

SPIRITUAL  
INITIATION  
AND THE  
BREAKTHROUGH  
OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS

THE BOND OF POWER



JOSEPH CHILTON PEARCE

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# SPIRITUAL INITIATION

AND THE

# BREAKTHROUGH

OF

# CONSCIOUSNESS

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## THE BOND OF POWER

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JOSEPH CHILTON PEARCE



Park Street Press  
Rochester, Vermont

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*To*

*Shelley Scott Mullenix  
whose persistent letters  
led the way*

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The force that through the green fuse drives the flower  
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees  
Is my destroyer.

And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose  
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever . . .

from

“The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower”

DYLAN THOMAS

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Taking the form of a bird,  
He sings in the trees . . .  
Through Him, the buried seed sprouts into a plant.  
Through Him, the hair grows on your head . . .  
Whatever you do, it is only through Him . . .  
He is the source of all your actions . . .

from

*Reflections of the Self*

MUKTANANDA

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# Contents

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Introduction

I Playful Insight

II The Genesis of Genius

III The Order of Things

IV Instruments of Mind

V Keys and Locks

VI The Biological Plan

VII Form and Content

VIII The Error-Correction Error

IX The Great Vaccination

X Creative Imagination

XI When Lightning Strikes

XII Meeting of Minds

XIII Mantra

XIV Eternity and Time

XV Vertical Alignment

NOTES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

OTHER BOOKS BY JOSEPH CHILTON PEARCE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ABOUT INNER TRADITIONS

BOOKS OF RELATED INTEREST

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## Introduction

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In some off-guard moment, a thought which illuminates new territory can explode in our heads and change the shape of our thinking and our lives. This “postulate which arrives full-blown in the brain” is a function of mind which holds the key to our nature, development, and fulfillment.

This phenomenon is rare. It comes as creative inspiration, scientific discovery, the Eureka!, the mystical revelation, the conversion experience. Its source has been a matter of debate. Trace the function to its source, though, and the mystery of our brain, mind, creation, and creator unfolds. The postulate is like a thread which, pulled from the woof and warp of our reality, unweaves that fabric and leaves us the threads from which reality itself is woven.

The problem with tracing the roots of creative insight is that thought, no matter its strength or brilliance, is not sufficient for the task. The postulate-revelation doesn't arrive in the brain as thought but as the materials *for* thought. Thought is but a tool of the function and seems only peripheral (though vitally) involved.

Revelation is as valid a term as postulate, since new information seems revealed to our mind, rather than thought by it. The postulate seems to arise from some deep recess of mind, not brain. I will use the term *insight* hereafter, since it is a “seeing” from within, even when projected without.

For instance, Kekulé, the famous chemist, “saw” a ring of snakes with their tails in their mouths directly in front of him, for a historic instant. Translated into the language of his profession, this configuration gave us the benzene ring, basis of all modern chemistry (for good or ill).

Insight seems extracerebral, an intrusion into our awareness. It flashes into us always in some moment out of mind, never when we are busy thinking about the subject involved. The great mathematician, William Hamilton, received his insight into the Quaternion Theory while crossing the bridge into Dublin one morning. The solution arrived in that instant when thought of quaternions was the furthest thing from his mind.

Insight seems enormously powerful when it arrives. At times it breaks right through our thinking and ordinary perceptions. This power gives insight its numinous, mystical edge of awesomeness and conviction to its recipients. This power emboldens us to act on the revelation in spite of its novelty and improbable nature, and gives us the strength to carry it into the common domain against odds.

Insight seems a *grace*, that which is given freely rather than made by our effort. Einstein spoke of his insights arriving like flashes of lightning which, though they lit up the landscape of his mind for only an instant, forever after changed its shape. The only thing which can change the nature of our thought is an energy more powerful than that thought. So there are different modes of mental experience and the difference lies in the levels of energy involved.

Ordinary thinking, our everyday “roof-brain chatter,” is a weak-energy emergent of our brain, while insight is surely more powerful. That is why the insight function isn't reversible, to be repeated by formula. Our ordinary thinking can (must) prepare for insight, respond to it, but can't manufacture it. A weak thought can't produce a stronger one, but it can attract it.

Nothing that we can do will insure the arrival of insight, yet insight comes to us only when we are passionately involved in the subject matter concerned, and have thoroughly prepared for its coming. Kekulé, for instance, had passionately sought for the secret of the benzene ring. Hamilton had spent fifteen years searching for the mathematical key to the quaternions before his bridge-revelation. Einstein, as a young man, had set out with a passion to find some unity of time, space, and matter.

William Blake said “Mechanical excellence is the vehicle for genius.” Genius is our personal reality of insight. Insight is the grace given, the stuff of genius, but a grace had at the price of passion, unbending intent, will, hard work, and tenacity.

In his mature years, Mozart’s mechanical excellence was so perfected that his genius could speak in direct insight. He would receive a commission for a new symphony and the work was quite likely to fall into his head as a gestalt, arrive full-blown in his brain, twenty minutes of music in an instant out of time. He then had the arduous task of translating that moment out of mind into the myriad of notes which could, in turn, be translated by others to make the symphony sound in the actual world.

A pianist friend of mine was preparing to play his favorite Mozart sonata in concert one evening. He leaned back to immerse himself in the nature of that work, and experienced the entire sonata as a single “round volume of sound.” Every note, phrase, and nuance was there, perfect and complete in that instant out of time. The experience was numinous, of a religious, mystical tinge, and had a profound effect on my friend. He had, perhaps, shared the sonata’s original nature as insight and revelation.

The task of translating insight often proves as great as the work necessary to bring it about. Hamilton spent fifteen years on the quaternions *after* his insight. Kekulé’s translation bridging the symbolism of a ring of snakes to the hard data of chemistry was not simple, nor was Einstein’s final neat equation spelled out in that original lightning bolt.

Back in 1958, I had a minor insight which followed, in my own minor way, the classical pattern of all insight. My insight was, in effect, a glimpse into the mechanics of insight itself. Being of a slow mind (and with four children to raise), it took me some twelve years to finish a translation. The end result was my book *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*. In that book I outlined a fourfold procedure for use in any creative venture, discovery, or transformation experience resulting in insight. Since the “formula of creativity” is a way to trace insight to its roots, I will summarize it here:

First, to entice insight into our lives, we must be caught up in some passionate quest. (No dilettantism here.) A certain intensity of purpose must be generated which finally swamps our switchboard, absorbs all our attention, rules out our lesser goals and passions. Then we must work for the mechanical excellence which alone can serve as the vehicle of our genius. We must gather the materials related to, and develop the abilities needed by, our quest. If an artist, we must perfect the mechanics of our art; as a scientist we must thoroughly search the area of our interest; as philosopher we must gather all possible pertinent knowledge; as spiritual seekers we must immerse ourselves completely in our chosen path. The half-hearted endeavor will leave us with only our weak thoughts and vain imaginings.

Our passionate pursuit, which may take months or years, must feed a massive amount of material into the hopper of our mind/brain. The materials must then at some point “take over,” take on a life of their own, dictate their own ends, overrule even the person gathering them. We must feel subservient to our own pursuit, used by it, incidental to it. This ushers in the “gestation period,” when the mass of accumulated data and/or ability achieves its critical size and power. Then, within that mysterious realm of insight, the revelation will form. Maybe.

In order to unfold as revelation in the brain, insight must get thought out of the way, at least for the brief instant needed. So the insight arrives in some moment of suspended thought, or simply pushed thought briefly aside.

Only an instant is needed for insight to break through since it comes always as a single unit, not as some digital breakdown. Insight is always complete and perfect in its single instant’s appearance, for it is a wholeness, or a power, that can’t be divided. It appears in all-or-nothing form.

The final stage is our translation of that insight into the common domain. This task may be frustrating, for verbal thinking is a weak tool for handling such power. Our translation is often clumsy

and may seem a poor substitute for the pristine purity of our original vision. The numinous power the revelation generally sustains us in our attempts, however, and the final expression in a language the measure of our genius. The greater our mechanical excellence, the stronger our intelligence, the greater the possibilities our genius can express through us.

In recent years, research has indicated a division of labor in our mind/brain, between spatial whole and digital breakdowns. This is the well-worn theory of right and left brain-thinking. Our preoccupation, indeed isolation within, left-hemisphere, or digital, analytical “take-apart” thinking has been the subject of much speculation. While insight clearly indicates a mode of unity-thinking, contrast to analytical thinking, a look at the whole procedure shows interaction between the two disparate modes. Insight indicates a greater power than thinking, involves a wider spectrum of mind/brain activity, but synchrony of the two also takes place.

Imbalance of right and left thinking seems to bring about dysfunctions. In my book *Magical Child* I discussed some of the critical problems facing technological countries today. These conditions are apparently brought about by imbalances of thought connected with technology itself. The problems addressed in my book have worsened sharply in the four years since I completed it, until any hope of solution seems remote to our time. (I need only mention the continuing epidemic increase of infantile autism; childhood schizophrenia; brain damage and its mental-physical dysfunctions in general; infant-child abuse; the collapse of the family unit; the increase of suicides in children; the breakdown in classroom discipline and inability of young people to learn; these coupled with a general increase in social collapse and adult confusion.)

Technology is sweeping our earth, and our social-mental breakdown seems an outgrowth of this sweep, indicating a mode of thinking out of balance and out of control. As usual in imbalance, our attempts at redress lead only to extremes equally unbalanced. Technology seems here to stay and the issue isn't how to get rid of it (which we don't want to do even though we sometimes hate it) but how to achieve balance with it.

We refer to left-hemisphere thinking, from which science and technology seem to spring, as “dominant thinking.” We tacitly assume that such thinking is superior; cultures using less stringent modes of logic crumble before this apparently more powerful intelligence.

Intelligence, however, is the ability to interact, and the ability to interact has not increased through technology. It has decreased. We have long spoken of our technological devices as “extensions” of our personal power: telescopes, microscopes, and so on, extend our vision; telephones and radios extend our hearing; machines our muscular power; computers our mental ability; weaponry our survival capacity; chemistry our dominion over insects, disease, perhaps even death someday; and so on.

In practice, though, every technological achievement really undermines, erodes, even replaces, one way or another, our ability it “extends and enhances.” Instead of extending and increasing personal power, our devices sharply reduce it. Any reduction of personal power produces anxiety, and millions of years of genetic encoding and expectancies begin to be shortchanged. Thus the paradox that our anxiety has increased proportionately (in fact, widely out of proportion) with our technological “advances” which should, by all rights, *reduce* anxiety.

For instance, even as we have developed the telescope, microscope, television, and so on, personal vision has collapsed correspondingly. There are peoples whose vision is so keen they can see the rings of Saturn with their naked eyes. Contrast this natural endowment with the records of the “visual health” of school children in Texas:

In 1900, when children did not enter school until age eight, one child in every eight had a visual problem (commonly myopia). In 1907, the age was lowered to seven, and ten years later one child in three was myopic. In 1930, the age of attendance was lowered to six, and myopia by 1940 afflicted 5 percent of all children. In the 1950's, television entered the scene, and by 1962, five out of every six



children were myopic—almost a complete reversal of the original figures in sixty years.

~~Surely no one-for-one correspondence can be established between such statistics and any specific cause; the whole social fabric is involved. Yet the correspondence is perfectly valid for the case in point, and the same case can be made for every aspect of human development and our resulting personal power. For a half-century I have heard the daily reports of thrilling new breakthrough discoveries promising perfect health, wealth, and all but eternal life for all, and have watched the quality of life, and psychological-physical health, deteriorate until we are a society in serious trouble.~~

Learning research finds that anxiety is the great enemy of intelligence and development. So an increase can be seen as an automatic index of a decrease in intelligence. A major thrust today in the medical-drug industry is for so-called “mind-control” drugs, most of which deal with curbing anxiety and depression. Meanwhile, sociologists still note a striking absence of anxiety and depression in the few preliterate or nontechnological societies left on Earth (and we assume they are disappearing from history from their inability to compete intellectually).

Our personal power seems to be draining right out of us into our machinery and tools. Human survival, development, our autonomy as persons, our long-range genetic goals, all center on the development of ability, which means personal power. Ages of genetic expectancy are built into us and we are conditioned to expect development of personal power. When this vast expectancy begins to sharply erode, anxiety is the only possible result.

Our anxiety is not some passing emotional disturbance, but a biological imbalance flashing in danger-to-survival signals. The result of our anxiety, however, is an increased demand for an increased production of technological “advances” to “extend our powers” and so relieve that anxiety. This creates a neat, double-bind vicious circle since the end-result is always greater loss of personal power and more anxiety, more demand for further gimmickry, and so on. (Technological childbirth is a prime example. Or, observe, since the advent of air-conditioning, hundreds dying during each heat wave when their air conditioners fail.)

The threat of technology is no more from bombs or pollution as this growing loss of personal power and our ensuing collapse into anxiety. Anxiety is singularly intolerable to the brain system, truly swamps the switchboard and stops all processes, as everything in an anxiety-ridden brain bends toward trying to *remove* that anxiety. Anxiety is not some intruder in the mind, though, not some foolish notion or wrong idea. It is a state of mind which acts as a form influencing all sensory and mental content. Anxiety arises from a more powerful modality than ordinary discursive, logical thinking, and its greater energy dwarfs and warps our supposed objectivity. Anxiety aligns our brain into a focus on and service of that anxiety state.

The dominance of left-hemisphere thinking may result then, not from its inherent superiority, but from the anxiety and powerlessness this one-sided mental action produces. This substratum of anxiety in technological man may be the force, or one of the forces, that dominates a less powerful logical system or culture.

Anxiety is peculiarly contagious. It operates below the limen of awareness—it isn't made of thought, but shapes or influences thought. It creates on contact an uneasiness, a disease, a vague wrongness, even guilt. This contagion affects a child immediately, and in the same way infects even the people largely free of anxiety historically. Anxiety is like the Midas touch. Everything the anxiety-ridden mind touches, in its ceaseless push for release from that anxiety, turns into that from which release is sought. All Captain Cook needed to do was touch on some preliterate people and the seeds of that culture's destruction were sown.

Teilhard de Chardin spoke of the Earth as a thinking sphere. Perhaps left-hemisphere thinking characterizes the West, as has been suggested, while some aspects of right-hemisphere thinking are found in some Eastern and preliterate societies. Is it too fanciful to speak of the Western world, with

its take-apart thinking, as the equivalent of the left hemisphere of this thinking sphere of Earth?

~~Needless to say, both modes of thinking are valid and needed, yet either is troubled if dominant.~~ Right-hemisphere thinking can lead to stasis, avoidance of concrete thinking, a retreat from the realities of the physical world. Left-hemisphere thinking can lead to splitting-apart to the point of fragmentation and chaos. A balance between the modes is obviously desirable, the subject of many recent books, and a rather remote possibility.

Carl Jung, on his return from a visit to India in 1937, observed that the Hindu didn't seem to think his thoughts as we do in the West, but "perceives his thought" as though thought were ready-made outside the brain and simply viewed like any sensory act. Indeed, Jung's notion agrees with Hindu and yogic theory that thoughts are not originated in the brain, but are perceived from a stream of impressions impinging on the brain.

At issue here is not the merit of Western and Eastern logics, but a larger definition of mental experience. The relation of mind, brain, and world is not a one-way street. Traffic moves on many levels and incorporates a surprisingly wide terrain. Insight is surely a perfect example of a level of thought not generated by our ordinary brain process. So the suggestion of a perceptual background which includes thought as one of its components is strange to us and academically suspect, but demonstrated in insight and can be experienced through meditation.

Brain research indicates that new processes of thought and experience open for us through synchronization of right and left hemispheres of the brain. The attempts of Eastern thought to break into Western logic on some serious level today may indicate the attempt of this thinking sphere of Earth to balance the fragmentations of technology. Because of the way genetic development unfolds and the way enculturation helps mold our whole brain process, a culture can't lift itself out of its own mind-set no matter how destructive that set becomes. Cultural interaction, however, can bail a culture out, much as one person can sometimes help another. So, as our technology absorbs the world, we may in turn be affected positively by that which we absorb.

Surely cultural interaction is often ridiculous on the surface. Technology is exported not by the serious, high and lofty sentiments of a noble science, but the hurly-burly of quick-rich hustlers willing to sell their grandmothers for a nickel. In turn, Eastern thought is represented all too often by atrocious, bizarre opportunists, drop-outs, and ego-maniacs. Yet the West has its true scientific genius, such as the physicist, David Bohm, and the East has its true genius such as the Siddha meditation teacher, Muktananda.

Amid the nonsense of a world of folly, the great syntheses are made by genius, syntheses which sooner or later, with luck, filter down to the level of the common domain. The following pages attempt to outline the mechanics of our disappearing personal power, as modeled within the most complete theory of reality the West has produced, David Bohm's *holonomic movement*, and in the most complete person I have known, that exemplar of personal and bonding power, Muktananda. The issues they present are threefold: insight, ordinary thinking, and the bonding power that underlies these rather polar modes.

There definitely exists in this world a bonding power that can arc the gap and bring us to wholeness. This bonding power, like insight, is directly within each of us, a part of our mind/brain/world function inherent in our very genetic development, and the subject of this book. Our age of professionalization prefers that we take some small fragment of a notion or observation, and exhaustively research and present the absolute-final-last-word on it. This is not practical here. Our bonding power doesn't lend itself to so precise a definition. My intent is to point toward a radical shift of orientation available through meditation; the nature of our personal power possible through meditation, and its possible remedial use by our culture. My intent is limited, but the scope encompassed is extravagant. If I suggest certain lines of thought but leave them hanging, so be it. I can only invite the reader to carry

through.

~~No synthesis of East-West thought is even suggested here. Such is beyond my area of competence (Furthermore, two Sanskrit words in succession put me to sleep.) Nor do I attempt some kind of sympathetic overview of meditation systems and teachers. The results of my four-year plunge in meditation have been so far-reaching for me I haven't the slightest interest in exploring other systems. Why go window-shopping when you have already made an improbably successful purchase? Nor do I attempt here some eclectic, dilettante's survey to show that all meditation roads lead to some grand meditation-Rome. I don't believe they do.~~

From the standpoint of Western logic, serious logical problems appear in the theory of Siddha meditation. I leave such problems out here not because I have lost my logical discrimination but because my task is to point toward the function, the bond of power involved. (Sufficient task, that Siddha meditation is a way of unlocking our lost personal power and establishing our bond with the matrix of our life. It works in spite of logical problems, and workability is what counts. Like the bumblebee who, according to the laws of aerodynamics, can't fly, flies remarkably well, Siddha meditation works in spite of—and even within—our Western logic, or logical box.

Mixed in with our logic is a phenomenon of mind called “psychological distance.” This is a kind of safety factor that lets us doublethink. For instance, I had an aunt who loved anything antique “primitive.” Even as she eschewed all vulgar, modern trash, she clasped to her bosom the awful old pieces of whittled-out junk if she thought them sufficiently *old*. No matter that it was without taste, form, art, or beauty; psychological distance and a few worm holes gave any object all the aesthetics it needed for her.

The same psychic-distance allows us to attribute greatness, even sainthood or divinity, to someone sufficiently long-dead. But a personal investment, indeed *risk*, seems involved in admitting greatness, saintliness, or divinity, to someone in the flesh. This is acutely so if that person is accessible, and when we know that person will immediately challenge us to change, to fundamentally transform our life.

Psychic-distance allows us to entertain talk of change. How we love to dabble in human potential, spiritual searches, personal growth-development proposals, consciousness-expansion devices, sensory-enhancement courses, mind-controls, and so on, boosting the morale of, but leaving untouched, our anxiety ridden social-ego. Part of the enormous fascination Carlos Castaneda's Don Juan held for us was in Don Juan's very *unavailability*. Reading of him both fed our hope-syndrome yet kept at bay the awful effort of his transformation. (I don't think this was Castaneda's intent at all, and am convinced we received a great gift from him.<sup>1</sup>) In the pages that follow, this margin of safety doesn't exist and I must risk a credibility gap from the outset.

For the sake of brevity few details are given of the persons involved here. I have used David Bohm's magnificent theory (in my own way) but have left Bohm as a person alone. Bohm was a protege of Einstein's; his book on quantum mechanics is standard text the world over; he is probably one of our century's great creative thinkers and has been a personal hero of mine since his publication in 1957, of *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics*, surely a milestone of Western thought. For the past decade or so he has been closely associated with Krishnamurti, that most Western of Eastern thinkers.

My own life has undergone serious shifts of orientation as a result of my personal experience with Siddha meditation and its teacher, Muktananda. My shift of orientation marks the point of departure for all that follows in this book, yet I have devoted all of three very brief paragraphs to Muktananda (If the reader wants more information on Bohm, Muktananda, or Siddha meditation, a brief bibliography is included.)

A bit of public exposure seems called for to get into the materials involved here. I have condensed

these personal events to a minimum, not to be coy or hint at Castaneda-type esoterica, but for the sake of brevity. ~~The power of the bond is the issue and my personal experiences are mere springboards~~ get to the matter at hand. The episodes of the first chapter help to fill the gap between my last book, *Magical Child*, and this one, and may help to show how the bond of power within us will use any and every means available to get through our stupidities and arrogance.

Aside from the opening, this book isn't autobiographical because the issue isn't so much what happened to me as something that may be trying to happen in the world. We have long envisioned a certain balance of mind, a synchrony of brain hemispheres, and, as within-so without. This may be a global vision as well. But balance is achieved not by our efforts to counter one mode of thought by another. It is achieved through a balancing power, a function of wholeness that is a third force in the apparent dual nature of our mind/brain and our world. This third force is a bonding power which holds everything together, from atoms to brains, a kind of universal *corpus callosum*. This force is of incredible, incalculable dimensions, but we are both functional parts of it, partakers in and of it, and in a very vital sense, "spokesmen" for that whole.

This function broke through the rigidity of my brain and my own brand of psychic-distance buffering. It came through a person because real change can take place only through persons (not histories of theories). And I could grasp it as personal power because it came through a person and not a power.

The remedial process that must follow may have a long way to go within me (sigh!) but my freedom from anxiety has already been dramatic and beneficial beyond statement. My wish, then, is that what happened for me, bringing about this book, might happen for some of those chancing to read this little work. Then this skirmish between my typewriter and myself will not have been in vain.

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## *Playful Insight*

Once a culture or a person collapses into anxiety, no self-effort is effective against that negative power. Only insight has the power to override that negativity and bring the system into balance. Operation bootstrap always fails. Wholeness of mind can't come from any action or thought from a split person, but only through a kind of grace, the power of insight arriving full-blown in the brain.

Whether Kekulé's ring of snakes, Einstein's lightning, or what have you, the function of insight works according to its pattern. Put a sufficient amount of passionate pursuit and collection of materials in, give over personal dominion to those materials, stand back before the insight when it comes, and serve it in its translation you then are empowered to make.

The nature of what we receive is determined by the nature of our output. The genesis of this present book of mine lies in a revelatory experience which came as the culmination to decades of passionate inquiry, even though, as with all insight experience, I surely sowed a wind and reaped a whirlwind. Central to my inquiry was spiritual longing which included religious rejection and rebellion against the idea of God. The focus of these decades finally centered around my work in child development, resulting in my book *Magical Child*, which I completed in 1976. Tangled into this work were strong personal anxiety and a feeling of failure; disturbed recollections on bringing up my four children; the disaster of our fifth child, a cerebral-palsy basket case; emotional residues of the children's mother and her passionate investment in them and early death.

So the book was emotionally charged from the beginning, and I began to give seminars on the subject to get professional feedback and maintain some balance of perspective, since the child theory growing out of the work grew more radical all the time. The seminars were emotionally charged, too, and grew in scope and length until I had to have professional assistance. I hired a full-time director that I might have time to work on the manuscript while flying about the country giving the seminars.

The central issue of the book and the seminars hinged on child play. I knew developmentalists were wrong to consider child play an attempt to evade the "harsh adjustment to reality." I knew the child didn't play to escape anxiety, but eventually could not play because of anxiety. I knew Piaget was right in his imitation-model theory of play but I knew that, too, was incomplete. The problem was, I didn't know what play was all about. I struggled with the issue for months, read all the research available, and became seriously preoccupied with the problem, which seemed a pivot around which all my years of search gravitated.

In the midst of this activity I received a letter from a reader of my previous books. She insisted that I go immediately and meet an Indian "swami," Baba Muktananda. She sent me a picture of the man, though I couldn't wait.

I receive a certain amount of crank mail; sometimes about various saviors knocking at my doorsteps; sometimes from the self-declared saviors themselves; and more often than not accompanied by pictures, that I might gaze upon their person. But this Muktananda's picture leered up at me like some reckless rock singer, with the most insolent eyes I had ever seen. Most of the would-be holy men at least try to look pious and saintly; this character seemed smug, irreverent, and mocking. I felt a distinct flush of irritation, doubled the mess up and threw it in the wastebasket.

without answer.

I had been on a couple of panels with so-called swamis, had met a couple of others accidental (they seemed everywhere), and had found them a fatuous bunch of egotists. Their copious writing seemed boring, vacuous, irrelevant. A friend and I had laughed smugly over the Guru-of-the-Monk Club sweeping the country in the early seventies. I had a serious aversion to the “Indian-trippers” and was pleased with my Western handle on things.

Recently, my former seminar director wrote that back in 1975 she had been going to this very swami, Muktananda, for some six months before taking on the job of my seminars. She had tried, she reports, to tell me something about this man and the remarkable experiences she had undergone as a result of “Shaktipat,” or initiation into his meditation practice.<sup>1</sup> My reaction, she wrote, had been so volatile, hostile, indeed irrational (I remember none of this), that she dropped the subject and did not mention it again. (Why cast pearls before swine?)

Thus, even before receiving his picture in the mail, I had been working with a person influenced by and practicing the meditation of this particular Indian teacher. Though I must leap ahead of my argument somewhat here, let me point out that, just as anxiety is peculiarly contagious, because of its negative power, meditation that follows initiation into a powerful system is equally contagious in a positive way. This positive influence had been at work around me, and receipt of the picture worked as a catalyst. In the weeks following my receipt of it, while I worked on my book, read research, or did my daily tasks, those insolent eyes would occasionally flash to mind, kicking up the same flush of irritation over tricksters rushing over here to bilk the misguided.

A few weeks later, I sat alone at home one evening, reading a new research paper on play. Suddenly the solution seemed to loom up, right under my nose if my brain would just pull together and clarify the matters. But I hadn't the strength of mind. Hours later, drained and defeated by play again, I leaned back, head in hands, and groaned aloud, “Oh God, what *is* the role of play in our life?”

Nothing in my fifty-year history had prepared me for what then happened. Instantly, without warning or transitional change of awareness, shock waves of ecstasy rushed up through my body. Without disturbing my sense of unity, I became aware of each cell in my body as my individual self. There were billions of me in a wild, exuberant dance of joy. Then I felt myself lifted up and hurled. Physically it seemed, like a ping-pong ball, from one end of the universe to the other. My body of billions-of-me passed through galaxies of stars, each star also me, pulsing in rhapsodic interaction. Ecstatic wave succeeded wave, each a crescendo of exuberance surpassing the other, and I shouted over and over: “God is playing with me!”

The experience faded without transition of my ordinary consciousness other than to leave me stunned and overwhelmed. I knew then what the role of play was, though, not just in child development, but in all of our life. I was weeks articulating that knowing into words, and rewrote my book on children from that new point. The three-day seminars I was giving on the subject underwent a corresponding change. I became like a smoothly oiled piece of machinery, indefatigable, calm, and certain. I was apparently convincing to others, too, since my seminars grew in demand. My seminar director, whose job was organizing and running the affairs, soon had bookings well in advance.

Amid all this, my interior world was calm but waiting, in a state of suspension. The revelatory experience of play had gone beyond my ordinary understanding and remained an enigma. My previous experiences had been as a candle in the sun compared to this one, even though it, too, followed the classical pattern of Eureka! or conversion. Surely the event had covered the subject of play, but it had also gone vastly beyond. The impact of the experience was too personal and dramatic to dismiss as simply a postulate-response to the materials of my book; too urgent to my immediate life to dismiss as illusion or “subjective delusion,” as our petty psychologies might say (in evading the issue); and surely the event had been too joyful to simply abandon and forget.

Further, I knew that even the greatest magician can't pull a rabbit out of the hat unless there is first a rabbit in that hat. As Blake said: "A cup can't contain beyond its own capaciousness." What I had perceived was somehow within me and part of me, and so threw my notion of myself into an open spectrum. Something was up. I felt I was waiting for the other shoe to drop.

One day it did, some three months or so after the insight of play. I received an anonymous letter this time truly crank and strange, yet strangely accurate and straightforward. The writer pointed out that I was being surrounded by a web of entanglements that would soon engulf me, that my real trouble was my spiritual longing, and that, unless my heart had totally hardened, I would recognize the truth of his words and immediately drop out of the world of affairs and pursue the true longing of my heart.

By then my seminars had grown in demand; spontaneous groups were forming to promote my chi theory and were calling on me increasingly. I was asked if I would prepare a summary of my arguments to present to the Senate committee in charge of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; to the California senators considering a bill for early school enrollment, and so on—while invitations came from educational groups, colleges, and parent groups.

A battle ensued between my calculating brain and my longing heart. One day my heart won out. I drove the sixty miles to the home of my seminar director, burst into tears, resigned from the seminar lecture circuit, left her with the job of processing herself out of a job, deprogramming coming events and doing the best she could with the financial debacle. I gave my daughter (my remaining dependent) over to friends for safekeeping, and left, with no forwarding address. I fully expected never to see any of them, or be heard of, again. Had I not spent my publisher's advance for my child book, I would have scrapped it as well.

Leaving the world of seminars, lectures, applause, and criticism (and the first promise of serious money in my life) had been no sacrifice. The damage done in our "monstrous misunderstanding" at birth and child-rearing was a difficult emotional row to hoe. Far more critical for me, I had no answer to the tragedy at all. Because I had delineated the problem graphically, my audiences projected on me their hope for, and expectation of, deliverance. In this age of professionalism, they looked for the new how-to formula usually sold after the diagnosis, and I had no formula at all. I knew, further, that only a new paradigm, some genius bursting full-force on the social scene, with lightning in his hands, could break the sodden mass of our heavily sedated, comfortably polluted self-destruction. The stage was filled with the blind leading the blind, the pathetic posturings of egos promising other egos a power the ego cannot conceive, generate, or possess. A constant merger of spiritual bankruptcies created the temporary illusion of solvency, for which I hadn't a nickel to invest.

It was some three years before the sequence of events spinning off from my play insight clarified for me. It takes power to understand, even recognize power. The fact that an indescribable bonding power can be awakened in us is perhaps intelligible only to someone who has undergone such an experience and its aftermath, as topology may be intelligible only to an advanced mathematician. And to say that a transformation of one's life can begin just by looking at a person's picture and being irritated by the eyes strains credibility for even the most open-minded.

At any rate, I dropped out of the ordinary world into an extraordinary one. With no notion of what to expect, I drove some 1,500 miles to spend some six weeks with the author of the anonymous letter urging me to break with the world. It was the strangest encounter I have ever had and, seen in retrospect, a necessary preparatory step in the changes happening to me. My self-appointed mentor's sole intent was (rightly) to "knock the bottom out of my mind." He couldn't tolerate it the way it was, and, being of a somewhat violent nature, he did a fair job.

Surely my academic arrogance, intellectual snobbery, cultural chauvinism, and spiritual pride were dealt blows in those six weeks. My mentor had an eclectic spiritual discipline based on the Advaita Vedantas (an ancient Hindu philosophy), Sufism, Tibetan mysticism, and a strong bias toward Carlo

Castaneda and American Indian shamanism. For days and weeks he pounded his synthesis into me, often skipping sleep and food in favor of his rather furious broadside against my “frightful ignorance.”

A near knockout took place in an incredible four-hour encounter one night, alone at an ancient American Indian “power place” some 10,500 feet up in the Big Horn range of Wyoming. My advisor sent me on this several-hundred-mile trip to do a solitary all-night “vigil” there, and as Castaneda-like as it sounds, and at the risk of losing all credibility with the reader, I will relate it.

My first task, on arriving at the ancient site that evening, was to figure a way over or through the impenetrable barbed-wire enclosure the government had installed to keep tourists from carting the whole area away. I was then supposed to sit, all night, in the center of this circle of stones to receive beneficial power supposedly residing there. The task of getting through or over the enclosure seemed impossible, however, and finally silly. I simply couldn’t take the venture seriously, couldn’t understand getting myself into such foolishness, and, though alone, I was a bit embarrassed.

So I gave up, unrolled my sleeping bag in the back of my station wagon, tailgate open, and thought to sleep there, next to the site. A mild breeze cropped up, however, and played around my ears, rather niggling down inside them, preventing sleep. I pulled a hooded sweat shirt on, in spite of the warm evening, but the breeze irritatingly snuck in through cracks. Finally I wrapped a blanket around my head, with an air hole for my nose, but the irritating breeze only grew worse, whipping harder into my ears.

Suddenly the wind exploded into hurricane force and blew me, bodily, out of the car. I thought this ridiculous and impossible, but grabbed hold of the bumper and held on, the situation now a waking nightmare. The nightmare became ridiculous as the wind pulled me, stretched me out like a rubber band, all the way over to the edge of the enormous precipice, some hundred feet away, with its drop of hundreds of feet straight down.

I knew rationally that the situation couldn’t be physically real, since bodies don’t stretch, that I had to be in an “astral” or subtle state. This cool observation helped nothing since the wind was whipping me up and down at the precipice edge, determined, it seemed, to pull me loose from that bumper. I had a momentary “visionary glimpse” of a newspaper filler-item captioned: “Tourist found dead at bottom of cliff at ancient Indian site.” At which point the seriousness of my situation gripped me—how logical the event would seem to my survivors—and I began to pray, fervently, to every member of the heavenly hierarchy referred to in history.

After an interminable period of this, I suddenly snapped back, more or less, into my body, but only as a point of awareness about where my navel is. Above me were two huge thumpings which I eventually recognized as the ventricles of my heart, wildly fast and out of phase with each other. On either side of me were large squashy objects pumping feverishly (my adrenals, I somehow knew) while below me was a big, grapefruit-sized ball of agitation I later assumed was my Chi or Katalpa, considered by Eastern disciplines the center of our being. The whole show was out of synchrony and I felt I was witnessing my body tearing itself to pieces.

To stem the tide I thought of regular deep breathing, which helps stabilize the heart in tachycardia, but I had no connection with my body. I was an observer in it, not ruler of it. I couldn’t find my heart or my lungs. Only after intense effort did I make some connection and get some grip on my breath. It was weak, shallow stuff and responded slowly. Meanwhile I kept up a general running patter, praying for any help any handy deity might care to give me.

Eventually I regained enough control of my body to get under the steering wheel. Every breath and motion seemed a peculiar, slurry, weak, and vapid act, taking place through remote controls that were connected poorly and demanded massive effort. As I got the car going and headed down the mountain, though, fragmentation began to dissipate. I felt more “solid” with each mile. Some twelve miles down I found a parking area, pulled over to sleep, and noticed that it was after two in the morning. My head



was splitting and I was ill. I had first stretched out on my sleeping bag shortly after nine thirty, about four and a half hours before.

In addition to having sent me to my near-demise, my mentor introduced me, of all things, to what he called *Hamsa* meditation, and the *mantra* (a term which is discussed in [Chapter XIII](#)) *Om Nama Shivaya*. These were the core of his daily discipline, and just happened to be the heart of Swami Muktananda's daily practice as well. At first I had feigned a polite tolerance of these foreign notions. Following the Indian power-plant fiasco, however, I could, as Castaneda might say, no longer guarantee myself my old consensus—nor any other. Surely a hole had been knocked in the bottom of my mind and this “Yoga” business slipped in easily enough and became increasingly important and productive.

My mentor couldn't tolerate me, even so, and I felt myself simply an object of his esoteric experimentation. On the other hand, I couldn't deceive myself and go back to lecturing, the blind leading the blind. The Indian power-plant venture had been the negative opposite of the life-giving plant insight still fresh in my mind. I could attribute the play experience to my long work on the subject, but the power-plant affair left me no place to hide. (I still haven't quite pieced that one out.) My rationality was bankrupt. I finally knew just how thoroughly I knew nothing, and I quit.

I retreated to the Blue Ridge Mountains in central Virginia, where my friend, Robert Monroe (you should know his book, *Journeys Out of the Body*, Doubleday, 1971), kindly sold me a well-isolated parcel of land some two miles from the nearest road, telephone, or electric line. Here I built a house and, with my remaining family, settled down to a private quiet life of organic gardening and meditation.

A series of astonishing and rich meditation experiences took place over those three years. My knowing and understanding were enlarged; my mind was thoroughly plowed, harrowed, and readied for replanting. Early in 1979, the same persistent follower of Muktananda, the one who had sent me his picture, wrote yet again. She had just read my third book, *Magical Child*, and urged me again to go and meet her swami, Muktananda. He was, she told me, in this country for his third world tour. To help bridge the gap this time, she sent me some of his books, including *Play of Consciousness*, on the cover of which was that once-irritating picture. The circle was closing. This time I was open, more able to receive. After a slow and casual start, those books engrossed me, every line spoke to me, everything began to make sense.

One evening I was reading Muktananda's little book, *Siddha Meditations*. A powerful visionary insight unfolded before me, ecstatic surges of power carried me beyond myself, but this time to my Self, a part of me I had never so directly encountered before. This lightning bolt proved a point of no return. Blake said: “If a fool persists in his folly he will become wise.” As a sufficiently persistent fool, I had at least the wisdom to suspend my folly long enough to go check out this man. If he could apparently, wreak such happy havoc on my nervous system from a distance, what might direct contact hold in store?

### *The Genesis of Genius*

I approached the Indian “holy man” with an openness that would have been difficult had my own inexplicable “power experiences” and three years of meditation not prepared the way. Even so, I found the trappings of Muktananda’s environment, which he carries with him like a turtle shell, alien and esoteric. Few accommodations were made to ease a stranger across the cultural barriers. It was sink or swim from the beginning. The evening program, open to the public supposedly as an introductory bridge, proved a solid two and a half hours cross-legged on the floor endurance test, of Hindu rites and Sanskrit chants designed, it seemed to me, to separate the wheat from the chaff at the outset.

Muktananda seemed at one moment icy, hard, and remote; the next unbelievably warm and loving. Magnetism and charisma, the stock-in-trade of the public figure, are not applicable to him. There was, though, a breaking inside me, some snap of a high-tension defensive wire, and sense of impending recognition on approaching him. I am familiar enough with projection to realize my own needs were looking for a target, but an obvious power radiated from him in turn.

Muktananda’s words seemed conventional enough in some ways, radical and improbable in others. He reiterates, in dozens of ways, that: “God dwells within you as *You*. Worship your Self, honor your Self.” Equally, he balances this with: “See God in each other. Welcome each other with love.” This inner-outer command summarized his position and one is likely to ask: So what’s new? Actually, “worshiping your Self” sounds strenuously heretical to Western ears, even as that capitalized *Self* begins to take on definition.

Ordinarily I would have been ill at ease over the naive, open, and unembellished truisms I heard, yet here the force seemed tied up in those phrases. Nothing else would have matched the charged atmosphere or strange setting, and over the following days the word *God* began to move from the realm of a slight cultural embarrassment and safe abstraction into a heady, overwhelming presence. The life-long generalization grew specific; the abstract grew concrete. Deep within, the notion reeled about: “Good God! It might be true.”

There are many kinds of genius, and genius is the issue here. There are people in the world who are simply plugged into a different circuitry, one at a radical remove from the ordinary. I knew a mathematical genius once and he was different. It wasn’t just that he could do tricks in his field, his mind-set had been changed in some way (if only in relation to his field). That there can be spiritual genius, a mind-set at a radical discontinuity with the average, is not so farfetched. Spiritual genius can arise, even in our country. I have known such a person. He remained largely anonymous, since he had no “lineage,” or tradition as in India, but had emerged with abilities quite outside the ordinary and wisely, cloaked those abilities carefully.

Like the insight-postulate, genius arrives full-blown in the brain, but only in a well-prepared one. The genius always goes beyond the outer limits of the known and possible. Genius is a created effect drawn not from the commonsense world available to the ordinary, but from mind’s imaginative creativity. Periodically, through the same insight function that brings us great art or discovery, a “postulate in person” arises, an absolute balance of mind/brain, body, world, and creation itself.

Genius appears from areas of intense social involvement along a particular line, just as the Eureka

insight results from a high level of passionate personal investment. The same processes are at work in all cases. If the same format is followed, the same source is tapped.

An intense and prolonged activity, generated by a sufficient number of people along *any* specific line, will eventually produce its peak and even its genius. The postulate in person will arrive full-blown on that social scene. Bach, a fifth-generation musician in an era of intense musical activity, was such a product. But Bachs do not appear in Eskimo tribes. (Eskimos have their own art and genius.) The law of development is that like attracts like. A culture is like a person in that, "To him who has it is given; to him who has not, it's taken away—even that little he had."

Arthur Koestler and others point out that India is a tight-packed mass of nonsense, hysteria, superstition, religious mania, silliness, and squalor. What needs to be added is that India also represents ages of accumulated investment along the lines of her perennial, absorbing national interest, which is knowledge of the psyche and spirit (i.e., psychology and/or spirituality).

Three-quarters of a billion souls are massed into that subcontinent, with an estimated eight million of them at any one time directly involved in full-time spiritual pursuit: the swamis, sannyasis, mendicant monks, sadhus, renunciants, and general holy men. All of which, backed by the supportive enthusiasms of at least some remainders of that vast populace, results in a lot of energy concentrated on a single issue. No matter what the focal point, this much energy must, by the very nature of creative thought, produce accordingly. There arise in India periodic high peaks of output in keeping with the nature of that input. That is, spiritual geniuses appear regularly, generation by generation, and always have.

In India, the genius doesn't appear among the professors or philosophers of the universities, nor among the hoi polloi who hawk their wares before the tourists, research psychologists, or religious dilettantes seeking sensation. The genius crops up largely unsung and in remote places. Often he is known only to a few. He may choose anonymity and have to be sought out. Few of these geniuses feel impelled to teach. They simply want to be left alone to *be* the fantastic state of experience open within them. Rarely is one appointed by his Guru to *be a* Guru (more on that term shortly), and only in the last hundred years have a few been directed to take Yoga to the West.

Meanwhile, as with any other activity on earth, along with the genius appears a host of near-misses, well-meaning but weaker talents, imitators, outright frauds, and scoundrels. These (perhaps the latter in particular) ape the graces of the genius and clamor about on the public scene, rather muddying the waters. All of this is part and parcel of the way any human activity functions. At best we have many fine technicians but few scientists; thousands of piano teachers and students, few Horowitzes and Rubinsteins; Einsteins arise from an army of able but lesser men, and so on. Thus, in some way, a shaggy swami of questionable repute, rushing over here to cash in on a good thing, is wasted. Like like attracts like, false teachers trap false students, to each his own as time filters chaff from wheat.

So, among the tawdry and hilarious show of the Guru-of-the-Month Club's decade of display: child gurus pushed into carnival prominence by zealous parents; ninety-day wonders from Brooklyn back from an excursion-rate trip to India as self-declared enlightened gurus seducing the throng of panting young things throwing flowers in their paths as they write books on cosmic orgasm; burned-out psychedelics shaving their heads and donning robes; stodgy pedants quoting dead Scripture while stuffing themselves on fried chicken; the real Guru just does his thing and bides his time.

Between the genius and the ordinary is a fundamental gap—of passion, esprit, daring; a certain ruthless tenacity and willingness to push beyond the known and risk one's very being. This discontinuity threatens us. We sense that the genius has powers of mind and character that we don't have, and his very presence behooves us to move beyond our ordinary self. This is why the genius is so often stoned by the populace. This is also why, without genius, we sink into lethargy and inertia.

The denial of genius is the denial of possibility beyond what we know and consider safe and

acceptable. Our denial locks us into the confines of our fixed system. Back in the 1950's, I saw a corporation advertisement which boasted: "No genius here! Just solid technicians working together solve the problems of science." I knew then that we were headed for trouble, a slow slide toward the idiot-end of the bell-curve graph. Only when our cultural model comes from outside the limits of the known and possible, that is, from genius, can our current system even maintain a middling average sanity or stability.

Blake said: "He who calumniates great men calumniates God." Yet our pettiness continually prompts us to heap calumny on great men, lest we be challenged by them to bestir ourselves and emulate them. There is, as well, a chronic "academic stoning" of great men by small academic minds. (One thinks of Noam Chomsky, a veritable canon of a thinker, target of decades of peashooting academic jealousies; or so brilliant a person as Carlos Castaneda being "exposed" by petty nitpickers.)

Blake also observed that: "Genius can't exceed itself." There are no lesser or greater geniuses, nor is there any historical progression of genius. They don't quantitatively add to a pool that makes each greater. Genius is a mind open to a certain continuum of mental activity and either you are there or you aren't. This hardly means that all geniuses are alike. None of them are. All roads of genius do not lead to a genius-Rome.

With a spiritual genius there is the brass to "embezzle God's talents" (as Northrop Frye put it<sup>1</sup>), to plunge into an area of mind and experience considered sacrosanct, forbidden, or critically dangerous (perhaps for good reason), and the capacity to wrest from that realm the highest prize and bring that back as a boon to all who dare accept the gift. The genius of a particular art or profession seems called on to risk his professional life or image, but the spiritual genius risks his *very* life and structure of mind/brain. Just as a mathematical genius breaks into a realm where he interprets his reality mathematically and sees things in a unique way, so the spiritual genius breaks into a realm that encompasses the total capacity of mind/brain and creation. He can then range the whole continuum of experience. This is called "self-realization" because that continuum is found within the human mind/brain and (reportedly) is recognized as one's own, actual being, or Self. (The Australian Aborigine's Dream-Time incorporated some aspects of this capacity, which is obviously as old as mankind itself.)

The problem is, variations of even a minor sort can produce novel effects in our reality. A person can undergo extraordinary capacity-changes: a religious rebirth; synchronization of brain hemispheres; opening some aspect of continuum consciousness; become able to "read minds"; pull nonordinary stunts, materialize objects or even move them without touching them; or even undergo actual "realization" in its Eastern sense—and still be completely unable to teach or guide another person. Yet the moment someone breaks through into some mental area outside the norm, he tends to cash in on it and rush out to the marketplace and set himself up as a big shot, a Guru.

Surely few terms are as sullied as *Guru*. The word is Sanskrit for dark-light. It stands for a function of development within us for moving, or maturing, from ignorance to knowledge, or from "darkness to light." The Latin word *educare*, from which we get education, meant essentially the same thing—leading forth into knowledge. *Guru* refers to a developmental process within us, and development and ability is the issue at stake.

The development referred to has a twofold aspect: *awakening* a particular natural potential in us (which is always the first task of a teacher), and *guiding* us in the development of that potential (the ongoing aspect of any teacher or teaching).

The difference between Muktananda and an ordinary teacher, or between his Siddha Yoga and any other teaching, is the potential which is awakened and developed. Muktananda is called a *Siddha* because he carries on an exceedingly old and unbroken line of teachers who, through hard work and discipline, developed the maximum potential of the mind/brain. And nothing less than this ultimate

this universality, is the potential which Muktananda evokes in others, and which he guides through ongoing development.

This potential which the Siddha can awaken in another is an inner power that, like any other potential, lies dormant *until* awakened. And it can only be awakened by one who has been not only awakened (which is comparatively simple since so natural to us), but has developed the power involved (which is a bit more of an accomplishment). The power is called *Shakti*, the process of awakening is called *Shaktipat*, and the awakening is almost useless, in fact, it can dissipate, unless there is then an ongoing guidance, or Yoga, to develop the power.

Anyone with good intent and some intelligence can become a teacher. But one doesn't *become* a Guru. One is chosen to be a Guru by a Guru. (This, unfortunately, is a very rare event. There are probably less than half a dozen of them in the world at any one time.) The simplest test of a Guru is the most direct: *Can* he awaken one's personal power, that is, deliver Shaktipat, and then guide the awakened power in its development? The student or disciple is the criterion, the yardstick: Does he undergo transformation that specifically changes his relations with this world for the better?

Three short paragraphs concerning Muktananda's history will suffice: he left home at fifteen without a cent or backward glance, knowing exactly what he was going to do. He spent twenty-five years of intense personal discipline and study in all branches of Yoga, or spiritual discipline. By age forty, he was a "successful" Yogi, with national fame and the appropriate following. And a gnawing discontent, for he knew that he was not complete. He was led to Nityananda, one of the most obscure but strange, but apparently powerful yogis of history. And, at forty, an age when such is difficult for the male animal (particularly for an utterly confident—and contemptuous of incompetence—proud, arrogant, headstrong, egotistical, and truly intelligent person as Muktananda was), he switched his life-role, became the disciple again; submitted himself completely to Nityananda, and made a second radical break with life as he had known it.

For nine years Muktananda struggled, in solitude, with the inner battle of transformation that Nityananda set for him. Every few years he would return, only to be dismissed at a glance by Nityananda, as "half-baked, unfinished." The struggle of those years is a classic of the harrowing, often frightful and dangerous journey within, as a brain's entire conceptual process undergoes reorganization; a willful collapse into chaos out of which a radically different process of mind can emerge. I refer in the Notes to the fact that Muktananda's body changed radically, too, as had happened to all the Siddhas.<sup>2</sup>

The result of these nine years was not just enlightenment in its classical sense, but, far more, the ability to deliver Shaktipat, the ability to literally just reach out and touch someone (or even think about them, speak to them) and awaken personal power within them. Shaktipat was apparently Nityananda's goal for Muktananda, and, eventually, before his death in 1961, Nityananda passed on to Muktananda his power, his "office" as Guru, the practice of Siddha Yoga (the discipline of the age-old lineage of "perfected masters"), and the command to take Shaktipat and Siddha Yoga to the world.

The issue of Muktananda's genius is the issue of Shaktipat. Siddha Yoga itself has been called "whatever happens around Muktananda" and is peculiarly hard to define since it continually redefines itself. In fact, it defines itself around the particular individual involved. Siddha Yoga is an example of a fixed goal and highly flexible plan for getting to that goal. The goal is realization of one's inner Self, which means one's own, unique unity with the creative process. The plan is anything and everything necessary to that particular person for getting to that goal. The goal is absolutely within one's mind, so the way for getting there also comes from within, and Muktananda is the catalyst bringing the development about.

Meditation is the term used for this Yoga, although chanting out-weighs actual sitting-still meditation in practice. And Shakti is the power always at stake. Since Shakti is a personal-universality

energy, Muktananda's Siddha Yoga is more a *tantra*, a generative force, than a Yoga in its classical sense. Muktananda continually links everything he does with ancient Scripture out of his background and lineage, but what is actually unfolding around him may be quite unique in history. The Yoga discipline involved with Muktananda is not a way of eventually awakening or developing some personal power, but a critical way of dealing with and controlling a power which almost immediately manifests from within a person coming into contact with Muktananda.

Leonard Smith, a young heart surgeon from Gainesville, Florida, was disturbed over a tendency toward emotional hardness in his profession, brought on by the continual exposure to death. He took up meditation as a possible means to maintain some openness and empathy with his patients. Eventually he was led to meet Baba Muktananda. During an intensive (an initiation into Siddha meditation) in August of 1979, Smith reports:

"Baba grabbed me by the bridge of the nose and held on. I seemed to sense him saying 'Stop thinking and just experience this.' I saw blue electricity going from Baba's arm up to his head, and then saw my own Self as a body of blue energy."

Leonard's rational, academic mind resisted strenuously at this point, with the usual arguments about illusion, hypnotism, and such. Then he saw his right arm, transparent blue, with every tissue, nerve, and blood vessel visible, ". . . clinging to the branch of a tree, holding on." (This was a graphic demonstration of one's academic ego holding on to its position of dominance.) "I felt each finger being pried loose, one at a time, until suddenly I snapped, like a rubber band, into Baba's head. There I found myself in an immense vacuum—an infinite space. A wave of emotion swept up from my belly, and I wept for fifteen minutes or more."

This was, Smith said, ". . . an archetypal weeping"—he wept for all the suffering and death in the world. He was ". . . cleaned out, left calm and peaceful" afterward. His life changed markedly from that moment. He became centered, calm, full of love and empathy for his patients, continually more skilled at his profession, a source of strength for those around him. (And he returns at every opportunity to continue his ongoing relationship with Baba.)

Smith's story is a classical account of Shaktipat, a personal power so unknown in the West, sapped as we are by our technology, that a credibility gap looms. The new holonomic theory by physicist David Bohm offers a splendid model of this power, and since genius brings us that which is beyond the outer limits of our known, we need all the help we can get.

Shakti is the bonding-power which holds things together. The Guru is this bond of power and its development in us. We have, in this century, monkeyed around with some of the outward, physical manifestations of the bond, as it holds physical matter together. To balance things and survive our tampering, we need to turn to the inner form.

I recall as a youngster hearing, with awe, that a single lump of coal contained enough energy to run a steamship for a year, were atomic energy to be tapped. In 1956, David Bohm proposed that if we compute the "zero quantum energy in a single cubic centimeter of empty space" (which is about new to nothing at all), we would come up with  $10^{38}$  ergs, the explosive power of roughly ten billion tons of uranium fission. Bohm spoke of that vast energy in a speck of nothing as "currently unavailable," but in his youthful optimism, assumed that eventually we would tap into it.

Unlocking the comparatively small energy in the atom has cast a pall of gloom over our world. We might think, God help us, should Bohm's early proposal bear fruit. Judging from Bohm's thoughts in the last few years, however, I think he may have intuitively touched on the realm of Shakti back then—that is, power as itself.

I once envisioned a radical mathematics unlocking Bohm's  $10^{38}$  ergs. I know now that an equal radical turning within is what is involved. The power of the Guru which can bind the scattered fragments of our life into unity is the issue. If the split atom has cast a pall of gloom over our world

the awakened Shakti within dispels that gloom. Shakti is the energy of creation itself. Allowed to develop within, this energy always moves for unity, it can order into coherence our mind/brain split asunder by the force of madness about us, and bring us into balance with this awesome universe we carry within our skulls.

## *The Order of Things*

David Bohm's new paradigm for physics offers a splendid model for explaining personal power and Shaktipat. Bohm's model fits the ancient theories of Siddha psychology with fine precision and marks a significant link between Western science and Eastern spirituality.<sup>1</sup>

The problem facing physics today is that there are no particles, no basic building blocks of matter as always presumed. All that can be found is an underlying vibratory energy. Matter manifests, Bohm proposes, through the interweaving of different energy vibrations. Bohm calls the vibratory energy out of which this interweaving manifests the *implicate order*, since all possibilities are implied within it. Bohm calls that which is manifest out of this energy (the physical universe) the *explicate order*, the which is made explicit.

Anything manifested in the explicate order is *enfolded* in the implicate order. By "enfolded" Bohm means that anything in the physical universe exists within the energy of the implicate order in a potential state, rather as a tendency toward expression.

For instance, consider the way insight breaks into the brain: Kekulé's theory of the benzene ring appeared to him first as a ring of snakes in a particular formation. We speak of this as symbolic of the eventual benzene ring. We could say that the benzene ring and the entire world of chemicals resulting from it was implied in Kekulé's dream. His vision, then, was the medium between the implicate order and the eventual explicate order of actual, man-made, and manipulated chemicals.

Mozart's initial perception of a symphony as an instant's gestalt was the transition between the implicate order's possibility and the explicate order's pages of musical manuscript which could be interpreted by others and turned into music. The symphony was enfolded within the implicate order and unfolded in time and space in the concert hall. When my pianist friend perceived the entire sonata he had experienced it as a kind of musical grace, an insight arriving full-blown in the brain, perhaps originally conceived by Mozart, enfolded within the implicate order awaiting its unfolding in time.

The difficult part of Bohm's theory for us Westerners, and its direct correspondence with Eastern thought, is that the implicate order is *consciousness*. The energy out of which anything and everything is made is conscious energy, which, of course, calls for a redefinition of consciousness. Any definition we attempt to make of this power is, however, of necessity drawn from our physical world. And the physical world, or explicate order, is of a different order of energy and so its terminology doesn't fit.

The power of consciousness, or the implicate order, is far greater than the power of the explicate order; far greater than *any* explicit manifestation made out of that great energy. All physical matter is of an essentially weak construction, undergoing a constant process of dissolution and rebuilding. Yet at the heart of matter is an incalculable power, as witness the release of energy in atomic fission.

The entire physical world, with its time and space, results from impulses which manifest by complex mathematical relations of frequencies within the implicate order. The explicate expression can be thought of as an order arising out of chaos through relating frequencies of energy. The chaos is the as-yet-unformed energy of the implicate order. This chaos is not a disorder or confusion but a very orderly potential, perhaps like a steady state of undifferentiated frequency.

The explicate order, the whole physical universe, is only a "ripple" on the surface of consciousness.



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