

COMMENTARY on the Shapiro Family Linked Verse ☺

*When mom and I were in Asia, we heard stories of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo grove in ancient China, a group of individuals who would meet regularly to discuss philosophy and read and write poetry. We loved that image! Flash forward 48 years, and we're now sitting drinking coffee (decaf!) at the Grove (on forest) preparing for this evening's Shabbat, when mom will light the candles (bringing forth more light—internal and external) and then sing in her angelic voice. We're looking over the just published copy of our family's linked verse and the church bells strike 5, with five "awakening" gongs and then a rendition of the Quaker spiritual "It's a gift to be simple." Really, could life be any better than this moment!*

*I had an "ah hah" about our linked verse—I thought, great, Talmudic (and Zen) commentary, of course! When we first wrote these poems, I saw these linked haiku as "Chinese linked verse"—i.e., there was a linked theme in each of the poems regarding light (enlightenment), shadow, dark); and a linked temporal theme: past, present, future.. I also saw the haiku as a "Rorschach" in that each of us brought our own perspective to the poem, creating different "shadings" and nuances of understanding.*

*But during the meditative bell chiming, I had a third "grouping" of our linkage. I think this comes from the way I view "Rorschachs"—my perceptual style. I take the "pieces" and see a "holistic picture." So, what I began to see here, organically, was a "narrative arc." It begins with "un-enlightenment"—a lower level of consciousness, not seeing the "light" and beauty that exists in the world (poem 1, with a nod to mom's cutely humorous view.) The second poem has hope: we come "from light" we are surrounded by light, but there is still "dust on the mirror" and a journey to take, and the doors for that journey await. (Ah, Dad's life as journey toward greater wisdom, compassion).*

*Poems three and four, Jena's two self-linked contributions, continue this theme of the journey, there is a sense of being drawn forward, trust that all will be ok, yet a sense of wonder—where is this leading. Poem five comes from an altered state, "one without a second, the oneness that sees and goes beyond "light and dark". The person, who lives in the here and now mindful moment, (the wise person ---Arahat, ) who has "attained" enlightenment, "awakened" (the arc from poem 1). Thank you, Shauna. . Poem 6 completes the circle. It comes after the "enlightenment" experience of poem 5 and is like the Zen "Ox-herding pictures" in which the "person, after chasing the "bull" (one's mind, emotions) learns to tame it, become enlightened, - the Bodhisattva, (our Superhero monk) r(Thank you Josh and Skyla) and returns to the world to continue to make "good choices" (cleaning one's own dust with wisdom and compassion) which in turn helps bring more light, compassion, and wisdom to help others who are in darkness and suffering.*

*What a journey, and how great to take it with you all, Precious Family. !:) love love poppers, part of the web of a family linked by love and light on so many levels, and with a wee bit of the cosmic chuckle. ☺*

