

## 1        Illness and Health

Illness and health – this is a subject that comes up in the lives of all people sooner or later. First I would like to say something about what illness actually is. All diseases have a spiritual origin. I will explain this by drawing a distinction among the different bodies you have. In addition to the physical body visible to all of you, you also possess an emotional body, a mental body and something you may call a spiritual body.

Illness mainly starts in the emotional body. It is from here that certain blockages settle themselves in the physical body on the material level. Often beliefs from the mental body contribute to the development of emotional blockages and thus to the manifestation of illness. I am talking of deeply ingrained beliefs or habits of thinking. Often these are beliefs about what is right and wrong about yourself.

Judgments may literally create a blockage in your emotional energy system. At those places where the blockages arise where the emotional energy is not allowed to flow freely, something of a dark energy becomes visible in the aura. This energy may settle down in the body. It need not necessarily be so, for this process takes quite some time and there is enough opportunity to turn things into balance emotionally, before a disease displays itself.

Generally your emotions tell you when your energy is not flowing, and when you turn your attention to their message and honor it, the blockage gets released. For instance you may feel upset or angry every time you have to do a particular thing and if you look more closely at those emotions, they will tell you that you are forcing yourself to do things that do not truly affirm who you are and who you want to be. However if you systematically ignore your anger and force yourself to do things you truly don't feel good about, then the emotion goes underground, so to speak. It removes itself from your awareness and it expresses itself in your physical body. The repressed emotion is an energy that wants to be heard by you. When it expresses itself through the body it will manifest as a physical complaint.

Generally a physical complaint or illness points at an emotion inside you that you are largely unaware of. The physical symptom makes it visible to you on another level and in this way actually helps you get in touch with the blockage. In this way physical symptoms or pain are the language of the soul. The soul longs for full communication among all of its parts. The soul feels happy when there is a free flow of energy and a continuous renewal of all aspects of itself. Blockages prevent the energy from flowing freely and that depresses the soul.

Illness thus has the function of an indicator: it shows you where you are in need of healing. Although illness seems to be negative in the sense that you are bothered by all kinds of symptoms and pains, the key is to interpret illness as a message or a signpost. In doing so it becomes easier to cooperate with the disease instead of resisting it.

The soul has many ways to communicate to you. The soul's favorite way is to speak to you through your intuition: quiet feeling tones, hunches, soft whispers of the heart. If it cannot reach you in that way, you will be alerted by your emotions. The emotions speak a louder language.

They clearly show you that you have to look within and find out what is igniting that emotional response. Whenever you are strongly affected emotionally you need to find out why and what it means to you. If you become silent and listen carefully, the soul will tell you. If you resist or deny your emotions the soul will speak to you through your body. The body is an intelligent being, highly responsive to not just the material things (like food and liquids) you take in but to the emotions, feelings and thoughts you have. The body is meant to be a communicator. It is not a mere vessel to dwell in. It has an intelligent function to play in helping the soul express and know itself in matter.

How can you learn to understand the language of your soul if it is expressed through the body as an illness? At the moment the disease manifests itself it may not be clear what message is conveyed by it to you. In fact you have denied the emotion it represents consistently for a long time, so it is by definition not obvious what your illness has to tell you. Understanding the spiritual meaning of the illness is a process. It is a quest, an inner journey on which you gradually restore the communication process.

To embark upon this journey, you first have to accept your illness. The initial reaction to illness is often one of denial or resistance. You would prefer the disease to disappear as soon as possible because it frightens you. You are scared of failure, decline, imperfection and ultimately death. The panic that seizes you when you are confronted with physical failure or illness prevents you from opening up to a broader perspective on illness. You could consider illness in another light. You might experience it as a messenger of change, as an invitation to return to something precious that you have lost.

To comprehend and cooperate with the “signpost function” of illness, it is very important to say yes to the symptoms and pains which display themselves in your body. In saying yes, in accepting the state of your physical body and in being willing to listen to the language of your soul through it, you have actually solved half the problem. The real problem is not the disease itself but that which it represents, the underlying blockage(s). The disease buttonholes you so to speak and forces you to look at the underlying blockage. In turning to the disease and saying yes with your heart and soul, you will already have solved part of the blockage without even knowing precisely what the disease wants to tell you. Part of the communication is being restored just by your willingness, your patience and determination to take this inner journey upon you.

However, to say yes and embrace the illness is not easy for you. You may find yourself resisting it, being angry or desperate about it and therefore not listening to what the malfunction is already telling you. Frequently you get specific clues. For instance the body’s inabilities indicate that you must let go of certain obligations, spend more quiet time by yourself, be less active and more attentive to your needs. Although you may not yet know how to interpret your physical situation from a spiritual level, quite often the behavior that the ailment forces upon you is a big clue. By limiting yourself in certain areas, it is putting a spotlight on things that were in the dark before. How is it with your ability to be patient and gentle with yourself? Can you really take good care of your physical and emotional needs? Illness always brings up these questions, and to confront and accept the emotions they arouse is part of the healing process.

To really start the healing process you have to say yes to it all: the pain, the discomfort, the anxiety, the insecurity and the anger. You have to look it in the eye, be friendly with it and reach out your hands to it. It is coming to you for healing. It is not something you have to get out of the way as fast as possible. It is not a coincidence that it has entered your life now.

If you ignore your body's language and you keep resisting the disease, it is very difficult to get through to the spiritual essence and meaning of the disease. There is too much anger and fear surrounding it. You only achieve true inner freedom in coming face to face with your disease, with your pain and discomfort and also with your feelings of fear and disgust. Embrace them and then ask them quietly and with an open consciousness: what do you want to tell me?

In your society it is not self evident to be intimate with your own body. Talking to your body like a being that deserves love and respect is not considered to be natural. You are dished up many idealized images in your society about what your body should look like, what fitness and health imply and what you should or should not eat and drink. There are all kinds of rules and standards about what a long and healthy life is like.

But all these idealized pictures bear no relationship to the path of the soul. The path of the soul is highly individual. Therefore to find the truth about any illness, ailment or distress that you suffer in your body, you need to tune into yourself in a very intimate way, leaving behind all these general, often artificial standards and rules. You are asked to release all these outside standards and to search for your own truth deep within.

This is a great challenge to you, for the fear and panic that seize you in the case of an illness make you look too quickly to authorities outside yourself. You reach out to external authorities for advice and comfort. This may be a medical doctor or an expert in alternative treatment; basically it makes no difference. The key is that out of fear, you tend to give up your own responsibility and partially hand it over to somebody else.

Of course there is nothing wrong with listening to an expert's advice and quite often this is a very sensible thing to do. But always you need to take this knowledge inside you and weigh it in your own heart. Feel whether the advice resonates with you or not. Only you are the true creator of your life, the master of your own body. Only you yourself know what is best for your own body. In the deepest sense of the word, you are the creator of your own body.

Since illness represents a stuck emotion that is partly beyond the scope of your consciousness, it is not always easy to understand what the disease or the symptom represents. Sometimes it seems very hard to find out what the soul is trying to tell you by a specific disease. At this point you need to go inside and examine yourself thoroughly, in the sense of gradually becoming aware of the kind of energy that manifests itself in the disease and what it is trying to tell you.

Regaining intimacy with your own body requires practice; it is not self evident. Do not give up on it too easily. When you are dealing with persistent complaints, try to examine them once again. Take a moment to relax yourself and then travel with a neutral awareness to the places in your body where the illness is expressing itself. Ask the pain or the disease to take the shape of a

living being so that you can talk to it. Ask it to appear as an animal, a child or a human being. Or ask it to appear as a guide, in whatever shape. Use your imagination! The imagination is a precious instrument to discover the deepest stirrings of your soul.

If you do so and when you notice that your body answers – with images or feelings – you will experience joy. You will feel happiness about the regained intimacy. The body speaks to you and its role as a communicator is restored! This is a breakthrough. As soon as you realize that you are able to know your body from the inside and that you are the only one who can do this for yourself, you will feel more confident. This self confidence makes it easier for you to feel what the disease is trying to tell you. It prevents you from brushing aside the answers that you receive from your inner self because they do not fit in with general ideas from the outside world. Intimacy with the body is very precious in all circumstances but particularly when the body is ill or in distress.

The way to let your body talk is love. You will not encourage communication with your body if you try to remove the disease by ardently repeating healing affirmations or visualizations to yourself. That still is form of struggle or resistance. The key is that you come to understand the meaning of the sick part of your body. If you understand this, things will be transformed and emotional blocks can be removed. This is how the healing process works – not fighting the disease, one way or another, but accepting it like a friend who wants to show you the right direction. This is difficult to understand, for illness frightens and distresses you. However accepting and understanding your illness is the only way to true healing. Illness wants to take you back home.

### Chronic and terminal illness

The purpose of illness is to obtain a better and deeper understanding of yourself. Once you do this and go along with the inner healing process, physical recovery is often the result. However it does not always work this way. Some diseases do not disappear even when it seems you have gone down to the root of the underlying emotional blockage. This is the case with chronic diseases.

In the case of a chronic disease there are persistent physical problems that keep recurring. Especially during vulnerable periods in which you more or less lose touch with your inner self, the symptoms recur sometimes even in an increasing degree. This can be quite demoralizing. Therefore it is important to consider the disease from a broader perspective.

People with a chronic disease undertake quite an arduous task. On the soul level, they have agreed to confront the fears that come up in the context of their illness and to confront idealized pictures of how someone should perform in life. To take up this challenge shows great courage.

It often happens that a soul chooses a chronic disease to work out a specific issue in a highly focused way. The disease throws you back on particular emotions each time. There is an emotional pattern that accompanies the illness. To deal with these emotions time and again is

quite a heavy task but it bears many fruits for the soul.

Quite often these lives have a great profundity and an inner richness that is not always noticeable to others. Therefore it is not supportive to constantly strive or hope for an improvement of the medical condition. The fact is that the disease often proceeds in a spiral movement, helping you grow on the inner level in circular movements upwards, although apparently you relapse into the same physical symptoms each time. On the spiritual level, you do not fall back but you reach ever greater depths in dealing with emotions that possibly have been overlooked by you in the past, even in past lives.

This also applies to hereditary or congenital physical defects. In this respect you sometimes speak of karma but I am careful with this concept, as you have a tendency to associate karma with crime and punishment. This is not how it works. The soul has the sincere desire to know itself to the fullest and to be free. This is its deepest desire. Starting from this ardent wish the soul sometimes undertakes ailments, diseases and physical defects which help it reach its aim. It is certainly not a question of paying off your debts. It is a deep intent to be set free and sometimes the best way to get there is to experience extremely difficult circumstances within your own body. For this intention we can only have the greatest respect, especially in your society where inhuman ideal images are cherished as to how to be functional, useful, beautiful and successful. These idealistic ideas make it even more difficult to live your life with a handicap and to nevertheless experience it as meaningful and joyful.

Finally I want to say something about incurable terminal diseases. Sometimes it will be obvious that someone will not survive a disease anymore. The body gradually succumbs to the disease. The “earthly frame” does not persist. At that moment what does the soul that finds itself within the body do? As long as you keep resisting the disease, you cannot get in touch with your soul and your inner knowing that tells you that it is time to say goodbye. Sometimes you sense in advance that you have to leave, but the idea strikes you with such horror and sorrow that you keep on fighting. You are eager to try another treatment or wait for that new medicine to be launched.

This is quite understandable and I certainly do not want to condemn this attitude, but you are hurting yourself in a terrible way. If you let go and allow death to come closer, you will notice that death is not an opponent but instead is a friend. Death releases you from the struggle.

If you go along with what death wants to tell you, you will pass through several stages before the actual process of dying takes place. These stages have to do with a gradual release of all earthly things – of your beloved, of your earthly surroundings, of your senses with which you observe everything around you. This is a beautiful, natural process.

It would be a pity to overshadow this process by an attitude of battle in which you try to hold on to life at any expense. Often by then the body has already become so fragile that life is not worth living anymore. Let it go. Death is a liberator who is there to serve you. Death is not your enemy. Death brings you new life.

When you are with someone who is incurably ill and when you feel that person knows that they are going to die, try to talk about it softly and carefully. It is a relief to the person who is passing over. The dearest and most precious thing you can do for a dying person is to sit next to them and hold their hand. There is nothing else you need to know or to be able to do in accompanying a dying person.

Terminal care is very important in your society. One day all of you will face this within your own family or your circle of friends. Simply be present with a dying person and feel the journey that is arriving. Feel the mighty, powerful moment in which the soul leaves the body and returns to the other realms, to its home.

Do not consider a disease that leads to death as an enemy who you will lose to in the end. It is not a battle. Quite frequently death comes to release you from even more pain and misery. You are certainly not a loser. You will simply continue your path in another way.

Sometimes there are particular issues you would have liked to live through or overcome during this life and these issues cannot be finished. This may distress you and not just you but those who stay behind as well. Nevertheless I ask you to leave this in peace, for there is a deeper wisdom at work that is guiding you and will bring you and your loved ones together in new and better circumstances. One day you will be together again and will celebrate life.

Today my biggest plea with regard to illness is to really embrace your illness. Surround the illness with love and awareness and let it lead you into a deeper understanding of yourself. Entrust yourself to the illness and allow yourself to enter into a more profound communication with yourself. Surrender does not mean to be passive or bitter about your illness but to cooperate with it in an active way, like a friend.

I embrace you all with my love and I ask you to feel my presence today, the presence of the Christ energy. Feel the love available to all of you in sickness and in health. There is so much love everywhere around you and you can feel it as soon as you let go of your judgments. You have so many judgments about what you do and don't deserve, about what you are doing right and what you are doing wrong, about all the things you still have to do and achieve. Let it go. Love is present here and now for all of you.