

# TRANSFORMATION IS THE RULE. IT IS NATURAL.

Abdul Aziz Said

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Being is one. Everything is interrelated. Yet the appearance of things is full of impermanence, violence, conflict, deception, and suffering. To say that this is illusory is ultimately true, but to see this truth calls for transformation of consciousness. Individual transformation resonates—it affects—all the rest of the cosmos. Some individual beings—prophets, saints, and sages—are less afflicted with imperfections—are more transformed with conscious love—than others. We see the influence of some of these beings upon millions of others. They are one way of helping to bring other beings closer to transformation. Transformation is precisely the deepening of individuals' consciousness out of the illusion of being separate selves. This is the realization of oneness. But it does not mean obliterating or repressing individual uniqueness—that is part of the rich play of manifestation, of appearance.

Individual transformation **is** facilitated by benign social, political, economic, educational, and other institutional structures. But it is paramount over them, because all outer formations—including matter itself—are projections of deep consciousness. So outer reforms cannot create awakening of inner consciousness. It's the other way round. There is interrelation, but the inner, the subtle, the conscious, the compassionate, is more basic. Deep consciousness is the ultimate creative force—and it exists at the center of each individual being.

**Problems and routines.** Between transformation of the illusory individual consciousness and transformation of human institutions, there occur problematic or routine life situations. How does an individual, undergoing transformation, deal with problems and routines? He or she does not necessarily know what is going to take place. Transformation may not consist in what the individual wants—it may consist in what they don't want, it may go against all of their concepts. The transforming event and their own whole-hearted actions may surprise them, may go against what they wanted. Transformation brings what Transformation wants.

Events and individuals' actions may contradict what they would want or ought to have happen. This is because transformation comes from a deeper place than the individual mind: All mental assumptions about what has to happen or what is right may be negated. Yet the result may be transformative—it will involve growth of consciousness.

**Institutions.** Education, politics, and economics are either scenes and materials for transformation or stagnation. Politics facilitates transformation when it is consensual. Economics is transformative when it is cooperative. Education transforms minds when it is cooperative and includes the deeper ways of knowing—those that touch creativity and inspiration: Analysis is only one of four ways of knowing. Analysis, discrimination, inspiration, and unity consciousness can and must be included in education. All these ways of knowing have to be included in schools and colleges; otherwise, schools and colleges suppress development of consciousness. Inclusion of the deeper ways of knowing in schools and colleges means instructors themselves must develop discrimination, inspiration, and unity consciousness. A person who is developing intuitive discrimination,

creative inspiration, and unity consciousness, along with a keen analytical mind, is becoming a trans-person—a knowing being that includes but goes beyond his or her separate self.

Inner work consists of altering our conscious beliefs—even giving them up—and working with the unconscious through symbols and emptying the mind. Helping others is transformative. It transforms our deep-seated sense that we are the most important thing that exists. In helping, we recognize in others the same consciousness we have. We are not separate from others.

**Individual and social transformation.** Conventional wisdom holds that human problems are due to inequitable political and social structures, not to our personal egoism, greed, anger, fear, grief, and inattentiveness. If only we change The System, all will be well. We will all be happy, without having to purify our minds and change our habits. This is the great fallacy of our present culture. It is the ruling prejudice of the social sciences and all political parties. It is the fundamental preconception of politicians, voters, commentators, and academics.

However, true social reform takes place from inside out. It does not depend on first reorganizing political structures, social institutions, or legal systems. From a spiritual point of view, those changes are outward and therefore secondary. What is basic is consciousness and character. Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” He added, “People are always looking for some political reform which will give them everything they want without asking them to be good.”

**The priority of inner transformation.** Were governments to be transformative, they would work on the basis of consensus. Consensual government already happens in some families and organizations—and occasionally in some official governmental actions. It is based on the spiritual practice and wisdom of leaders, and aims for the inner growth and transformation of citizens. Citizens' cooperation in this process releases synergy—something greater than “industrial policy,” New World Orders, or five-year plans.

A test of the priority of inner over outer structure was the collapse of Soviet communism: Marxist reform of political and economic structures over a vast and rich continent during three generations did not beget a more highly evolved, conscious, or loving “socialist man.” The outer institutions were not supported by the inner tendencies and understanding of the people. Their contrary inner sense overpowered the outer structure. This outer structure collapsed despite being backed up by dictators in command of all the society's assets. The communist structural reforms did not produce inner reform of the Soviet people.

Individual transformation of consciousness is what makes positive reform positive. A material increase of consumption that increased anger, delusion, addiction, selfishness, and fear would not be a positive reform. This point is the theme of literary “dystopias,” such as Kurt Vonnegut's *Herbert Auberger* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Real reform by definition promotes inner growth of individuals.

It is true that positive institutional forms have causal influence on—and do not merely result from—positive inner reform, *but the prior and primary cause in this*

*interrelationship is inner reform. Positive social reform cannot even be conceived of except in terms of inner growth—connectedness, higher consciousness, peace, and love. Positive reform **means** reform that helps individuals realize their transformation.*

**Pluralism in Real Reform.** Real reform is pluralistic, since different people are at different stages of inner growth. Even at the same stage, there are different ways to reach the next stage. People need different environments—from the life-long practice of a single profession, to frequent change of jobs, to one major job change; to particular kinds of lifestyles, climates, exercise regimens, conversation, and even distinctive environments of art—in order to grow. Tribalism, collectivism, capitalism, and socialism all have a function for some people. Religious seekers have adopted voluntary communism in abbeys, ashrams, and monasteries for thousands of years.

**Competitive, warlike politics transforms into cooperation.** Can politics be cooperative if politicians are competitive? Can competitive voters elect a cooperative politician? When people change from inside, when their consciousness transforms into cooperation, **then** they are open to each other's ideas and needs. So cooperative politics is flexible.

Cooperative politics does not make the false dichotomy between self-interest and community interest. These are reciprocal. Individuals are not fired or demonized for questioning community dogmas. And the community is not subservient to the demands of immature individuals. There is room for divergent enclaves of culture, economics, and religion.

**Transformation and the Supreme Knowing.** In addition to the rational, conceptual mind, there exist higher levels of knowing: Discrimination, inspiration, and transformation proper—unity consciousness. These are not antagonistic; they are complementary. And it's necessary to develop them all along with the development of the rational mind. Without developing all these ways of knowing, individuals and societies are not transformed. To develop discrimination, inspiration, and unity consciousness to the point where they can really influence an individual's life and have an impact on the global community, we need to include them in education, starting at the earliest level.

Discrimination is the way of knowing we use at times when we must choose between two actions despite the fact that the analysis that may be used to bolster both are equally compelling.

Inspiration is the opposite of discrimination. In inspiration we sweep the stage clean of information and the mind clear of thoughts—emptying ourselves so that new ideas may enter in. Sleep is a common way of doing this.

Supreme knowledge is knowledge of the unity of being. Doubt always remains in thinking, because the object that is thought about seems different from the thinking subject—and consequently the thought may be mistaken. If I think about myself, I'm certainly strengthening my sense of separate selfhood. "Look at me—I'm so great, I'm better than they are, or I'm so miserable, I'm worse than they are, or I'm just as good as they are." And if we think about something else, we create the sense that the something else is other than we are—so our sense of self

is strengthened again. This is not the way to certain knowledge and not the way to transformation of self. Muhiyiddin ibn Al'Arabi, a twelfth-century Muslim mystic and philosopher, defined knowledge as perceiving—and **being**—that which is. Our sense of separateness is an illusion, but is deeply entrenched in our unconscious. The purpose of real knowing, therefore, is transformation—release from the illusion of separateness, rooted in unconscious, compulsive thinking, especially the underlying thought, “I, I, I.” Real knowing is to be transformed—united with the object of knowledge. This knowing is transformation, from the deepest level. It unites the head and the heart. This is the way it is supposed to be.