

Ego or Heart, Fear or Love: That Is the Question

by Randall L. Eaton, Ph.D.

How do Sufis walk on 1300 degree coals without being burned? How do ordinary people instantly transform into heroes? Later testifying that they did what anyone would do in the same circumstances?

Joseph Chilton Pearce wrote a book entitled *The Biology of Transcendence* in which he described this heroic state of being as “unconflicted behavior” which he said occurs when we accept that our death is inevitable. In other words, when we are fearless, egoless.

It happened to me first when I was 13 years old swimming in String Lake, Grand Teton National Park. The lake had a current that had pushed a young adult man of about 18 off a submerged rock on which he had been standing in 12 feet of water. I saw that he was thrashing and struggling to stay afloat.

I had just completed life-saving, but what I did next was totally unorthodox. Except for a momentary intention, I did not analyze the situation nor contemplate my actions. In total absence of fear, I simply swam underneath the man, stood on the bottom of the lake and raised my hands up to touch the bottom of his feet and held them. I don't know how long it was but a boat was paddled from shore and he was rescued.

Years later I became aware that the greatest things I ever did, I never did. All I did was hold an intention and then in complete fearlessness against incredible odds, perfect action flowed thoughtlessly, a path known in Zen as beginner's mind.

It puzzles me that the strongest men in the world – having been a competitive powerlifter, I know some of them - who hold the records in the squat, bench press and deadlift are weak next to Sri Chin Moy, a yogi who was inspired to take up weightlifting late in life. At 69 years of age and weighing 160 pounds he was a whimp by anyone's standards, but he did the pec-deck exercise with 650 pounds, a calf raise with

over 8,000 pounds – raising an elephant with Carl Lewis, the Olympian, sitting on its back - and with one arm supported 7,900 pounds!

The best calf raise recorded before Sri Chin Moy's feat was 1500 pounds by an Alabama strongman twice his size who, I'm sure, was using steroids for decades. The yogi bested the record by more than five times!

Sri Chin Moy is famous among American orthopedic physicians who invited him to their annual conference, sure they would prove him a fake. They weighed the plates he lifted and carefully scrutinized everything. Larry Pedagana, the surgeon who operated on my knee, was there, and he said, "All I can tell you is that we don't know how he is still walking around," meaning that the feats he performed should have crushed him.

In line with Joe Pearce's "unconflicted" behavior, Sri Chin Moy says that he doesn't move the weight with his mind, by which he meant his ego, but with his heart. He prayed that his incredible demonstrations would inspire people to lighten the mental burden of their lives and turn to a different path, the path of the heart, the path of transcendence.

Thousands of people asked Sri Chin Moy two questions, "How do you do it?" and "Why do you do it?" His replies always were, "My faith in God gives me the strength to do these things," and, "I'm trying to show people there is an easier way."

Jack Schwartz, the famous healer, was studied by physicians at the University of Toronto Medical School, where a 20-gauge knitting needle was passed completely through his bicep. The electroencephalograph monitoring his brain wave patterns and the EKG reading of his heart activity showed no changes during the procedure. After the researchers pulled the needle out of his arm one said,

“Stop the bleeding, Jack.” The bleeding stopped; more remarkable, the man then said, “Start the bleeding; Jack,” and the wound began to bleed.

Jack was famous for the demonstrations he gave before lecturing to medical and nursing students. He layed down on a bed of nails with his shirt off and then had everyone in the audience walk by to inspect the puncture wounds in his back. At the end of the lecture the audience again walked by to look at Jack’s bare back but found only dried blood. All the punctures had healed.

Jack wrote a book entitled, *I Know in My Heart*, he also wrote one entitled, *It’s Not What You Eat, It’s What’s Eating You*. Using his mind and heart to master his own vital energy, Jack accomplished the unthinkable. The last few years of his life he slept an hour daily and ate the equivalent of one small meal each week while maintaining a fierce schedule of teaching, healing and writing. He smoked like a fiend, and to his surprised students and patients he responded, “Its what you do with the smoke that counts.” He was convinced that he and others like him could achieve the unthinkable because of spiritual radiance anchored in the heart (akin to the teachings of AAMichael’s “ray-diance”).

Why wasn’t Jack Schwartz a household name? I discovered him first on a nationally broadcast PBS TV program. Why wasn’t every professional athlete talking about Sri Chin Moy’s path of the heart? His feats were performed on major TV networks in North America. Because, as Deepak Chopra reminds us, seeing is not believing, believing is seeing. It is our assumptions about the nature of reality that program and limit our perceptions and thus our capability.

Western civilization is spiritually bankrupt. It trusts the body, the ego and the machine. It trusts pills and scalpels and medicine men who see nuts and bolts where energy meridians and charkas ought to be. It trusts intellect, not

intelligence. That is why many recreational hunters wear camos, use high-powered scopes and bullets that kill at 400 yards. They believe they must employ prowess to deceive and overcome a deer or elk. Perhaps we would rather play the ego game than hunt from the heart, because that is the model we've encountered from infancy. It reminds me of the incredible extent to which so many of us go to make ourselves attractive to the opposite sex: from bulging biceps to fat bank accounts and super-normal breasts because we lack faith in life as a spiritual matrix that transcends our everyday awareness. So few ask the Creator for permission to hunt a deer for the same reason that so few ask for their soul mate to come into their life: we are thoroughly conditioned to believe in prowess, the path of ego.

Egoism disempowers humanity and is the cause of endless pain and suffering, which reached its zenith in science, defined as "the great myth of Western man," by Oretga y Gasset. However, while Newtonian or mechanistic science persists as cultural paradigm, it cannot be blamed for egoism, and neither can Cartesian philosophy; all Descartes did was express the exaggerated egoism of the West.

Despite the paradigm shift represented by quantum physics, mechanistic science persists as cultural mythology because of the egoism that spawned it.

In *The Biology of Transcendence*, Joe Pearce describes peaceful human societies such as the Senoi and Kalahari Bushman, in which youth develop naturally into caring, healthy adults without "no" and "don't" every nine minutes of their childhood. He identifies enculturation as the process that pollutes human potential. He defines culture as the body of knowledge and belief regarding survival in a hostile world passed on from one generation to the next. While ego has become the chairman of the psychic board in "advanced" civilization, that is not the case among many indigenous cultures which do not view the world as hostile nor do they live in a perpetual state of fear. Instead they view life as interdependence and unity.

They are acutely aware of keeping the ego in check and embracing the intelligence of the heart, knowing what is appropriate to do...wisdom.

Pearce agrees with William Blake that “All evil consists of self restraint or restraint of others,” meaning that “Accusation, in any of its forms, is a negative judgment, and a negative judgment in any form ruptures relationship – the classical definition of sin...When we accuse or judge another, it has the same effect on us as being judged ourselves. Any judgment we make, no matter of whom, registers in the heart as a disruption of relationship, and the heart dutifully responds on behalf of our defense, shifting neural, hormonal, and electromagnetic systems, from relational to defensive.”

Essentially, it is the use of judgmental language and signals to change behavior that are the very core of egoism. They trigger our ancient survival instincts and promote the rank and fearful influence of ego. “Though shalt not” is the foundation of law and religion, the cement holding civilization together, the origin of all legal systems, prisons, war and our downfall.

Most civilizations adhere to “I am what I own,” thus the rise of rampant male egoism, separation, competition for resources, warfare, subjugation of nature and women, destruction of the environment and all the rest of it.

In many indigenous cultures the antidote to judgementalness includes gratitude, grieving and forgiveness as well as humor. There is more laughter and joking in a Kalahari Bushman camp in one day than most of us experience in months. An antidote for us is to be found in *A Course in Miracles* which teaches inner peace through forgiveness, “What is real cannot be threatened. What is unreal does not exist.” It insists that every choice we make is between fear or love, ego or Spirit. Why did Mary Ann Williamson say, “Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our greatest fear is that we are powerful

beyond measure”? Because the ego, which is fearful, does not comprehend the path of the heart, love or spiritual reality. Jampolsky’s response to the *Course* was a book entitled, *Love Is What's Left When All the Fear Is Gone*.

The lives of exemplary men and women, everyday heroes, yogis who perform impossible feats, peace-makers like Jimmy Carter and Nelson Mandela and primal foraging cultures have one thing in common. They trust love, peace and unity, that which is real and cannot be threatened - powerful medicine indeed.