

THE FINEST GLOBAL MAGAZINE FOR THE FIGHTING ARTS

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PLUS:

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Avengement
and the Evolution of...

**Scott
Adkins**

PLUS: STRANGE DAYS ON AVENGEMENT
WITH MARK STRANGE MARTIAL ARTIST, STUNT MAN & ACTOR

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Original Truth...

SHAMAH

DEALING WITH THE AFTERTASTE OF A FIGHT

Martial arts usually focuses on how to avoid getting into a fight, and when there is no other choice but to fight for a 'just cause', the idea is to cultivate your combative fighting skills so you can incapacitate your opponent(s) swiftly and gracefully as possible using 'reasonable force'. Seldom do we focus on the bitter aftertaste left behind after a fight, and how to dissolve that.

Let's delve deeper into this...

Why People Fight

People fight for many reasons, such as when they:

- Get offended,
- Feel threatened,
- Feel scared,
- Treated badly,
- Something is stolen from them,
- Under extreme pressure,
- Feel disrespected,
- Experience injustice,
- Values & beliefs are violated,
- Have a bias towards a specific tribe,

...to name but a few.

All these boil down to one root cause...

Love! That's right... **Love!**

It is the love for:

- **Something you love**, e.g. car, house or other material object,
- **Someone you love**, e.g. your family, friends and tribe,
- **Something you believe in**, e.g. honour, pride and justice, and
- **Yourself**, e.g. your ego identity.

The Aftertaste

When people fight, they are usually left with a bitter aftertaste of **shame** and/or **guilt** (which can also be expressed by other negative emotions such as anger, hatred and dejection), whether it is from their direct actions/inactions, or whether this has been imposed on them unjustly as a consequence of someone else actions/inactions.

Shame often signifies violation of cultural or social values, while feelings of **guilt** arise from violation of one's own internal values and beliefs.

Shame and **guilt** are a sign of incongruence between your truth, and/or someone else's actions/inactions, alerted by your conscience as an inner distress and discomfort.

Shame and **guilt** play negative tricks on your mind and emotions, and can lead to illness of the body, until you eventually muster the courage to decide to resolve the matter once you have the resources to deal with it.



Fisticuffs

Just to set the record straight, not all fights leave a bitter aftertaste of shame and guilt. The Irish Gypsy's are reputedly famous for their fisticuffs, that is, going 'toe-to-toe' to resolve a dispute between two people. Once the fight is over, the two parties shake hands in a gentlemanly manner, hug it out, and the issue is forgiven on both sides, and the dispute is put to rest forever leaving a sweet taste of contentment and humility.

No by-standers jump in, and there is a code-of-conduct such as no throws, eye gouging, hair pulling, and each fighter has a 'fair play man' who acts as a referee to make sure the fighters make it a clean fight.

Often misconceived as barbaric bare-knuckled-fighting, this is in fact fighting with honour and pride. This is an original form of Irish martial arts called Dornálaíocht, which we now know as modern boxing (also referred to as the Irish stand down, bare-knuckle, prizefighting, pugilism, toe-to-toe, fist fight or fisticuffs).

This article however, focuses on fights where a dispute is left unresolved leaving a sense of shame and/or guilt.

What is Shamah?

'**Shamah**' (pronounced shum-ah) is a word from the ancient language, Sanskrit, which means '**forgiveness**'.

The word '**shame**' has a very similar phonetic root, originally, believed to be derived from the Old English word '**Hama**', meaning a veil or covering that one wears to signal penitence. **Shamah** therefore is the unveiling of the covering, the lifting and release of the shame and guilt, with a surrender to your vulnerability while being submerged in humility - which is easier said than done.

Shamah therefore requires immense **Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Mastery**, so one can truly forgive from the heart and soul by removing their ego defense.

Forget Me Not

Most people have heard the saying, '**Forgive and forget**'. The truth of the matter is, the unconscious mind never forgets anything... **EVER!** It is an infinite store of information (whether you have the skill to recall that information is a different matter).

Therefore, true forgiveness remembers everything. So why would you...

***Choose to live in the past,
And reflect that onto your future,
To re-create past experiences,
Which no longer serve you in the present.***
...it's a vicious circle!

Rather, forgiveness focuses on accepting and embracing the past and making peace with it, living in the present the best you can, so you can create new fond memories right now, to shape a better and brighter future.

Facing Death

Picture yourself at a funeral, staring at the coffin about to pass into the cremator or lowered in the ground for burial (whichever you prefer). You have a lasting reminder that this is - **The Final Farewell**. You have a sudden realisation that we are all heading in the same direction, and that our existence on planet **Mother Earth** is merely a temporary one. You are left with a stark realisation that... '**Life is too short**'.

You have a '**moment of clarity**', when you realise all the fighting and drama is meaningless and feeble. And you experience an overwhelming sense of humility and insignificance in the face of death, and an appreciation for the life you still have.

The question is... What are you going to do with all this newfound learned wisdom?

Miso No Koro

To truly practice the art of **Shamah**, you have to be like the '**Moon in the Lake**'.

Picture a moon glistening in a tranquil lake at night. Notice how the lake does not attach itself to the moon, though it is a direct reflection of all the moons' heavenly glory. To see the true reflection of the moon clearly, the lake has to become totally calm and still.

Remember, recollection, anticipation and want are all sources of attachment, which cause ripples in the lake, obscuring the reflection of the moon. We have heard it all before - He did this, she did that; he said this, she said that; I should've done this, I could've done that; and so on.

Only when you practice the art of **Miso No Koro** - *stilling your mind like water*, you

become aware of your sources of attachment, and you are able to **see your attachments clearly** so you are able to work on detaching from them.

Only then will you notice your true shine is a reflection of all the light outside of you, as well as all the light inside of you.

Only then will you start to notice the water has been moving all the time, and you are able to '*flow with it*'.

Karmic Flavours

Karma comes in three flavours:

Karmic debt: this is when you do something untoward to someone, and you create a negative karma: a debt which you have to pay back to that person.

Karmic credit: this is when you do something nice for someone, and you expect something in return and create a positive karma: a credit which the other person now has to pay back to you in some way, shape or form.

Zero Point: this is when you do something kind and compassionate for someone without any expectations: this is pure selfless servitude, called Seva in Granthi, the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs.

True **Shamah** sits peacefully at the **Zero Point**, not creating any karma. **Wayne Dyer** summed this up beautifully when he said: '*How people treat you is their karma. How you react is yours*'.

Kensho

Indigenous tribes and ancient cultures believe that we choose the life experiences we need in this lifetime, so we can evolve spiritually to reveal who we really are, our **Original Truth**, and return 'home'.

Ancient wisdom teaches us that anyone that inspires us or causes us suffering to reveal who we really are, is a **life teacher** (or 'agent of the universe') sent to us especially to serve us. We therefore have an obligation and responsibility to seek the lesson in that experience so we can ascend.

The Japanese call this **Kenshō** - Ken means '*seeing*', shō means '*nature, essence*'. It is usually translated as '*seeing one's essential nature*', that is, our Buddha-nature. **Kenshō** is an initial insight or awakening, not necessarily full Buddhahood.

If we miss or ignore the teaching, then life will repeat the lesson with increasing severity until you actually have no choice but to face yourself.

The hardest thing to do is to thank your life teachers for serving you through inspiration and in particular it is more difficult to do so through your suffering.

What is the Colour of the Wind?

What did you experience momentarily when you read... *What is the colour of the wind?* ...An emptiness drifting in the wind perhaps.

This **Zen Koan** helps us to experience the emptiness or no-thingness if you may. The wind also signifies thoughts drifting away, creating a sense of non-attachment, non-being, no-thingness, or **Mu** in Japanese.

Martial arts teaches us to cultivate a state of **Mu**, so we can respond intelligently to whatever strike comes our way. For when we become attached to a thought such as 'if this happens, then I will do this, that, and the other', that is usually when we get punched in the face or struck. **Mike Tyson** famously quoted, *'Everyone's got a plan, until they get punched in the face'*.

Similarly, when we fight, we get attached to the thoughts, emotions and feelings associated with the fight, rather than seeking freedom from that which is no longer really happening, because it was in the past.

It's All a Game

Like in a game of **Monopoly** (or any other board game for that matter), in the end... everything goes back in the box (just like you will at your funeral). When you understand this, you will start to understand true freedom. So stop fussing over petty things and start enjoying playing the game - while it lasts.

The Three Ego Weapons

As part of the '**human condition**', we all suffer from **The Three Ego Weapons**, which are:

- Fear & anxiety,
- Separation & animosity, and
- Shame & guilt.

Mind the Gap

When we fight and a bad aftertaste is left behind, we create a gap between people and their tribes. Where there is a gap, it fills with one or more of **The Three Ego Weapons**. The

wider the gap, the greater the damage caused by **The Three Ego Weapons**.

To close the gap, you have to decide: **Whether it is worth reconnecting with love, or Whether this relationship has served you, and you are free to walk on.** As they say on the London Underground, '**Mind the gap**'.

Childs Play

Picture two young siblings playing with a toy, and all of a sudden they start fighting over the toy. Moments later, they will be back to playing with one another as if nothing ever happened and onto the next game. They don't hold a grudge in their hearts, rather, they dissolve all the negative emotions and carry on playing... because it no longer serves them, and it is simply more enjoyable and effortless to continue playing and having fun.

We can learn a lot from children. We have simply forgotten the way to **love playfully** due to... **Social conditioning and conformity, and Rigidity in education and corporate life,** ...that has beaten the '**childs play**' out of us. Children, as vulnerable as they are, have an amazing innate ability and tenacity to forgive, because they operate from a place of pure innocence and egolessness, unconditional love, and sheer joy of playfulness. They naturally exist in a state of **Shamah**.

Shamah is...

Courage and strength whilst sitting in your vulnerability,
Quieteness of the ego and submerging yourself in humility,
Liberating yourself from other peoples karmic actions/inactions,
Responding intelligently with kindness, compassion and love,
Connecting with our inner-child's innocence, unconditional love, joy and playfulness,
Shamah is ultimately... **Self Mastery**.

As **Brene Brown** (TED Talk on Vulnerability) put it... *'Empathy is the antidote to shame and kills the secrecy, silence and judgment. You can stand outside the arena and feel invincible and achieve nothing, or You can step into the arena of vulnerability and grow, regardless of whether you fail or succeed'*.

And so it happens to be...

*'If the reason people **START** fighting is - **FOR LOVE**, then the reason people **STOP** fighting is - **THROUGH LOVE**.'*

■ **GODSPEED, LAK**

TAKE ACTION AND MASTER YOUR LIFE

To practice The Art of Shamah (forgiveness):

1. Choose someone/ something you want to forgive,
2. Still the mind so you can start to think and see clearly,
3. Become aware of your attachments to them/ that thing,
4. List your vulnerabilities around this space,
5. List what your ego is saying,
6. List all the karmic actions/ inactions/trespasses done unto you/others,

Now...

7. See the life lesson in that, and embrace that wholly,
8. Sit in your vulnerabilities and make yourself comfortable, finding strength in doing that,
9. Allow your ego to quiet down, and submerge yourself in humility, repeating "there is no I",
10. Separate and release their actions/inactions as their own (not yours),
11. Send them kindness, compassion and love, and
12. Decide how you're going to close the gap,
13. Then take the appropriate action/inaction to close the gap, and most of all
14. Expect nothing in return and do it with pure intent, joy, playfulness, and most of all love.