

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

PYTHONS IN THE MIND

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My first exposure to the word *sanctuary* was in the story *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Quasimodo rescues Esmeralda, who was being led to the gallows after being accused of being a witch. Quasimodo dramatically swoops down to her on a rope tied to a statue on the facade of the cathedral. With Esmeralda over his shoulder, he swings back, carrying her into the cathedral, shouting, “Sanctuary! Sanctuary!” The church was protected under medieval law, as it was considered holy ground and the king had no power there. So my initial understanding of a sanctuary was a physical place; a building that was a place of protection.

Currently I have a broader understanding of the word. I know it can be a place where we can separate ourselves from the rest of the world, a place where we feel untouchable and protected. That’s a useful step towards understanding that we, ourselves, can be a sanctuary. We can hold a place inside ourselves that is pristine and true, where nothing can penetrate or violate what we know to be holy. We can be a living sanctuary.

The word *pristine* often refers to a place where no human activity has taken place. It has been used regarding parts of a forest where human beings have not yet compromised the ecosystem. The definition of the word *pristine* includes these words: *unspoiled, clean and fresh...perfect.*

The July 28, 2014, edition of *Time Magazine* reports the loss of the pristine nature of the Everglades in Florida because there are pythons that are taking over. There are now over 100,000 pythons in the state of Florida, and mostly in the Everglades. They are native to tropical and subtropical Asia, Africa and Australia. They have been introduced into a Florida environment where there are no

predators. Pythons reproduce quickly, laying 35-100 eggs at a time. Their rapid expansion is devastating the small mammal population in Florida. During a month-long state-sponsored hunt in 2013, 1,600 participants found and captured 68 pythons. Obviously pythons are difficult to find. They can hide well in the trees! So I'm not planning on going to the Everglades anytime soon.

When you introduce an invasive species into a place where it doesn't belong, that species proliferates and the pristine nature of the environment is compromised. It is no longer a sanctuary for the life that is indigenous to that ecological zone.

This phenomenon in the natural world is a profound metaphor for what is happening within human beings. Within people, there is an environment in which life thrives. There is an internal ecology that is meant to be pristine. As human beings, we are designed to be a place where the holiness of Being can live. When you introduce things that are unholy—ideas and beliefs, and the moods, feelings, words and actions that go with them—those unholy things will proliferate there because nothing is present to keep them in balance. There is a whole list in the *Time Magazine* article of things that have come to the shores of the United States that do not belong in this environment: giant Asian snails, Cuban tree frogs and zebra mussels are also on the list. I think pythons and slimy snails represent well what enters into some people's consciousness and spoils their pristine inner nature.

So who is keeping an eye on the pythons and snails coming into your pristine place? For many people, slimy things enter the place that is supposed to be a sanctuary. They should not be allowed on holy ground, where Love lives. Here, the design of life is manifesting the wonders of Being. And yet people let these snakes and slimy snails come in and take over, and they can't figure out why there isn't a holy home anymore. Meanwhile, they keep allowing the ships that carry these unwanted guests to have easy access to their shores.

For a time, I belonged to a group that met once a week for lunch. It started out as a fun non-political, non-complaining group. It was designed to be an enjoyable break in the week. Soon a member of this group was at conflict with her job for the local newspaper and the school system that she believed wasn't treating her child properly. Week after week the conversation would go to these topics. I started believing our town and the children in it were at risk. I started talking about these topics with others, sharing my anxiousness about these circumstances in which I felt helpless. There was a python's nest in my mind and I didn't notice it because this was a good friend who was "suffering." I had stopped my own critical thinking and allowed an invasive unholy visitor to be a houseguest in my mind.

If you allow the thoughts and feelings that are antithetical to life to take over your house, you will not have a happy internal ecology. If you feed them, give them your time, make them comfortable by giving them your attention, you shouldn't be surprised to find that your inner peace is disturbed. They've moved in! Before you know it, the guests are bossing you around. You are nourishing them with your food and you are giving them shelter. They are being fed by your life force. Before you know it, your holy place has a python problem.

It takes a spiritual warrior to protect your sanctuary. Think about a holy place that has no spiritual warriors protecting it. In the world in which we live, it won't be holy very long. Unless there is someone who says no to that which is unholy trying to get in, it isn't safe. There will be beer cans and cigarettes butts all around. That is what happens inside people.

I need to be the warrior that keeps things pristine. I have to protect the fresh and unspoiled reality of who I am and let that reality live in the midst of my human experience. I know there is a part of me that is a warrior that carries a sharp sword, not to attack but to protect and to keep holy what I am building, which is a place where Love lives and people who are interested in doing this with me can come and be with me. A place where Love rules.

On July 26th, I facilitated a powerful workshop, Life Destiny Immersion, with David Karchere. (The next time we are offering the workshop is October 31—November 1.) We created an atmosphere that assists people to see any invasive species that may have compromised their internal ecology. Just as the state of Florida instructed people culling pythons in the Everglades to locate them and then pick them up by the tail, we assist people to lovingly see what is important, to see the pythons within them and to remove them with care. Just as there are tools for addressing the infiltration of the Everglades, there are tools for addressing what may have infiltrated your consciousness. Pythons entered Florida without anyone noticing. And without knowing it, you may have allowed snakes that don't belong to enter your thinking and feeling.

My experience shows me that when I am taking responsibility for what enters my internal sanctuary, I find others who are doing that as well. Together, we hold a larger sanctuary space and support each other. We can be loving warrior companions. We can then extend the invitation to others to come and touch what this holy place feels like; to remember their own experience of the pristine state within themselves.

I used to go to church as a girl to touch the holy sanctuary place that I felt there. I give thanks that I met a conscious friend who showed me the keys to my own home, my living sanctuary that I

brought with me when I came into this earthly home, when I was born into this world. It is the one I tend and keep and enjoy.

One way I express my gratitude for that gift is to assist others to find the same experience within themselves. And not only to find it, but to keep it. I am dedicated to keeping the living sanctuary holy and to teaching how to notice the things that don't belong and how to keep them from making a home in your consciousness.

It is such a joy to share a commitment with someone to let Love rule. You can look into another person's eyes and invite them to name the things that do not belong in their own pristine inner ecology. Doing that for each other, we might do a little internal squirming, but it's squirming that we are actually hungry for. It's not beating us up. If it is my own internal python, I don't want it there. But if I lose the ability to look into your eyes and keep what's holy between us in place, something else is happening. I am protecting what doesn't belong within me and giving it a home. What I have discovered is that I then start making up a story about what's happening to justify what I have done.

I'm interested in being a spiritual warrior for keeping a holy home—a holy home here, holy home there—a holy home all around me, so that my life is filled with that integrity. So that we can share a pristine ecology among us. Isn't that what you desire too? Let's hold this sanctuary together, where the holiness of Being can live.

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