

# The Gift of Depression

By

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One of the most common problems I encounter in my psychoanalytic and psychiatric practice is individuals struggling with depression. Depression is a serious psychiatric disorder and must be aggressively treated with all available methods, including appropriate antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications, mood stabilizers, cognitive behavior therapy and alternative stress management paradigms like Yoga, mindfulness, meditation, etc. However, most of these approaches put the fire of depression out but often do not plug the gas leak that feeds the fire of depression. A look into the depth of the psyche is essential to harvest the meaning, purpose and the guidance of the depression.

The word depression encapsulates the fact that in depression our Ego or outer consciousness is depressed- pushed down into the depth of our unconscious. Here we meet the Soul and the healing wisdom of the psyche. The depressing of the ego is essential for deepening our consciousness into our own depths for recharging, resetting and reconfiguration of our life's program and align it with our soul's intention and purpose; our teleos or destiny. Ego often temporarily breaks down in severe depression. However, if this breakdown is attended to expertly, it makes room for the Soul to breakthrough onto the stage of consciousness.

The art of psychotherapy is to guide the individual into the dark waters of the unconscious in a way that one may claim the treasures that lie hidden while avoiding the sharks that lurk about. The archetypes and the healing wisdom of the soul are excellent guides in this dark realm of our depths. In my book *Path to the Soul*<sup>1</sup>, I explore the guidelines to access the wisdom of the Soul and in my book – *Awaken the Slumbering Goddess*<sup>2</sup>, I explore the specific goddess archetypes that guide us in different crisis, challenges and developmental transitions of our life. In depression, the archetype of goddess Aditi – the goddess of void and new creation is specifically helpful.

Analytical treatment of depression must explore not only the psychological problems in the past, the parental complexes, the personality and genetic vulnerabilities etc. that predispose us to depression, but also explore the purpose and the path that depression points to – to our future choices. We feel depressed when we are not living out of our soul but rather living out of our Ego. So we must make informed choices about the future. What will make us feel at home in our soul? When we answer this question after “Googleing” our unconscious and get a read out from the soul and align our life to soul’s guidance, we get back into our Spiritual Groove. Life is now balanced. We are in Tao. Depression now becomes soul guide rather than an adversary of the Ego.

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<sup>1</sup> *Path to the Soul* by Ashok Bedi, M.D., Samuel Weiser Inc. 2000

<sup>2</sup> *Awaken the Slumbering Goddess* by Ashok Bedi, M.D., Booksurge Publishers 2007

Ashok Bedi, M.D is a Diplomat Jungian psychoanalyst and a board certified psychiatrist and addictionologist. He is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association; a Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and a Training and Supervising Analyst and a faculty member at the Analyst Training Program at the Carl G. Jung Institute of Chicago. He is author of several books including 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

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Dr. Bedi specializes in treatment of adults with emotional, relational, addiction and psychiatric problems. He uses a Jungian analytical psychotherapy and psychoanalytical treatment models, not only treating the symptoms, but the underlying psychological and spiritual issues that feed these problems. Medications are used when appropriate but I believe one must also attend to the underlying issues in psychotherapy or psychoanalysis.

