

Introduction

The Way of Undoing, the very heart of all authentic spiritual paths, is the true way to God and spiritual liberation. Though it is nothing new, it has commonly been overlooked or avoided by spiritual aspirants. Usually, seekers devote their lives to other, less relevant disciplines (such as rituals, blind faith beliefs, and spiritual techniques), and fail to submit wholeheartedly to the great purpose of spiritual life—the Undoing of ego. Spiritual practices can be helpful. But, the Undoing of ego remains the single, indispensable prerequisite for living an enlightened, Godly life—the Life Divine.

Real spiritual life is about the Undoing of ego. It's NOT about getting what you want, solving your earthly problems, etc. If that's what you want from spiritual life, read no further, because this is not for you. It is for those who at least suspect that the search for personal benefit is exactly what's WRONG with life—both practical life AND spiritual life.

We must beat the addiction to self-orientation in order to live in the Spirit. Then and ONLY then can we be SPIRITUALLY fulfilled. Then and ONLY then can we function as true servants of God, and as channels of Divine Love. Why? Because ego stands DIRECTLY in the way of all that is good and Godly. Ego's presumptions of separation and difference keep us alienated from each other, God, and direct experience of spiritual reality.

If you want an alternative to the problems and pitfalls of separate, selfish living, real spirituality is it. But make no mistake about what real spirituality is: it is the Undoing of ego. YOUR ego. No more, no less. And it will always be that. That's the truth. If you want to be liberated from ego, get ready to face the ego squarely, and read on...

The root of all evil

Fortunately, most people understand, at least intellectually, selfishness is the root of all evil. We recognize the terrible social and personal problems caused by gross manifestations of egotism—anger, addictive attachment, neurotic aversion, etc. Unfortunately, hardly anyone appreciates the true depth and extent of the problem. Gross egotism is only the most easily recognized symptom of a deeper disease. Meanwhile, every day, far subtler expressions of ego destroy emotional and spiritual health.

Why don't we enjoy the freedom, unity, love, and lovingness we dream of? *Self-protectiveness* ruins love. *Stinginess* limits giving. *Hyper-control* prevents surrender.

pride cometh before the fall. Almost all achievements and joys of a sublime nature are routinely aborted by aspects of ego—aspects of ego that are, in this day and age, overlooked, accepted—even *fashionable*.

Our selfish little world

In this world, self-centered, live-for-number-one values have become the prevailing philosophy of life. Everywhere you turn, you see the blind pursuit of selfish gains. People are actually surprised—and perhaps suspicious—when anyone acts *other* than in their own self-interest.

But that's only in everyday, material life, right? *Wrong!* Religion and so-called spirituality have become, for the vast majority of people, just another means to achieve selfish goals. Don't believe it? Read on...

The new, selfish spirituality

In recent times, in response to public demand, almost every religion has been adapted to serve selfish purposes. All over the world, spiritual sources—teachers, ministers, self-help authors, alternative healers—have adapted their sales pitch to appeal to the selfish interests of spiritual seekers.

“Hand all your problems to Jesus; he will solve them all.”

“Come to this retreat and receive spiritual empowerments—only a hundred dollars.”

“This meditation technique will open your chakras and clear your aura.”

The result? A warm fuzzy spirituality that pampers the weak, accommodates the lazy, and offers sometimes even miraculous profits to the greedy. This consoling spirituality makes virtually *no* demands on the faithful, for fear the “faithful” will run away!

But people-pleasing spiritual leaders can't take all the blame for leading the public astray. Spiritual seekers themselves are quick to misinterpret the most ego-confronting spiritual truths in ego-friendly ways. For example, “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven” is routinely used to justify the narcissistic pursuit of self-improvement.

The true way is unequivocal on the need for self-surrender. Can there be any mistake about statements like these?

He who loses his life shall gain it.

— New Testament; Christianity

*The Lover is but a dead thing,
the Beloved is all that lives.*

— Rumi; Sufism

*The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day.
The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day.
For one gains by losing and loses by gaining.*

— Tao Te Ching; Taoism

How do such uncompromising statements fit the me-oriented agenda of ego? Obviously, they don't. And neither does *true* spirituality. The usual "me first" values stand in stark contrast to anything that could truly be considered spiritual. Here's the way the me-oriented priorities line up:

First, I work to get what I *need*—to survive economically.

Then, if there's any time or money left over, I'll pursue what I *want*.

Finally, time and energy permitting, I *might* shoe-horn in a little spirituality—but only if it promises to give me what I want.

And also, when it comes to spirituality...

I will avoid what challenges me. I will run from anything spiritual that seriously questions my selfish ways of thinking and living.

The big soul sellout

Self-serving spirituality is far *less* than useless. It perpetuates egotism by distracting us from the real problem, while letting us think we are actually solving it. When we believe spiritual salvation can be obtained at a price *less* than giving up self-centrism, we make a "deal with the devil." *That* little "bargain" costs soul fulfillment.

How tragic, that religion and so-called spirituality have become just another self-improvement strategy. When we convert spirituality to a tool of selfishness, we remove its ancient, essential, and eternal purpose: the renunciation and transcendence of selfishness and ego. Then, the one thing that should have saved us becomes yet another servant of our own downfall. When spirituality joins the selfishness bandwagon, where's the safety net? What will arrest our fall? Self help? Selfish prayers? Church? Not likely!

Would any truly spiritual teaching attempt to seduce people with promises of pain relief, success, pleasure, and material security? No! Sincerely consult any spiritual tradition, or just ask your own conscience. You will hear one clear message: Real spiritual life is not selfish—it is *anti*-selfish. Though selfish pursuits may account for almost the whole of most lives, self benefit has nothing to do with *True* spiritual life. Spirituality is about letting go of selfishness—period!

Selfish saints?

Can you imagine any *truly* spiritual individual being selfish? Of course not! Indeed, selfish evolution is a contradiction. Therefore, even the attempts of a selfish person to become less selfish—when those attempts are still just reactions to the person’s own perceived problem—are flawed at the root. And so are all activities that are based upon self-effort, self-meditation, self-interest, self-improvement. Self-centered living in any form—even “spiritually” selfish living—opposes spiritual progress. As long as personal development is the primary purpose of our existence, none of us can find spiritual fulfillment.

*So long as you seek Buddhahood, specifically exercising
yourself for it, there is no attainment for you.*

— Yung-chia Ta-shih; Buddhism

Spiritual advancement isn’t about personal fulfillment—at least not in the terms that ego thinks about fulfillment. Spiritual success bears no resemblance to worldly success. Spirituality exists to *solve* the problem of ego, not to cater to it. It has nothing to do with self-interest, or furthering (ego) self in any sense.

*They are forever free who renounce all
selfish desires and break away from the ego-cage of “I,” “me,”
and “mine” to be united with the Lord.*

Attain to this, and pass from death to immortality.

— Bhagavad Gita; Hinduism

The true purpose of life

If we’re living right, we’re not living for *ourselves*. Happiness will come as a result of right living, but only as a secondary effect. The rewards of right living are not our appropriate concern. Clearly, being unselfish is good for everyone—including us. Surely God is pleased with that. But, if our main *reason* for being unselfish is our personal benefit, we’re not being unselfish—we’re being selfish. That’s the paradox of right living: The fact that it’s good for us can’t be the primary motivation and still have it be *right*.

The true and rightful purpose of life is self-transcending love and unselfed service. No one can ever love or serve truly while living the life of ego. Ego is unalterably and consistently opposed to real love and loving, and eternally afraid of giving. Love and service are the reverse of the tendency to act in the name of lower self-interest and ego-survival. Love, ecstasy, enlightenment—anything of spiritual value—results *only* from the transcendence of ego. Therefore, spiritual advancement depends on the willingness to live beyond ego.

On the way, in the way

Granted, it is *human nature* to want to improve your circumstances. It is totally *natural* to strive to reduce your suffering, your confusion, your problems, your limitations. It is *natural* to try to increase your safety, your security, your comfort, your satisfaction, your convenience, your knowledge, and your pleasure.

Our natural responses are built into our genetic, physical make up. Therefore, we cannot be faulted for them. Nonetheless, a natural life of unbridled tendency consists of little more than surrender to ego. In that case, ego tells us what we can do and what we are not allowed to do. And, what could be channeled through us, by God, is obstructed or co-opted.

You, as you (mis)understand yourself to be, stand in the way of God acting through you freely. Therefore, until and unless you allow ego to be Undone in you, you are simply—though perhaps unconsciously—*preventing* the flow of Divine impulse into life. When it comes down to the actual choice points of existence, you must *transcend* what is merely natural in order to become a God-surrendered, loving person.

More ecstasy than hair shirt

The True Way is not the easy way. The Pearl of Great Price was never meant to be cheap. It is costly, at times painful, but whatever its price may be, the rewards *infinitely* outweigh it. And despite all we've said about the need for self-transcendence, the way of heaven is not a hair shirt way. *Miserable* self-denial is simply ego's opinion of heaven; it's an utter falsification of the Life Divine. Think about the most ecstatic moments of your life: Every one of them was an experience of self-transcendence.

Regarding the peak experiences of your life:

Every one of them was an experience of ego-transcendence, yes?

(For more information regarding peak experiences and ego transcendence, see endnote.)

The Divine design

The Way of Undoing is entirely different, and opposite to, the natural, ego-driven form of human life. But happily, by Divine design, there is more to us than ego and lower instincts. If there wasn't, we would never tire of the natural life; we could never desire ego's Undoing. And there *is* life after ego death: *real* life, the Life Divine. Living beyond ego *is* life as God designs.

The very same spiritual realities that threaten the ego self, satisfy the True Self. What chills self, thrills and fulfills Self. Where no ego can be comfortable, the Spirit is completely at Home. Ecstatic even! Just as much as self is separate and lonely and limited, Self—the soul essence of humanity, unsoiled by ego—is one with God, one with humanity, and truly free.

True freedom is not freedom to do whatever we want; true freedom is freedom *from* what we, as egos, want. It is liberation from ego, no less! When ego is released, the problem of self resolves into the realization of Self—our Divine spiritual reality.

What is unselfish?

What does an unselfish life look like?

- Unselfish is when the forms of aspiration are not self-centered.
- Unselfish is when the lower self, the mind, and all of its personal junk and dreams and preferences have been renounced and thrown to the four winds.
- Unselfish is when you stand free of ego in all of its forms—even the so-called spiritual forms.
- Unselfish is when you stop consulting your ego (and lower mind) about everything.
- Unselfish is when you are free to do what is right because it is right, without concern for the personal consequences.

What is right action?

And what *is* right action? The only right action is the action of love freely given, for no purpose but the service of God and the benefit of others. And that is the exact opposite of what the ego is always doing. Right action will certainly not resemble the action the ego would have you do, and why should it? If it did, it would not free anyone from ego!

The Pearl of Great Price: The best deal ever

The Way of Undoing is the essence of the true spiritual path that has always been taught, and sometimes lived, throughout the ages. It is the ever unpopular, supremely challenging, unfailing passage to eternal life—the Life Divine. If you want the Life Divine, God’s Way is the only way. God’s Way *is* the Undoing of ego.

A cosmic challenge for all humanity

This is God’s cosmic challenge for all of us—to convert from selfishness to unselfishness!

Does that intimidate you? The true spiritual path threatens ego to the core—it runs directly against the ego’s grain. But ultimately, if *you*—your spiritual Self—can recognize ego as *the* fundamental spiritual problem, and if you can see that *you* have that problem, it’s time to do something different. Never mind any fears and difficulties involved.

The remainder of this area of the web site will chart this passage for those intrepid spiritual travelers who not only wish, but also *choose*, to follow it.

*O son of Man! If you love Me, turn away from yourself;
and if you seek My pleasure, regard not your own; that
you may die in Me and I may eternally live in you.*

— Baha’u’llah; Baha’i

*How long can the moth flirt
near the mouth of the flame before their lips touch
and the moth's soul
becomes like the sun.*

*And does the moth then die? No.
In serving God one is transformed
into Him.*

*What lovers would not unite beyond belief and
annihilate
their separation forever if they
had the power to do so?
That power our Lord has.
Existence spins on His potter's wheel;
all is being shaped into the Divine.*

*What lovers would
not want to die
embraced?*

— Meister Eckhart; Christianity

Endnote:
Peak Experiences and Ego Transcendence

Recall your *peak* experiences, the most beautiful experiences of your life. If you think about it, you will realize they *all* involved ego-transcendence. The transcendence of ego is exactly what allows us to experience wondrous qualities of Divine nature: expansiveness, freedom, radiance, joy, ecstasy, sublimity, etc.

But here's what confuses things: *Afterwards*, we tend to relate to those experiences selfishly: "I had such a wonderful time. I want that again, more and more," etc. Ego instantly becomes so attached to peak experiences, we come to associate ego, not egolessness, with peak experiences. But that is a MIS-association. Indeed, if grasping mentality had been there *when* those experiences occurred, they could not have occurred. Remember, *at the time* when you had any truly glorious experience, ego was out of the way. *At that time*, your focus definitely *wasn't* on your little self—and that's *exactly* what made such a glorious event possible.

Here's another easy way to verify the point: What always happens *after* anyone has a peak experience? We want more of it. We try and try to make it happen again. And, it doesn't work. We suffer that particular disappointment nearly every time. Why? Because ego got involved.

This is one of the most important lessons we learn in the school of hard knocks: Selfishness *always* prevents—or ruins—beautiful experiences. You can observe that about any kind of peak experience: love experiences, sexual experiences, meditation experiences, spiritual experiences—all of them. *In every case*, egoic orientation *prevents* or *ruins* beauty. True beauty *always* disappears the instant ego gets involved.

The grasping response to beauty may be natural enough, all right, but it's not *super-natural* enough. The natural response shuts the door to the super-natural. That's why it doesn't work to take such huge beauty, and make it about little you. Wondrous beauty can't possibly be seen through the ego's eyes. That's why *lasting* bliss belongs only to those who permanently—rather than momentarily or occasionally—live beyond ego. Make *that* your goal.