, in some kind of inexplicable pain. I hit the floor with my feet; I hit my head against the pillar; I blabbered wildly and loudly. The children wept and wailed, awakening the neighbours and the houses in the locality. Some friends of mine came in and seeing my condition, they too shed tears in sympathy with the children. A doctor friend came at about 3 a.m., and, realising that my pitiable condition was due to my not taking the morphia, he brought four injections with him. He told me, "I have brought these. Take the injections." But, I replied,

"Doctor! The promise I have given to Swami will lapse tomorrow. Keep the four safe, until morning." The time was then 3-45 a.m. My children were sitting all around me. I told my little daughter, Hafiza Begum, "Go

and get me the Vibhuti of Swami I have kept in that shelf over there.” She brought it and gave me. I took a pinch and placed it on my tongue and drank some water to wash it down.

In about ten minutes, I fell asleep! During sleep, I felt as if I was on a pilgrimage! I slept nicely, until 11 a.m., the next day, the fourth day. Exactly as promised, the Doctor friend hearing that I had awakened from sleep, came at about 12 noon, with the four morphia injections. When he came, I was reclining in my easy-chair, calm and collected, with no sign of any after-effect— no cough, no sneeze, no haw or hum. The Doctor asked me, softly, "Dear Friend! How do you feel?" I replied, equally softly, "By Swami's Grace, my mind is clear and calm." Then he said, "in that case, I believe you have no need of this morphia." I said, in a firm tone, "No. There is no need." The doctor was overjoyed. "Ah! What happy news you have given us! How pleasant to the ears! At last, after all these years, Swami has showered His Grace on you!" the Doctor said and going out into a fruit shop, he brought two apples and placing them in my hands, he left, with the morphia he had brought for me! Since that day, three months back, I have never had the slightest inclination towards morphia. My health has improved a great deal, and is getting better and better every day. My medical practice has also picked up fast. My children are happy.

The Wednesday after my recovery from the hold of the crocodile, morphia, I joined the Nagarsankirtan group that passed before my house and reaching the Subrahmanyeswara Temple with them, I related to all the devotees of Bhagavan, the story of my vow and its fulfillment. My friends, relatives, and well-wishers were all very happy when they came to know of Baba's Grace. I have now no doubt that the Divine Will of Swami can cure every one suffering from such vicious habits, provided they surrender to him. For myself, I am convinced that He is Divine and that His Grace alone has saved me and can save me.

—Dr K. Meeramohiuddian, Uravakonda