



*On the occasion of
the 124th birth anniversary of Pujya Shri*

BABUJI MAHARAJ

30th April 2023, Kanha Shanti Vanam





BECOMING YOUR
AUTHENTIC

Self

Dear friends,

The spiritual goal we aim to achieve through Heartfulness practice, as defined by Pujya Babuji, is “complete oneness with God.” The reality of the goal transcends even that description, which represents the limit of our ability to conceive of it. The goal, oneness with God, implies a merger between God and self. For union to occur, there must be a level of identity between two entities: Only like can merge with like. Therefore, the individual must attain a state of qualitative




identity with God. That is why the spiritual path requires that we focus on personal transformation, i.e., becoming progressively subtler finally to match God's ultimate subtlety. Merger is possible only to the extent of our subtlety, the shedding of our personalities' gross or lower aspects. The great masters, therefore, counsel us to improve our moral character. We frame evolution as a progression from animal consciousness to human consciousness and, ultimately, to divine consciousness. To attain higher levels of consciousness, our lower tendencies, emotions, and desires—which are present to some degree in all people due to our shared evolutionary past—must be dropped.

The understanding of the need to transcend lower qualities is not exclusive to spirituality; the entirety of human culture seems to recognize this as a necessity. Human society, under the influence of animal tendencies, becomes violent and tempestuous. Religion has functioned as a regulating force with its twin instruments of fear and temptation, scaring us with threats of hell and tempting us with promises of paradise. Secular society uses the same two instruments of fear and temptation, rewarding selfless virtue with honor and

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punishing vice and selfishness with social humiliation. In one way or another, the same message reaches us from all sides: *Overcome your base tendencies*. Whether our motivation is social or spiritual, we remain under enormous pressure to rise above our lower aspects and express only our virtues. A great burden, then, is placed on the individual who does not know how to overcome the tendencies from which they seek to be free. We come to fear the lowest aspects of ourselves to such an extent that we tend to repress them. The ego rejects these fearsome qualities and segregates them from the outward personality, instead relegating them to the subconscious mind. Yet, these qualities remain within us.




The ego constructs our personality, which defines our conscious identity or persona. Ego is a term used to refer to the knowledge of one's individual existence or identity. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, this concept is known as *asmitā*, which means “I-am-ness.” In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which focuses on action, ego is called *ahaṅkāra*, a term referring to the sense of personal “doership,” a faculty sustained by the knowledge of identity. Both words—*asmitā* and *ahaṅkāra*—are different names for the ego. It is vital to note that the ego, which provides us with the knowledge of self-identity, *is not the real identity itself*. The real identity is the soul—the *purusa* or *ātman*. However, this authentic identity is hidden behind a veil of a false identity—a persona woven by the ego. *Persona* is a term which, in its older Latin formation, meant “mask.” A mask displays a false identity overtly while hiding the actual but covert face beneath it. The persona, therefore, can be understood as an impersonation of the real *Person*—the soul. To mistake the persona for the authentic Person is, according to Yoga, the basic *avidyā* [ignorance] to be overcome. Therefore, Yoga is a process of moving from the persona to the Person. The yogic idea is that the ego creates the overt personality through a process of confounding, or identifying, itself with attributes, objects, and actions—the elements of the persona or false self. For example, when we notice the presence

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of generosity in our hearts, the ego identifies with that noble quality and proclaims, “I am generous.” Generosity is thereby assumed into the persona, and we feel that we are generous. The belief that we are generous now twists our natural generosity into a false display of generosity.

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung devoted much thought to the nature of the individual persona fabricated by the ego. His understanding



of the persona was that it includes both the way we see ourselves and the way we display ourselves to others, like a character assumed by an actor, identifiable by its mask. We are actors who have gotten lost in their roles and forgotten their real identities.

The ego maintains the barrier between the conscious and subconscious aspects of our personality. One of Jung's significant contributions was his insight that the ego is highly selective regarding what it chooses to identify with and what it rejects for inclusion in the persona. What happens when we notice an abhorrent quality in ourselves—cruelty, for example? For a spiritually aspiring individual, their “spiritual” ego will not wish to identify itself with this negative quality. Consequently, this negative quality will not be allowed a place within the conscious persona. What happens instead? The negative quality, cruelty, will be denied and repressed. It will be consigned to the dark recesses of the subconscious, where it will incubate and strengthen. Eventually, it will burst out, perhaps to the great shock of the concerned individual. That which is rejected from inclusion in the persona finds its way inevitably into the subconscious, whether it is a baser animal quality, an unacceptable desire, a taboo action, or doubt in the Master, the system, or God. Jung termed this collection of rejected and repressed feelings the “shadow-self” and stressed the

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necessity of acknowledging its presence, thus integrating it with the conscious persona.

There is a scene from one of *Star Wars* films, *The Empire Strikes Back*, in which Luke Skywalker is instructed by his master, Yoda, to venture into a gloomy jungle to face his deepest fear. Once inside the dark forest, Luke encounters an enemy who is soon revealed to be his own dark side—his shadow self—whom he defeats in battle. The lesson is that we can only overcome our inner darkness by facing it, shining the light of awareness into the darkness of the subconscious.





This idea gives a new depth to Swami Vivekananda's description of spirituality as expanding our thin layer of conscious awareness through the vast oceans of sub and superconsciousness. Expanding our conscious awareness through the subconscious means becoming aware of its contents. We must not allow ourselves to repress our negative qualities but face them instead, truly accepting their presence; we must not be afraid of identifying ourselves with them. Of course, there is






no need to advertise your shadows. Instead, privately acknowledge their presence within you as the first step in transcending the parts of yourself that scare or overwhelm you. The need to confront the shadow-self is not frequently addressed in yogic discourse. For example, one of the reasons that Osho remains controversial today is his insistence on recognizing and respecting the presence of the baser tendencies of the human being and the means he employed to address them. However, we can acknowledge and overcome the shadow-self within us without resorting to morally problematic methods or reinforcing those qualities through their expression.

In his commentary on the tenth maxim, Babuji suggests that we take a few moments at bedtime and, with tearful eyes, sincerely lay our imperfections at the feet of the great Master, imploring for help and forgiveness. Consider what is happening in this scenario: It is nothing but a deep identification with our faults, to such an extent that tears form in our eyes. This single act achieves Jung's ideal of integrating the shadow-self into the persona. With the feeling, "Beloved Master, *this* is what I am," we consign the current persona to his care for dissolution

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People often misunderstand Yoga's suggestion that we cease identification with anything apart from the authentic Self. As a result, they repress what they consider to be unvirtuous or unspiritual. Non-identification means that, whatever we are, we always identify it in relation to the great Master—a relationship of dependence. In all situations and moods, we keep alive the remembrance of our dependence on the Divine. With frankness, internally offer yourself to Him: "This is what I am. Please help me to transform myself." Babuji called this *repentance*. Repentance extends beyond facing our faults and inwardly submitting them to the Master. True repentance is equally an offering of our virtues and noble attributes, for if we are to enter the realm of ultimate purity, we cannot carry *anything* with us, neither the bad nor the good. Babuji urges us to achieve a state of poverty by transferring our entire burden to him, whether that burden consists of spiritual wealth or deficit. As Babuji wrote, when traveling

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by rail, you hand over your heavy luggage to the train guard for ease and convenience; similarly, on the spiritual journey, we must hand over the heavy baggage of the conscious and subconscious self—the persona and shadow—to the Master.

Meditation expands our awareness, allowing us to become conscious of the shadow-self within the darkness of the subconscious. However, it requires courage to confront the shadows within us and acknowledge that they are as much a part of us as the *sattvic* qualities we also possess. Remember that you have the power of the great Master at your back. When you constantly orient yourself toward him and submit both faults and strengths to his care, both the shadow-self and persona will wither away, allowing the authentic Self to merge with its Source and at last attain its original home.

With love and respect,

Kamlesh

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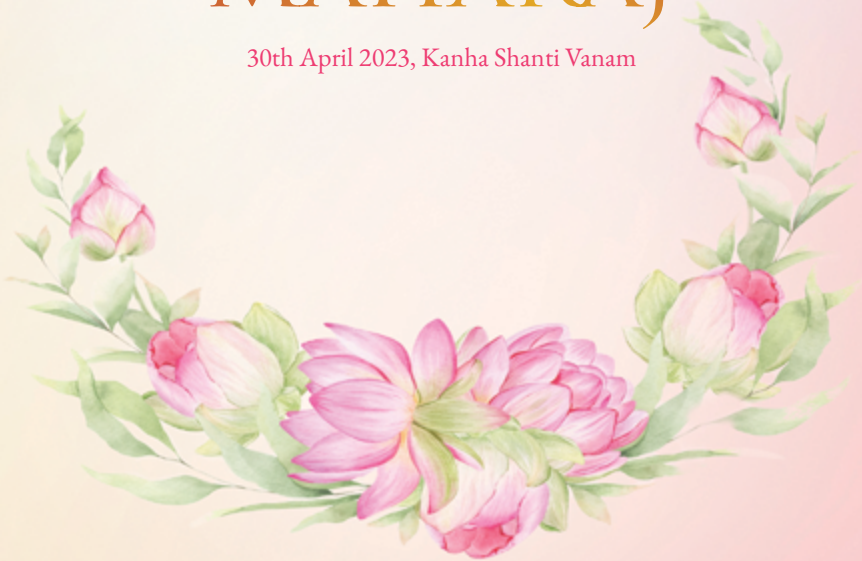




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heartfulness
advancing in love