



## ABOUT SWAMI

## ABHAYANANDA

I was born Stanley Ross Trout on August 14, 1938, in Indianapolis, Indiana. In 1966, at the age of twenty-eight, I was graced by God, and experienced the unitive vision. A few years later, I met a holy man called Swami Muktananda, and I journeyed to India to live with him and to learn from him. After some time, he invited me to join the spiritual Order of *sannyasa*, and gave me the name "Swami Abhayananda", which means 'the bliss of fearlessness.' I have kept that spiritual name ever since, though I eventually parted with Swami Muktananda and his organization.

I do not belong to any church or to any religion, but I do belong to that select group of people who have experienced God directly, and I stand as an unyielding bulwark against the current cultural trend toward an atheistic worldview. God is very certainly real. God is, in fact, the only reality. Since He first revealed Himself in me, my focus has been on God and His revelation, and my writings are

simply a means of sharing that revelation. I am not hindered by organizational ties or religious affiliation, as my vision and my philosophy is based on my own personal mystical experience, and is not restricted to any of the mystical traditions of either the East or the West. Today, I live a simple, solitary life, devoted to meditation on God and the sharing of His revelation.

Thursday, November 18, 2021, marks the fifty-fifth anniversary of God's revelation to me. I am not the first to be so graced and I will not be the last. What He revealed to me I have passed on to you. Whether you accept this revelation and make this knowledge your own is totally up to you. Nevertheless, it is my earnest hope that this revelation will inspire you to seek to know Him in yourself and for yourself. I can tell you that He helps and guides those who trust in His presence, and He rewards those who make the effort to reach Him. May He bless you every one.

Swami Abhayananda

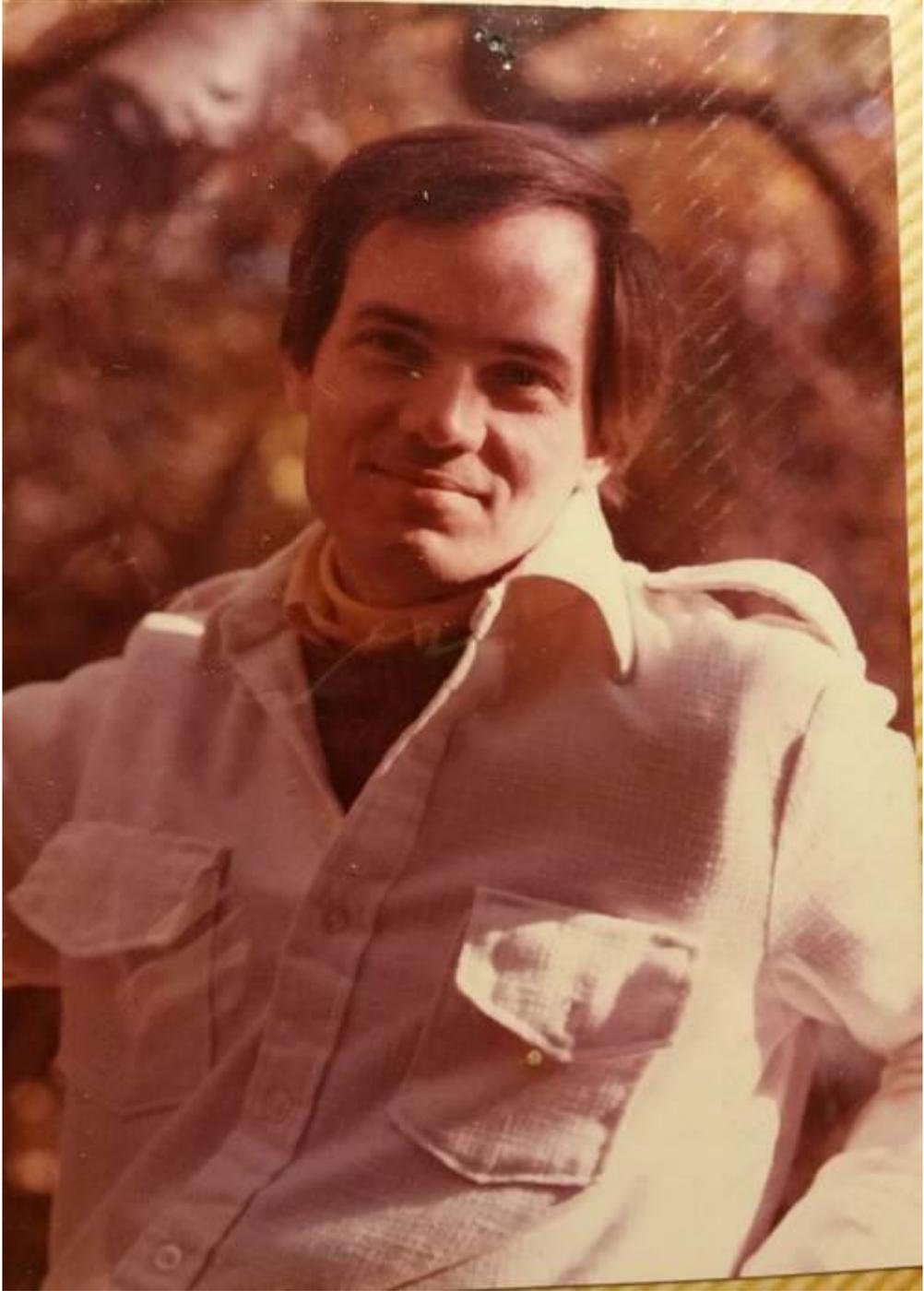
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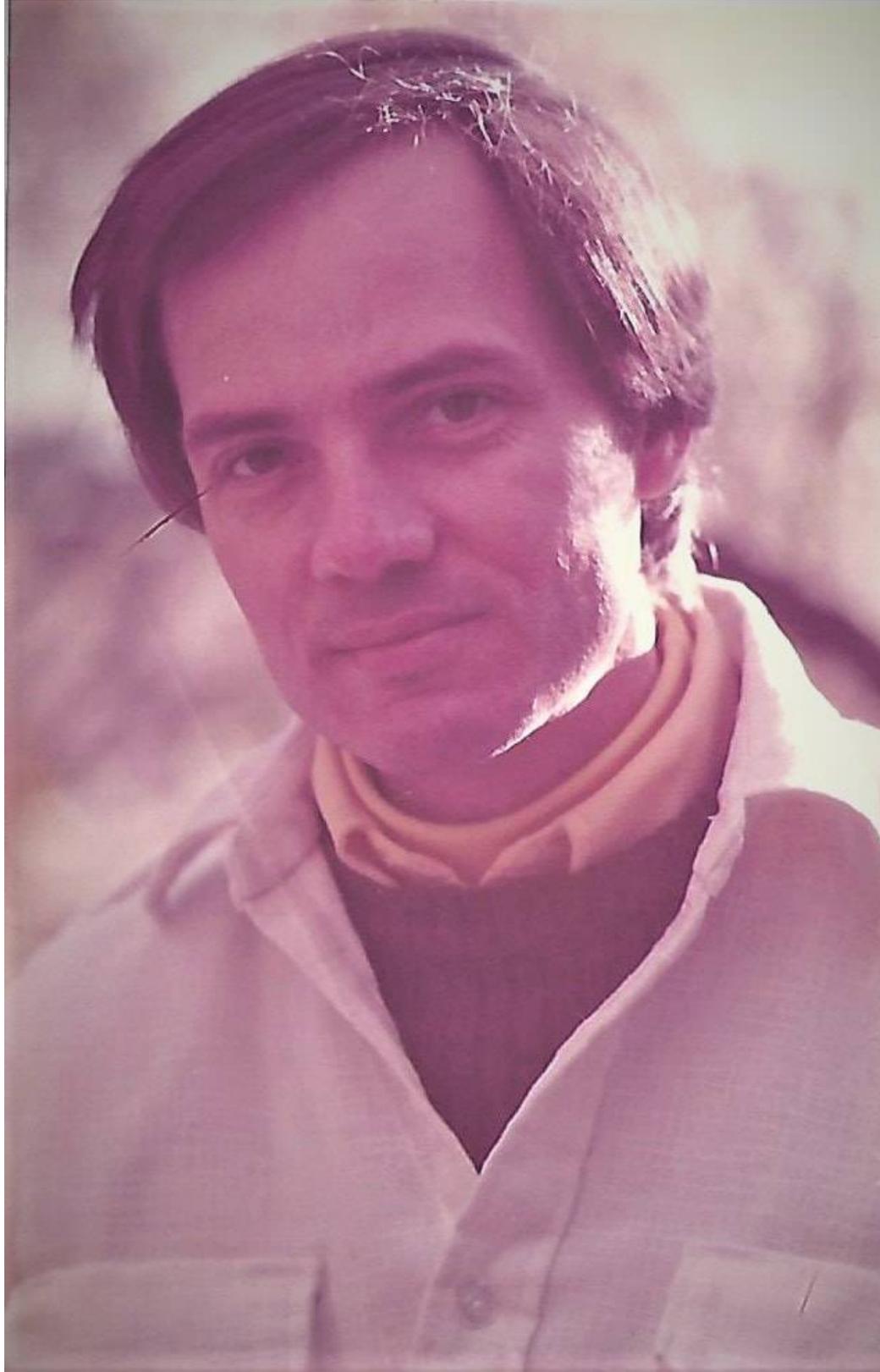
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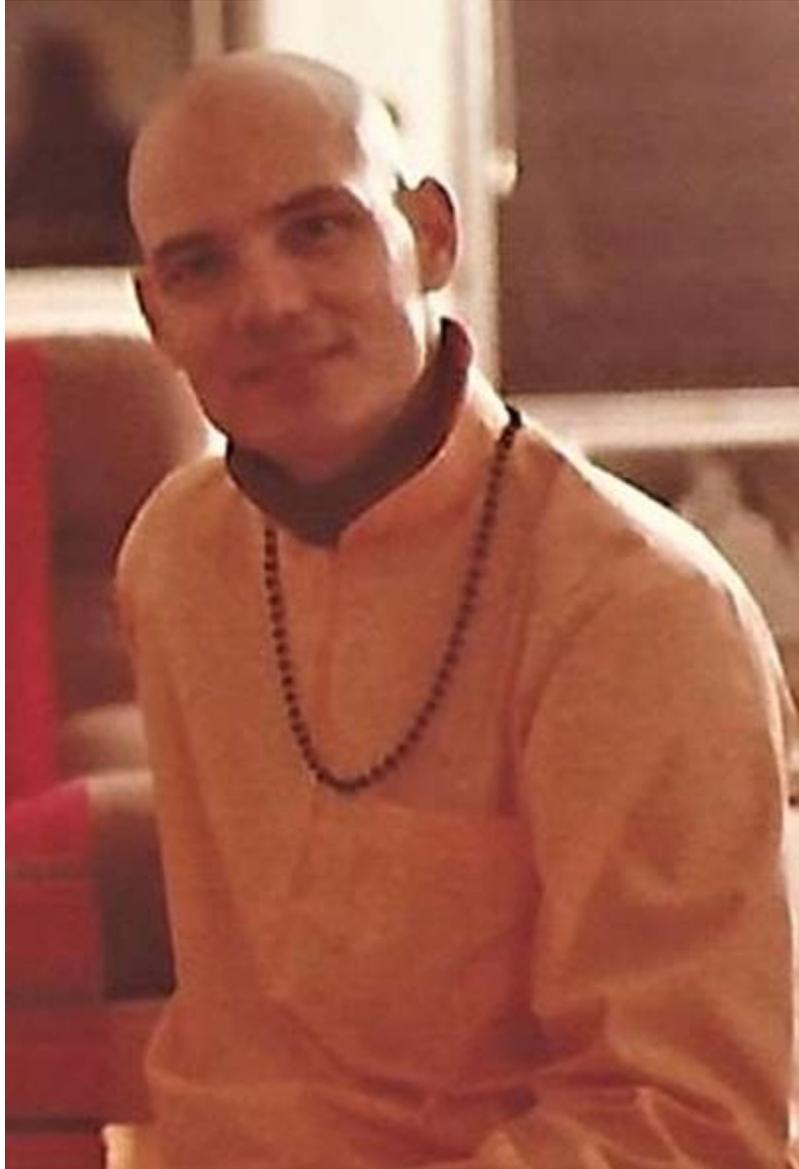
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Oakland, California, 1977



Oakland, California, 1977



New York, New York, 1978



Florida, 2012

## MY EXPERIENCE OF GOD

I was twenty-eight when I first pledged my life to God, saying:

**Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.  
I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.  
I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless;  
Nor shall I frighten any,  
For Love comes sweetly and meek.  
I shall keep no violence within me,  
Neither in thought nor in deed,  
For Love comes peacefully.**

**I shall bear no shield or sword,  
For the defense of Love is love.  
I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men,  
For love seeks Thee always.  
I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,  
And lift to them Thy countenance,  
For all are powerless before Thee.**

**I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,  
Lest Thy light be extinguished by the winds;  
For without Thy light, I am in darkness.  
I shall go free in the world with Thee--**

**Free of all bondage to anything but Thee;  
For Thou art my God, the sole Father of my being,  
The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart;  
And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,  
And lean on Thee till the end of my days.**

Later in that same year, while I was living in an isolated little cabin in California's Santa Cruz mountains, I prayed to God: "Let me be one with Thee, not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children." In that very moment I experienced union with God. And at the same time that this unitive experience was occurring, I was able to set down on paper what I was experiencing. As I became uplifted to union with God, my vision became His vision, my voice became *His* voice, *I* and *Thou* became indistinguishable. Here is my account of what was written at that time:

*November 18, 1966:*

All day long the rain had been dripping outside my cabin window. And now the silent night hovered around me. I sat motionless, watching the dying coals in the stove. "Hari!" my mind called in the

wakeful silence of my interior. During the whole day, I had felt my piteous plight so sorrowfully, so maddeningly; “Dear Lord, all I want is to die in Thee,” I cried within myself. “I have nothing, no desire, no pleasure in this life—but in Thee. Won’t you come and take this worthless scrap, this feeble worm of a soul, back into Thyself!”

“O Father,” I cried, “listen to my prayer! I am Thine alone. Do come and take me into Thy heart. I have no other goal, but Thee and Thee alone.”

Then I became very quiet. I sat emptied, but very awake, listening to God’s silence. I balanced gingerly, quakingly, on the still clarity of nothingness. I became aware that I was scarcely breathing. My breath was very shallow, nearly imperceptible—close to the balance point, where it would become non-existent. And my eyes peered into the darkness with a wide-eyed intensity that amazed me. I knew my pupils must be very large. I felt on the brink of a meeting with absolute clearness of mind. I hovered there, waiting. And then, from somewhere in me, from a place deeper than I even knew existed, a prayer came forth that, I sensed, must have been installed in my heart at the moment of my soul-birth in the mind of God: “Dear God, let

me be one with Thee, not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children.”

It was then, in that very moment, that the veil fell away. Something in me changed. Suddenly I *knew*; I experienced infinite Unity. And I thought, “Of course; it’s been me all the time! Who else could I possibly be!” I lit a candle, and by the light of the flickering flame, while seated at the card table in my little cabin, I transmitted to paper what I was experiencing in eternity. Here is the “Song” that was written during that experience (the commentaries in parentheses which follow each verse were added later):

**O my God, even this body is Thine own!**

*(Suddenly I knew that this entity which I call my body was God’s own, was not separate from God, but was part of the continuous ocean of Consciousness; and I exclaimed in my heart, “O my God, even this body is Thine own!” There was no longer any me distinct from that one Consciousness; for that illusion was now dispelled.)*

**Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,**

**Even I who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters--**

**Even I am Thine own.**

*(Heretofore, I had called to God in the chaos of a multitude of thoughts, a multitude of voices and motions of mind—the very chaos of hell. And in my calling, I was as though standing apart from God; I felt myself to be an unclean pitcher immersed in the ocean of God, dividing the waters within from the water without. Though God was in me and God was without, there had still remained this illusion of ‘me’. But now the idea of a separating ‘ego’ was gone. And I was aware that I—this whole conglomerate of body, mind, consciousness, which I call “I”—am none else but that One, and belong to that One, besides whom there is nothing.)*

**Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?**

*(A wave is only a form that arises out of the ocean and is nothing but ocean. In the same way, my form was as a wave of pure Consciousness, of pure God. How had I imagined it to be something else? And yet it was that very ignorance that had previously prevented me from seeing the truth.)*

## **Do the mountains and the gulfs cease to be of the earth?**

*(Mountains and valleys in relation to the earth, like waves in relation to the ocean, seem to have an independent existence, an independent identity; yet they are only irregularities, diverse forms, of the earth itself.)*

## **Or does a pebble cease to be stone?**

*(A pebble is, of course, nothing but stone—just as I now realized in growing clarity that I was none else but the one 'stuff' of Existence. Even though I seemed to be a unique entity separate from the rest of the universe, I was really a piece of the universal Reality, as a pebble is really a piece of stone.)*

## **How can I escape Thee?**

**Thou art even That which thinks of escape!**

*(Thought too is a wave on the ocean of God. The thought of separation—can that be anything but God? The very tiniest motion of the mind is like the leaping of the waves on the ocean of Consciousness, and the fear of leaping clear of the ocean is a vain one for the wave. That which thinks of separation is that very Consciousness from which there can never ever be any*

*separation. That One contains everything within It. So, what else could I, the thinker, be?)*

**Even now, I speak the word, "Thou," and create duality.**

*(Here, now, as I write, as I think of God and speak to Him as "Thou," I am creating a duality between myself and God where no duality exists in truth. It is the creation of the mind. Having habituated itself to separation, the mind creates an "I" and a "Thou," and thus experiences duality.)*

**I love and create hatred.**

*(Just as for every peak there's a valley, so the thought of love that arises in the mind has, as its valley, as its opposite, hatred. The impulse of the one creates the other, as the creation of a north pole automatically creates a south pole, or as "beauty" necessitates "ugliness," or as "up" brings along with it "down," or as "ahead" gives birth to "behind." The nature of the mind is such that it creates a world of duality where only the One actually is.)*

**I am in peace and am fashioning chaos.**

*(The very nature of God's phenomenal creation is also dual; His cosmic creation alternates from dormant to dynamic, while He, Himself, remains forever unchanging. In the same way, while our consciousness remains unmoved, the mind is in constant alternation. For example, when it is stilled, it is like a spring compressed, representing potential dynamic release. The mind's peace, therefore, is itself the very mother of its activity.)*

**Standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.**

*(Just as the peak of the wave necessitates the trough of the wave [since you can't have one without the other], wakefulness necessitates sleep, good necessitates its opposite. Exultation in joy is paid for with despair; they are an inseparable pair.)*

**But now, weeping and laughing are gone.  
Night is become day.**

*(But now I am experiencing the transcendent "stillness" of the One, where this alternation, this duality, of which creation is made, is no more. It is a clear awareness that all opposites are derived from the same ONE and are therefore dissolved. Laughing and its opposite, weeping, are the peak and the trough which have become leveled*

*in the stillness of the calmed ocean, the rippleless surface of the waters of Consciousness. Night and day have no meaning here: All is eternity.)*

**Music and silence are heard as one.**

*(Sound, silence—both are contained in the eternal Consciousness which cannot be called silent, which cannot be called sound; It produces all sounds, yet, as their source, It is silence. Both are united in the One of which they consist.)*

**My ears are all the universe.**

*(There is only Me. Even the listening is Me.)*

**All motion has ceased,  
Everything continues.**

*(The activity of the universe does not exist for Me, yet everything is still in motion as before. It is only that I am beyond both motion and non-motion. For I am the Whole; all motion is contained in Me, yet I Myself am unmoving.)*

**Life and death no longer stand apart.**

*(From where I am, the life and death of individual beings is less than a dream—so swiftly generations rise and fall, rise and fall! Whole eons of creation pass like a dream in an instant. Where then are life and death? How do they differ? They too are but an artificial duality that is resolved in the One timeless Self.)*

**No I, no Thou;  
No now, or then.**

*(There is no longer a reference “I” that refers to a separate individual entity; there is no longer anything separate to refer to as “Thou.” This one knowing Consciousness, which is I, is all that exists or ever existed. Likewise, there is no “now” or “then”, for time pertains only to the dream and has no meaning here beyond all manifestation.)*

**Unless I move, there is no stillness.**

*(Stillness, too, is but a part of duality, bringing into existence motion. Motion and stillness, the ever-recurring change, are the dream constituents in the dream of duality! Stillness without motion cannot be. Where I am, neither of these exists.)*

**Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish.**

*(Lament? In the pure sky of infinity, who is there to lament? What is there to doubt? Where there is no other, but only this One, what error or obstacle could there be? What is there to stand in the way of infinity? What is there other than Me?)*

**Nothing to pride oneself on--  
All is accomplished in an instant.**

*(Pride belongs only to man, that tiny doll, that figment of imagination who, engrossed in the challenge of conflict with other men, prides himself on his petty accomplishments. Here, whole universes are created in an instant and destroyed, and everything that is accomplished is accomplished by the One. Where, then, is pride?)*

**All may now be told without effort.**

*(Here am I, with a view to the Eternal, and my hand writing in the world of creation, in the world of men. What a wonderful opportunity to tell all to eager humanity! Everything is known without the least effort. Let me tell it, let me share it, let me reveal it!)*

## **Where is there a question?**

*(But see! Where everything is very simply and obviously Myself, what question could there be? Here, the possibility of a question cannot arise. Who could imagine a more humorous situation?)*

## **Where is the temple?**

*(What about explaining the secrets of the soul, and how it is encased in that temple of God called 'the body?' That secret does not exist; for, when all is seen and experienced as one Being, where is that which may be regarded as the receptacle, the temple?)*

## **Which the Imperishable?**

## **Which the abode?**

*(Which may I call the imperishable God, the Eternal? And which may I call the vessel in which God exists and lives? Consciousness does not perish. The Energy of which this body consists does not perish. All is eternal; there is no differentiation here.)*

**I am the pulse of the turtle.**

**I am the clanging bells of joy.**

*(I am everywhere! I am life! I am the very heartbeat of even the lowliest of creatures. It is I who surge in the heart as joy, as surging joy like the ecstatic abandonment of clanging bells.)*

**I bring the dust of blindness.**

**I am the fire of song.**

*(I am the cause of man's ignorance of Me, yet it is I who leap in his breast as the exultation of song.)*

**I am in the clouds, and I am in the gritty soil.**

**In pools of clear water my image is found.**

(I am that billowing beauty in the sky; I play in all these forms! And the gritty soil which produces the verdure of the earth—I am that soil, that black dirt. I am every tiny pebble of grit, cool and moist. And when, as man, I lean over the water, I discover My image, and see Myself shining in My own eyes.

**I am the dust on the feet of the wretched,**

**The toothless beggars of every land.**

*(I live in the dust that covers the calloused feet of those thin, ragged holy men who grin happily at you as you pass them by.)*

**I have given sweets that decay to those who crave them.**

**I have given my wealth unto the poor and lonely.**

*(Each of my manifestations, according to their understanding, receives whatever they wish of the transitory pleasures of the world; but the wealth of My peace, My freedom, My joy, I give to those who seek no other wealth, who seek no other joy, but Me.)*

**My hands are open—nothing is concealed.**

*(I have displayed all My wealth; according to his evolution, his wisdom, each chooses what he will have in this life.)*

**All things move together of one accord.**

**Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.**

*(All is one concerted whole; everything works together, down to the tiniest detail, in the flower-like unfoldment of this world. All is the doing of the One.)*

**The Sun stirs the waters of My heart,**

**And the vapor of My love flies to the four corners of**

**the world.**

*(Like a thousand-rayed sunburst of joy, My love showers forth as the universe of stars and planets and men. And then, this day of manifestation gives way to the night of dissolution ...)*

**The Moon stills Me, and the cold darkness is My bed.**

*(And the universe withdraws into My utter darkness of stillness and rest.)*

**I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged,  
And set in order once again.**

*(The expansion and contraction of this entire universe is merely an out-breath and an in-breath; a mere sigh.)*

**A million worlds begin and end in every breath,**

*(And, flung out into the endless reaches of infinity, worlds upon worlds evolve, enact their tumultuous dramas, and then withdraw from the stage once more. This cycle repeats itself again and again; the universe explodes from a single mass, expands as gas, and elements form. Eventually they become living*

*organisms, which evolve into intelligent creatures, culminating in man. And one by one each learns the secret that puts an end to their game. And again, the stars reach the fullness of their course; again, everything is drawn back to its source....)*

**And, in this breathing, all things are sustained.**

\* \* \*

After this, I collapsed in bed, exhausted by the sheer strain of holding my mind on so keen an edge. When I awoke, it was morning. Immediately, I recalled the experience of the night before, and arose. I went outside to the sunlight, dazed and disoriented. I bent, and took up a handful of gravel, letting it slip slowly through my fingers. "I am in this?" I asked dumbfoundedly.

I felt as though I had been thrust back into a dream from which I had no power to awaken. My only thought was to return to that state I had known the night before. I rushed up the twisted road and scrambled up the hill to the cliff on top of the world, above the forest and ocean, where I had often conversed with God; and I sat there, out of breath, praying, with tears running down my cheeks, for

Him to take me back into Himself. Before long, a chill blanket of gray fog, which had risen up from the ocean below, swept over me, engulfing me in a misty cloud. And after a few moments, I reluctantly went back, down the mountain.

*The above description was excerpted from my book, The Supreme Self, where you may read more about the conditions and circumstances of this rare experience. This book is available for reading or downloading at this website along with a shortened version which may be found in my Article, "My Mystical Experience."*

*The various books and articles that I have written since that night of revelation are my ongoing attempt to explain for you what I experienced on that amazing night. All my books and articles available on this website were written in praise of God and to His glory for the purpose of benefitting you, His children.*

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## **A GIFT TO BE SHARED**

(from my Article, "About Mystical Experience")

We all realize that we possess a perspective on the world that is entirely self-centered. Each of us is the center of our own world, the subjective focal point round which everything else turns. My experience is different from your experience; yours is different from mine. And, while we can verbally share our experiences and our perspectives with one another, if those experiences and perspectives are not *personally* acquired, they remain mere hearsay, and do not have the same affect on us as *personal* experiences.

Despite this acknowledged incommunicability of personal experiences, I have spent a good portion of my life attempting to convey to others some sense of an experience of my own that I feel has some real importance for everyone, and therefore needs to be communicated.<sup>1</sup> It is an experience that occurred to me more than fifty years ago, and yet it is a timeless one, in that it was an experience of eternity itself. Strangely enough, I had vowed to God to give pronouncement to this experience even before it was given to me: "Let me be one with Thee," I prayed, "not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory, for the

benefit of all Thy children." I can only explain the uncharacteristic selflessness of this prayer as being itself the work of God. And, of course, since God granted my request, you can well understand that I am not only obligated but am resolutely committed to praising God in His glory for your benefit, and for the benefit of everyone.

When Jesus first described the mystical experience that occurred in him during a baptism ceremony on the banks of the Jordan river, the term, "mystical experience" had not yet been coined. Today, it is a commonly recognized term, and yet the experience it connotes is still not yet fully understood. This is because it is an experience not of the body or the mind, but of the soul, and it is described by those who have experience it in various ways, according to the intensity or profundity of each individual's experience.

In the early twentieth century, William James pointed out in his book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, that religious or mystical experience occurs in a myriad of ways, as though on a spectrum, from a vague and momentary sense of God's love filling the universe to a complete immersion in the Divine, in which one experiences their separate

identity to be merged in and made one with the universal Spirit. Each instance of mystical experience has its own unique characteristics, and each experiencer appears to be absorbed in the Divine Light to a greater or lesser degree. For some, it is but a momentary mood or fleeting awareness, and for some others it is a prolonged period of a life-transforming 'union' with God, and the awareness of "oneness" with the Father of all Creation.

I am well aware that it is as true today as it was in the time of Jesus and the time of Plotinus that the great majority of the people are ignorant of the existence of such mystical experience. Despite the many learned studies and the many available accounts of mystical experience by well-reputed people throughout the ages, the majority of the people remain as ignorant as before. Why is this so? It is so because the people comprising the ignorant majority do not have personal knowledge of mystical experience in their own lives and are therefore extremely reluctant to believe that such experiences have occurred to others or that they are relevant to their own lives.

I understand this well, as I was once a member of that ignorant majority. And yet, today, I would say to

that majority: the very fact that a few souls have experienced divine revelations *does* have a major relevance to your own lives. Mystical experience is a revelation of the nature of the reality in which all of us live. It is as relevant to you as it is to those who are the direct recipients of that experience.

If God were only going to reveal Himself to one or two people each century, clearly, it would be a very ineffective campaign of Self-revelation. Therefore, those, like me, to whom He has revealed Himself, are empowered to share their divinely acquired knowledge with everyone else. But what God reveals in an instant with an inner revelation, I can only reveal with words—tediously slow and cumbersome words. So, please be patient with me and you will be abundantly rewarded.

God's gracious gift to me of mystical vision was undoubtedly meant for all of us. It was a rare gift of the knowledge that this world is His own, that you are His own, that nothing in the universe is outside of His divine domain; that if we can fully comprehend this truth, we will be able to see His love and His wisdom in all that is created and know His blissful presence in our own lives. For He is the air that fills our lungs; He is the awareness that

allows us to experience and to know; He is the kindness that overflows in our hearts. Open your mind to Him, and know the unlimited wonder and joy of being, for your being is *His* being; your being is the expression of His infinite love.

This God-given vision was my own personal experience, to be sure, but I ask you to please accept my experience as your own. It is His wish, and therefore it is my wish as well, that you come to know Him in yourself. Look to Him for all that you wish for in this life, and you will be fulfilled beyond your wildest dreams. And, if you are very fortunate, He may also grant to you, as He did to me, the vision of your timeless divinity in Him. So, may it be.

**NOTES:**

1. If you would like to read a detailed account of my experience of God, please see my book, *The Supreme Self* available on my website as a free download, or click on [MY MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE](#) in the Menu.

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## WAKE UP!

We all recognize that we each have a purpose peculiar to our own self-development that is designed and decreed by God. But we must recognize also that we have a *common* underlying long-term spiritual purpose in knowing and giving expression to the Divine within us, to the one eternal Self whose manifestations we are. To know that Divine Self, we must seek God within ourselves; and if we are fortunate, we will experience an enlightenment, a mystical dawning within our souls, that will reveal to us our own divinity, our own eternal Self.

No one really knows what "enlightenment" is until it happens to them. But be assured that it is not just a myth; Enlightenment is real. In some cultures, it is described as "union with God," "the Divine Marriage", "Self-Realization", or it may be given any number of other names. But it is the ultimate Goal and Purpose of all man's endeavors on this earth and always has been. Today, however, in these dark times, we are bombarded with the message that our happiness depends upon owning a "smart phone," that the highest goal and purpose of every young

person is to become an athlete, a professional player of basketball or football, or to earn a huge salary and achieve fame and renown. This is the “dumbing down” of our civilization; this is the repudiation of our long-held spiritual culture, the surrender to the ideals of idiots, to the government of imbeciles. And *if* I thought that anyone was listening, I would shout, “Wake up, my brothers and sisters! Wake up! Remember who you are and reclaim your Divinity!”

Those who have directly experienced a profound realization of the Divine are often found to be associated with one specific religious tradition of another. There have been Self-realized, or enlightened, saints among the Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike. It seems nearly impossible to find a true mystic who is not affiliated with one or another religious tradition—a fact no doubt attributable to the strongly-felt influence of sectarian religion in the education of children in nearly every regional populace.

As for myself, I have no such affiliation. I have been deeply influenced by the devotion of the Christian, Thomas á Kempis, by the nondual philosophy of the Upanishads and Shankaracharya, by the poetry of

Sufis such as Jalaluddin Rumi, and by the Neoplatonist vision of Plotinus; but I do not consider myself to be a member or affiliate of any of these traditions. In fact, I am of the opinion that we would all be much better served if we could just boil them all together in a large pot and skim off all the long-accrued, habitual and separative elements, such as the representation of Jesus as the exclusive 'Son of God' in the Christian tradition; the mythology of the legendary patriarchs and the divinely appointed nationalism of the Jewish tradition; the sectarian allegiance to the ancient relatives of 'the Prophet' in the Islamic tradition; the fanciful gods of the Hindu tradition; and other such sectarian nonsense. Once we skimmed off all these impurities, we would be left with a purer brew from which all could happily drink.

What would be left would be a simple and straightforward love of God, a love directed solely to Him, both in His transcendence and in His immanence. It would be a devotion requiring no formal or ritualized activities, one which relied on no ancient, revered texts, but one which pointed all souls toward direct personal contact with the Beloved and an allegiance to Him in every thought, word, and deed.

Such a 'pure' religion would be universal, uniting all mankind in a common creed in which hatred and murderous violence would be disallowed under any circumstance. Jesus, the Buddha, Muhammed and Abraham would be honored as distinguished members of a holy brotherhood, and God would be re-established as the sole rightful object of our worship. Every variety of worship and praise of God would be encouraged with no limit to their expression. The real meaning of the word, 'religion', which signifies the uniting of the soul with God, would be supremely honored in the hearts and minds of all. Of course, this ideal is not possible of attainment today, but it is the goal, and one day it shall be realized.

When this goal is achieved, the widespread recognition that mystical experience is the fountainhead of all religion will constitute one of the most significant historical revolutions of our time. It will be comparable to the Copernican revolution that so overwhelmingly transformed the intellectual comprehension of our place in the cosmos. Likewise, the Mystical Revolution will utterly transform our understanding of who we are spiritually and redefine our spiritual path. It is a

revolution that has already begun silently amongst the most thoughtful and knowledgeable of us and which in time will expand to illumine the minds of every man, woman and child. It will be a revolution founded in divine revelation and yet which is free of religious superstition, a revolution based upon the common spiritual experience of the most gifted illuminati among us.

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## MY FOUNDATION

There is an 'I' at a deep level in this apparent 'me' that surfaces in its own time and produces creations that are beyond the power of this apparent 'me' to produce. That 'I' is divine and eternal and graces 'me' with Its presence in moments of its own choosing and has the ability to reveal a reality more true and more clear than this apparent 'me' can even imagine. It is this deeper 'I' that is referred to by some as the inner soul or *atman*, the Divine, or the Christ within. That 'I' cannot be known unless He makes Himself known, but His influence may be recognized by His fruits.

Therefore, let it be known and understood by all who

read the words I have posted here that whatever truth or clarity may be found herein is not of my own making, but is given by that divine Self as a favor to this supplicant soul for its eagerness to serve. No praise is due this eager soul, this apparent 'me', but all praise is due to that divine and eternal 'I' who has treated me so generously in allowing 'me' to be included among Its humble servants.

That one Self, eternal and undivided, does not truly consist of two beings: a Master and servant, an 'I' and a 'me'; rather It is an indivisible Spirit—appearing as an individualized form in this manifest world as 'me', but operating *within* 'me'—as eternal Soul, a universal 'I'. At times I address that Spirit as "Thou", but He is my ground, my foundation, not separate, but surrounding and encompassing 'me'. We are one, though, while the body persists, along with this *ego*, it seems that we are two.

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## MY TWO I's

My current name is Swami Abhayananda, though I was given the name Stanley Ross Trout at birth. Both of these names refer to who I am as an individualized person temporarily existing in the grand illusion of time and space. But there is another 'I' that I claim as my *permanent* identity. That other *I* (which Vedantins call the *Atman* or Self, and Christians refer to as the *Christ* within) is the universal Consciousness that is the eternal foundation and support of all I's. If I refer to my temporal phenomenal self, "I" means one thing; if I refer to my eternal Self, "I" means something else. So, as long as *I* exist in both the eternal and the temporal realm, it appears that there are two I's. But that is only an appearance.

It is only those who have become consciously aware of the eternal *I* who are able to recognize this apparent double-identity, and to distinguish between the two I's. Jesus, for example, on whom the religious organization of Christianity was founded, spoke frequently from his individualized temporal identity, identifying with the personal being who was born as a Jew and lived in the community of

Nazareth; but he had known his eternal 'I', and he occasionally spoke from that universal Consciousness identity as well, such as when he said, "I am the Light; I am above all that is manifest. Everything came forth from me, and everything returns to me. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift a stone, and you will find me there." 1

Many of those who do not recognize the existence of two I's in themselves are confused by the words uttered by Jesus. 'Well, which is he?' they ask, 'man or God?' And, of course, the answer is 'He is both!' They are the two aspects of his dual identity, as he hinted in his statement, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me. 2 I and the Father are one."

3 The same is true of you—except that you are as yet unaware of your greater identity. When you do become aware of that greater Self, you will declare, as Jesus did, "Before Abraham was, I am." 4

The dual identity of Jesus as man and God was much discussed by the early Church Fathers, but they did not understand that Jesus was disclosing, not just his own personal reality, but the divine nature of all men. Though he was treated as a common preacher, Jesus was a mystic, privy to the mysteries of the divine reality, and he was revealing a metaphysical

truth universally applicable to everyone.

When I reflect back on my own “mystical experience,” I recognize that the words that I put to paper during that experience did not originate with me, were not uttered by me, but by my Divine Self. But then, that brings up the question ‘how is it that there are two beings speaking through one individual?’ The answer is that there are not two beings, but rather two perspectives: one being the perspective of the time-bound individual soul, and the other perspective—from the one who spoke through my pen on that fateful night—was the perspective of the all-inclusive One, the universal Consciousness that we refer to as ‘God.’ They are both *I*. For *I* am experienced as both this individual conscious self and as the universal, omnipresent, Consciousness who is my eternal Self.

It was that universal, omnipresent, Consciousness that somehow overrode my individual consciousness on that November night in 1966 (by a miracle called ‘Grace’), and it was the words of that universal Consciousness that sounded within me, and which were put to paper. “I am in the clouds, and I am in the gritty soil. In pools of clear water, my image is seen.” And again, “All things move together of one

accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain." These are not *my* words; they are the words of the universal *I*.

At the moment those words were written, I was keenly aware that, even on the sandy floor of the oceans, the current that moved the tumbling grains of sand was intimately connected to every other force and particle existing in the universe. As though by the functioning of one all-inclusive Mind, everything that occurred was connected to, and related to, everything else in the universe in an organic manner.

The only thing close to a rational explanation of this appears in the following words of the twentieth century quantum physicist, David Bohm:

"The world which we perceive cannot properly be analyzed into independently existent parts with fixed and determinate dynamical relationships between each of the parts. Rather, the 'parts' are seen to be in immediate connection, in which their dynamical relationships depend, in an irreducible way, on the state of the whole system (and indeed on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire

universe). Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts. We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent 'elementary parts' of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that [the] inseparable quantum inter-connectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole." 5

The Divine Mind containing "the unbroken whole" has Its own conscious Identity and perspective, and each of the "particular contingent forms" also has *its* own conscious identity and perspective. Though the particular contingent forms are *contained within* the whole, both the particular forms and the unbroken whole each has its own conscious awareness. They are two, but they are one. The universal Consciousness experienced in the mystical vision seems to be 'other' than oneself, though It is in fact one's own greater Identity, one's universal Self.

The above statement of David Bohm explains how, from the perspective of the unbroken whole, all things are seen to move together of one accord, while from the perspective of each of the contingent sentient forms, each one's movement occurs individually in accordance with its own spontaneous and unaided will. From the perspective of the unbroken whole, local causality is replaced by the "inseparable quantum inter-connectedness of the whole universe." But from the perspective of the particular contingent forms (you and I), we appear to be entirely free to choose our own actions as we will.

The fact is, there are never really *two* I's; every soul is a manifestation of the one universal Consciousness and has no other permanent identity. That One is the only true 'I'. But, from the time we are born into this world, we begin fashioning a false separate personal self that exists only in our minds. At birth, each of us is given a name to distinguish each of us as a unique being, with a distinct parentage. We each bear distinctive genetically inherited characteristics and we each bear distinctive histories as well, accumulated through many lives, which in turn contribute to our distinctive personalities. In this way, a soul is formed, giving each of us a strong sense of personal individuality and uniqueness. But

the fact is that we are all manifestations of the one Self, the one Consciousness, from whom and in whom all beings exist, and to whom we all owe our being.

That one Being is everyone's true Self, but in order to become aware of that universal Self, it is necessary to give some time to prayerful meditation in which you can quiet the mental urging and clamoring of your fabricated personal identity. It will help if you can focus your mind instead on a phrase or mantra that brings silence and peace to your conscious awareness. Let the breath too be calmed, and devoutly invoke the Lord of all being. When you become aware of His presence, approach Him reverently. If He is favorable to you, He will merge your awareness into His own for as long as He wishes; during that unitive experience, all remnants of your limited personal being will fade away, and you will know yourself as the one illimitable Self of all.

### **NOTES:**

1. *Thomas, Gospel of*, 114; (trans. by Thomas O. Lambdin), from Robinson, James M., ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, E.J. Brill and Harper & Row, 1977, p. 135.

2. *John, Gospel of, 17:25*, from the New Testament of the King James Bible.
3. *Ibid.*, 8:54.
4. *Ibid.*, 8:58.
5. Bohm, David and Hiley, Basil, "On The Intuitive Understanding of Non-Locality as Implied By Quantum Theory", London, Foundations of Physics journal, Vol. V, 1975; pp. 96, 102.

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## WHO WE ARE

If we rely solely on empirical observation, we must conclude that we live in a universe of material phenomena—stars, planets, nebulae, gas clouds, black holes, and all that is manifest to the human senses. But the mystic's vision reveals that, at a subtler, more primal level, we are living in a universal Consciousness in which all the individual constituents are interconnected and possess the same universal identity. That Consciousness—which we refer to as "God"—is an integral noumenon (Mind or Spirit) containing the phenomenal universe, and It

is the Creative Source and substance of all that we experience as the material universe and its contents, including the bodies we regard as our own as well as all the objects in our environment.

Science has shown that the phenomenal universe of time, space, and individual forms is a result of 'the Great Radiance' or 'Big Bang,' that was released as an immense amount of particulate matter in the form of high-frequency electromagnetic radiation some fourteen billion years ago. This resulting universe of form is the manifestation of that 'Great Radiance' projected by and within the one universal Consciousness. And because this universe exists *within* the universal Consciousness, it is thereby imbued with, permeated by, and fully participant in the all-pervading universal Consciousness.

That universal Consciousness, which is our sole primary reality, is also our primary *identity*. And since every one of the individual constituents of this universe are participants in the one universal Consciousness, each sentient individual entity within the universe operates in accordance with the coordinated movement of the entire system. In other words, as is revealed in the mystic's vision, "all

things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain." So, while we may regard our separate individual selves to be independently free to act in accord with our individual wills, at a subtler level, it is apparent that we are all governed in our being, in our willing, and in our actions by the single omnipotent and all-embracing will of the one universal Consciousness.

That universal Consciousness is One; It is the eternal Source, who, by Its Creative Power, creates and contains "all things." And all those *things*—including us—are moving together of one accord, interconnected in one intricately coordinated Whole. So, do you have free-will? Yes. Of course, you do! The more pertinent question is, '*Who* are you?' There is only one here; there is no second. That One is the sole identity of all; It is who you are. That One is both the Mover and the moved, both the Governor and the governed, both the Determiner and the determined.

But how do we understand the paradox that, while we are manifest as constituents of the Divine Consciousness that is God, each individual believes that it has the freedom to choose his or her own course of action, and feels responsible for his or her

own actions, good or bad? The answer is that we have the sense that our individual will is free because, in fact, it is! Remember, we are not merely an individual soul manifested in the world of time and space; we are the one Consciousness who is determining everything, and that one Consciousness truly *is* free. In other words, while we may believe ourselves to be separate individual entities responsible for our individual actions, the fact is that our true, eternal, identity is God, the one divine Consciousness, who, alone is responsible for every action. 1 It is He who is doing everything.

Here is another way to understand this paradox: When we sleep, as dreamers, we (subconsciously) create our dream characters and their roles in our dreams, and yet, while dreaming, we *identify* with the dream-character in the dream, and, as that dream-character, we feel that we are free to choose our actions within the dream. The truth, however, is that we, the dreamer of the dream, create the dream-roles of those characters, so that the characters and their roles are wholly determined by us. Free-will only *appears* to exist in the dream world; in fact, all the dream-characters and their actions are entirely determined by us, the dreamer.

In the same way, in the phenomenal world, it is God—the one Divine Consciousness—the Creator of this universe, who is the *real* Identity of everyone, and who is determining every action and every outcome. It is He who projects this heated drama, with all its twists and unforeseeable turns, and it is He who will bring it to its fitting conclusion. The notion of an individual self apart from the one eternal Self, is merely an illusion. It is only because we are, in fact, the eternal Self, the one Consciousness who is determining everything, that we are aware of our illimitable freedom.

The 'ego', or 'I' awareness, is not an exterior *thing* that afflicts us; it is simply an illusory perspective (with which all beings are endowed by their creator) in which one believes oneself to be a singular and independent being among a multitude of beings and objects—as opposed to the one true perspective in which one identifies with the indivisible Self underlying all of existence. From that illusory perspective, we convince ourselves that we are self-determined individuals; and it is only 'mystical experience,' or 'the grace of God,' that provides a glimpse into the egoless state, where there is only the one conscious continuum, where there is only the One Being, who is seen to be our

sole everlasting identity!

“Ego” simply means “I,” and “I” can signify a distinct individual soul associated with a particular body or it can signify the universal Divine Spirit. One of these I’s is the eternal Reality, and the other is merely a transient appearance, existing in time and imaged forth by the Divine Mind. Which of these “I’s” is the *real* you, the permanent you?

We need to acknowledge that, while we exist within the manifested universe of space and time, we possess a distinctly unique body and soul/mind, but our underlying identity is the absolute Self, or Consciousness, from which the body and soul are produced and in which they are contained. So, who are we? What are we going to identify with? If we identify with the body, we are identifying with an entity that is transient. If we identify with the individualized soul, we are still identifying with a transient entity, though the soul’s duration is somewhat greater than that of the body. But if we identify with the Self, we identify with the eternal truth; we acknowledge that we are the one immortal, imperishable and invincible Reality.

Listen to these words of the great Indian sage, Sri

Shankaracharya:

“The fool thinks, ‘I am the body;’ the intelligent man thinks, ‘I am an individual soul united with the body.’ But the wise man, in the greatness of his knowledge and spiritual discrimination, sees the Self as the only reality, and thinks, ‘I am Brahman.’” 2

Jesus of Nazareth had also realized this truth:

“If you knew who I am,” he said, “you would also know the Father. Knowing me, you know Him; seeing me, you see Him. Do you not understand that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? It is the Father who dwells in me doing His own work. Understand me when I say that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.” 3 “I and my Father are one,” 4 he said.

At another time, identifying with the transcendent Consciousness, the eternal Self, Jesus said:

“I am the Light; I am above all that is manifest. Everything came forth from me, and everything returns to me. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift a stone, and you will find me there.” 5

And here are the words of the great Sufi mystic, Ibn Arabi:

“When the mystery of the oneness of the soul and the Divine is revealed to you, you will understand that you are no other than God. ... For when you know yourself, your sense of a limited identity vanishes, and you know that you and God are one and the same.”<sup>6</sup>

The one Existence-Consciousness-Bliss is the *only* One. There *is* no second. All the illumined seers have realized this same truth, and they wish you to also know and realize this truth in yourself.

### **NOTES:**

1. The all-embracing will of the universal Consciousness governs the life of every soul throughout its many incarnations as it accrues the results of its evolving karma. Eventually, each soul becomes purified and awakened by that Divine will to the knowledge of its eternal identity and knows itself as the One. For more, see my article, “The Astrologer’s Vision,” at my website, “The Mystic’s Vision” ([www.themysticsvision.com](http://www.themysticsvision.com)).
2. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, III:10;  
Prabhavananda & Isherwood, *The Crest-*

*Jewel of Discrimination*, Vedanta Press, 1978,  
p. 58.

3. *The Gospel of John* 13:40.

4. *The Gospel of John*, 10:30.

5. James Robinson, *The Gospel of Thomas*, 1977; 77,  
p. 135.

6. Landau, Rom, *The Philosophy of Ibn  
Arabi* London, George Allen & Unwin,  
1959; pp. 83-84.

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## THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE OF NONDUALITY

In the unitive Mystical Experience, a soul becomes awake to its union with the one eternal Source, and during that experience the soul no longer sees from a soul's perspective but from the perspective of the eternal One. In my own experience, at the height of that mystical union, from that eternal perspective, all had become perfectly clear:

"All may now be told without effort.

Where is there a question?

Where is the temple?

Which the Imperishable? Which the abode?"

From that limitless perspective, and in that divine clarity, there could not be discerned any distinction between the Imperishable Spirit and the so-called temple—the bodily abode—in which that Spirit was said to abide. One Being, indivisible, was seen to comprise all, both form and essence, both body and soul:

I am the pulse of the turtle.

I am the clanging bells of joy.

I bring the dust of blindness.

I am the fire of song.

I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil.

In pools of clear water my image is found."

In that mystical clarity, there is no Cartesian dualism, no separation or distinction between body and soul; for everything is seen to be God, everything is seen to be His manifestation, everything is seen to be contained in the one eternal Being.

### **Which The Imperishable, Which The Abode?**

When I was a young man, I was accustomed to thinking of the body and the soul as two wholly

separate and different realities: I considered the soul to be the imperishable Spirit in the body, and the body to be the perishable “temple” or “abode” of the soul. But then, God granted me His vision, allowing me to see from His divine perspective. And when I searched within my Self (the divine Spirit) for the division between the body and the soul, I could see no division, and I wondered: “Where is the temple?” “Which the Imperishable, which the abode?” But, in that all-inclusive One, there was no such distinction to be seen.

Everything in the universe—including my own body—was seen to be made of God. There was no “temple” of the body; there was no indwelling Imperishable Soul; there was only the one Spirit, comprising all. He alone is everywhere, existing in and *as* everything. What I had considered to be ‘my’ body, was made entirely of His creative Light, and so, that body was therefore really God’s body. “O my God”, I exclaimed; “even this body is Thine own!” 1

I think most of us tend to regard only our incorporeal souls as divine, as imperishable, for our bodies clearly are not imperishable. When someone dies, do we not witness the decay of their lifeless bodies? But *consider*— though our bodies

perish, *that* of which our bodies are made *is* imperishable.

In the final analysis, all bodies, all material objects, are made of God's Light, 2 and at the world's end, when the earth along with the whole universe dissolves, everything (including the physical particles remaining from all interred or cremated bodies) will transform back into that divine Light from whence it came. Just as God, the transcendent Spirit, is imperishable, His Light of which all the universe is comprised is also imperishable.<sup>3</sup> Though God, the Spirit and His creative Light are distinguishable and separable, they are both contained and united in the one absolute Being.

And so, though we tend to identify our individual selves with the bodies we inhabit, we must know for certain that our individual 'I' is but a temporary illusion. Bodies come, and bodies go; and with each incarnation, we as individual souls grow experientially, intellectually, and morally. Nevertheless, it is certain that eventually we must come to know the one true 'I', the one divine Spirit who is our eternal Self—containing all bodies and all souls. That One is our sole identity. So, put away all concerns and fears: realize that you are the

one all-inclusive, all-pervasive Self of the universe. Know that you are eternally blissful and imperishable and be free.

### **NOTES:**

1. For a complete account of the mystical experience referred to here, please see my book, *The Supreme Self*, available as a free download at my website: [www.themysticsvision.com](http://www.themysticsvision.com)
2. For more on the Light by which God forms our world, see my Article, "How God Made The World," number 10 in the [Menu](#).
3. The imperishability of the Divine Light is formulated in the first law of thermodynamics (otherwise known as the law of the conservation of energy) which states that the total energy of a closed or isolated system (such as the whole universe) is constant; energy can be transformed from one form to another but cannot be created or destroyed. In other words, it is eternal, imperishable.

### **The Metaphysics of Duality**

If we think carefully and accurately, we must come to the conclusion that God constitutes everything that exists. That being understood, it must also be understood that He exists in *two different modes* or

aspects: He is the ultimate reality, the divine Mind, the one conscious Spirit—formless, invisible, and eternal — who exists as the conscious Self within whom we exist and who is thereby within all of us; *and* He is *also* the Creator who periodically projects His own Light-Energy that becomes the material particles that form the substance of the phenomenal universe in which we live and of which our bodies are composed.

So, we have an *apparent* duality within the nondual Reality: it is a duality between Spirit and Matter, between the universal Consciousness (which manifests as our own individual consciousness) and the world-substance. This apparent duality of Spirit and Matter is reiterated in the perceived duality of body and soul; but we must remember that these dualities are apparent only. God is both soul and body, both the invisible Spirit and the divine Light that forms the 'material' universe. He exists in two different modes; He has two different aspects: He is the eternal Spirit, the absolute Ground that constitutes our conscious Self; *and* He is *also* the Light-Energy that He projected fourteen billion years ago that gives (apparent) form and 'material' substance to our current world.

So, while these two modes or aspects exist separately and independently, they are *both* God, they are both eternal. It is true that the material world with all its forms is both changing and transient: it has a beginning and an end; but the Light-Energy of which it is constituted is nonetheless eternal. For, while the multi-formed appearance that is the material universe is eventually dissolved back into the pure Light of God of which it was made, that Light-Energy itself, by virtue of its divine nature, lives eternally in God.

I would like to propose a simple remedy to the confusion that often arises when discussing the absolute Nonduality that underlies the apparent duality: The one Spirit, the Divine Consciousness or Supreme Self, is to be regarded as "God I"; and the Light-Energy that constitutes the material world is to be regarded as "God II". I feel that, with the implementation of this terminology, confusion will not arise, and it will become clear that there is only God I and God II, and that it is to be recognized hereafter that God, in His dual aspects, constitutes everything that exists. 1

**NOTE:**

1. Had René Descartes truly understood that Mind

and Body are both constituted of God, he would no doubt have found a solution to his Cartesian duality in the realization that the nondual One, while appearing to us to be a duality, is *in Itself* a single unified and integrated reality. This fact is not known through reason; science cannot come close to this knowledge, but it is realized and subjectively confirmed in the God-given mystical vision, for, as a soul experiences itself in the mystical vision as the all-inclusive Divinity, it knows no distinction between its form and its essence, its body and its mind; all is in fact experienced as the one indivisible Self.

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**from the Conclusion to**  
***HISTORY OF MYSTICISM***

It should be abundantly evident that throughout the ages men and women have come face to face with God, the absolute Source and Ground of all existence; and that it is this very experience which constitutes the one common thread that binds together in unity all the great religious and philosophical traditions which have existed since

time began, and all that shall exist in the future. Each of the great mystics spoke in his own language, his own restricted terminology, and the consequence is that today many consider each of these efforts to reveal the nature of reality as disparate and unrelated "philosophies" or "religions." But the experience of the one Reality is the same for all, of course; and in all the declarations of the many prophets, saints, and messiahs, we can hear the attempt to convey a common knowledge based on that common vision.

[That common vision of the mystics reveals] ... the unity and ever-presence of God, the supreme Self. With such a refined vision, we learn to see that not only are we the Self, but everything around us is also the Self. The subject is the Self; the object is the Self. Truly, no matter who or what I see or speak to, it is really only my own Self. If we could really grasp the truth of this, what a revolution would occur in our thinking and behavior!

Just as waves on the ocean are only water, just as golden ornaments are only gold, so all the various forms in the universe are only forms of our own Self. Becoming aware of this, we would begin to revel in that joy which had been missing in our lives before.

We would begin to drink the nectar of the unending love for which we had been thirsting before. And we would begin to take delight in just being and living and acting in the world in a way we had been unable to before.

The knowledge once gained from an experience of “enlightenment” is a means of escape from any real ensnarement in anxiety or fear from that time on. It is a supramental *knowing* which asserts itself whenever needed, and provides a surety, which can never be shaken. The perceptual division of subject from object does not cease; the world goes on, even for the enlightened. It is just that he *knows* in his heart, with an indomitable certainty, that he and the universe are one.

Just as a chess-player retains the awareness that the warfare between his opponent and himself is merely a temporary game of role-playing, and that at the end of the game both the red and the black pieces will be thrown into the same box; in the same way, one who has clearly experienced the undivided Reality retains the knowledge of the ultimate unity and sees the play of subjects and objects as the ongoing pretense, or play, of the one divine Self. Listen to what [the thirteenth century Indian saint,]

Jnaneshvar, has to say on this theme:

"There is nothing else here but the Self. Whether appearing as the seen or perceiving as the seer, nothing else exists besides the Self. Just as water plays with itself by assuming the forms of waves, the Self, the ultimate Reality, plays happily with Himself. Though there are multitudes of visible objects, and wave upon wave of mental images, still they are not different from their witness. You may break a lump of raw sugar into a million pieces, still there is nothing but sugar. Likewise, the unity of the Self is not lost, even though He fills the whole universe. He is seeing only His own Self—like one who discovers various countries in his imagination and goes wandering through them all with great enjoyment."<sup>1</sup>

But how are we to attain this unitive state of awareness? Until we are lifted into the "experience of unity" by the grace of God, duality must continue to exist for us. When that unitive experience is about to happen to a person, that person's mind becomes irresistibly withdrawn from worldly concerns, and becomes centered instead upon one all-consuming love, a singular sort of love, for the very source of love within. And in the process of consummating this love, solitude is procured, giving the mind the

opportunity to become detached from the pull of distracting thoughts and sense-impressions; and the mind is then focused with great intensity upon its aim. Consciousness, like an unflickering flame in a windless room, becomes pure and clear. And then suddenly it knows who it has always been.

It is God's grace, which manifests in us as that divine love that draws us so compellingly toward the experience of unity. This love is not the ordinary kind of love between a subject and an object, however; for in this case the subject and the object, and the love itself are one. Nor is this love the result of a conclusion based on a rational premise; it is an inner *experience*. It is something quite real—breathhtakingly and intoxicatingly real. It stirs from within, and centers on itself within. It is not a rationally thought-out construction based on philosophical principles, but a sweetness that is itself the object of devotion. It is this Love that *bhaktas* love. It has no location but the human heart, yet its source is the universal Being. It is His gracious gift, and only those who have experienced it know what it is.

It is of this love that Sri Ramakrishna sang:

"How are you trying, O my mind, to know the nature of God?

You are groping like a madman locked in a dark room.

He is grasped through ecstatic love; How can you fathom Him without it? When that love awakes, the Lord, like a magnet, draws to Him the soul." 2

Such longing for God always precedes the experience of enlightenment, because it is the natural expression, the unfailing indicator, of a shift in consciousness toward the transcendent Unity. All of the outer events as well as the inner ones will conspire to bring one's life to that point where enlightenment is experienced. When it is time for it to come, it will produce itself, and it will announce its coming by a great wave of love that steers the heart irresistibly to the source of that love, and eventually reveals itself unaided from within.

Consider the great Shankara's final message to the disciple in his *Vivekachudamani*:

"Gurus and scriptures can stimulate spiritual awareness, but one crosses the ocean of ignorance only by direct illumination, *through the grace of God*." 3

No one has ever realized God except those to whom He has revealed Himself. On this point all Self-realized beings are unanimously agreed. As one commentator says in the *Malini Vijaya Vartika*: "The learned men of all times always hold that the descent of grace does not have any cause or condition but depends entirely on the free will of the Lord." If it were dependent upon conditions, it would not be absolute and independent grace. According to yet another Tantric scripture, the *Tantraloka*, "Divine grace leads the individual to the path of spiritual realization. It is the only cause of Self-realization and is independent of human effort."

The experience of Self-realization occurs when the mind is concentrated to a fine laser-point and focused in contemplation of God; but this happens only by the power of the universal Self, of God Himself. This is not a denial of the efficacy of self-effort, but merely an assertion that every effort or desire to remember Him, every intensification of concentration on Him, is instigated by Himself, for He is our own inner Self, the inner Controller. It is He who inspires, enacts, and consummates all our efforts.

Among the Christian mystics, we find complete agreement on this issue. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, says: "You would not seek Him at all, O soul, nor love Him at all, if you had not been first sought and first loved." Meister Eckhart also acknowledges this truth, saying: "It is He that prays in us and not we ourselves." And the Blessed Jan Ruysbroeck concurs:

"Contemplation places us in a purity and radiance which is far above our understanding, ...and no one, can attain to it by knowledge, by subtlety, or by any exercise whatsoever; but he whom God chooses to unite to Himself, he and no other can contemplate God." 4

We find the same agreement among the Sufi mystics, the Hindus and the Buddhists. It is always so—always. And though the attempt is often made by charlatans to translate the description of the mental state of the mystic at the time of his experience of unity into a sort of "method" or "scientific technique" for the attainment of God, no one has ever claimed that such a technique has actually produced the advertised result. For, by themselves, the practices of shallow breathing, fixed stares, and cessation of thought, will never produce the experience of unity.

This experience comes only by the will of God. Nanak, the great Guru of the Sikh tradition, stated the matter plainly when he said, "Liberation from bondage depends upon Thy will; there is no one to gainsay it. Should a fool wish to, suffering will teach him wisdom." 5

When He draws the mind to Himself, the mind becomes still automatically. It is not necessary to attempt to still the mind by austere practices or artificial methods. The body becomes still, and the mind becomes still, when the heart is yearning sincerely for Him alone. Everything happens very naturally by His grace: One begins to begrudge the mind any thought other than the thought directed to God; and, with the aim of centering the mind continually on Him, one begins to sing His name in the inner recesses of the mind. It doesn't matter what name is used; Christians call Him "Father"; Muslims call Him "Allah," or "Karim"; Jews call Him "Adonai"; and Hindus call Him "Hari" or "Ram." Love responds to whatever name is called with love. To one who loves, His name is nectar; it is like a cold drink of water to a thirsty man. It is no discipline, nor is it an austerity. It is the refreshment of life. It is the sweetness of peace, and the delight of delights.

Since there is really nothing else but that infinite Being wherever one may look, the clear awareness of that truth dawns, as one begins to sing the name of God within the heart; and the bliss of recognizing one's own Self both without and within begins to well up. The more one sings His name, the more one revels in that bliss, and the more clearly one perceives His continual presence. Inherent in that perception is all mercy, all right judgment, all tenderness, all loving-kindness. It is the natural devotion by which a man's heart is transformed, and by which he becomes fit for the vision of God.

Therefore, say the mystics, we must forge our link with God, and He will lead us to Himself. He will draw us to love Him, for He Himself is that Love that awakens in us as love for God. He will draw us to seek Him in prayer and in silent longing, for He is our own heart. Follow, and you will reach Him. Draw near to Him in the silence of the night and He will reveal Himself to you as your very deepest Self, your eternal Identity. Keep on loving Him, keep on trusting in Him to guide you, and keep on praying to Him. When He puts into your heart the desire to know Him, He will lift aside the veil and reveal that, all along, it was Him who prayed, who sought, who sorrowed, as you; and that, all along, it was you who

forever lives beyond all sorrow, as God—forever blissful, forever free.

## NOTES:

1. Jnaneshvar, *Amritanubhav*; VII; Swami Abhayananda, Atma Books, 1989.
2. Nikhilananda, Swami, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1941; p. 607.
3. Shankara, *Vivekachudamani*, *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination* Swami Prabhavananda & Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, Calif., Vedanta Press, 1947, p. 131.
4. Jan Ruysbroeck, *The Sparkling Stone*, IV
5. Singh, Trilochan, *et al* (eds.), *Selections From The Sacred Writings of The Sikhs*, London, Geo. Allen & Unwin, 1960, p. 42.

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If you have read even a small portion of the writings featured on this website, you are well aware that it represents a viewpoint that is not only revolutionary but highly unpopular—unpopular in the sense that it goes against the view of the majority. In the books and articles featured here, the occurrence of my own revelatory experience of the Divine reality is

described, and forms the basis for the assumption that any other devout human being is also capable of experiencing such a transcendent revelation—that, in fact, those who have experienced such a revelation in the past were also ordinary beings and not divinely begotten children or incarnations of the supreme deity—at least no more so than anyone else.

This understanding flies in the face of the customary religious suppositions of a large number of people, I know; but old customs must eventually give way to proven experiential knowledge. The acceptance of mystical experience, and the recognition of its misinterpretation through the ages will certainly not come overnight; but eventually human evolution requires the expansion of human understanding through the acceptance of accumulated experiential evidence.

There is no shortage of evidence to show that many people throughout the world and throughout history have experienced the interior revelation of their own divine being; and if you are unaware of this evidence, please see my *History of Mysticism*, a factual account of that evidence (available as a free download from this website). Though, from the perspective of history, so many have testified to the occurrence of

that revelation in their lives, it is, for us, a sad fact that so relatively few seem privileged to experience that revelation each day, month, and year during the limited time of our lives. In that regard, it is an experience that seems to be both common and yet rare--common in the long term, but rare in the short term.

It must nevertheless be accepted as indisputably true that we are, each one, the manifestation of God Himself, and are capable, each one, of knowing Him as our immortal Self through prayerful contemplation and a focused and mindful intent. His will is paramount; but if, by acting in accord with His will, you can affect, or in any way influence the course of His will, you must do so. Beg for His favor, implore His merciful gift of light, give your heart unreservedly to Him, surrender your life in His service; see all creation as His manifestation, and know your oneness with Him.

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## **WHAT IS A SWAMI?**

It's a question that comes up from time to time, and I've learned that I cannot really say what being a

Swami means for all Swamis, but I can at least try to say what it means to me. I was living in a secluded cabin in the Santa Cruz mountains when it first dawned on me that I wanted to be a Swami. I had gone to live in that cabin in my spiritual quest for enlightenment, and I had been reading many books on Indian philosophy as well as books on Western religious philosophy. I was impressed by what Sri Ramakrishna's disciple, Swami Vivekananda, said about *sannyasa*, and also by these words of Sarvepali Radhakrishnan:

"A *sannyasin* [monk, or swami] renounces all possessions, distinctions of caste, and practices of religion. As he has perfected himself, he is able to give his soul the largest scope, throw all his powers into the free movement of the world and compel its transfiguration. He does not merely formulate the conception of high living but lives it, adhering to the famous rule, 'The world is my country; to do good my religion'. Regarding all with an equal eye he must be friendly to all living beings. And being devoted, he must not injure any living creature, human or animal, either in act, word, or thought, and renounce all attachments. A freedom and fearlessness of spirit, an immensity of courage, which no defeat or obstacle can touch, a faith in the power that works in

the universe, a love that lavishes itself without demand of return and makes life a free servitude to the universal spirit, are the signs of the perfected man." 1

Well, who wouldn't want to be such a person? It was during this same period of time that I was given to experience a profound illumination from God, revealing the spiritual depth of my true being. And shortly thereafter, I made myself and God a promise: that I would first give myself a twelve-year period of spiritual study and growth, then I would become a Swami. That was in 1966, and in 1978 I was able to fulfill that promise. After a paradisaical five years in my cabin in the woods, I traveled to Ganeshpuri, India and became a disciple of the famous Kundalini master, Swami Muktananda.

Muktananda (affectionately known by his disciples as "Baba") is known by many today as a man who made a tragic mistake in his later years, just prior to his death in 1982, by inappropriately sharing his physical affections with a number of his young female disciples. Many of us will also make great mistakes in our lives, especially as we age; and it is a terrible shame that Muktananda's great legacy of loving wisdom should be so tarnished by the memory of a

few misdeeds in the latter period of his life. I was one of those who left his organization in protest and who spoke out condemning those misdeeds, and they needed to be condemned. But, because of those unfortunate events, few of the public today know of the greatness that was Swami Muktananda. His was a spiritual presence that touched the lives of hundreds, even thousands, of souls and lifted them to an experience of God in their lives through the generous gift of his own heart's immense compassion and love. Those who sat in his presence know, as no others can, that despite his human imperfections, he was indeed a great saint, possessing immense compassion and awesome power.

In 1978, I was working in Muktananda's Oakland ashram, when I wrote to Baba in India informing him that the twelve years of my apprenticeship had expired and that it was time for me to become a Swami. He then invited me to Ganeshpuri to take part in the *sannyasin* initiations that were to take place in May at the time of his birthday. There were about a dozen of us, both Indians and Westerners to be initiated, and an appointed *Mahamandaleshvar* (ceremonial official) named Swami Brahmananda Sarasvati of the

Shringeri Math was on hand to direct the proceedings. After performing the Vedic rituals of offering rice balls to our ancestors, and after having the last remaining 'brahmin's tuft of hair' shorn from our heads, signifying the transcendence of all castes, we performed the culminating ceremony of discarding our old clothes while standing waist deep in a cold raging river at midnight, and the receiving of the Swami's ochre robes. After that, we were Swamis, monks of the prestigious Sarasvati Order.

But, of course, it is not the ritual ceremony that makes a Swami; it is the heart's desire, the commitment to a spiritually dedicated life, and the favor of God and one's Guru. I was to know the awesome power of Muktananda's grace to his Swamis, a grace that enlivened the world and my soul with a brightness that revealed God's sparkling beauty within and without. Through no merit of my own, I experienced a divine blue light that would indicate to me advanced godly souls by dancing over their heads; I would experience Muktananda's grace being emitted from my own body to sincere devotees; I was even able to experience the transference of spiritual energy to others when someone inadvertently brushed my clothes. It was all his amazing and gracious power, transmitted

from him through me, even though he was not present. His loving regard of me, even from far away, was a tangible energy that drew me in awed devotion to know him as the very image of God and distributor of God's grace on this earth.

In Muktananda's organization, SYDA Yoga, Swamis were honored, not so much for their holiness, but for their position in the hierarchy of the Guru's favor. Muktananda, in the tradition of the rajas of India, ruled as king over an orange silk-robed aristocracy or nobility, who always sat in the front nearest the king when he gave audience. Further back were the members of the functional bureaucracy, and behind them the peasants, the visiting mob. The Swamis shared in the teaching role, giving authorized courses and operating the regional Meditation Centers and Ashrams. In the absence of the Guru, they were the connection with the Guru and his teachings. In a way very similar to the monks and priests of the Catholic Church, the Swamis of SYDA Yoga made up an organizational hierarchy of representatives of the Siddha line.

But just as in the Catholic Church there were, and still are to some degree, lone contemplative hermits and anchorites who live among the people, in India

there are many *sannyasins* who wander freely and independently, living the worshipful and contemplative life or teaching and lecturing and living by the charity of the citizenry. One can easily see, however, that such a class of religious itinerant beggars would not be feasible in Western countries. What, then, is a Western Swami to do? How is he (or she) to carry on his or her chosen vocation?

We must understand at the outset that a Swami transcends not only all Hindu caste designations, but all sectarian religious designations as well. A Swami is not (necessarily) a Hindu. The ideal Swami is learned in *all* religious traditions, and he is familiar as well with current science and literature. He is an enlightened and learned soul, and he is solely dedicated to God and the well-being of all God's children.

After I had left Muktananda's organization, I was faced with the question of how to continue my "mission" as a Swami. My immediate instinct was to share my acquired experience and understanding in the form of writing, and I went on to produce a number of books, all concerned with the "mystical experience" and the Self-knowledge obtained

thereby.

There was also, of course, the necessity of meeting the expenses of living in this world; and this I managed to do by obtaining a license as a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) and working primarily as a Home Health Aide for elderly and infirm patients in their homes. For the twenty-five years since I left Siddha Yoga, I have written my books, seen to their publication, and daily served the many patients I was assigned to: victims of stroke, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease, and senile dementia with hands-on care. I no longer parade about in orange silk robes; rather, I live a simple solitary life as a servant; I promote my books, presenting them and offering them as free downloadable ebooks at my online website: [www.themysticsvision.com](http://www.themysticsvision.com); and I spend a good deal of time in reflection and inward communion with God. According to our brother, Socrates:

"This is that life above all others which man should live, ... holding converse with the true Beauty, simple and divine. In that communion only beholding Beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but Reality [Itself]; ...and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue, to

become the friend of God and be immortal if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?"

— Plato, *Symposium*

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You will have noticed that I do not ordinarily speak of temporal conditions in the world; I do not propose solutions for the worldly ills that are so apparent to all of us. For example, I do not address the current and long existent culture of racial discrimination that seems to pervade this world. But, today, I'm going to make an exception to that rule:

In the United States of America, at the present time, there is an increased awareness of this ongoing racial conflict, and no one seems to know what to do to alleviate it. I think we might begin to solve the problem if we can recognize that the blame for the world's ills does not fall on any one race or another, but on humans, on *people*. It is not Blacks or Whites, or Jews or Germans, who are ignorant and cruel; it is not the Arabs or the Chinese, the Americans or the Russians who are to blame; *every* human being is capable of ignorance and cruelty, *every* human being is capable of the most abject inhumanity. In other

words, it is you and me, my friends, who are the source of all the evil in the world.

Wise up! Examine who you are and modify your behavior accordingly. Though you are searching for a race of people or an ethnicity to blame for all the trouble in the world, it is *your* ignorance, *your* intolerance, *your* stupidity, that needs to be addressed. Whenever the thought of enmity arises toward a race of people or nationality, or toward a particular culture, remember this: We are one people in God, He is not only our Creator and Ground; He is our ultimate Self, our witness and judge, and each one of us is responsible for what is in our own mind and in our own heart, and eventually we will have to account for it.

These worldly troubles will be remedied if only we, the people, become transformed in heart and mind to focus on God's loving presence in our own hearts. Surely, then, He will bless us and many others with the interior revelation of His ever-presence, and will free us forevermore from all hatred, worry, distress, and sorrow. Reach out to Him with all the power of your mind and heart and soul, and He will surely grant your heart's desire.

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Also, please explore the many books and articles available to you here on my website. They were written by God's grace solely for your benefit. And please take every precaution to remain safe from the current Corona Virus pandemic. I pray that God will inspire and protect you and keep you well.

\* \* \*

Here's a song to make every day Thanksgiving Day:

## **SONG OF THANKSGIVING** **(from my article, "Praising God")**

Hari, my love, I wish to sing to Thee a song of  
Thanksgiving,  
Yet, O how I dread the futile search for meaningful  
words to offer Thee!  
My heart is full of thanks and praise for each breath  
that is granted me,  
But to speak reveals the lie of pretended two-ness  
that I must tell.  
For Thou art my breath, my voice, the Real; and I am  
but the image.  
I live by Thy uncommon Life, imaged in Thy dream of

me;

And yet my gratitude to Thee upwells, as an image in  
a mirror

Might admire its own source, its real and original  
Face,

Or as a dream character might call out praise to its  
dreaming Self.

Though we are one, not two, I'll speak as though  
we're separate and apart;

For how else might I truly speak to Thee?

O Hari, Thou art alone, undiminished by the clatter  
and glitter

Of a billion billion images, mere reflections in a  
house of mirrors.

For Thou art alike the house, the mirrors, and the  
flitting images as well.

This speaking too is like the barking of a dog in an  
empty field;

For, though it may be heard, the silence of the  
cosmos remains unbroken.

Yet I--this imagined form--am present—at least in  
appearance.

And because I'm here, please let me speak to Thee in  
loving thanks.

O Hari look how wonderful is this story Thou dost

tell!

Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.  
Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is  
Thine

And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and  
breath of life.

Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing,  
Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light  
and love,

Dost bubble up from Thy unfathomable depths  
Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful  
thanks.

O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable  
Repose,

Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and  
beast

With purpose known only to Thy own delight;  
And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us  
from within

To bring us happily through adventures great and  
small,

And eventually to our end in Thy boundlessly blissful  
Self.

O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama  
Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,  
Frightful predicaments, and uproarious

denouements!

Yet, in the end, we all awake to know one eternal  
Self,  
The Dreamer of this dream, our ever-undisturbed  
Reality.  
Always unperturbed, Thou art forever untouched by  
time,  
As the patient sky is ever untouched by the passing  
clouds.  
We are where we have always been in truth, never  
separated  
From our constantly unfolding, ever undivided Self,  
Where all the fervent lives o'erpassed, like dreams,  
Once left behind in waking, hastily retreat from view,  
Revealed as the flimsiest of transient illusions.

In waking, we are one in Thee, O Hari!  
And in Thee, *as* Thee, we have always been.  
Never imprisoned as we thought in separate forms,  
Once reawakened from our dreams, we know our  
Ever undivided and eternal Identity as Thee.  
In blissful folds of snow-white radiant Eternity  
We rest as Thee in peaceful oneness and joy.  
But while I live in pretended separation from Thyself,  
Let me now offer my song of grateful thanks to Thee,  
Who art the Life that lives me, my secret pride and

joy;

For it is Thou who hast made Thyself as me.

Dear Father, all that Thou hast made is good,  
And all Thy beauteous forms sing praise and thanks  
to Thee.

Then, let me uplift my voice in song as well

To glorify in praise my gracious Lord:

O Hari, all praise be to Thee in Thy heavenly glory!

All praise be to Thee in Thy universal pageantry of  
form!

My head is bowed in loving thanks and worship,

Knowing Thou art all and more than all.

Thy grace to me is beyond what my voice can tell.

I can but offer thanks, with hands held high, to Thee,

My ever kind and gracious Lord.

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