

The Role of Ancient Teachings in the New Paradigm

by Penney Peirce

As we yearn for a larger explanation of what's happening in the world today, many turn attention to the spiritual, esoteric teachings of ancient cultures—teachings that have been recorded by both priesthoods and mystics. These systems were ways of symbolizing and preserving universal experience so it could be duplicated for those to come, and to hide knowledge from those who might misuse it for personal gain. In times past, it was mainly those few in spiritual service who received the knowledge and discipline necessary to train their minds to experience “enlightenment.”

Today, though, everyone is involved in a global process of spiritual growth—no more is enlightenment the realm of a special few. Esoteric teachings can serve as established roads into understanding the large-scale transformation happening today, but often they don't go far enough or communicate how the phases of the process actually “feel” or how the teachings may have evolved to fit with our accelerated reality.

The Many Paths

Since people have varying levels of readiness and many cultural biases, there are many paths to the same goal. The Universal has been fragmented the way the Tower of Babel fragmented knowledge into so many languages. Throughout history many souls have incarnated to create and re-create ascension ceremonies and practices, suited to specific cultures and time periods, to help people remember who they are and what they know. Sometimes the methods were updated for the times, and sometimes the teachings remained dogmatic—ie, the teachers were loyal to past codified forms of the knowledge and processes.

Back when an individual's world was limited to their village or country, one narrow path was fine. But today we are becoming global citizens, looking for commonalities among peoples. There are core truths at the heart of all paths to spirit. Should we let our definition-loving left brain limit us to only one way? Should we allow ourselves to become captive of a form?

The Limits of Ancient Teachings

In many ancient practices the teachings originated with partial perception. People were seeing in a linear way where there appeared to be a separation between earth and heaven, humans and the gods. Heaven was way “up there” and there seemed to be a huge gap between the realms. Various methodologies were defined so people could

cross that gap—Charon, the sacred ferryman, carried souls of the newly deceased across the river Styx. Some souls were taken up in the chariots of the gods, while others had elaborate burial rituals to ensure they would make it to Valhalla or Olympus with all their worldly possessions.

Back then, we needed heaven to seem like earth, to believe there was “something” rather than “nothing” out there; we needed physical proof. We needed the gods to be like us, rather than we like them. We gave them powers we didn't grant ourselves. Visitations were needed to convince the left brain that heaven was real. Similarly, we needed physical representations of abstract sacred patterns, or frequencies of consciousness, to feel the reality of how the nonphysical realms functioned. We sought to replicate sacred geometries in our temples, churches, cities, and arts. But for the large part, we didn't go into the direct experience of the abstract, nonphysical realms.

We are still coming from partial perception today, still seeing a gap between self and soul, between matter and spirit—because we're still knowing through the filter of linear perception. It's logical, then, that many of the old teachings are appealing. But we are experiencing an intensified acceleration of energy and consciousness that's causing our physical reality to increase its frequency; we are now able to experience that the nonphysical spiritual realm is within the physical one. They are one! As we flow with the acceleration on the planet and experience greater integration of soul with self, spirit with matter, our identity and reality transform. We are actually transforming faster and in larger collectives than ever before on the planet. Ancient teachings don't address this.

Today's Fragmented Consciousness

I see the attraction to Hermetic teachings, shamanism, sacred dance, mediumship, Wicca, working with gemstones and herbs, yoga, the Kabbalah, and so forth, as healthy beginnings. Many paths can facilitate higher states of consciousness when practiced diligently. As in ancient times, with enough work, people could experience initiation, during which the divine collective nature of the individual soul was revealed and memory of the spiritual realms returned. But this was a lifetime commitment. Becoming part of the Freemasons, for example, was a serious undertaking with many tests of character along the way.

Today, people may grasp hold of just one segment of broader teachings or may misinterpret techniques as ways to have a successful relationship or make more money—in other words, they want a better quality of life in the physical world, and don't go any further. This “spiritual materialism” blocks transformation. In addition, given the shallow, fragmented nature of our consciousness, many people want fast answers and don't want to put in the time to do the necessary work. They aren't curious enough to see the magical, joyful results that occur when we take things far enough.

Many seem to be grazing from one practice to another. Are we dilettantes or synthesizers? Are we splitting our consciousness further or unifying methods and inner experiences into a cohesive core understanding?

Watch for Subtle Forms of Ego and Distortion

A problem comes when teachers of ancient systems want to lock the teachings down as “the” answer or way. Or when they are caught in subtle forms of ego: the need for attention (to feel special) to validate themselves, identifying with the teachings as a way to integrate past life experience, or using the teachings as a security blanket to not have to truly dissolve the “clutter” they hold—which might be fear-based or based on pride, past successes, or habit. Then they don't move beyond the forms, techniques, definitions, and processes of the specific system they espouse. And they can't become universal enough for what is happening on the planet today.

I have never trusted people who tell others they're enlightened. I've always sensed that the truly enlightened live in the world in a way that quietly empowers others, not in a way that draws attention to themselves. Enlightenment, when it comes, is so ordinary—the memory of the way it is just occurs, along with “How could I have forgotten?” So I watch for teachers who claim special expertise, use superlative language, coin their own terminology to stand out from the crowd, have special processes you need to experience to achieve high-level results, or who create online empires. I watch for people who don't walk their talk and who are in the “work” to unconsciously heal themselves while acting as if they know what “you” need. I watch for spiritual guidance (even from myself) that comes from left-brain projections.

I watch for people who channel holy or healing energies so they themselves can feel them but don't go further to become them, or to see that the recipient is already full of sacred energy and doesn't need any more. To become a master is an old way of thinking—that we need an expert intermediary to connect us, or that mastery is a superior or unusual thing. Enlightenment is actually everyone's true original state and this should be popularized. Spiritual growth still requires work and persistence. It's not something you get quickly in an online course or training. We need discrimination about the caliber of teachers we work with and our reasons for pursuing certain paths.

Also watch for people who misrepresent universal principles through lack of understanding or who anthropomorphize spiritual beings so they seem more human. For example, in my understanding, angels and archangels rarely take on physical form, but are more likely to merge with morphological fields of high-frequency vibration, the kind created in ceremonies. Angels are not outside us but are more like an immense field or kind of light—a bridge-like clarifying frequency we can share with them. We give nonphysical beings names, but it's for our convenience. They are more like tones that

lead attuned people into new states via resonance.

Also, since there is no outside world, we can't "attract" anything or anyone. Willpower doesn't work. Forms emerge from our field when we match vibrations. The new Intuition Age frames things in terms of energy-consciousness-fields-frequencies-collectives-soul groups-pools of knowledge—all resonating. Tune yourself to any and you can know within that band of knowledge without intermediaries. The help we get from nonphysical beings is via telepathy and event coordination, timing, and helping people be conscious of when and what to do.

Work with Forms and Direct Experience

So, if you're grazing to synthesize knowledge from different viewpoints, the way a college student might take a variety of electives, great! If you're diving deep into one path, great! Get as much from it as possible and then look for similar, parallel paths as well that can broaden your worldview.

Ancient wisdom practices can be useful if we don't get stuck in definitions and attribute the universal experience to special individuals. Just go deeper, trust yourself. You are the soul and you are the master teacher to your own personality. Certainly there are levels of readiness. Until you merge soul and self, a supposedly "separate" teacher will appear for each and every level. In the end, though, all teachers are you. The key is to feel for ego, lack of fluidity, and either too much, or not enough, seriousness. Choose what feels just right, and notice when something begins to feel limiting. The next thing you need will be revealed. And watch for your own impatience or the subtle anxiety that can convince you to jump ship. Sometimes it's important to hold your attention on something one minute longer. Use what you can from specific paths, but forge that direct connection and merger with your own inner world.

