

Fear and The Gross Body

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Sarah: My problems seem to be entirely physical which then leads to mental involvement!

I have had 2 occasions so far where my heart developed abnormal rhythm for brief periods and when that happened. It seemed like tidal wave of fear arose and for a while there was only this fear! At this time I (mind) did cling with desperation to the thought 'I am awareness, not this fear, this is object only!' But it happened few more times. Doing the same thing

Sundari: All experiences take place in the mind, even the ones that seem to come from the body. The body is just meat, it is inert—a counter across which experience transacts. The body does not experience directly because it is not conscious, although consciousness pervades every atom so it appears to be conscious and to experience. The Gross Body is called the *sthula sharira* in Sanskrit; it refers to the five elements because it is made up of them and sustained by them. It is basically just food. It is a means for awareness to have contact with objects and to experience pleasure and pain. The Gross Body and all its (apparently) experiences are objects known to you and exist as thoughts in the Subtle Body, and the Subtle body is a thought appearing in you, awareness. In deep sleep, or when your attention is on a thought, a feeling or an experience that does not involve the body, the Gross Body does not exist for you. It only exists for you in the waking state when you pay attention to it—such as when a fear thought appears in the mind about ill-health or pain in the body.

There is always something 'wrong' with the body, even when we are experiencing good health. It is not static but fluid, like a river, always changing and in a state of flux, and in a constant symbiotic relationship with the environment (Isvara, the gunas). It is a product of the gunas. The body you had a year ago, a month ago, or yesterday is not the same body you have today because the gunas are always changing, constantly revolving. Thus, nothing in *mithya* ever stays the same. The body belongs to Isvara and we have no control over it other than to look after it to the best of our ability. With knowledge about healthy lifestyle and especially guna management, you can do a great deal to maximize health, wellbeing and therefore, peace of mind. It is very difficult to maintain a sattvic mind if your lifestyle is a mess and the body is in bad health as a result. But, no matter how well we look after the body, Isvara is the final (and only) determiner of how long the body will sustain life. What use is control??

The body is on loan to you; you are not meant to and (definitely) will not be allowed to keep it! Take appropriate and timely action to look after it but surrender it to Isvara, who will take care of it. **The right attitude, which is an attitude of gratitude for the gift of life 'in a body', is the best and sanest approach to the body and to life.** It is a privilege to be born with a human body because only in a human body can *moksha* obtain. And when the time is right, the body will be withdrawn and returned to the five elements from whence it came, and you will not be affected by that one bit.

Your problems are not coming from your body and its good or bad health. They are coming from ignorance, from fear thoughts, the main one being fear of death. Why not embrace that fear, make peace with it, take it as *prasad*? There is no point in denying it if it will not leave you alone, but

you can remind yourself that fear is something known to you, the self, so it cannot *be* you. And, if it is not you, then it will pass because it is not real. Real being defined as that which is always present and never changes. Which only applies to you, the knower of the fear thoughts. Resistance is futile. All egos must face this one, the fear of death, of non-existence. Death of the body/ego is inevitable, so why not die now? Die to fear and live with impunity, with the confidence that as the self you are beyond life and death? Say NO! to fear by turning around and facing death.