

OUR ENEMIES WITHIN

by

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Students of spiritual transformation are taught that there is no God “out there,” our relationship partners are not the source of our pain, and our financial struggles aren’t caused by a difficult boss. We learn that all of these challenges are mirrors to us for what lies within. By looking beyond appearances and deeply into our own attitudes, beliefs, habits, and unconscious behaviors, we grow.

And so it is with the task of discovering the meaning within the terrible events of September, 2001. In *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran speaks of “Crime and Punishment”:

Oftentimes I have heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you, but a stranger unto you and an intruder upon your world.

We are being asked at this time to consider the possibility that those who create evil deeds in the world are actually outpicturing, or acting out for us, just as children tend to mimic their parents’ unconscious behaviors, those dark and unacceptable regions within our human psyches. Every one of us has felt unsettling feelings, either consciously or not, and projected them onto others as judgments based in our unconscious fears. It is far easier to point fingers at others who exhibit nasty traits than take ownership of those traits we have worked so hard to hide within us.

On a global level, this becomes the World Shadow - whether it takes form as a dictator or an entire culture that we love to hate, it is still our own inner material projected outwardly and collectively on a grand scale. Gibran says:

...even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each one of you, so the wicked and the weak cannot fall lower than the lowest which is in you also.

Probably the most unacceptable idea, which is found in all mystical truths, is that we are not irresponsible for the acts of anyone else. The spiritual principle of “We are all one,” does not work only when we are meditating on peace or feeling loving toward someone - it means just what it says. We are ALL ONE. There is no separation between us. Perpetrators and victims, no matter what the situation, are all inexorably entwined with one another in some way. Gibran says:

The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the wicked, And the white-handed is not clean in the doings of the felon. Yea, the

*guilty is oftentimes the victim of the injured, And still more often
the condemned is the burden bearer for the guiltless and unblamed.*

This is difficult material to ingest if the ego is weakened by fear-based resistance, old patterns of guilt and shame, unhealthy self-regard, or projection onto others. Whenever I present these kinds of ideas, I know some people will be annoyed or angered. I've been involved in this work for so long that I understand that reactions against new or challenging ideas are just as important as receptivity to them. For in the reactivity lies the possibility of transformation. Not to *my* ideas, but to *new* ideas that support us in creating our lives the ways our Souls need us to. When our entrenched habits and beliefs are pushed hard enough, they may break and make way for new experiences of wholeness.

And so it is with the task we face of seeing the events of September 11 as an opportunity to make the changes we, particularly those of us in the spiritual community, have always espoused. Our spiritual ideals are now being tested. Will they stand up? Or will they be, as is shown in the classic Tower card in the Tarot deck, blasted and thrown down because they were based upon naiveté, unreality, arrogance, or misplaced power? I once had a dream in which I was quite comfortable meditating alone in the top floor of a tall tower. It came crashing down, and I thought I was going to die. What I died to was my arrogant isolationism, which was based upon a deep-seated belief that I was somehow inadequate and would never fit into society. In the dream, I emerged from the rubble and found myself with many others, walking in serene gardens amidst beautiful temples and universities of great learning. After the dream, I vowed to embrace my humanity and transform all the ways in which I protected myself from deeply engaging with others.

To look at our own dark mysteries takes a great deal of courage. Those brave Souls on the airliner that crashed in Pennsylvania confronted their darkest fears and by doing so, sacrificed their physical beingness for the sake of others. Who is to say that all those who lost their human lives had not agreed on a Soul level to make this sacred act for the sake of all life on this beautiful planet? And why might they have done this? Perhaps to awaken us to the sleep we had succumbed to. The inner work has just begun and just as in the "Hundredth Monkey" principle, it only takes a few who are willing to face the truth of what we have ignored for so long. The work will be worth it. Gibran says:

*You cannot separate the just from the unjust and the good
from the wicked; For they stand together before the face of the
sun even as the black thread and the white are woven together. And
when the black thread breaks, the weaver shall look into the whole
cloth, and he shall examine the loom also.*

I extend my heart to all of you with blessings for your growth, deep understanding, and expansion into all you were meant to be.