

“A Look at Spiritual Emergence”

What occurs on a regular, fixed basis during the year can also occur within our lives at any time, without advance notice.

During the Jewish year, one of the great spiritual high points is embodied in the High Holidays and the Festival of Sukkot. During this time, a primal process of spiritual awakening can take place. At the end of a long process of internal assessment, repentance and atonement, we emerge from this most intense period spiritually charged. Through this process within sacred time, one undertakes great, concentrated inner work.

In doing the work, we are moved to take our spiritual life seriously and to address it conscientiously. We endeavor to move our internal paradigm to the next spiritual level. We strive to bring our consciousness to a point of inner transformation.

If at any juncture of our lives, we deliberately create sacred time-space and utilize it properly for the work of assessment, rectification, atonement and thanksgiving, we emerge from this most holy experience, cleansed, clear and realigned with God and with Self.

Once we reach deep within, we can find ourselves facing our own failings and shortcomings. It then takes courage, determination and perseverance to do the work of introspection, repentance and rectification. Though once we have done so, we suddenly find ourselves reconciled with God and aligned with the Divine Will. Therefore, now we are in a far better position to freely trust in God's compassion and guidance during the days and years to follow.

When coming to understand the reality of spiritual emergence, it is important to remember that once a door is opened, the way is cleared for many things to happen. As in daily life, should you open your front door widely, friends can arrive, guests can be welcomed. Fresh air circulates and one is suddenly connected with the greater world outside of self.

In terms of what may happen at this juncture, there are truly a lot of possibilities; Some anticipated and some totally unexpected. The same holds true, when one opens the door of the heart.

A true return to God and a resurgence of Self must come from the heart. Without emotion or without the meditations of the heart and the inner knowingness it provides,

we would not be human. It is the heart that actually makes us in the image of God. The heart is the psycho-emotional center of our being.

By allowing for the opening of the heart, we allow much to be brought to the surface of consciousness. Some of what comes forth from within, is anticipated. Some is accepted. Some is welcome. However, some is overpowering.

During spiritual change, we are constantly being prompted to move forward, to move beyond where we were, to where we need to be next. Often, our conscious mind is the last part of our being to know this. It is the conscious mind that is also the most resistant to change, frequently. In the intensity of the introspection process, there is great spiritual potency that is activated and can be released. Hence, one can encounter a storm of powerful feelings. One can experience the sudden rise of buried or forgotten issues or feel caught in the onslaught of events, which are unanticipated and quite possibly overpowering at first flush.

This type of experience is part of a process of spiritual emergence, as I understand it. I would define this type of spiritual emergence as an internal shift, prompted by the soul, that changes one's life by altering one's perspective.

This type of change can be very abrupt and disconcerting. However, if handled correctly it can often lead one to the next level of spiritual awareness and development, if one chooses to ride the process out. When a spiritual shift takes place that is being orchestrated from within, emotions long suppressed or left unacknowledged, can explode to the surface in order to be recognized and dealt with. Events can occur, that shake the very foundation of a person's beliefs and disrupt the traditional ways in which one has looked at or approached something. What is happening, when this occurs is very important to understand.

When you experience such a shift, your inner being has made a decision. It has decided, that not only is it necessary for you to move on spiritually, but also that you are ready and able to handle it, whether your mind thinks so or not. It is laying the cards out on the table and you have to play out the hand. If you handle the situations presented to you, if you work out the life puzzles before you and weather the emotional storm, you will emerge a spiritually stronger and more integrated person.

There is no right or wrong way to handle what your inner self is impelling you to deal with. The critically important element is simply, that what emerges needs to be assessed, handled and processed through, allowing the soul to experience it and subsequently, to move on.

When one goes through the process of internal prompting and concomitant external change, one passes through the complex of doubt, confusion and fear. One arrives ultimately at the point of spiritual maturation. Here, any related guilt and shame can be worked through and allowed to dissipate forever. When spiritual issues emerge, the choice one faces, is between learning to grow spiritually as a soul or delaying the progress by avoidance, by not facing one's issues.

To grow and develop spiritually is the essence of existence on all levels of being. It is the very core of life. Sometimes, we are led to seek the path and walk it diligently. We are prompted to make changes and are given the insight and courage to embark on the journey. At other times, the door is suddenly thrust open and we are booted out, finding ourselves on the road, de facto.

Sometimes, that is the way it has to be. As the Mishnah says, The workload is great, but the time is short. Whichever way one comes to embark on the path, it will eventually be the cause of great excitement, anticipation and joy. For the road leads to God and to a deeper understanding of the relationship of Self to the Divine.

Times of Spiritual Shift place us on the path of personal evolution and life improvement on all levels. The emergence of a spiritual paradigm, at any point in one's life is the way of peace, if walked in honesty and integrity. Spiritual emergence is the arrival at the new crossroads. Therefore, it is to be most heartily welcomed and received. One should travel this precious road with earnestness and devotion. Conflict, pain, anxiety and confusion are only signs along the roadside. They are not the road itself. The way of the spirit is the way of peace. So, I wish you all a good journey.

Rabbi Fisdell