

Personal Shadow and World Peace

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Our world is in turmoil at home and abroad. There is turbulence in the social, cultural, political and global matrix. Competing ideologies and priorities distract us from our civility, mutual respect and humanity. Some of the change is for good as democracies break out in the Middle East dictatorships. Closer to home, we have legitimate dialogue about our health care system, our national debt, our national values and our place as a nation in the world. It is not the issues but how we conduct the process of negotiation which is the core dynamic. At times, it feels as if we might our own self fulfilling apocalypse of 2012! As a citizen, as a parent, a grandparent and a psychoanalyst, I wonder what would be best personal strategy to become a conduit of peace rather than an instrument of strife.

Of all the things we can do, if I distill it down to one simple intervention; it would be to own our shadow. Each one of us has an unconscious, neglected, split off part of our personality, which we repress and then project onto the other: onto our adversary, the minority, the illegal immigrant, the foreigner, the one that provokes our fear, anger, mistrust, discomfort.

Now if we put our reflective lens on ourselves and explore what irks us about this other, in this mirror, we almost always will see a reflection of our unconscious shadow self. When we hate a controlling coworker, it mirrors our own controlling tendencies, when we blame the illegal immigrant for stealing our job, we may be coming out of our own trickster, manipulative core, when we see a certain person as a criminally inclined without evidence, we may be coming out of our own un-lived criminal shadow.

If each one of us stays unconscious of our shadow and just project it onto each other, it would be eye for an eye world, where we will all be blind.

On the other hand, if we acknowledge the shadow without defensiveness as potentially belonging to us, it opens up the potential for growth, wholeness and health. But before we can claim these dividends, we must transmute and transform the shadow and assimilate as a healthy part of our personality.

The process of transmutation of shadow is simple. What part of the shadow is potentially a healthy and a necessary part of our personality. We may see that the angry shadow may be seed of our appropriate self assertion, the controlling shadow may foretell the need for boundaries in relationship, the careless shadow invites us to maintain caring detachment. Once we see these potentials reflected in the mirror of our adversaries, they become the medium of self enhancement and change agents for us. If each one of us can do some transmutation of our dark sides and move it to the light side of the psychic ledger, soon the world becomes a peaceful place. We can now become the source of collective light rather than darkness. When each one of us does our personal shadow transformation work, we can make the world a peaceful place, with respect for the adversary, while disagreeing without being disrespectful.

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Trained in India, Great Britain and the US, he is interested in the emerging frontiers of Spirituality and Healing and the synapses of the Mind, Body, Soul and Spirit. He is author of the book, Path to the Soul, Weiser Books, 2000, Awaken the Slumbering Goddess: The Latent Code of the Hindu Goddess Archetypes, Booksurge Publishers, 2007 and the coauthor of Retire Your Family Karma, Nicholas-Hays, Inc. 2003, These and his other upcoming presentations can be previewed at his website www.pathtothosoul.com



Ashok Bedi has been in practice in Milwaukee for over twenty- five years and specializes in Adult Psychotherapy and Jungian Psychoanalysis. He regularly presents lectures and seminars in India, Great Britain, Ireland, USA & internationally on the topic of the Spiritual and analytic dimensions of treatment, healing and personal growth. Over the last several years, he has been the International Association of Analytical Psychologists liaison person for developing Jungian

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