

**THE LAW OF
STRUGGLE;
PP. 1-159**

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The Law of Struggle; pp. 1-159 by Hyman Segal

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HYMAN SEGAL

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THE LAW OF STRUGGLE

By
HYMAN SEGAL

Author of
"The Book of Pain-Struggle"
etc.



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Foreword

ON THE WAR AND THE BOOK

WE HAVE promised ourselves that this War is to be the last. Still, how do we know? We did not seek it, yet it came. We are in the grip of momentous currents, we know not how. Evidently, we still do not know the laws by which we live. Tho we have stored up great accumulations of miscellaneous, unrelated, unassimilated facts concerning ourselves, these accumulations have only served to make confusion worse confounded. And yet, the great problems with which the world is wrestling so bloodily to-day are compounded of the measure and quality of our self-knowledge. We still do not know our place in the scheme of things; and the blows of the Germans resounding against the gates of Paris, beat also upon the faith in the hearts of men.

If the Great War, which has descended upon us like a visitation from another world, is not really native to our true nature as human beings, why does it have such a hold upon us? Whence does it derive its power to stretch forth its gruesome hand and drag us, open-eyed, protesting, horror-stricken, into its dread vortex? Why are we finally fascinated by it and go exulting into the fray?

To accuse the world of inconsistency and hypocrisy provides us with no explanation. Beneath every cover of duplicity is concealed some earnestness of purpose. What is it? What is the blundering purpose of the world?

Some years ago—in the year 1911, to be precise—I wrote a book* in which I attempted to set forth this riddle and its answer. The whole problem seemed to me then—as it does now, in the fourth year of the Great War—to be embodied in the correct understanding of pain and struggle

*The Book of Pain-Struggle

and their true avenues of expression ; the whole solution, in the frank recognition of pain as of the very stuff of life and the way in which it must normally react in struggle. Perhaps if the subject had been given a tithe of the study devoted to armaments and tactics, the world would not today be peering so anxiously out of the bloody abyss in which finds it itself.

I might have been willing to wait a while longer before attempting, with my poor powers, to touch upon this great theme again, but this cataclysmic War which, please God, we shall win, impels me to speak once more at this time.

Is this War of us or of another? Is it inherent in our life or not? If it is, why do we not adjust our life and our sense of values to it? If not, how comes this eruption in our midst and what can we do to avoid its repetition? In short, what has been wrong with our thinking, what is wanting in our self-knowledge?

It behooves us to give these questions our serious attention.

HYMAN SEGAL

New York, May, 1918.

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CHAPTER I

THE WILL TO STRUGGLE

1. Pain-and-Struggle.

THE scientist in his demonstrations relies not alone upon his statistical charts, but upon a knowledge of life in his readers by which his proofs must ultimately be tested. The statistics of pain and struggle in particular have first of all to be perceived by the inner eye, and only then tested and checked formally. If we have the eye to see it, the necessary data is unescapable wherever we turn, whether we view life as a whole or examine it in small sections under the microscope.

The essential thing in order to grasp the subject is to know pain when we confront it, even tho we have been wont to recognize it only in tooth-aches and ailments generally which are only acute instances of disproportion between pain and struggle. Our view of pain must become more comprehensive, and we must recognize struggle even when not accompanied by the startling signs of physical strife. Physical conflict has always been held out to us as almost the synonym of struggle. And yet, even in this class of struggle, it is not necessarily the most clamorous and ferocious antagonist who is the most redoubtable. So, too, we are accustomed to think of the lion, the tiger, the bandit and the burglar as very formidable fighters indeed but, as a matter of fact, they are very feeble strugglers and have long been out-classed; so much so, in fact, that they hardly enter into our calculations to-day.

On the other hand, there are a great many far-reaching struggles in nature that seldom arrest our attention. Who,