

The Holy Land is Within

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In the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the United States' retaliation, the threats of biological warfare and further violence, many people have been traumatized to the core. What many took for granted as safe and secure no longer is. More than anything, the spirit has been assaulted and the negativity continues to assail us. This is the frontier with which we as healers have to deal. The question of how we, as healers, help ourselves and our patients live with the reality and the opportunity of our time is precisely our challenge.

As we listen to the various news people, pundits, politicians, and psychologists, we are being given food for the mind: data, explanations, reasons, and ways to "figure it all out." Largely, the spirit is ignored. Certainly, we must physically beef up security with air travel and the postal service; we must effectively utilize our military and intelligence communities. We can breathe deeply and engage in aerobics to get out of our heads. We can talk things over. We can even talk ourselves into relative calm, but the spirit, the very core of our being, is largely ignored.

In my practice during the last month, I have seen more people in need of spiritual resurrection and support and more energy blocks than in any one month in 21 years of practice. Many of these people are lucid, well-read, well-informed. Some can effectively debate or argue intellectual positions. Some are not so well masked. In either case, there is little or no joy, strength, or radiance at the core. There is deep fear and spiritual resignation. In an age in which some ninety-plus percent of people are already damaged at the level of the spirit, America at war has more deeply traumatized it. Things in our lives that previously could be handled, no longer can. People are increasingly turning to drugs, food and sex to numb the pain. Never has the need for spiritual healing been greater. If there is to be a healing of nations and individuals, it is up to us to meet that need directly, confidently, and accurately.

What has this to do with the practice of acupuncture? It is the essence of it. Only when we accept that we must be able to resonate with the full spectrum of human behavior will we be able to hear and understand the cries for help from our patients. If a patient comes in full of fear, can we feel the nature of that person's fear and know exactly what points are needed to resolve it? Can we perceive and respond to the patient's needs with our own rapport skills and, in essence, *be* the healing? There is no treatment for "fear." There is only treatment for the unique individual who is in fear. What does *that* person need? It may be very different from the needs of another.

Understanding this, we can use our work with patients (and with each other as colleagues) to work on ourselves. Every interaction can become a challenge to stretch ourselves. We can learn so much. With what types of patients are we unable to make rapport and why? What emotions make us uncomfortable? In what ways do we overreact or under-react? What unresolved burdens do we bring into the treatment room? Why did the patient respond as he did? What did I do that elicited that response? What might I have done differently? Did I reach that patient at the level of her need? Did I take the time to really see or give only a cursory glance? This is where our work lies. We cannot respond to the individual needs of our patients unless we are fully available to hear those needs, to be present and embrace those needs. We are only able to embrace in others that

which we can embrace in ourselves.

Classical Five-Element acupuncture takes time and skilled guidance to learn. There is nothing more powerful than using the appropriate points for their spiritual connotations based on the *need* of each patient. What patients tell us in words is largely useless. Most cling to a mask and wish to show us only that mask. With training and experience, we learn to see and hear what is under the facade - what the patient does not wish us to see and, further, that which he or she is unaware of. These are the levels we must be prepared to enter. Accurately diagnosing and treating the elemental *causative factor* is essential, for it is the ground on which the mind and spirit can grow and flourish. As to the physical body, in the words of my teacher, J.R. Worsley, "The spirit can move mountains. It can certainly move disease."

I will share *some* of the points and treatments I have been called upon to use frequently in the last month. I emphasize that these are *not* formulae. They are effective when chosen as a response to a *need*, which the patient expresses in myriad ways. They are effective when conjoined with appropriate points on the patient's elemental *causative factor* meridians, any of which are powerful spirit points in themselves. They are most effective when we are clear of our own obscurations and therefore a channel of healing energy. Each point or treatment has no equal when it is *needed*.

Exit-Entry Blocks

One way in which energy flows within the body-mind-spirit is at the *Wei* level. This energy serves as a "defensive" layer of protection and circulates among all meridians in the same numerical order as they follow in the 24-hour circadian clock (I -- Heart, II -- Small Intestine, III -- Bladder, IV -- Kidney, etc.). Normally, the energy smoothly "exits" one meridian and "enters" the next. A shock or trauma to the body, mind or spirit can cause an obstruction or "block" between any of the meridians, which will clog and disrupt the flow of energy in the whole system.

Another type of block can occur between the Conception (*Ren*) and Governing (*Du*) Vessels. This block, too, is generally caused by an overwhelming shock or trauma to the body, mind or spirit. In relation to the 12 regular meridians, these two vessels are like vast reservoirs which feed all of the other meridians like rivers. If there is a block within these vast reservoirs, all meridians will be severely depleted. The patient may show a tremendous overall lack of strength and vitality on any level, as virtually no energy is reaching *any* of the 12 Officials (organ/functions). There is often a feeling of just wanting to sleep, yet sleep does not refresh or replenish the energy. Any physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual symptoms are apt to be exacerbated.

Until these blocks, which *must* be detected on the pulses, have been cleared by tonifying the appropriate points of exit or entry on the affected meridians, *no* treatment will be effective.

Kidney 24: Spirit Burial Ground

When one has been so heavily burdened or traumatized that he or she has virtually given up, it is as if the spirit is deeply buried and unreachable. The patient may appear loud and out of control or quietly resigned. He may be able to, move, talk, and even reason. The determination of the mind may even make it appear that all is well, but it is utterly without a core, an empty shell without the inner spark of life that brings joy, enthusiasm, and meaning. Without spirit, there may be existence, but there can be no real *life*. Only when the spirit is present can we consider how to help it. This point, in a category of its own, has the ability to "open the ground", resurrect, restore, and revive the spirit itself.

Heart 1: Utmost Source

To the early Chinese, the Heart Official, which they called the Supreme Controller, was akin to the emperor, heaven's representative on earth. The emperor, when healthy, manifests all the qualities we would want in a chief executive: divine wisdom; radiance; fairness; enlightenment; unselfishness; and love for all. The love and joy that we receive from the fire element bathes every part of our lives. It allows us to *feel* the love of the Divine, to share in the warmth of spirit that eternally pervades everything and enables us to feel at one with others. This point connects us to that source within and without: one and the same. It is used when that connection has been broken, such as after a shock or trauma has penetrated the Heart's defenses. Disconnected from the Utmost Source, we feel alone, isolated, spiritually cut off, uninspired, fearful, empty, severed from life.

Urinary Bladder 37: Soul Door (in some texts, this point corresponds to UB 42)

When this door is open, we are able to be inspired, able to take in new vistas of richness and quality. Shock and trauma can slam this door shut, keeping us from the very spiritual essence that we seek. We may go on spiritual quests to find it, not perceiving its presence within ourselves. We try to contact the spirit, but cannot. If this door is closed, we are never satisfied with what we find. Even in the presence of the holy, we cannot take in its nourishment. Opening this door, we allow access to the deepest levels within. It is the way to the innermost dwelling of the spirit, its home, where the eternal riches await.

Governor Vessel (*Du*) 12: Body Pillar

Like the central pillar or tent pole to which all guide wires are attached, this pillar maintains our internal strength and uprightness. The body, mind and spirit are built around this pillar. It supports and strengthens the "house" in which we live. It must be firm and rooted, yet able to yield as needed lest it break by the slightest jarring. We consider this point when trauma to the body, mind or spirit has weakened the pillar, causing it to bend or crumble, leaving us fragile, wobbly, unable to regain the stability and balance we need to face any situation, to recover, and to carry on with our lives.

The forementioned points are but a few of the endless possibilities for responding to the needs of patients in crisis. The art of determining the causative factor and the planning of full treatments is beyond the scope of this or any article. What we can see, perhaps, is that the need for this system of medicine has never been greater. We have had a glimpse into how much care and intention go into the selection of every point and what we are capable of doing to reach and repair the human spirit. Learning these skills is challenging, life transforming, and great fun. The best contributions I can make in these times are: to continue to work on myself as an instrument of healing, to deliver the skills of this system of medicine to my patients with all my heart, and to teach others how to do the same.

This time of crisis presents an opportunity. The sudden realization of the fragility and preciousness of life literally forces us to live it more consciously. There seems to be less reason to hold onto old resentments and prejudices, more reason to love and to learn all we can about how to help one another.

* The translations of point names used in this article are taken from *The Meridians of Ch'i Energy: Point Reference Guide* by Professor J.R. Worsley.

