

The Mystical Union of Love and Heartbreak

Chapter 1

Today, December 7, is my Mother's Birthday. I mention this because she is the first to have initiated me into love, heartbreak, and Grace. This is the neighborhood we have entered as we cross the threshold into the liminal space of Holy Days and powerful collective, archetypal energies. For some, time and space may collapse as memories of people, events, and times past arise, filling our hearts with love, loss, grief, joy, depression, missing of people we love. As the last page of the calendar is about to turn, I am aware of time and life flying by very fast. I feel a heightened awareness of the impermanence, imperfection, and incompleteness of things in our fragile human existence, in my own life. This year, with conditions being what they are in the larger world and in our own local, personal worlds, I hear from others, and can feel in my own heart, that the *mystical union of love and heartbreak* is palpably pulsating in the hearts of many.

To the dualistic, egoic mind, love and heartbreak appear to be polarities, yet, in the Heart of hearts, they are inseparable, two experiences of loving. When we love we automatically are risking loss and heartbreak. Opening to one opens us to the other, a mysterious divine arrangement. Given the fact that the objects of our love are impermanent even though love is timeless and boundary-less, learning to be with heartbreak is implicit and essential to our loving freely and fully. It seems that our tender human hearts, with their armor, cracks, scars, and shackles are *intended to be broken open* on this human journey so that we can love more and more, not less. The other option is to withhold or shut down our love for fear of heartbreak, and most of us have done this at times, and found that this further hurts our already-broken hearts.

My own experience, and perhaps yours, is that when I surrender and open to my heart breaking open, more love flows through. Deep sobbing, crying, wailing, or keening can be such a relief to body and soul. Tears of joy and sorrow keep the terrain of loving moist and fertile. As humans, it is our nature to love--*we are love*--and when that is somehow denied or impeded, we suffer.

We feel ecstatic when our hearts fill with love that is so strong and palpable that we seem to be on fire and radiating joy. We yearn for this, seek it out. Ten thousand love songs and a zillion poems in every language are about love, perhaps half of those about the pain of lost loves. Heartbreak has taught me that it is also possible to feel ecstatic in the midst of my heart breaking open. Increasingly I feel the

love at the center and in the fabric of all heartbreaking events. My children have been, and still are, my Master Teachers of unconditional love and heartbreak. I burn with more love for them than I ever knew was possible. Over the course of their lives, I have also been down the road of heartbreak and devastation with each of them, too, and learned that in receiving, rather than resisting what is, it is possible to be fully present to them and their situation in love, allowing for clear seeing and right action. The loving heart receives everything, including its own breaking open. When I want things to be different than they are, my work is to pray and meditate, ask for the grace to get to the place within myself when I can receive and rest in what is as it is. This is the neighborhood of miracles, in my experience.

As a defense against the fear and pain of heartbreak, we may avoid loving, or sometimes make people unimportant, tell ourselves and act like they do not matter, when the deep truth is that they do matter—more than we know or may want them to. Something may have occurred in the relationship to wound us and/or the other and a separation occurred. Any external separation from one we have loved and cut off, or one who appears to have abandoned us, mirrors some separation within our own hearts. This is devastating to the family soul, to our own soul. Repair is possible even if reunion is not.

In my family of origin, hearts were so utterly wounded that all verbal or physical expressions of love were suppressed to a minimum. Even as a child, when I could not name it, I felt the obstruction to the flow of love in our family soul and it was excruciating. The ancestral lineage of wounds and pain was such that I was exiled from my family when I was three. The pain of that was so devastating that I became masterful at denying my own love, making people not important and disappearing them, or myself, so that they did not matter to me. I am still working to repair this. Repair can happen by allowing our hearts to feel the pain of the loss, the grief, and whatever else arises. Shutting down, avoiding, denying love or heartbreak can bring a deadening and despair, suffering that is not redemptive or life-giving. If we have a change of heart, a softening and opening, it is not impossible that something may shift in the outer situation, in the family soul, or the other person. The unitive field is real and ripples of love spread wide and work their magic in unimaginable ways.

I have found it extremely powerful and amazing to make prayers and novenas--nine days of practice--inquiring into whom I have disappeared, denied, or cut off loving, whom I have exiled, forgotten, not received, or made not matter to me, whom I have shut out of my heart via fear, hate,

denial, unwillingness to risk being hurt again. Answers and revelations appear when I am willing to receive them. I pray to feel the heartbreak related to each person. When I started the novena practice of receiving and asked to receive everyone and anyone I have left out for whatever reason, I was stunned by who came into my awareness, whom I had forgotten or denied, and even discovered some family members I never knew but realized they had been forgotten and shut out of my family soul.

Alchemy is the transmutation of energies and feelings from a low vibration to the higher vibration of love, peace, stillness. It happens within our hearts to allow love to flow through us again to these people, whether they are currently in our life or not. Alchemy is what happens in our hearts when we give our focused attention and breath to our hearts, without any story. The sperm of attention enters the womb of the human heart and the Mystery begins to do what it does and conceive new life, right there in the vessel of our own human heart. Our pain, our resistance, whatever is there—even love—become the path, the *way*, to the Great Heart, the Heart of hearts, which is pure love and vastness, boundaryless, opens to everything, refuses nothing, holds what is as it is. We each have access to this all the time. I will tell you about the way to do this that was given to me 20 years ago. It is called *heart samyama*.

One of the facts of human life is that we do move in and out of each other's lives and quite often it has nothing to do with not loving. Families suffer lineage heart wounds, couples break up, friendships are broken, we repeat painful things from our own childhoods with our children that we swore we never would, and it is rarely, if ever, because we don't love them. I have come to realize how everyone in my life who was 'lost' somehow, alive or not, is now being 'found' and welcomed back into my heart, if not my life. Everything in life, every love and every heartbreak, is full of Grace. Amazing Grace is here and happening all the time.

As we come into new relationship with love and heartbreak, we come to experience that grace is always here.