

# THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES  
OF DIVINE LIGHT

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## LOVE CONQUERS SHAME

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As human beings, we are made in the image and likeness of love. And then something happens. However you construe what goes wrong in people's experience, something does happen for most people so that love doesn't have a chance to come through fully. Love is ignored, and something else takes its place. When love is not coming through a person clearly, there is another experience that is the evidence of a lack of love. If love is a name for what is most real and true about a person, then when love is not coming through a person, who they are is blocked from coming into the world. They are not expressing who they are, and consequently they are not experiencing who they are. When that happens, the person experiences themselves as an unloving person.

Our word for that is *shame*. Shame is the experience a person has of being untrue to the core of who they are as a being of love. Shame gets passed around among people. I have friends who jokingly say they are expert *shamers*. And when something shaming is said in fun and in jest, it can uplift a situation. So it is good to acknowledge any tendency to shame other people in subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways. But when the shaming of other people is unconscious and malicious, it is horrible. If you are the recipient of shame from another person, what you have to remember is that if they are dishing it out, they are taking it into themselves too. They are doing it to you because it has been done to them, and they are very likely doing it to themselves all the time. Ultimately, shame is an inside job. And nobody can shame us on the inside unless we cooperate.

There is a magnificent story about the remedy to shame. The remedy to shame is the victory of life, and the victory of what we are here to know in our life. It is the victory of following through, the victory of realizing our vision of what is possible. It is the victory of rejecting a half-lived life, and living a life that is full of dreams and visions, full of aspiration, full of inspiration to do what you are here to do, and full of what it means to manifest all those visions and dreams and aspirations. That

life of victory seldom unfolds in the way that a person expects. The realization of my visions and dreams has certainly not occurred like that in *my* life. But if we are willing to meet love on its own terms, and to live our life on its own terms, we have the opportunity for victory, which is the manifestation of love.

Up until the point at which love is manifest in a living form, love is a secret. Love is a secret, as far as you and I are concerned, until it manifests and comes out in our life, until it's embodied by us in our living expression and by what we create. Up to that point there can be doubters, probably us foremost among them: Is love really real?

That is the challenge to a person who is attuning to the spirit of pure love within them. But once love is actually manifest and in expression, we know it, incontrovertibly, for ourselves. We know the promise of love when we allow love to come all the way through us and be manifest in our life, and there it is—love in action, love embodied.

The story of King David dancing in the street of Jerusalem is about this. It is about love conquering shame. There are many facets in David's life as it is told in Bible. Best known is the story of David and Goliath. But following that, he became king of Israel and prepared the way for the building of the temple in Jerusalem. An important element of that story was his recovery of the Ark of the Covenant, the box that held the Ten Commandments. This was the most sacred object of the Children of Israel, believed to carry magical properties. The Ark was precious because it represented to the Children of Israel all that held them together. It represented to them their ancestors, and particularly Moses, and the sacred direction that had been given to them through Moses.

The Ark had been stolen and finally it was retrieved by King David. So David celebrates. That is where I will pick up the story as it is told in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, Chapter 6.

*And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.*

An ephod was a ceremonial vest.

*So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.*

*And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.*

*And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it.*

A tabernacle was an elaborate tent.

*And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.*

*And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.*

*And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to everyone a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. So all the people departed every one to his house.*

It is interesting to note the reference to “even the women”! The occasion inspired David to transcend any cultural limitation that would have treated women differently than men. This was a time of celebration, a time of victory.

*Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!*

Have you ever been shamed for being joyful? For celebrating the pleasure and fulfillment of life? Particularly when it comes from someone close to you, that can feel like it cuts deep.

Sometimes this passage is referred to as David dancing naked before the Lord. But the text says nothing about being naked, dancing through the streets. He had an ephod on at least.

*And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord.*

As I read this passage, it speaks to me of the pleasure and joy of life. It speaks of the fulfillment of a vision of what is possible. And then David says this, addressing Michal’s shaming of him:

*And I will yet be more vile than thus....*

What a clear retort! Full of sarcasm, appropriate to the moment! If the fulfillment of what is most sacred to me is vile, then bring on the shame! Here is a powerful example of addressing shame when it comes from someone else in our life. It is the depiction of a person who knew that the shame from others, even someone close to you, should not control the direction of your life. I doubt anyone accomplishes much of any significance without becoming clear on this issue.

And then there are these very interesting words that come next:

...and [I] will be base in mine own sight...

*Base*, in this use of the word, has an archaic meaning, which is *lowly*. I believe that King David is saying that not only will he endure the judgment and shame of others; he will endure his own self-judgment and the feeling of shame that arises from within him if that is what it takes to live a life that fulfills what is most important to him.

He knew that the ultimate factor in living a fulfilled life is not the approval of other people, or the disapproval. It is not even about having a good opinion of yourself. If we are embodying the love within us, we are happy, despite all of that. We are transcending a state of consciousness that lives in shame.

It is said that love is the ultimate healer. If love is the power of the universe within all things and within us, actually, it is the *only* thing that heals. You can go to a doctor and a doctor can stitch you up and take out an organ and give you a drug, and all those things could help. But it is love, the supreme power of the universe that is within us and within all of our flesh, within all the cells and atoms of our body, that heals. So where a person is embodying that spirit, love heals, and love's healing begins in the heart. The wound of shame is healed in the only way that it can be healed. Someone else can help us with it, but ultimately the only way that we are healed is from the inside—by being the living embodiment of the love within us.

In my own experience, I've been aware of how the whole human world and the world around me has acclimated itself to a reality that excludes pure love—how, for most people, as Rumi's poem says, they just never get a drink of love. And then there is a life that is built on that premise—no access to pure love. I do not care what a person builds in their life in whatever way, you cannot make up for that lack. And the only real place from which a drink of love comes is within a person. Yes, we can bring love to other people, and it is a blessing to receive love from other people. But ultimately it does not quench the thirst if the love that is within is not accessed and given.

That takes losing your shame through selfless service that is love in expression. I have seen the reality of that experience trashed by people who should have known better. I have heard supposedly spiritual people take John F. Kennedy's most famous saying and turn it on its ear to say, "Ask not what you can do for the whole; ask what the whole can do for you." John F. Kennedy was talking about the country, but whatever whole you are a part of, if you do not act in selfless service to that whole, you undo for yourself the experience of pure love.

I understand that we all need to take care of ourselves. But in the end, we are not really very good at taking care of ourselves if that is our sole focus. It does not go well for us as human beings when we are all about taking care of us. It goes well for us when we live a life of service to others and to the world around us. I am not just talking about charity as it is usually thought of. I am talking about a fundamental attitude of giving in life.

When a person lives a life of true service, giving all of who and what they are to the whole, they find that the whole gives back and they are nourished—not because they sit in some kind of spiritual arrogance, believing they are a good person and the world ought to take care of them. I am talking about truly being in service and truly giving every bit of who we are to the world around us.

The profound truth to which humanity is awakening is that we are not victims of this world who are not being adequately served by it. We are creators of this world. We are in service to our world. The Dalai Lama says it this way:

*When you think everything is someone else's fault, you will suffer a lot. When you realize that everything springs only from yourself, you will learn both peace and joy.*

The core of love within us and within all things is creating everything. Everything springs from that, and so everything springs from us. Knowing that is learning to live in peace.

The antidote to shame is love. Let's love.

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