

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPERATIVE

PLANETARY REDEMPTION
THROUGH SELF-REALIZATION



SHUNYAMURTI

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We hope that you enjoy this free sample from Shunyamurti's book The Transformational Imperative. It includes the Table of Contents, the Forward, the Prologue and the first essay from the book.

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E-book Production by Sat Yoga
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San José, Costa Rica

Published by Sat Yoga Publications, Doral, Florida
Visit www.amazon.com to order printed copies.

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Seven Endnotes to the Endless
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Foreword

The essays you are about to read were sent originally to students of the spiritual path of Sat Yoga in various parts of the world. The purpose of these writings was, and is, to support and encourage serious spiritual warriors at all phases of the inner struggle to achieve the imperative next leap of human evolution—what the ancient spiritual tradition of Sat Yoga refers to as the Supreme Liberation.

This goal is no mere utopian diversion for new-age dilettantes, but a scientifically defensible, ethically imperative, and psychologically requisite attainment if we are going to meet the mounting challenges to human survival. The general level of our psychological development is insufficient to withstand the stresses of cultural collapse, let alone those of the coming ecological failure and cataclysmic geophysical shifts. The apocalyptic clouds of global war, pandemics, famine, and social breakdown are darkening and advancing every day. Only a radical transformation of human consciousness, in which critical numbers of us mobilize the full range of our psycho-spiritual potentials—our creative intelligence, healing powers, telepathic communication, and empathic peacemaking capacities, among others—and organize new centers of higher culture to fill the vacuum and provide leadership when the current system has fallen of its own dead weight, will enable us to bring about a renaissance on our sacred Earth.

The goal of Sat Yoga is transcendence of the ego. The ego can be defined as the normal-neurotic state that most of us are in, which involves the belief that the self is the body/mind, with an existence that is temporary and separate from others and from the universe as a whole. Technically, the ego is a complex three-tiered structure. In addition to the conscious mind, there is an unconscious sector with multiple layers of repressed psychic sediment. In addition, there is a censoring apparatus responsible for the homeostatic maintenance of the ego with its customary defense mechanisms. These defenses are responsible for most of the ego's pathological behavior patterns. Beyond the ego lies the trans-rational Self, which Yogis call the Atman. This real Self is one with the universe as a whole, and is serene, loving, peaceful, and wise. Realization of the Atman brings about a radical transformation of one's life.

For a fortunate few, the effort to transcend ego-consciousness is swift and sweet. Upon learning that the ego is illusory, consciousness drops identification with body and personality and enters the state of pure blissful awareness. Then the gift of the use of

higher powers in the service of humanity unfolds easily with further training. For most of us, however, the struggle to transcend ego is long and arduous, requiring the rigorous working-through of tenacious unconscious fixations and primitive defenses. These essays are designed to be of use to those at all stages of the journey, at all points on the spectrum of psycho-spiritual development.

This text is not intended to substitute for intensive one-to-one work with an adept spiritual guide, who is trained to function as a catalyst to accelerate the psycho-spiritual development of others, including the purification of the unconscious mind and the emergence of *siddhis* (higher Yogic powers of awakened mind). Working alone is far more difficult. The ego has many ways to deceive and divert one from the central task. Defense mechanisms built into the unconscious ego structure can too easily maintain submerged fragments of narcissistic consciousness in the fog of Maya (illusion) while convincing you that you are achieving illumination. A skillful, truthful, dispassionate guide and a supportive spiritual community that can recognize blind spots and that do not collude with imaginary versions of enlightenment are essential allies on the difficult ascent of the holy mountain within.

Sat Yoga is a path that integrates the teachings of the ancient Yogic sages with all the esoteric traditions of both East and West, fleshed out with the aid of conceptual tools gleaned from the most recent forms of depth psychology and psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and other human sciences ranging from semiotics and linguistics to sociology and anthropology. In addition, this path makes use of the findings of mathematics (especially set theory, topology, and higher-dimensional geometries) and the hard sciences, from quantum physics to biology and chemistry.

The insights from these disciplines can offer crucial analogies and metaphors to aid in the understanding of the relationship between the complexity of ego-consciousness and the simple nature of higher awareness that can help center the mind in a state of alert stillness, in preparation for the attainment of final liberation.

Sat Yoga is an integrative path, one function of which is to demonstrate that all religions are pointing to the same immanent/transcendent truth. It is a truth that we must come to embody—if we are to meet the challenges of the unprecedented crisis that is upon us.

It is no exaggeration to call this the decisive moment in human history. It is not just the end of one era and the beginning of another. It represents the end of a cycle of natural existence for the whole planetary biosphere, and is resulting in the extinction of nearly all the

higher life forms on Earth. The survival of humanity itself is in question. At this unique evolutionary moment, the energies of consciousness, our Supreme Being, are more active. They can be more easily and palpably felt with less effort than at other times, at least by those who ask with faith and love for understanding and assistance in bringing this process to the most fruitful culmination.

The inspiration, serenity, and empowerment accessible as a result of ego transcendence and union with our immanent/transcendent Supreme Self are the necessary attainments to complete the quantum leap required of humanity. We are called upon now to grow up as a species, to face reality, to renounce our narcissism, our mendacity, our addictions to power and pleasure, and our intentional ignorance and denial. To accomplish all that, we must find our real center, known in Yoga as *Atman*.

The act of profound centering, or meditation, has a long history as the core practice of Yoga and the later spiritual traditions based on Yoga. Meditation involves the silencing of the mind. In inner silence, ego transcendence leads into contemplation and finally numinous realization of the transfinite Real. The power, insight, and sublime presence of the Absolute can then work through the individual body/mind. This produces *Avatara*, ego death and spiritual rebirth: the aim and object of all true religion.

As more and more individuals undergo this sacred metamorphosis, the effect on human consciousness of this higher vibratory frequency will shift humanity as a whole into a new level of coherence, producing morphogenetic effects throughout the chain of Being. This change in turn will hasten the end of the current *yuga*, or human evolutionary era, and the birth of the next. We are at the brink of the end of the world as we know it, the climax of the age of Kali Yuga, the age of conflict, brutality and vice, in which humans have fallen to the lowest moral and spiritual level possible—and potentially at the beginning of the new age that every religion has longed for as Paradise, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, or Sat Yuga, the golden age of the manifestation of our highest possibilities for truth, virtue, harmony, happiness, creativity, and unity. This is no mere myth. We have the power to make it a living reality. Some of us now alive may in fact survive to see the transition take place in our current lifetimes.

It is hoped that the following essays will be of help in preparing for this momentous planetary transfiguration. Once the pieces of the puzzle fall into place, we can recognize that what, on the surface, seem to be tragic phenomena—such as global warming, biological plagues, economic meltdowns, world wars and general social collapse—

are really blessings in disguise. All the above are the birth pangs of a new world. Of course, it could yet die in childbirth. We must take every precaution to protect it. Humans are being put under pressures never before known. Some will crack under these pressures. Others will transform. If we create communities that are mutually supportive in fulfilling our transformational imperative, we are more likely to achieve a successful renaissance. The metamorphosis of humans into what have in mythic discourse been called angels and gods can only occur under such extreme circumstances as we are facing, but we must respond adequately.

We have already entered the long-awaited season of the spawning of a new generation of divine beings. It happens only once in numerous millennia. We are fortunate to be present at this most wonderful (super)natural event. Not even the hatching of sea turtles or the birthing of whale calves can compare. It is even more wonderful when we realize that we have been chosen to participate. And we have. Some have already recognized that the divine transformative process is underway. And in a very few, it is already complete.

Nature is about to give birth to Supernature, to the crown of Creation. The seed of Supernature is within us all. If we cultivate the Godseed, through devoted meditation, egoless action, communal synergy, and constant compassionate mindfulness, the shell of the ego will soon crack and the Supreme Self will be revealed and released to act through yet another being. Global destruction and planetary renewal will both occur simultaneously. It is important to identify not with what is dying, but with what is being born.

The following essays are intended to help you orient yourself to the changes that are already happening within you, as well as without. Please share this information with others who are also sensing the portentous coming of the new dawn. Those who feel helpless to do anything to stop the onrushing suicidal death drive of our present societies need to know that there is nothing to fear. Our terminally ill culture of oppression is being taken out of its misery once and for all. Environmentalists worried about the mass extinction of species should also be not afraid. The power of Nature to create new life is limitless.

It is imperative that we transform ourselves so that we deserve to live in a world restored to its full health and beauty, so that the laws of karma shift into gear on our behalf. The accumulation of merit, as Buddha said, will be decisive. We must merit salvation. Only through the purification of our souls and our total dedication to God, through our love for this world and for all beings, who in fact are God in deep disguise, can we achieve the fulfillment of our own potential: our transmutation into divine beings. This is the one mandate

communicated by God through all the prophets of all religions. Now is the moment to fulfill the transformational imperative.

Know that you are not alone. Many of us are working together, on both subtle and gross levels of reality. And the Supreme One is secretly guiding us all. The whole truth shall soon be revealed. In the meantime, remember God with love at every moment. That is the one quintessential key to salvation.

Namaste,
Shunyamurti

PROLOGUE

The Search

The Search

The soul is like a salmon. It seeks to return to the place of its birth.

For the salmon, that means leaving its comfortable known habitat in the deep ocean, swimming to the mouth of a strange river, one that it has seen only once in its life, and beginning a long haul upstream. Soon it will be struggling fiercely against the current, finally having to leap cascading waterfalls, then to wriggle through shallows and under logs, before it reaches its destination. And on the way, the salmon must face the greatest obstacles of every sort, from the predations, contaminations, dams, and debris of humans, to hungry bears and other beasts, the resistance of Nature itself, to arrive at last at the place of its spawning.

Most will not make it. But among the few who do, there is no question of having arrived at the right place. Somehow, it knows, it remembers the very spot of its own origin. And there it mates, with another of the same brood but complementary gender. One lays the eggs, the other fertilizes them, and then both will die, having fully completed their life cycle.

How is the soul like a salmon? We, too, at some moment in life, realize the uncanny need to return to our transcendent point of origin. Societies have historically accommodated that need by establishing pilgrimage destinations and routes, physical journeys to the source of some sacred river or holy land or numinous object that represents our Supreme Being. But the real pilgrimage is within. And we know intuitively, when that moment comes, that we must enter into our inmost consciousness to re-find our original essence.

In contemporary society, there is no recognition of this ultimate drive of the soul. And so the inner pilgrimage is too often short-circuited, or else co-opted by social institutions into a more limited intention. But the soul, like the salmon, will not settle for a false destination. It must return to its true point of origin. Whether this point is called the Self, God, Allah, Buddha nature, Shiva, or Brahman, is unimportant. The point of origin is beyond names and beliefs. It lies in another dimension that is both beyond the world and yet here and now, more intimately here than our own ego-consciousness. To get here requires only the realization that we have not truly been here and now, that ego-consciousness is out of touch with its inmost Self, that the world of our ego-consciousness is an artificial construct of language

that veils the Real. The journey begins when we allow that construct to drop away.

The inner journey for us is as perilous as the heroic effort to leap upstream to the source-point is for the salmon. We must leave behind the comfort of the ego's habitus, the defenses and behavior patterns that enable us to maintain the illusion of a unified personal self, and face the psychic fractures, phantasies, conflicts, and currents of repressed affect from which we have hidden for so many years. To face the fact that our real Being is unknown to our own consciousness requires great courage. Yet the soul unerringly knows, even though the ego does not remember, where it is going and what it is seeking.

The soul encompasses the ego. Ego is the personal, three-tiered, structure of hardened mind-energy that constantly emits routine thoughts to maintain the homeostasis of its identity construct through time. It consists of a conscious level of subjectivity, and an unconscious cache of repressed thoughts, memory traces, axioms, phantasies, and other identificatory fixations. Between the conscious and the unconscious levels dwells the ego's central intelligence agency, that is responsible for maintaining defense mechanisms; enactment of drives in accordance with phantasy scenarios; superego judgments to maintain control over the conscious mind; constant deception of the conscious mind as to its true agenda; and the general direction of behavior, according to that hidden agenda.

But unbeknownst to the ego, the encompassing power of the soul leads one's life in directions that differ from the desires of the ego. The soul consists of what Jung called the archetypal intelligence of the Self, together with the power of compassion. The soul is still an individualized entity, but it operates from holocentric, rather than egocentric, principles. The soul slips its higher understandings and sublime feelings through the gaps in the ego, moments in which the censoring agency is off-guard. The soul expresses itself in dreams, in synchronicities, in spontaneous flow states, and in moments of grace that occur when the ego mind is too exhausted to ward off the inundation of blissful love.

But despite such moments, ego-consciousness remains confused and suspicious. How do I know that I am a soul? What does the term even mean? The soul, arriving at the destination of inner silence, recognizes itself as being just as illusory as the ego. The soul is a more subtle illusion, far more profound and serious, but it is finally only the vehicle of an even more vast, inconceivable Presence.

While on the journey toward ultimate Self-realization, the soul functions as a durable power that directs and impels the search toward the Absolute. Soul strengthens the conscious mind, facilitates the

exploration of the unknown inner reaches, the space of dreams, of phantasy, of inspiration, of archetypal representations, of all the multiple dissociated realms of consciousness clamoring for recognition. At the moment when the soul has completed its extraordinary journey, it recognizes itself as illusory, a work of the highest art, the creation of a far more sublime Creator. The soul then dissolves into Atman, or Pure Spirit.

Each piece of the psyche claims to be the whole, until it collides with a conflicting piece or encounters a more powerful intelligence, presence, and will to which it must submit. Yet all the pieces together do not make up a whole. The puzzle can never be completed at the level of the ego, or even of soul, simply because they both lack real Essence.

The denial of this fact is the illusory ego's *raison d'être*. Since it has no true center, but only a swarm of inner usurpers, in the form of superego voices and their programmatic psychic attacks, along with shards of infantile ego images, the ego is in constant chaos, at least at the unconscious levels of the mind—and it can easily break through into a conscious crisis. Each ego and superego fragment retains the holographic property of believing itself to be the 'I'. Brokering their conflicting demands is part of the function of the central censor. But it can only operate according to a rigid program of defending power and prestige, and protecting sources of security and objects of enjoyment. Sometimes, the conscious mind recognizes the illusory nature of its feelings, drives, and attitudes, but still it can rarely over-rule its primitive impulses.

The ego is normally saved from having to realize its weakness and the robotic nature of its pseudo-existence. It escapes self-understanding through willful ignorance and preoccupation with greed, hatred, and the other deadly sins that govern its libidinal economy. Only when all the egoic shards have been silenced is the film of the egoic imaginary finally pierced. Only then, when consciousness recognizes that its egoic identity is no substantial or authentic self, does that empty self-recognition realize the emptiness as the Self.

The ego flees from that recognition, since it feels it as annihilation. Indeed, the Self is void, an absence of objective being, a luminous emptiness that contains all. The Self's emptiness, when understood and accepted, morphs into rapture, an extraordinary kind of love that deserves the adjective 'divine'.

But to the ego, emptiness is the ultimate threat. The ego fears annihilation precisely because it is already non-existent, struggling to mask its pretense of reality from itself and everyone else. So the ego must be continually vigilant, always thinking, always aggressive, always

hating, always staying a step ahead of the others. To the ego, this is a cruel and dangerous world in which divine love is an illusion, and because of the ego's emotional fragility, one must reject the other before being rejected.

The ego complex believes it is the entity living your life, until one day its complexities cause it to crash. Its energies will burn out, its passions fade, and its reason for being will collapse in pointlessness and exhaustion. Then, if the ego has the honesty and clarity to surrender to its higher inner power, another more profound center of awareness, the soul, may take over from the censor, and purify the unconscious mind, while filling the conscious mind with what Buddha called *bodhicitta*, compassion and wisdom.

The soul then completes its inner journey to the Source. On reaching the eternal Light, the soul dies into the flame of the immortal Self, known to the ancient yogis as the Atman. The presence of the Atman—the unknown Real Self—emerges gradually within the soul, which intuitively surrenders. The soul makes an offering of all the lower chakras—the power drive, the sexual drive, and finally the security drive—and melts into ecstatic union with the supreme Light of God-consciousness.

There is yet another death still to come, the death of God into the Absolute. This has been called Mahakal, the Death of Death, the final annihilation of all distinction between God, Self, and Universe, and the return to the ultimate Source of Being.

Once the moment of destiny has arrived for the unfoldment of this extraordinary process, the soul—just like the salmon—diverts the ego out of its usual course of existence and incomprehensibly turns toward a strange inner river of Becoming and begins its apparently mad journey into the unknown dimension where completion, death, and fulfillment all wait.

The soul lives in a different dimension than the ego. The ego identifies with the body and thus with the family of the body, with the signature behaviors and personality traits of the biological family, and often with the place in which the body was born. But the soul has a different family, a different life span, and a very different intent. Once the soul is stimulated into activity, it begins to separate from all the known landmarks of the ego, to begin its fateful journey into the inner realms to find its hidden Source—the divine luminous point of pure and timeless awareness that resides as the Heart of all.

Many people have the experience of not being truly seen or understood by their biological family. One day, when the soul awakens, that family begins to appear like an assortment of strangers having no authentic relationship to one's real Being. One begins to separate, at

first internally, and then, perhaps, externally as well. The soul comes to connect with its Essence, triggering incredibly heightened aliveness. One opens both heart and mind to one's higher destiny and to the Supreme Love that radiates in its inmost core. This enables it to achieve ultimate fulfillment.

Some souls have to cross the planet on their search; others need only cross the street; while still others can make the inner pilgrimage in the comfort of their own home. This, too, is a matter of destiny. Some people make pilgrimages to Rome or Mecca, others to Jerusalem, Benares, or Lhasa, some to the Congo, Chichen Itza, or Macchu Pichu. Some find in those places what they are looking for, while others have to continue their search. And they may ultimately return to find the treasure was waiting for them all along in their own heart.

What is every soul searching for? The soul is magnetically drawn onward by the unquenchable thirst for its lost Essence—for nothing less than the full realization of God within. At that moment, just as the ego had to die into the soul, now the soul dies into the God-Self, the Atman. And finally, Atman merges into the Absolute. This is known as Jivan Mukti, or liberation-in-life.

The transformation process is no doubt already underway within you. It is useful to those who find themselves in the hands of the living God to understand the nature of the ego, the soul, Atman, and Brahman, the Absolute. Understanding the relationship of all these levels of our Being will facilitate the transition to the deepest level of Presence.

The ego is constructed over a period of years, an ongoing elaborate response to the traumas and demands of infancy and childhood. The soul grows over longer spans of time, often millenia, a durable vehicle that survives the passages between deaths and births, and functions as the psychic creator and container of the ego. The soul is not the Self, and from the perspective of ultimate reality, yes, it is but another illusion. But it is an illusion that we must pass through to gain final liberation.

The soul is constituted by the profound longing for return from the fragility and impermanence of time to the refuge of eternity—yet it keeps moving along the trajectory of linear time, gaining wisdom through the sowing and reaping of karma. Its very identity is woven of the karmic thread that connects all its past and future lives. When that thread comes to an end, when the desires of all those lifetimes of exile in the universe of spacetime, energy, mass, and mind have culminated at last in the exhaustion of its outward-aiming energies, then the soul, like the salmon, seeks its point of origin from which to die back into God in final liberation.

The soul knows when it must begin its journey home. The ego may think the idea is irrational, but it must at some point yield to the higher powers within. You would not be drawn to reading this, if you had not reached the point at which such knowledge/power is unfolding within you. There are probably mixed feelings, of course. But, no doubt, there is a longing for the release of creative energies to fulfill the spirit's ultimate desire. You are on the threshold of that miraculous moment.

Usually there are a number of false starts and dead ends. Until the soul fully separates from the ego, its true desire is always going to be distorted and foiled by the other-directed desires of the ego. The ego has a more limited agenda, a pale imitation of that of the soul. It wants the insignia of power, and more covertly, it seeks to return to the mother's womb and/or receive the father's symbolic phallus. But the ego can never fulfill that phantasy. Sexuality is a mirage. Neither orgasm nor romance can yield the holy grail of wholeness. Climbing the social hierarchy is a fool's game. The ego is doomed to disappointment.

The soul, however, can succeed in its search for a different kind of womb, the cosmic womb, and the phallus of God (in Sanskrit called the *Shiva Lingam*), the penetrating power of the infinite supernal Light. Only in the attainment of the blissful orgasm of ultimate mystical union can the soul at last dissolve. In the moment of its merging with the Light, the soul dies into its own concentrated nucleus of pure Spirit. And then a new kind of life begins.

Just as every salmon finds its own river, and then its own spawning point in that river, every soul must find its own way to salvation. Its moment of awakening and that of its ultimate liberation will be different for each one. For some souls, who were born only a short way up the river of time, the return journey may be easy. But for those who were spawned a long way up the river, the journey home is far more arduous and filled with great obstacles. A few souls were spawned near the very source of the river. They face the greatest difficulties and the greatest rewards.

For those rare souls, the journey will seem endless and will take them through every kind of non-ordinary experience, from the most sublime to the most terrifying, dangerous, and absurd, until the awful moment when the river seems to peter out into a tiny rivulet, and all seems utterly hopeless. At the moment of the deepest darkness of despair, they will at last encounter the spring that is the Source, the luminous loving presence of God. And they will recognize that they have arrived at their journey's end. Now is the season, within the long cycle of planetary time, for the attainment of the supreme goal—for all of us who have been on this long, strange trip.

We are awakening from a trance called history, from being lost in the mists of collective amnesia. For some, these words will provide a shock of recognition. We are returning Home.

PART ONE
Entering the Path

The Transformational Imperative

Like alcoholics at a twelve-step meeting, we must admit the truth: existence has become unmanageable for the human species. At every level, from individual emotional stability to couple and family relationships to global politics, life is in deadlock. There is no solution to our problems—or even the possibility to will a solution—so long as human consciousness remains at its current level of incomplete development. Our conflicted egocentric psychic economy, reflected in our sociopolitical conflicts, must be transcended. Our addiction to the drives and pleasures of the ego—to its nasty attributes like narcissism, greed, hatred, prejudice, aggression, deception, venality, and denial—is destroying our collective existence.

If we are going to survive, we must evolve rapidly to higher levels of consciousness. This has been the deepest yearning of humanity since the dawn of recorded time, the *raison d'être* of every religion, the message of every great prophet and sage in history. But now our time has run out. We cannot wait for some messiah or avatar or revolutionary movement or benign extraterrestrials or any other form of utopian Other to accomplish the redemption for us. We must do the work of inner transformation ourselves—and do it immediately.

The transformation of consciousness has become THE existential imperative. We either transform now or succumb to extinction. Whether we succeed or fail as an evolutionary experiment will be determined by us, the set of presently existing human beings. And the transformation required can only be achieved one human being at a time. It cannot be mass-produced, although we can accelerate the process by creating a planetary culture that supports this achievement. But someone must go first. We ourselves, each of us who become aware of the imperative, must become role models of the attainment of that supreme ideal.

Each of us must take responsibility for our own inner development—for achieving ego death, followed by sacred rebirth as manifestations of the one Cosmic Self. Out of the illusion that we are many, we must realize we are one—this is the real meaning of the credo on the U.S. dollar bill: *E Pluribus Unum*. What is necessary is not an egoic parody of unity, in the form of submission to empire, or empty new-age nostrums that mask the persistence of infantile ego-systems, but the authentic oneness of the Divine Presence, made possible through rigorous disciplines of self-transformation, meditation, and radical paradigm shift.

It is an ethical imperative that we make the project of self-transformation the top item on our life's agenda. Without the attainment of sacred rebirth into our highest and most genuine potential Selfhood, all else is in vain. We owe such a metamorphosis to our loved ones, to our ancestors and our descendants—but most of all, we owe it to our Self, to the Source of our existence, to the supreme power and intelligence that has created us all.

It is not only a moral but a psychological imperative that we transform now. Unless we do, the dark shadow forces in our psyche will wreak havoc with our emotional stability, if they are not doing so already. As the collective psychic energies on the planet become more chaotic and pathological, the waves of anxiety, paranoia, and despair threaten to overwhelm us. The unshakeable peace and serenity of our inmost Being is our only refuge in such a time. To reach the sheltering energies of the One—our immanent/transcendent God-Self—the ego must first be transfigured, made transparent to the supernal Light that shines from our inner depths.

It can even be said that transformation is a political imperative. Both left and right wing movements have in the past century brought about horrors of mass murder and enslavement. Without a transformation of consciousness, there is no way to overcome systemic corruption, scapegoating, and power-madness. Unfortunately, the left has jumped to the wrong conclusions from Marxist and postmodern insights into the class, gender, race, and other identity conflicts that lie behind the fraying façade of unity characterizing contemporary societies. But political revolution, even were it possible, would not lead to a transformation of consciousness. The same egoic forces win every political battle. The ego itself must be conquered—no other sort of revolution will suffice.

The egoic multitudes that populate today's empires can never attain unity or harmony so long as they remain in the trance of false consciousness. Aggression, deceit, and projection are inherent to the ego. As frustration increases, the paranoid collective ego is prone to psychotic lashing-out as well as suicidal collapse. This is why ever more authoritarian regimes are being imposed, and human rights gradually eliminated. No empire can maintain hegemony for long over the sectarian hordes that are overrunning one failed state after another.

But it should not be overlooked that the ego is inherently schismogenetic. Schisms will eventually break apart every movement, every group, and every governing coalition. Not even spiritual groups are immune to this tendency of egocentric behavior. Only transcendence of the ego can make durable unity possible. There can be no long-term cohesion even within the most rigid sects unless such

a revolutionary psycho-spiritual development takes place. Eventually, as Hobbes predicted, egos will be in a state of total war of all against all. Spiritual transformation is imperative because it alone can create a new political event horizon. It alone has the power to potentiate the creative energies that can stimulate a global cultural renaissance.

The current perilous biopolitical situation of human beings is a blessing in disguise. It forces us to do what we would otherwise leave to future generations. But there will be no future human lifetimes on this planet if we do not act now to change the course of our destiny from our present suicidal trajectory toward one that is realigned with the power of love and truth. The current situation also makes clear that real power is not in the hands of the political elites any longer. As the world's political systems devolve, their breakdown is leaving a vacuum. The legitimacy of the old order, the established identificatory alignments, including extended families and religious organizations, is dissolving in dysfunction, in scandal and hypocrisy, in empty ritual and irrelevance.

Many people, unable to contemplate the dizzying possibilities of this period of kaleidoscopic change, remain stunted and stifled in their futile enmeshments with obsolete signifiers of identity and status. The majority has chosen denial as a way of avoiding the anxiety of radical uncertainty. Others have entered a period of spiritual nomadism. They are wandering through a desert of meaningless social activity, or else have embarked upon a determined search for higher understanding, seeking a Star to lead them to a new Bethlehem—some to a manger where they themselves can be reborn as avatars. Some seek new fountains of truth and genuine love. They seek to align themselves with those who display the signs of true worthiness: egoless wisdom, incorruptibility, dispassion, universal love, purity of mind and life, unshakeable inner peace and serenity.

The problem is: life has a long learning curve. Everyone on a spiritual path is growing, aspiring toward the absolute of human perfection, but few have reached it. We stumble on the way, and sometimes we fall. And those we look up to will also fall, from time to time. This recognition of frailty in ourselves and even in our teachers and guides must always keep us humble in our attitude toward others, not judgmental or vengeful, but always forgiving.

Our loyalty to God grows as we learn, and gradually we renounce our temptations as we find the balm of acceptance and healing in God's grace. Because we cannot wait for perfect individuals to appear, we must take the risk to sculpt our own perfection, and to go as far as possible using conscience as our compass, serenity as our barometer, and the wisdom of great sages as our inspiration.

When we meet someone who can take us further on our journey, who can open our eyes to deeper truths and more universal love, we ought not refuse the opportunity to grow. We must gain genuine autonomy, discernment, and inner union with the One Light.

Working through the egoic distortions of our thought processes, fomented by unconscious anxieties, is an extremely difficult undertaking. It is the Great Work, as the alchemists have said, but it must be approached with reverence and trepidation. It is like walking a razor's edge. To have any chance of succeeding, we must learn the art of meekness, yet boldly wield the dagger of Truth.

As Christ has taught us, the meek shall inherit the earth. Communities of those dedicated to the ideal of meekness (a word that derives from Sanskrit via Latin, *mansuetudo*, meaning one whose true Self, *swa*, has conquered his egoic mind, *manas*) are now forming, guided by those with sufficient integrity and equanimity to have transcended at least most of the lower egoic identifications, and who support one another in achieving ever higher development of goodness and spiritual power. They are learning to work together to overcome psychic barriers to developing fearless, truth-seeking, compassionate, holocentric, narcissism-free relationships. Such communities, learning to live in harmony once again with Nature, developing sustainable ecological modes of production and consumption—if they can also maintain ethical and ego-transcendent modes of conscious interbeing—are destined to prosper and provide models for the next age of humanity.

It is imperative that we ourselves become such beings of simplicity and wise living, of pure faith and divine power, not simply worshippers of one or another being who achieved that goal in the past. It is the only way to survive and benefit from this time of troubles, and to be a blessing to others.

We must become Buddhas, not merely Buddhists. We must be avatars of Vishnu and Shiva, not merely Hindus who worship them. We must be Christed, not be content with remaining mere believing Christians. We must become prophets of Allah, not mere proselytizers. We must alchemically transform, not just be scholars of alchemy.

We must metabolize the highest human psycho-spiritual potentials that lie dormant within us, not simply preach or philosophize about that possibility. Our surrender to God must be complete, not mere lip service. Let us use all the tools and insights of every religion, every philosophy, every science, every school of psychoanalysis and therapy to attain this goal. It is necessary to overcome our limited identification with any single religion or ideology and open to receive

the wisdom of our entire human heritage of intellectual and spiritual development. We need all the help we can get.

Today, as never before, the physical sciences also converge on the emergent unifying spiritual paradigm to offer support and crucial insights into the processes of transformation and transcendence. Science in past centuries led human consciousness away from the chains of religion. But that was religion that had fallen into degraded and dogmatic misunderstanding of its own mythologically-coded information streams.

Today, every field of science has been revolutionized by the recognition of the necessity to factor in the reality of consciousness. In physics, the most recent mindbending theoretical breakthroughs—mindbending from the Newtonian perspective, but commonplace to realized yogis—in quantum physics and cosmology, yielding such concepts as higher dimensions and parallel universes, relativity, wormholes and time travel, and most importantly, of the fundamental place of consciousness in the constitution of reality—have served to re-legitimize the metaphysics of the Yogis of ancient India.

The same metaphysical insights are at the core of every esoteric tradition, continually reaffirmed by prophets, mystics, and sages of all religions. New understandings in evolutionary biology supporting the concept of intelligent design have even destabilized the neo-darwinian dogma that has limited the scientific imagination to a flattened reductionistic account of reality. The dead-end of materialism is being overcome in minds that had been ideologically hammered into submission for centuries. A renaissance of scientific spirituality is taking place, one that no longer needs to hide in the corners or apologize for its failure to accept the death of God.

Science is re-energizing the spiritual quest. Psychology is helping even more. The overthrow of the old behavioral paradigm that denied the existence or relevance of consciousness has brought the vastness of the unconscious and superconscious realms back into theoretical play in the therapeutic culture wars.

Great efforts are underway to integrate psychoanalysis with the insights of Buddhism and Advaita. Jungian analysis, archetypal and transpersonal psychology movements are all advancing, capturing the hungry imagination of new graduates in the field. Lacanian analysis has triumphed in many of the world's psychoanalytic communities, an approach that unmasks the illusory nature of the ego, and leads to "benign depersonalization," a concept compatible with the nondualist teachings of Eastern spiritual paths. Sullivanian analysis and post-Kohutian approaches are coming to similar understandings.

European poststructural philosophy, extending the work of such thinkers as Husserl, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze has also taken a spiritual turn, recharging the field of non-dualist theology. Dazzling thinkers such as Kitaro Nishida, Shinichi Hisamatsu, Keiji Nishitani, and Masao Abe, of the Kyoto School of Zen philosophy, have forged an elegant rapprochement between Buddhism and Western theology and philosophy. God, no longer reduced to an anthropomorphic Other, but now in the formless form of Absolute Nothingness, the unknowable yet immediately present truth of our intelligent self-aware universe, is making a comeback.

We must, of course, ensure that the transformational urge does not become re-appropriated by egoic religion. Sat Yoga is not a religion but a secular set of experimental psycho-spiritual practices. These are protected by ethical parameters that ensure that the results do not become contaminated or misused by the ego. The secular nature of Yoga has led to its adoption as a psycho-technology by all the religions of the East. Meditative practice transcends all possible discursive paradigms. Thus, there are literatures of Shaivite yoga, Vaishnavite yoga, Advaita yoga, Buddhist yoga, and Taoist yoga, to name but a few.

Unfortunately, in the West, the signifier “yoga” has in recent years come popularly to refer to a recent elaboration of one of its preliminary practices, that of *asanas*, the well-known physical stretching and balancing postures, rather than the true aim of yoga, the achievement of *samadhi*—which is the state of pure awareness in which all thought-constructs and other mental noise have been eliminated.

The physical practice of *asanas* played only a small role in the preparatory transformational activities of the original Yogis. Read even a late text like the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and you will find little reference to *asanas*. The point of *asana* practice was simply to learn to sit comfortably in order to be able to meditate for long periods without moving. The Yoga Sutras are dedicated to the attainment of *samadhi* and the attendant *siddhis*, the psycho-spiritual powers that come along with advanced mental development.

Today’s stunted understanding of Yoga as a form of physical exercise is a symptom of the narcissistic degradation and materialism that have contaminated even the most profound spiritual traditions. The emphasis on physical prowess has led to the unfortunate spectacle of exhibitionistic hatha yogis more proud of their ability to stand on their head than to overturn their ego.

The goal of Sat Yoga is nothing less than the transformation and transcendence of ego-consciousness. Through its practices, we can

learn to live in the supramental levels of our Being. Sat Yoga carries forward the work of many modern sages, including Sri Aurobindo, whose integral yoga aims at the downloading of the Supermind into our individual consciousness. The main difference between Sri Aurobindo's effort and our own is that Sat Yoga imports the clinical wisdom gained in the West through a century of psychoanalytic exploration into the praxis of transformation. By applying such skills as symptom and dream analysis in one-to-one atmanology sessions of free associative self-inquiry, while being held in the safety of a positive pranic energy field, yielding the gradual understanding of drives based on subconscious phantasy structures, and promoting a revitalization of cellular energies, the process of transformation is greatly accelerated.

The term *Sat Yoga* means union with our essential noumenal Being. This use of the term Being refers to what is more appropriately called the Ground of Being. It is the fundament of Being that is beyond the dualities of being and non-being, the ultimate Real that no words can adequately explain or describe. Therefore, we sometimes also refer to It as our Supreme Being.

In other words, Sat Yoga is the disciplined practice of living egolessly. Meditation is the core activity of Sat Yoga. Serious practitioners make the time to sit regularly for about an hour at a time twice a day, in addition to occasional retreats in which we sit for eight or ten hours daily, in a state of mental silence, with our whole attention centered on the Self within. Eventually, the tendency to produce egoic thought constructs subsides and the Self emerges in fullness. Our transpersonal identity reveals itself as timeless presence, serenity, love, clarity, wisdom, luminosity, and all-embracing emptiness.

To achieve the ultimate transfiguration, the ego must first be purified. Three overarching vows prove useful: commitment to a simple lifestyle that supports transformation; continual analysis of one's ego dynamics; and daily engagement in benevolent actions that inspire others to bring out the best that is in them. Transubstantiating the ego is the best gift we can offer to humanity.

Human psychological transformation is imperative. Let us quickly do our own inner work and then help as many others as possible. Self-realization is not a luxury for the upper classes. It is the only means of liberation for all beings everywhere. It is also the ultimate adventure. Here is a cause that can be the vehicle of endless creativity, insight, and delight.

To open the heart to the awesome energies of divine love is the sweetest bliss. To live in virtue and nobility of spirit is the most profound satisfaction. To dwell in ceaseless mindful union with the Absolute is an incomparable rapture. Transformation is imperative. It is

also our destiny, our timeless *telos* in this cosmic play that is the sport of the Supreme Intelligence. There is a profound urge within us all to realize our oneness with the Creator, the Dreamer of this strange and wondrous dream that is the universe. This urge will manifest spontaneously at some moment. But we can accelerate that occurrence by our efforts to achieve Self-realization. Let us, therefore, enter courageously into the unknown Presence that is the Self, assent to the ascent, the advent of the great adventure: our conscious transformation into the full manifestation of who and what we already are eternally—we have nothing to lose but our suffering.



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