

The Body as Means or End

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⁶⁹ Attitudes toward the body are attitudes toward ATTACK. The ego's definitions of ANYTHING are childish, and are ALWAYS based on what it believes a thing is FOR. This is because it is incapable of true generalizations, and equates what it sees with the function IT ascribes to it. It does NOT equate it with what it IS. To the ego, the body IS TO ATTACK WITH Equating YOU with the body, it teaches that YOU are to attack with, because THIS IS WHAT IT BELIEVES. The body, then, is not the source of its own health. Its condition lies solely in your interpretation of its function.

⁷⁰ The reasons why definitions by function are inferior is merely because they may well be inaccurate. Functions are part of being, since they arise FROM it. But the relationship is NOT reciprocal. The whole does define the part, but the part does NOT define the whole. This is as true of knowledge as it is of perception. The reason why to KNOW in part is to know entirely is merely because of the fundamental difference between knowledge and perception. In perception, the whole is built up of parts, which can separate and reassemble in different constellations. Knowledge never changes, so that its constellation is permanent. The only areas in which part-whole relationships have any meaning are those in which change is possible. There IS no difference between the whole and the part where change is impossible.

⁷¹ The body exists in a world which seems to contain two voices which are fighting for its possession. In this perceived constellation, the body is regarded as capable of shifting its control from one to the other, making the concept of both health and sickness possible. The ego makes a fundamental confusion between means and ends, as it always does. Regarding the body as an end, it has no real use for it at all, because it is NOT an end. You must have noticed an outstanding characteristic of every end that the ego has accepted as its own. When you have achieved it, IT HAS NOT SATISFIED YOU. This is why the ego is forced to shift from one end to another without ceasing, so that YOU will continue to hope it can offer you something.

⁷² It has been particularly difficult to overcome the ego's belief in the body as an end because this is synonymous with ATTACK AS AN END. The ego has a REAL INVESTMENT IN SICKNESS. If you are sick, how can you object to the ego's firm belief that you are NOT invulnerable? This is a particularly appealing argument from the ego's point of view, because it obscures the obvious attack which underlies the sickness. If you accepted THIS, and also decided AGAINST attack, you could not give this false witness to the ego's stand.

⁷³ It is hard to perceive this as a false witness, because you do not realize that it IS entirely out of keeping with what YOU want. This witness, then, appears to be innocent and trustworthy only because YOU have not seriously cross-examined him. If you did, you would not consider sickness such a strong witness on behalf of the ego's views.

⁷⁴ A more honest statement would be as follows: Those who WANT the ego are predisposed to defend it. Therefore, their choice of witnesses should be suspect from the beginning. The ego does not call upon witnesses who might disagree with its case, NOR DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT. We have said before that judgment IS the function of the Holy Spirit, and one which He is perfectly equipped to fulfill.

The ego, as a judge, gives anything BUT an impartial trial (judgment). When the ego calls on a witness, it has ALREADY MADE IT AN ALLY.

⁷⁵ It is still true that the body has no function of itself. This is because it is NOT an end. The ego, however, establishes it AS an end because, as such, IT WILL LOSE ITS TRUE FUNCTION. This is the purpose of everything the ego does. Its sole aim is to lose sight of the functions of EVERYTHING. A sick body does not make any sense. It COULD not make any sense, since sickness is not what it is FOR. Sickness is meaningful only if the two basic premises on which the ego's interpretation of the body rests are true. These are specifically first that the body is for attack, and also that you ARE a body. Without this, sickness is completely inconceivable.

⁷⁶ Sickness is a way of demonstrating that YOU CAN BE HURT. It is a witness to your frailty, your vulnerability, and your extreme need to depend on external guidance. The ego uses this as its best argument for your need for ITS guidance. It dictates endless prescriptions for AVOIDING this catastrophic outcome. The Holy Spirit, perfectly aware of the same data, does not bother to analyze it at all. If the data are meaningless, there is no point in treating them. The function of truth is to collect data which are TRUE. There is no point in trying to make sense out of meaningless data. ANY way they are handled results in nothing. The more complicated the results become, the harder it may be to recognize their nothingness, but it is not necessary to examine ALL possible outcomes to which premises give rise to judge the PREMISES truly.

⁷⁷ A learning DEVICE is NOT a teacher. IT cannot tell you how you feel. YOU do not KNOW how you feel, because YOU HAVE ACCEPTED THE EGO'S CONFUSION, and YOU think A LEARNING DEVICE CAN TELL YOU HOW YOU FEEL. Sickness is merely another example of your insistence on asking for guidance of a teacher who DOES NOT KNOW THE ANSWER. The ego is INCAPABLE of knowing how you feel. When we said that the ego DOES NOT KNOW ANYTHING, we said the one thing about the ego that is wholly true. But there is a corollary. If knowledge is being, and the ego has no knowledge, then the ego HAS NO BEING.

⁷⁸ You might ask how the voice of something which does not exist can be so insistent. Have you ever seriously considered the distorting power of something you WANT, even if it is not true? You have had many instances of how what you want can distort what you see and hear. No one can doubt the ego's skill in building up false cases. And no one can doubt your willingness to listen, until YOU will not to tolerate ANYTHING except truth. When YOU lay the ego aside it will be gone.

⁷⁹ The Holy Spirit's voice is as loud as your willingness to listen. It cannot be louder without violating your will, which He seeks to free but never to command. He will teach you to use your body ONLY to reach your brothers so He can teach His message through you. This will heal them and THEREFORE heal you. Everything used in accordance with its function as HE sees it CANNOT be sick. Everything used otherwise IS. Do not allow the body to be a mirror of a split mind. Do not let it be an image of your own perception of littleness. Do not let it reflect your will to attack. Health is the natural state of anything whose interpretation is left to the Holy Spirit, who perceives no attack on anything. Health is the result of relinquishing ALL attempts to use the body lovelessly. It is the beginning of the proper perspective on life, under the guidance of the one teacher who knows what life IS, being the voice for Life Itself.