

Published in: *Voices: Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists* (2002) 38, (1), pp. 41-47

## Peace Has a Price

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The teacher kept talking about how sorrow was intimately connected to joy. She said that one could exhaust joy if sorrow was not allowed its voice in the soul's cry for freedom. She looked at me and told me to write about that. I could feel her words reverberate through the depths of my being, while my mind kept trying to grasp at threads of what she was offering me. I knew what she said was truth and that it was important that I understood with my heart. My mind knew of countless implications of the principles of duality that could be used to explain away or minimize the importance of this simple phrase, "Sorrow must be embraced if one is to know true joy." Her words were a call to action. I had been teaching the need for therapists to do their own inner work, spiritual work, for many years. This was pulling something out from deep within me, something my mind could barely grasp, but my body was responding to like an instrument in the hands of a maestro. Somehow there is a way to make music from sorrow and joy.

The invitation to write about the relationship between philosophy and psychology was timely and a delight to me. In my search for wisdom I immersed myself in ancient philosophies and contemporary interpretations. That search led to the psychology of Jung who offered a guideline that has been a hallmark in my personal therapeutic approach, "Effective psychology is applied philosophy." As a therapist it is my intent to help people live their own wisdom, a wisdom that can be discovered through psychospiritual work. My understanding of the terms *psyche logia*, the deep study of the psyche, and *philo sophia*, the love of wisdom, provide me with a therapeutic foundation for my work and my personal philosophy. More specifically, the love of wisdom of Sophia, the feminine principle, has become an exciting and hopeful means of challenging what appears to be a world on the brink of self-destruction. My work as a therapist has expanded to include environmental and political realms. All of this revolves around my understanding of the essential need for awakening of the feminine principle in the people of the many cultures of our world.

The emergence of the feminine principle is one of the most profound and hopeful events of the last century. In Riane Eisler's provocative book she defined the Chalice as "the life generating and nurturing power of the Universe." The Blade/Sword that has ruled for so long is "the power to take life rather than give it" (Eisler, 1987, p. xvii). Her work makes a compelling argument for the need to surrender the Blade and pick up the Chalice once again. Similarly, in the 1930s, Jung warned that if the feminine principle and the shadow archetype were not integrated the human species would not survive. We need to withdraw our collective projection of the shadows from the enemy outside ourselves, and we need to awaken individual and collective awareness of the essence of the feminine, if we are to survive our own madness.

Between the moments of delight when I thought of writing of philosophy and psychology

and the later demand to write about sorrow and joy I experienced the rip in the world's soul that is the destruction of the World Trade Towers. The Taliban Leaders are an easy enemy onto which I can project all evil, an enemy that is the epitome of those who are committed to the repressed feminine and the apparent denial of their own destructive actions. Now is the time to apply philosophy. Whose philosophy, whose love of what wisdom will I draw upon? Will it be that of the psychologists, the politicians, philosophers or spiritualists? To what end? As a therapist, am I changed by the events of this horror? Will my therapeutic approach be any different as I integrate what has happened?

How do any of us know what is truth? I have no doubt that the individuals who sacrificed their lives to a cause they believed in were confident that they knew truth. How does the individual psyche develop a construct of meaning that enables destroying lives for a principle, a cause, a belief? Such horror revealed in both recent events and in history is the product of the blade unimpeded by the awakened heart. It is like a cancer in the body of Gaia, Mother Earth, a living organism in which we each play a part. The cancer cells must be destroyed but only when the source of cancer is changed can we relax our effort. We will continue to witness this mutation of the human psyche unless we commit to radical awakening in sufficient numbers that the source of this cancer is transformed. This source is children, who are raised in horror, no matter what country they live in. Such a commitment requires something from each of us. "Do not seek enlightenment unless you seek it like one whose head is on fire seeks the water!" (Ramakrishna, 1942). Peace has a price.

What is this price to be paid, this "pearl of great price" as the wisdom literature offers? I first heard the phrase "peace has a price" in 1997, high in the mountains above Espanola, New Mexico, sitting with hundreds of Sikhs as we listened to their teacher, Yogi Bajan, and my teacher, Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati. The annual Sikh Peace Prayer Day is a gathering that honors peacemakers from around the world. This week Yogi Bajan grieves the death of his student, murdered in ignorance by one who thought the student was Muslim. Killed by ignorance ... whether he was Muslim, Sikh, or a man with a beard and a turban in the wrong place at the wrong time ... killed by one who destroys for a principle, a cause, a belief.

What is this ignorance that torments our world? The Buddhist language suggests that most of us are ignorant most of the time. We are asleep. The psychologist might say we are unconscious. Building on the Buddhist wisdom, I learn that to be ignorant is to ignore that which my deepest soul knows. Beyond the healing of personal neuroses is becoming conscious of the Self, the symbol of that which has answers to our most important questions: Who am I? How did I get here? Where am I going? I practice the patience the poet writes of:

Be patient with all that is in your heart  
 And try to love the questions themselves.  
 Do not seek for the answers that cannot be given  
 For you would not be able to live them  
 And the point is to live everything.  
 Live the questions now and perhaps,  
 without knowing it,  
 You will live along some day into answers (Rilke, 1934).

I know that joy is what we all seek. Many people know very little about joy and far too

much about sorrow. Sorrow can get people to take a deeper look at themselves. Philosophy may have something to contribute on sorrow and joy. One such example, Dr. Huston Smith in his description of the philosophy of Hinduism, has offered a map for the path to joy. In the initial stages, known as the path of desire, there is the search for pleasure, then worldly success with its three aspects of fame, wealth and power. Without judging these needs, he states that for many this is the sum total of life. For others, “Eventually there comes over him a suspicion that he is caught on a nonstop treadmill, having to race faster and faster for rewards that mean less and less” (Smith, 1986, p. 31). At the end of the path of desire is the path of renunciation. He goes on to say, “What if the focus of his concern were shifted? Might not becoming part of a larger, more significant whole relieve his life of its oppressive triviality? This question, once it arises, brings the beginning of true religion” (Smith, 1986). Helping a client consider these ideas can be therapeutic. The old adage, “timing is everything” is essential. Asking the question can be enough.

It is important to understand the use of the word “religion” in its earlier sense as an encounter with Mystery, “this is the original meaning of the word religio - a careful observation and taking account of the numinous” (Jung, 1958, p. 596). Jung saw his therapeutic approach as primarily focused on the encounter with Mystery from which the individual would integrate neurotic suffering as the teacher that forced greater consciousness. All suffering, in this way of thinking, is the result of a lack of consciousness. To develop such consciousness is “authentic religion’s role ... to de-center the ego, not pander to its worldly desires” (Smith, 2001, p. 45).

Psychology can have a role to play in the essential task of the 21<sup>st</sup> century if humanity is to achieve sufficient awareness to counter the ignorance that destroys. This will require therapists to apply philosophy with greater skill. There is increased “dissatisfaction with medical care ... among patients and providers, despite unprecedented medical successes,” attributed by these authors to “failure to acknowledge the role of spirituality in human relationships” (Balducci and Meyer, 2001, p. 368). Accusations that “psychology has failed” are made by philosophers who seek financial par with therapists believing they can do a better job for most of the current neuroses people bring into therapy (Campbell, 1998, p. 25). It is arguable that the last century of professional development of therapists has suffered the same one-sidedness as science in general, an overemphasis of the technological development with little or no emphasis on the spiritual growth essential for conscious use of the tools of technology. This includes the increasing emphasis on mechanical medical treatment of what is often the despair of an alienated ego, or the inflated ego that attempts to compensate for inner emptiness. To whose wisdom do we turn? Is it to biological psychiatry? Certainly that philosophy needs to be heard. I also hold to Carl Roger’s provocative hypothesis that one of the essential qualities an effective therapist **must** provide is congruence (Rogers, 1959). Such congruence evolves from genuine philosophical inquiry that has practical application for living.

There is ample precedence for guidance if we are willing to recognize our own limitations as professions and begin to seek wisdom where it has been proven by the test of time. “Accept without fail words spoken from experience, even if the speaker is not learned in books ... Confide your thoughts to one who has studied the work in practice, rather than to a learned philosopher, who reasons on the basis of speculations, with no practical knowledge” (St. Isaac of Syria, 1990). Such individuals can be found in the literature of philosopher/researchers who identify and seek to understand highly evolved individuals (Houston, 1982). Such experienced

guides are often found as spiritual teachers. In a culture that is wary of the idea of Gurus, with justification, there is a need to research and dialogue about what discriminates those teachers that are guides to the Self from those that have identified with the Self. The wisdom literature has a wealth of guidance to aid in such discrimination.

One example, Swami Nityananda, “says that the guru who initiates an aspirant is the ‘guru of cause’ ... differentiating between the physical teacher, who can show the seeker the road to Self-realization, and the ‘guru of action,’ who actually walks the road. This action guru ... resides within the individual, for the action guru is nothing other than the Self of all” (Nityananda, 1985, p. 260). The term guru means teacher but not to be confused with just anyone who offers guidance. This practice, known as guru yoga, is intended to relieve suffering by awakening the student, known as chela, to her true Self. In many cultures the idea of becoming fully conscious is rarely expected without a sage as a guide. When asked why I would follow such teaching I offer that this guru Ma will not allow me to be any less than who I truly am. Through Jungian analysis followed by guru yoga I have experienced relief from useless suffering, increased confidence and acceptance of life’s challenges, and certainly increased joy in many areas of my life. I am also more equipped to participate in the sorrows of the world with less sentimentality and avoidance.

There are so many identical points of view between those on a spiritual quest and those who do the work of sacred psychology. As one example compare these two quotes, one from a spiritualist, the other an analyst:

A life-myth begins to get interesting when a deep discontent with one’s direction, or even with one’s personality arises. Sometimes this happens when you meet a living example of a whole other possibility: one of those enlightened beings, variously called saint, bodhisattva, tzadik, gnani, and many other names. In the Sufic tradition such a person is called a True Human Being (Barks, 1997, p. 12).

I made a statement earlier that the reasons a person gives for wanting to enter analysis are rarely the true reasons. They are, without a doubt, the conscious reasons . . . It is that he has looked at himself and does not like the person he has become, and he believes that somewhere there is in him the possibility of being another sort of person, the one he was meant to be . . . Yet, how many are willing to involve themselves with one suffering individual for as long as it takes to help him come together again, and to reunite the splintered fragments (Singer, 1973, p. 32).

The former was my experience from meeting both Dr. Singer and Ma Jaya. The second quote is my experience from both analysis and as a spiritual student. When my wife and I discovered our path had led to a guru, a woman who challenges cultural assumptions about how a guru should look and act, my wife asked me, “What do you do if you find what you have been looking for?” Neither of us would have said we were looking for a guru in any form. Both of us had met searching for wisdom. When it came in the form of a True Human Being I could only surrender. However, it would seem that the ego does not surrender easily. To ignore that which my deepest soul knows sustains my image of myself that is my ego identity, an identity that has allowed me to cope with life more-or-less adequately. If I want to experience the wisdom of my Self and live a more integrated life, the pearl of great price, the ego must die to the Self. In

wisdom literature it is the reward of becoming conscious, as John the Baptist perceived when Jesus approached, “He must increase but I *must* decrease” (John 3:30, KJV). The Greek word for “I” is ego. Ego decreases that the Self may increase. The evangelist was adamant that this *must* happen. It is equally clear that this is no easy task. As the Tibetan master writes, “There could be no bigger mistake than to think that ignorance is somehow dumb and stupid, or passive and lacking in intelligence. On the contrary it is shrewd and cunning, versatile and dangerous in the games of deception” (Sogyal, 1995).

To learn about surrender of the ego at the feet of an enlightened being has a long lineage, tested by time. Nowhere do I know of such an individual destroying the lives of innocents. The stories some will tell of spiritual teachers leading their students to destruction is distorted. The Taliban leaders are not gurus of cause. They suffer inflated egos, having identified with the Self which results in a distortion of spirituality. True wisdom keepers may challenge their students in any number of ways to help them surrender false pride, arrogance, and the idea of separateness. No mystic writes about the kind of oppressive behaviors observed in current Afghanistan, or in Ireland the week before the horror in New York when second graders were stoned on their way to school, or in the Congo where two and a half million people were killed in battles of ego in the last ten years. Or, as in our own country, when so-called religious leaders used this terrorist tragedy to foster their own agendas of bigotry and prejudice. Ignorance is cunning, dangerous in the games of deception. There is no longer an alternative for a world in which egotism destroys. We thought we were separate. Now we must know better.

That is what Ma was teaching me tonight. By feeling the depths of my sorrow evoked by terrorism I open myself up to “participating in the sorrows of the world with joy.” I believe it is in being conscious of the relationship between sorrow and joy, healing the split between them, that I approach becoming a true human being and more useful as a therapist. It is in the intent to practice spirituality in all my relationships that I have my practice or yoga to develop such consciousness. In the words of Ma, “kindness is my religion.” To live into that is the yoga of relationship. It is a demanding spiritual discipline that requires others, particular others that will test me and show me where my ego is defended.

The price of peace is to surrender my ego, perhaps the most difficult task I will encounter. Yet, I know this is a worthy task, one that provides me with a living experience that integrates sorrow and joy. In the words of the Koran “Or do you think that you shall enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed away before you?” (2:214). These are the words of the Self written in a tradition that offers the harvest of love and inner peace. It is this inner Guru of action that will show me how to renew my ability to remain present with another’s deep and genuine sorrow. It is that same Self that will not allow me to drown in the sorrow and to be confident that joy will one day come again. As my own ego decreases I am learning how to be the Chalice, the empty vessel that is the alchemical vase. All I really have to do is pay attention.

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