

From symptoms to Instinct: understanding how to see dis-ease symptoms as directions, not threats or lessons.

In most cases when people find they have symptoms of an illness, no matter what it is, there is an immediate process whereby the symptoms are usually seen as one of two things. In the modern day, most commonly symptoms are seen as a threat to be “dealt with”. The sense of separation which is the fundamental root of all dis-ease, is all about the interior vs. the exterior. This has been the case for millennia and even is recorded in some of the ancient text of Chinese medicine. However, before these notions became ritualized as a dualistic doctrine there was an original idea of symptoms being simply “signs of change” rather than threats. Today the threat ideology is related to the economic model of biology where there is a “survival of the fittest” and as such a fight to survive means things trying to “get in” and “attack the body” are to be feared and therefore need to be killed or destroyed by a doctor’s arsenal of weapons. Modern medicine is run much like a military operation and there is a cross-over between the two technologies when that which is seen to threaten the body is sought to be subdued or defeated in order that other parts may survive. Dualism creates the perspective of good/bad, right/wrong and also separate parts. The natural reality, which is of an indivisible whole, is completely ignored. The above could be described as the “scientific” perspective from the medical-biological stand point, this is not at all objective but is the common perspective and as the narrowness of Newtonian-based science has become the new god, so this is the majority holding of modern ways of looking at symptoms.

The other way is the religious view, which is equally as useful/useless at curing or dealing with illness through the “power” of belief, or what modern medicine calls the placebo effect as they haven’t a clue what brings this about. The main premise is that either the symptom is a blight from god, or part of a karmic retribution in which a person has “past life” trauma to deal with, or made bad “choices” in life, or some misdeed requiring atonement, such that they now need to play out a physical manifestation of disease in order to resolve the previous misdemeanor. This is the same kind of superstition as the believed-in “threat” of bacteria or viruses or other problems contained in Western ideological dualism. Religious dualism is older and wider-spread even in less modern societies, in the New-age communities and in many religious groups worldwide, so it is equal if not greater in proportion to scientific beliefs as to what symptoms are. Belief in the religious deity or Shaman/witch-doctor can be enough to initially resolve symptoms, but they do return as the original problem has not been dealt with, this builds up dependency which is the stuff of all colonial ventures.

In fact there is no lesson to learn, or past-life to recapitulate, there is no teacher. Life/nature isn’t a teacher, or a hierarchical god swinging an axe, the universe is you and you are the universe so how can this make for a lesson-learning process? The teacher-student dynamic is one based in the deepest illusion of dualism. That which is background to both forms of dualism and so disarms them both, is where the root of medicine originates. This can be found in the non-dualism of Taoist medicine and the Vedas of India to a certain extent but much of the information is still presented in very dualistic terms. If we look past this at what is truly meant, then we find ourselves just seeing symptoms of

disease for what they are, simply symptoms occurring now, without a past or a future. The pain is just pain, nothing is added. However, the pain is not the real problem. The suffering, which is the perception of the pain, is the key impediment to treatment/cure and the focus of Western medicine on the notion that “I” is believed to exist and so the pain is happening to a personal “me”.

If we take the example of the common cold, which has symptoms of sneezing, from the ancient dogmatic perspective we could see this as a karmic retribution, for instance where you as the Pharaoh of Egypt in a past-life situation decided to kill thousands of people in cold blood*. (**Notice that people always seem to have been pharaohs rather than insects, rats, stones, or even peasants with no power at all, based on karmic ideas about hierarchy of the separate “soul” and other totally fabricated ideas about the nature of humans in relation to animals and plant life.*)

Another possibility is that a person has been possessed by an evil pathogen of some kind intent on attempting to destroy the body, a ghost or demon or the like. This description is also given validation in a world of dualism, where although it may be called a bacteria or virus in modern terminology, there is still the connotation of being under attack and therefore the need for an immune defence, which again misses the point.

From the broadest perspective, what we see is something akin to frost. Frost comes every year and the nature of colds is about this. Just as the ground, grasses and plants get a layer of frost so does the human, even though houses are warm which helps, but still the body gets a small amount of frost. When this happens the circulation of energy around the body slows down and as it does so the skin’s functioning decreases. The membranous tissues or surface of the body get frozen a little and so circulation blockages occur and then one experiences the first symptoms of a cold: coughing, feeling cold, sneezing and nose running. The sneezing and coughing are about blockages in the circulation of the body, this situation is similar to a hose-pipe that hasn’t been turned on for a while, as the energy/water comes through the pipes the air bubbles caught in the pipe cause an uneven flow and the pipe shakes as the bubbles comes through. Because the fluids don’t circulate properly, they collect and the nose starts to run. Shivering occurs which is also the effect of the blockage. As time goes on the surfaces of the body are still frozen shut and as a result of blockage in flow, this causes a back-log of energy. This back-log is like a dam, it builds up to a crescendo and then it blows. In fact the build-up is of the warm blood and internal circulation systems of the body and the blockage is of the frost or ice on the surfaces, it is as if the warmth of the inside finally builds up and thaws the body. This next stage occurs in the form of a fever which is vital in order to release the surfaces and allow full body circulation to recommence and when the fever breaks the body will have regulated itself again. In all of this we can see that the inside and outside are simply regions of warmth and cold in the universe and, like weather patterns, these fronts meld into one another without intent.

There are of course far more complex ways of explaining the minutiae of every case of cold and each one will be slightly different, but the basic format of explanation uses no notion of threat to the body nor of karmic retribution or possession, the language is plain and simple and it speaks in energetic ways which are not about right or wrong but simply about the flow of nature. For medicine to be understood, or anything else for that matter,

it needs to come from a place which is devoid of dualistic judgment, where bacteria and viruses are not seen as a threat to immunity and militaristic words such as “immunity”, “defence”, “system”, “killer cell” are no longer used to describe the nature of the process.

The idea that phenomena can occur without reason or meaning is a very difficult concept to grasp for those steeped in the ideology of modern biology, as is the karmic patterning and retribution type idea. Biology has not yet assimilated an understanding of modern physics and at the same time the main principles of physics are being undermined by uncertainty of the basic theories, so science, especially that of biology, is very much based on “religious” beliefs and perspectives of “survival”. Seen from a simply energetic perspective that is inclusive of these more narrow perspectives, while seeing them in context of a larger space, then there is another view that is actually beyond belief. It is very difficult for the human being not to try and find meaning, or to ascertain causality based on an idea of “fairness” or balance, that in reality is actually quite imbalanced and subjective, and the need to find meaning is always at root based in fear. Looking without an idea of what one is looking at, or hearing without filtering for content derives from an infant/instinctual sense. Instead of the adult who “knows”, there is a child who doesn't and who moreover attaches no importance to knowing. Instead of springing from hierarchical domination and dualism as occurs in science, medicine and religion which all revolve around “authority” figures exerting power, true medicine becomes a playful connection.

At the root of Taoism there is the often misunderstood concept of the “sage”. However, this sage is none other than the innate instinctual sense that is life itself, which is in fact nowhere to be found because it already is everything. As such the situation that is most revered is that of simply seeing the world as an energetic play of light and sound, without a “me” or “you” to be found. This too is health in its truest sense, it is not the quest for a “perfect” body but an understanding that the movement of nature follows directions of expansion and contraction and that these result in phenomena, or what some might call symptoms. These symptoms are simply energetic phenomena and as a result their resolution is very often about a letting-go that occurs when nature is allowed to take its course. Just as it is very hard to “dissolve” into tears and really feel it, it is also impossible to spontaneously sweat when you want to, or stop one's heart beating because “I command it”. While some people have certainly developed skills allowing them to alter the body state, i.e. the actor who can cry on command, the meditator who can slow the heart or sweat easily when focused on doing so, all these are forcefully intended and are therefore unnatural for the human-animal. The Tao Te Ching points out that “control of the breath” meaning situations where the breath is not naturally but forcibly drawn, and also anything else which follows on from this, or all pre-intended movements of the body is “violence”.

The natural expression of healing is something that has no intention and as a result allows nature to take its course unimpeded or without a layer of abstraction of self, which consumes a huge proportion of the body's natural functionality. Tony Parsons suggests that perhaps 60% of the energy of the human is used up in the general process of “self-hood” meaning that only around 40% of energy is actually involved in natural activities.

This is similar to the idea that we are using only a proportion of our actual capacity, however in fact we are always 100% energy, just very inefficiently expressed.

In medicine there is no intention. Seeing nature and following its course really means allowing and assisting a person when they are ready to let go. This means there is no exclusivity of patient or practitioner, there is no divide. Neither is there a goal of perfection, the healing process allows the patient to let go of the energy used in worrying/anxiety about the cold which will then allow the fever to come out. This can be accomplished using *any* tool or form of treatment, some are more or less effective at one time than another. For example, in a cold pattern herbs are the most appropriate methodology to use. However the human connection of practitioner and patient allows for the root of the problem to be resolved. This is really the sense of relaxation, warmth and connection, the dropping away of the idea of individuated “self” allowing herbs to be fully and deeply ingested. As such dualism in the mind and the body dissolve. This relief is healing.

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12/ 11/ 2011