

Redemption and the Healing Arts

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For most people, science, economics and spirituality are separate areas of life and knowledge. All three of these vital pursuits, however, have roots in the same universal laws that govern everything in the universe.

The main definition of the word universal is "present or occurring everywhere or in all things." Universal laws therefore would apply to all areas of knowledge and human activity or they would not be universal. One example that is easy to understand would be the Law of Polarity, which states that all manifested things and experiences have a bipolar nature. A colloquial way to put this is "everything that goes up must come down and vice versa."

Can you see how that applies to science - to economics - and to spirituality? If you can easily see the application for the first two, but have trouble with the third one consider this - the word "spirituality" comes from the root Greek word "spiritos," which means breath. That is certainly something that keeps going up and down - as do our moods, emotions, energy levels, finances among many other things. So, the study of spirituality could be said to be the search for inner peace and clarity that arises when we accept our bipolar nature (cease resisting what is) and learn to live more in the center of our breath. This is along the same lines as living within the Tao.

I would like to briefly explore the term "redemption" and how it applies to economics, spirituality and the practice of acupuncture. This understanding can help those of us in the healing arts to better appreciate what it takes for our chronically suffering patients to find long-term resolution (redemption).

Some common and applicable dictionary definitions of the word redemption are:

1. The act of delivering from sin or saving from evil
2. Repayment of the principal amount of a debt or security at or before maturity (as when a corporation repurchases its own stock)
3. The act of purchasing back something previously sold

The word "redemption" has both spiritual and economic meanings.

I have long pondered the inner meaning of this word and will share some thoughts about it. The common thread running through the meaning of "deliverance from sin" and "the act of purchasing back something previously sold" is the idea of value. In both cases something of value is being withheld from being used or enjoyed. If we sin we enjoy our lives less, if we are not in possession of our property we cannot use and enjoy it.

If we further look at the definition of "sin" a common dictionary meaning would be "an act that is regarded by theologians as a transgression of God's will" or "to violate a law of God or a moral law." Of

course the word God can have almost infinite meanings, but in this post I'll consider God to be the source of all that is of genuine good to us - love, life, breath, material sustenance, abundance and blessings of all kinds. Let's also postulate that this God force works according to universal laws that govern all aspects of the creation and our bodies and minds.

Plants, animals and mountains have no choice, but to live in accord with universal law. We humans don't either, but we have a degree of free will to think, and hence create our experience. Unlike animals we can influence whether we live in harmony and obedience to universal law or at least temporarily create a counterflow to it. Even creating a counterflow is governed by universal law, but doing that can greatly increase our suffering and reduce our enjoyment of life.

So by this view "sin" is "to violate a law of God or a moral law" (aka universal law). By doing so we lose (or at least experience the illusion of losing) much of our enjoyment of our good. So, sinners (aka negative thinking creators) lose touch with a degree of their enjoyment of life, material sustenance, abundance and blessings of all kinds. Sinners apparently do this by creating negative or disharmonious thoughts and actions that, by universal law, create blockages and counter-flow to the free flow of *qi*, *Shen*, *Jing* and other vital substances. Ancient Chinese medicine states that *qi*, *Shen* and *Jing* are the "3 Treasures." Having an abundance of these treasures is the support for a healthy, abundant and enjoyable life. Deficiencies or blockages of these substances lowers quality of life and produces suffering in direct proportion to how much blockage there is.

This view of sin takes it out of a religious context that could be fraught with guilt and disempowerment and puts the patient back in charge of their own destiny. While yes, they are responsible for their own suffering for the most part they also are empowered to get back in sync with universal law and regain their virtue and enjoyment of life. This is where we acupuncturists come in.

While our scope of practice is primarily based on insertion of needles or other treatment methods, the superior practitioner acts just as much as a teacher or good example of attempting to live in sync with universal law. Just needling them to temporarily relieve their symptoms is far from the fulfillment of our healing art.

So how does redemption tie into economics?

Here's how: If you are in debt and hock your car for cash, you lose enjoyment of your car. To get your car back you will need to "redeem" it by making a payment, or having someone else do that for you. If you save up S&H Green Stamps or equivalent from the supermarket they are useless until you go to the "redemption center" and trade them for something you can really use like a toaster or set of pots and pans. Paying our mortgage to the bank is in effect redeeming our house. Paying those huge interest rates is how we trade our life force, in the form of money, to redeem and keep title to a place to live. When a charitable organization or kind benefactor make payments to help a homeless family get housing, they are making the payment of energy for them to allow them to have redemption of a suitable home.

I will not try to address the question here of whether Jesus or other great teachers can make a payment of virtue for "sinners" so their good can be redeemed, as is professed by some religions.

I will mention one more universal law - the Law of Love. This law states that love is the greatest healer, and that each of us does have the blessing power within us to make a difference for others. We do have the power to make other's lives a little healthier and happier than they otherwise have been.

Again, this is where a dedicated, skilled and compassionate practitioner can make a big difference.

In my career as a doctor of Oriental Medicine, I see that my patients come to me because they feel some of their good is being withheld from them. That good could be a pain-free life, a more positive emotional experience, freedom from addiction, or the threat of their life being shortened. My job is to support them in removing their blockages (counterflow) and choose to live more in harmony with universal law. This opens the way for their redemption, so they can have greater enjoyment and fulfillment of their life experience.

So what then is the root of pain?

A short answer is that pain is the sensation of inner blockages of and counterflows to *qi*, *Jing* and *Shen*. People come to acupuncturists to be relieved of many kinds of pain - physical, emotional, addictive, pain of fatigue or pain of unclarity. When people feel cut off from peace, harmony or abundance they need to make a payment of their love, good thoughts, actions of service to others or efforts to help themselves to experience redemption of their good.

I believe that the greatest gift of acupuncture and other energetic medicine is to use our arts to give people a more open and pain-free space, at least temporarily, so they may adjust their attitudes, beliefs and actions to come more in harmony with universal law. This redeems the joy of being alive and leads to long-term resolution and soul evolution.

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