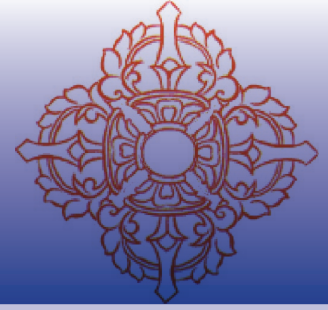




High Sierra Light



Vol. 1, #3 — January 2005

The newsletter for www.doingyourwork.com

'Tis the Season for Shedding.

Hello everyone—I hope you've had a peaceful and loving holiday season. There is much to discuss as we move out of the Winter Solstice and into a potent season of change.

What an intense experience of change the last few months have been—life in post-election America definitely takes some getting used to. In this newsletter, I'm going to suggest some ways to get positively oriented within this new cultural landscape.

What we are being confronted with now in America is a new Coalition of Shame—political, religious and social—that has emerged out of the Bush Campaign and the November election. In its essence, it is not new. You can go back as recently as McCarthyism in the 50's to capture the flavor of what this election has reawakened in the shadow self of America.



What is new this time around is a stronger and more diverse spiritual community that is committed to spiritual, sexual, social and political freedom. An American community that does not want to be controlled by shame and the distorted, dyslexic reasoning that shame creates. What is new this time is that our world is at stake, and we must act.

Shame is an ancient wound that haunts humanity. It is no accident that it has reassembled in the form of a political and religious alliance that threatens to undo some of the essential freedoms that define not only democracy and free will, but mental/spiritual freedom itself. Shame has returned because, like evil, it must be openly confronted and exposed for what it is. We have not yet mastered this lesson as a nation, or as a world.

At the heart of the spiritual forces of change that have been occurring this year is the call to finally let go of our wounded selves and find our true, unique gifts of Light and Love. There comes a time in doing your work when the next step is to let go of fear—to shed the inhibitions that come from growing up in dysfunctional world—and emerge.

It is time to shed the idea that love cannot guide humanity, and that shame must rule.

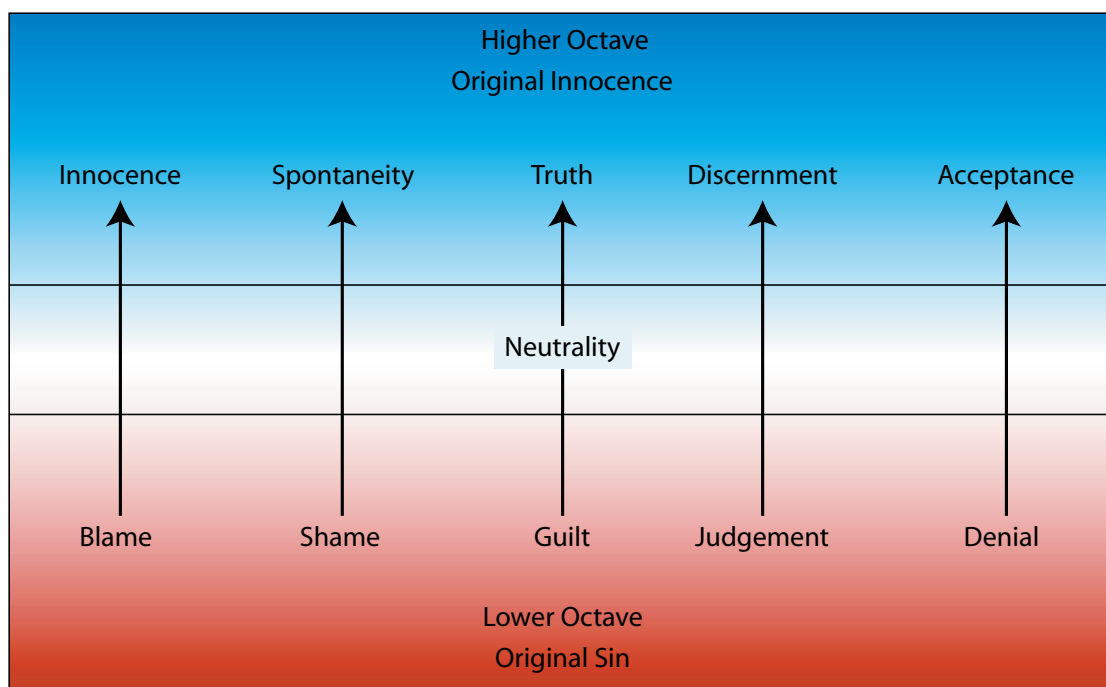
The Big Picture

In August, the Mercury Retrograde initiated a six-month cycle from September through February that is deeply energizing the possibility of finally letting go, awakening to our true Selves and shedding our wounded identities. For some, this cycle will be the time when that shedding really happens, while for others it starts or intensifies the process that will complete at the appropriate time in the future. Either way, this is the time when we are being called to show up and evoke our Light, our Commitment, and our Freedom in response to this new Coalition of Shame. This is the time for which we all incarnated.

So what does it mean to really let go of our wounded identities? It begins by recognizing and accepting that there still exists a potent density in humanity—the Lower Octave of Manifestation that is defined by the idea of Original Sin, held together by blame, shame and guilt, and anchored in the physical plane by judgement and denial.

When we were born, we came into families that were, each in their own way, trapped in these Lower Octave dynamics. We then took on wounded emotions and patterns as we tried to bring love into our families and they could not respond, and became trapped in that wounding and density.

Simply described, healing our wounded identities starts with having acceptance for our grief. Grief is the love within us that has never been given, love that has been trapped in the Lower Octave. Allowing grief to move restores our ability to be neutral with the forces that have trapped us, because our hearts are recovering the power to love. As this healing progresses, we can reanimate the wounded emotional body within us through innocence, spontaneity, truth, discernment, and acceptance up into liberation in the Higher Octave.



The Higher Octave

The Higher Octave of Manifestation is defined by the idea of Original Innocence, is held together by innocence, spontaneity and truth, and anchored in the physical plane by discernment and acceptance. The Higher Octave can co-exist with the Lower Octave, and influence the direction the Lower Octave takes. This is our goal—to heal our emotional bodies so that we can dwell at a higher emotional resonance on the planet and anchor new Light patterns into our emotional bodies. As we do this, our actions and emotional expressions build a new spiritual/emotional resonance on Earth that is not bound by shame and can reach into those souls waiting for our transformation to inspire them.

Spirit is electric, emotions are magnetic. They are meant to co-create Light in the physical plane in an electro-magnetic matrix. Spirit inspires with new Light patterns and emotion responds with desire, vision and commitment. A completely healed emotional body can hold a sustained presence of Light in the physical plane indefinitely, and this emotional healing is the message of the Resurrection of the Christ. As Jesus was trapped in the Lower Octave and subject to death, his connection to the Higher Octave allowed him to rebirth his emotional body and reconnect with the Christ Light, thereby resurrecting as the Christ in physical form.

Jesus said, “Come unto me as little children”. In other words, you can access the Christ Light through the emotional matrix of Original Innocence. In a wounded world, governed by the dominant idea of Original Sin, blame suppresses innocence, shame suppresses spontaneity, and guilt suppresses truth, while judgement controls what we are afraid of, and denial negates the existence of anything other than the entire Lower Octave.

To transmute these poisons, we must find them in ourselves and do the emotional work to honor our grief and traumas. Then we must liberate our innocence, spontaneity, truth, discernment and acceptance through reparenting the innocent child within us, and setting healthy boundaries so that our Inner Child is never shamed or denied again. We must also discern the wounded emotions in others and set healthy, compassionate boundaries so that we are not enmeshed.

All of us have either had or will have our wake-up call that it is time to do our work. That it is time to heal our wounded emotions and patterns, and make our hearts and emotions available for Higher patterns of Light to move through us and inspire us to shed the density we were born into. When we have healed enough of the grief caused by being born into density and know that we can nurture ourselves into being neutral about our families and our past, then we can dwell in the Higher Octave more and more.

Loss-of-Consciousness Patterns

We are trapped in the Lower Octave through both wounded emotions and loss-of-consciousness patterns. These patterns are defined by complex dependencies and a failure to individuate into our own true egoic orientation in life. They are defined by specific dis-abilities: the inability to set boundaries, to form a personal vision and achieve it, to achieve expansive intimacy with others, and to experience a direct, higher connection with Light.

Loss-of-consciousness patterns are anchored in unhealthy dependencies which enmesh us into other peoples' wounded emotions as we were once enmeshed into our parents' wounded emotions. There are three levels to these patterns: primary dependency, interpersonal dependency, and spiritual dependency.

When we remain trapped in these dependencies, our emotional body cannot awaken to receive and embody liberating Light. There are three primary forms of entrapment that weaken us and actually leak energy and Light from within us, so that we actually lose consciousness of our real Self and the possibility of moving into the Higher Octave.

1. Transferred primary family dependency—adult re-enactments of primal abandonment and betrayal acted out through failed dependency dramas in relationship with food, sex, drugs and alcohol, other people, groups, institutions and governments. This level reflects essentially the early child level of development.
2. Interpersonal codependency—sacrificing ourselves to avoid our own pain and needs while enmeshing into and taking care of others so they won't feel pain either. Codependency avoids grief, change and confrontation with the truth of our deepest woundings and needs. This level essentially reflects the teenage level of development.
3. Spiritual dependency—trying to avoid the complexities of healthy adult egoic development and responsible boundary setting through entering into 'selfless' dependency with myriad transcendental, fundamental, devotional and mystical/shamanic spiritual practices. Many of these wounded practices (which often encourage a transferred family dependency) over-idealize Spirit, denigrate the emotions, demonize the ego and largely fail to address abuse, addiction, post-traumatic stress, grief, and real boundary setting, especially with gurus and spiritual/religious 'authorities'. This level essentially reflects the young adult level of development.

Confronting these patterns in our lives frees us from toxic dependencies and requires committed action to break free from them. That committed action forges a new egoic focus that is self-honoring and neutral in the face of others' wounding. This focus allows us to regain our lost consciousness and evolve into true Selfhood.

Exploring Egoic Consciousness

The recent Mercury Retrograde in December focused on expanding an area of human experience that is greatly misunderstood and holds a lot of judgement—the Ego. The learning experience being energized through the December Retrograde is about allowing yourself to re-perceive the necessary role that the ego plays in our spiritual evolution.

I am well aware that many spiritual traditions hold the ego to be much like the appendix in our bodies—some sort of strange vestige that hampers ‘real’ spiritual experience. Well, I completely disagree, and through the Retrograde it appears that we are being asked to reconsider many old judgements held around the ego.

Here is my definition of the Ego, which I will expand on:

Your Ego is the part of you that knows that you are a unique soul.

That’s it, pure and simple.

Without an ego, you can’t set real boundaries. If you cannot honor what is unique in yourself and don’t feel that you deserve to do so, you will have a very hard time thinking clearly about these things and creating functional boundaries.

The real nature of the ego is that it celebrates uniqueness in ourselves and others, and when healthy is a very win-win aspect of ourselves. But there has been so much confusion and demonizing of the ego that there isn’t a lot of awakened and unwounded ego on the planet. I would go so far as to say that the level of ignorance and judgement placed on the ego is a widespread disease of perception that keeps humanity trapped in an unhealthy submission to abusive, shame-based souls.

The ego is the crystalline snowflake within our consciousness—no two are alike. It is a life force within our souls that drives us to discover and expand our own unique life expression. The ego also has a very expansive drive to create synergy, not separation, and lovingly responds to the calling of Spirit to create new patterns of Light. Think back to two very important historical people—Joan of Arc and Benjamin Franklin. Inspired by higher callings from Spirit, both allowed their egoic self to expand and move into new dimensions of intelligence, freedom and liberation. Had they denied their egoic consciousness, we’d live in a different world.

One of the great ironies and contradictions of humanity is that we obsessively watch and honor people who are expressing and evolving egoic consciousness—Michael Jordan is a great example—and yet continue to embrace spiritual beliefs that hold the ego as a malignant and ‘lesser’ aspect of our true Selves.

In order to truly understand these contradictions, we must look at the context in which spiritual teachings perceive the ego. Most spiritual teachings are observing the WOUNDED AND TRAUMATIZED EGO, and base their practices on trying to convince the wounded ego to calm down. Unfortunately, by using only the word ego in their teachings to convey the idea of wounded ego, millions of people have created a very inaccurate association with the word.

The healthy ego is intimately woven into our emotions and heart, and it experiences and knows itself in cycles of movement/expression and in meditation/rest. Yes, the healthy ego, aligned with higher energy, is a self-governing organ of consciousness that knows when it needs to express, and when it needs to listen. Where we possess great confusion is when the suppressed, wounded ego needs to move in order to find balance again.

Imagine holding a ping-pong ball underwater, and then letting it go. It shoots up, yes? Well, that is what happens when, after being judged or denied, the ego has a chance to escape that suppression. It MOVES. It seeks Light and acceptance. It attempts to re-establish an essential balance and equilibrium in the self. The ego experiences judgement or denial the way you or I would experience having your head held under water until you almost pass out. There is an urgency to restore normal functioning, a primal urgency.

Here's the challenge for us in staying neutral and holding unconditional acceptance for the ego as it heals: if the ego is moving back into balance while still holding a primal, wounded emotional charge, it will usually act out some aspect of the intensity of the traumatic impact of that original judgement or denial. Trapped in raw experience, the ego is seeking love and acceptance for its traumatic experience. That acting out can range from low-level venting and frustration to severe abuse and psychotic/schizoid episodes.

The recent Retrograde is asking us to reconsider some long-standing judgements on the ego that are preventing it from healing and evolving to its right place in our total being. We are asking for healing on the planet, yet without allowing healing in our own egoic consciousness, we will block the Light that wants to lift us into expansive new synergy that can make a shift on the planet. People stuck in self-judgement of their own egoic self perpetually chase their tails, asking for Light and then blocking its very expression.

If we are ever to rise up and challenge shame on the planet, we must have healthy egoic consciousness.



Confronting Shame with Love

So here we are, watching the Bush administration trying to undo many things that were created to hold a government in check and balance—from the Geneva Convention rules of interrogation to the ethics rules in the Senate. Bush is proudly trying to take apart something that really worked in eliminating poverty in the elderly—Social Security—because his government can't afford it anymore, while his supposedly well-fought war in Iraq disintegrates daily into a debacle never before seen in American military history, propped up by a carousel of idealistic democratic goals that we all know don't stand a chance of succeeding if we keep on alienating every ally around us.


I'll tell you what I am watching: an Adult Child of an Alcoholic faking his way as the President, surrounding himself with codependent enablers, and hoping that we are all just as dysfunctional and shame-based so we won't catch on to a pretty pathetic mockery of the American Presidency.

But let's put this into perspective. We owe a great deal of this new wave of dysfunctional and shame-based denial, which has taken the art of political denial to a new level, to one man: Bill Clinton.

When Bill Clinton lied to the American people about Monica Lewinsky, he made the first real modern mockery of the American Presidency. In his shame and sex addiction, Clinton lied and denied his own dysfunction, leaving it to his wife to clean up his mess. Now, virtually every President has had scandal and dysfunction in their time in office (often managed by strong wives). But Bill Clinton crossed a line on national television and deeply offended a portion of America that was not yet an alliance—the Christian conservatives, the quiet religious, and the emerging multi-cultural middle class. Bill Clinton opened Pandora's Box of Shame.

You can draw a direct line from that moment to a re-energized Republican coalition that took everyone by surprise in re-electing George Bush. In the re-election campaign, Karl Rove brilliantly exploited the moral outrage quietly seething in conservative America, and appealed to a community held together in their collective shame and fear.

There is something very disturbing but almost touching about watching Bush, in his dyslexia and medicated smugness, believe that he is liberating America from a lesser people, the Liberals. He truly believes that he is a Chosen One, and in his role as the most blatantly dysfunctional President ever to serve in that office, I think he is: the one who will finally play out the caricature of shame-based denial to the degree that there is no hiding from the truth. In Native American medicine, he is the heyokah and trickster, the clown that turns everything upside down. The question is, when have we had enough, and what do we do?



We can only start in ourselves. We must look at the Lower Octave again, and realize that we are in the middle of another Lower Octave takeover. In the intensity of this experience, there is no better time to work on wherever we are trapped in the Lower Octave ourselves.

In my last newsletter, I brought through a lot of information on the Goddess, freedom, and Free Will. Bush's re-election may seem to have dismantled that momentum, but I don't see that. The Goddess needs us to confront this cyclical dance of shame and denial and to master it. The hopeful wave of freedom that stood behind John Kerry must now reassemble and redefine the problem not as political, but as being a problem that we all share: the crippling human legacy of shame.

We are going to need to radically expand our understanding of the depth to which shame has permeated the human culture. Just as with Evil, if you underestimate the parasitic power of shame it will always creep back in. Shame lives in every aspect of our culture. It even lives in spiritual gurus who perpetuate the Lower Octave denials of ego and emotion as supposedly enlightened understandings.

We are being asked to reclaim our spiritual authority through our own complete healing. We are being asked to see through the slippery spiritual rationalizations that tell us to withhold love from parts of ourselves as an enlightened practice, thereby keeping us trapped in density and struggle. I have worked with so many spiritual seekers who are twisted up in pretzel shapes trying to live free lives while denying essential aspects of themselves as bad because their master told them they need to do this to be worthy of the Light.

We are being asked to do nothing less than give birth to a spiritual model that does not contain shame. Nothing less will free us from the dance of unhealthy dominance that the Lower Octave is acting out this very minute.

The essence of shame is that it feels innately unlovable and unworthy. **Shame hides the fact that it has a very hard time learning about healthy relationships**, often behind grandiose statements and plans, and will employ very convoluted denial strategies to conceal this disability.

The key to mastering the lesson of shame in those around you lies in being able to feel all of your own emotions so that you will know if someone is acting out of shame, and then you can choose an appropriate response. If one isn't in touch with all of their emotions, they can be deceived, for shame is a master of deception, distortion and denial. The deeper and more toxic the shame, the greater the attempts to deceive and control others so that they cannot see the shame.

Shame is by nature a dyslexia. The human soul is by nature innocent and good, and to internalize the idea that we are flawed at our core is to reverse the truth: we are truly innocent first and taught to feel shame, but shame has it backwards, that we are flawed first and must be redeemed. And the new shame-based, self-appointed prophets speak in grandiose, distorted voices.

Listen to the voice of the Republicans like Anne Coulter just in the title of her book, "How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must)—the World According to Anne Coulter". These are grandiose voices of shame—there is no neutral compassionate wisdom speaking here. This is a thinly disguised hypervigilance and paranoia that must demonize the Liberals in order to idealize themselves as saviors of all that is good and right in the world.

Hiding from these forces of shame will not change anything. The new Coalition of Shame is a potent, dense and virulent wounded ego, acting out and seeking love and acceptance for the tremendous gaps in its own consciousness and heart. We can either go numb in the face of it, judge it out of fear, or master the greater lessons that put this new and grandiose coalition in perspective.

We must resonate understanding, acceptance and compassion toward these forces of the Lower Octave. Shame is a matrix that can be dissolved through complete self-acceptance and taking action in our lives from that place. If we commit to doing our work to completion, there is a way in which moving into the Higher Octave, by the very nature of that shift in consciousness, weakens the grip of the Lower Octave.

Yes, we must also take action in the world. We must vote, be involved, communicate and take risks. Hiding heals nothing. Yet if our ground of being is not healing, and if we are not moving toward an enlightened neutrality in the face of the Lower Octave and its denials, our actions remain trapped in that very density.

A great time of change is upon us. Spiritual and emotional dysfunctions that are millenia old are reaching up and asking us to respond from within the core of our own beings. We can do this. So in closing, I like the words of Dr. Wangari Matthai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and a true emanation of the Goddess herself:

"We can work together for a better world with men and women of goodwill, those who radiate the intrinsic goodness of humankind. To do so effectively, the world needs a global ethic with values which give meaning to life experiences and, more than religious institutions and dogmas, sustain the non-material dimension of humanity."

