



Sangam Yuga

Incognito as the seed that nurtures the potential tree within it, the invisible seed of consciousness is first planted and then carefully grown. When the time comes, the fruits ripen and the earth is again filled with vitality and wisdom.

Sangam is the confluence of rivers with the Ocean - God and his creation. It has been portrayed as a divine dance, where every movement is a purifying alchemy and spiritual experiences are meant to transform a mind of iron into a mine of gold.

As the end of every night unfolds into a new day and the last sighs of the winter brings the fresh air of spring, it's in the darkest hour that the seeds of enlightenment are eternally sown.

There is a vision from the distance, as our planet is observed from outer space. The earth - a sparkling pearl - stands out, surrounded by an unlimited universe. A cosmic arrangement of planets and stars gravitate in a continuous movement, in absolute synchrony. A floating world, a giant vessel made to navigate.

Beyond this universe there is a vision. An eye that has the power to focus on everything it chooses. Merged within this vision there is a story: the knowledge of the three existing energies operating within our universe, realities that are eternal and only similar in their nature.

The human soul along with the elements that compose matter have already been seen as tiny particles of light, points of infinitesimal dimension. But it is in their difference that the limits between the physical and the metaphysical are defined. Consciousness is the basis of human life.

We have been consciously playing our roles as different characters, using different costumes and languages throughout a series of births. It is the human soul who has been enjoying and interacting with the world of non-conscious elements; that has been living at different stages of time, expressing and absorbing different habits and tendencies, and maintaining its core personality.

The play goes on as changes gradually begin to take place. Our innate wisdom slowly fades, but not before it goes do we realize that our truth has been diluted along with our inner strength. Journeying through time meant we've come to forget who we really are. We are no longer capable of recognizing our spiritual identity.

This is the story of the living soul within the cycle of time. The state of the world we live in, the quality of our own life, has only been reflecting the state of our inner self.

But still there is a third reality: a being of wisdom who has always remained beyond. A soul that is unique in many levels; One who has never been subjected to reversals of time and fortune. He has kept the understanding, he has remained constant.

There is a vision that doesn't need the eye to recognize, not even to be physically present to realize. His mind operates in another level, resides in another dimension and is filled with the accurate knowledge of the processes of the universe. This third force, energy or consciousness is peculiar to One alone - the One whom men, for so long, and in a myriad of ways, have agreed to call 'God'.

The Divine Play

In ancient India, it was a custom for the boatman to ask *Kah paragah?* "Who is going to the other shore?" Those believed to have once crossed the shores of time were called *Tirthankaras* - 'the ones who crossed'.

Sangam Yuga is the age bridging two very distinct and contrasting moments. It's as if one could see, on the one shore, the shadows of a declining system and on the other, the gradual formation of a new order. It's rather a state of awareness, for the movements of the world are still propelled by the old forms, and will continue to be so, until being self-consumed.

The transition from Kali Yuga into a new Sat Yuga starts with the awakening of the spirit. It is the blossoming of truth in thought and action together with sustained efforts over a period of time that allows one to recognize hidden aspects of life.

The moment of 'creation' is therefore not a mere variation of structures. New ideologies and social systems have brought reforms with them but have not been able to generate great changes.

Within a cosmic cycle, the Confluence Age is the period for perfecting the soul. It is when the understanding of destiny and free-will along with the observation of spiritual laws becomes again part of the play; when the old saying '*hum so, so hum*' - that which I was, I shall be again - becomes meaningful. We begin to create our own destiny.

This knowledge gets amplified by the recognition of an all-penetrating movement, an arrangement that unites and interconnects that which seems to be loose, operating an invisible order, 'putting right' into what has gone wrong, bringing up the results of what has once been sowed.

Whether we know it or not, we are influenced by the movements of *karmic* laws. Nothing is unchanging, nothing remains isolated. Human beings are ever integrated in a universe in constant motion.

It is due to the existence of a pre-destined 'plan' that the action of someone is linked with the experience of someone else. We may call it nature, destiny or fate. This unseen force is the interplay between souls and the laws that govern the world, making it more than a chaotic play. Everything moves according to the plan of the 'drama'.

This pattern also applies to the reacting forces of nature, whose elements possess an inherent power to respond. For this reason, the end of Kali Yuga has been remembered as a time of destruction and renewal, brought about by natural and manmade calamities.

The secret then is to know the plan, to have the map of changes, to take part in them. A new creation does not emerge out of the blue, nor can it be born out of simple wishing. There is the need of a force, of someone to inspire, to influence and in some way to determine those acts that will not only bring personal improvement but collective change.

We also need the power of a truth, of one who can touch those hearts and minds which have for so long been conditioned by the messages of the ego. In deep darkness, there is the need for light - for a mind that is not struggling amidst duality and entropy. And most of all, we need clarity and loving guidance. Only someone who knows us deeply can be aware of our potential future.

Prahbu Ki Lila - the ancient perspective of cyclic renewal - considers therefore this third acting force, best translated as "the drama in which God also plays a role".



"Your call goes towards Hindus, Bhuddists, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Muslims and Christians. They all come, gather around Your throne and thread a garland of love in adoration of You...."

Bharata Bhagya Vidhata - The Bestower of Fortune of Bharat
Rabindranath Tagore

Shiva Nataraja

One of the most accurate memorials of the Confluence Age is that of the Supreme in the symbolic posture of *Nataraja* - the King of Dancers - his dance being the representation of the supreme energy in movement.

Shiva dances over *Apasmara Purusha* - the demon representing human arrogance - humility being the virtue from which man can begin to reach a level of spiritual perception. In one hand, he holds a deer - the fluctuating mind of man that must be controlled; in another, he shakes a drum - the symbol of creative energy; and in his third hand, he holds a flame - the image of destruction.

His fourth hand, in the posture of *abhaya mudra*, says: 'Do not be afraid, as I destroy, I also protect'. The circle of fire surrounding him symbolizes the eternal and constant movement of the universe during the age of Creation (at the confluence of the cycle), preservation (during the Golden and Silver Ages) and destruction (at the end of the Iron Age).

Within the many symbols, the most significant seems to be the least noticed. The dot on his forehead - his 'third eye' - represents the incorporeal form of the Supreme Soul. It reveals that his thoughts are never related to the material world; that his vision is of a spiritual nature.

Shiva is also known as the Lord of *Yoga* and as the teacher of an art that has long since disappeared. It refers to spiritual experiences in which one can directly connect with the Highest Soul, remembered as a Being of Light by mystics of all times.

These experiences are eternally remembered for they fill the soul with a depth of love and peace that are not to be found in this world. Its uniqueness lies in that it's related to a living source, a Being who makes himself present and loved. This relationship not only empowers the mind and give strength and clarity to the intellect, but it also allows the soul to release the burdens and sorrows of its past.

Shiva Nataraja is no longer just a powerful metaphor. Those who experience living in a period of intense change know that a relationship with the Supreme is not only a possible reality but a necessary means. For such *yogis*, this is the foundation of their transformation and the beginning of a new cycle.

'Leave your throne in the sky and come down to earth'
Indian devotional song

There are memorials related to divine intervention in all cultures of the planet. Their archetypes may vary, but they have been present in the minds of all people, in a very special way, since early times.

We may have distanced ourselves from signs and feelings of the spirit but our innermost mind seems to have preserved a record of experiences that are common to every human soul. The mechanism of our subconscious only manifests something as a desire once that has been previously experienced. Similarly, each movement of the spirit through history can be seen as an attempt to bring back those qualities that humanity had once possessed and lost.

Most of the symbols, rituals and festivals of India are memorials of a period of transition, when a new cycle is born. They point to the most auspicious time, when the Creator himself has to re-enact his own special role. In India, ancient songs are still passionately sung, calling for *Patitpavana* - the Purifier and the Bestower of Knowledge and Happiness to teach the right method to liberate the soul from its weaknesses and pain.

To come across millions of people with such spirit of devotion can be striking. The way India was able to preserve millenary traditions and turn them into contemporary practices is at least impressive. Even in the understanding of time, the word *kal* may still be used to indicate yesterday, today or tomorrow. This firm idea of recurrence is also seen in a beautiful passage of the Gita:

*"Whenever the Sacred Law fails, and evil rises its head,
I return to re-establish the true Dharma"...*
Bhagavad Gita IV - 7



Ancient Raja Yoga

"There, where there is no darkness, nor night, nor day, nor nonbeing, there is the Auspicious One alone, absolute and eternal.

There is the glorious splendor of that light, from whom, in the beginning sprang ancient wisdom."

Svetasvatara Upanishad - IV,18

A genuine quest for deeper understanding had once made use of an internal level of experience. Because spiritual experience encompassed the highest thoughts of antiquity, a subject as fluid as time, could be approached in all its subtleties. The state of transcendence, often combined with empirical observation, came to produce extraordinary views. The cyclic perspective not only considered eternity but had also tried, in many ways, to understand the physical and ethical implications inherent to unending life.

Sacred symbols related to this peculiar vision of history were left engraved on ancient tombs and temples. This was done in a time when ancient mystical sciences were raising the same questions of today's higher mathematics and quantum mechanics. The attainment of higher knowledge was then believed to be intrinsic to spiritual revelation.

The nostalgic and idealistic philosophy of ancient India has once thoroughly pursued the truth about the *Kalachakra* - the cosmic cycle of time. It also left behind legends of those who knew the secrets of past and future - the *Chakravartins* or spinners of the wheel.

As it happens, when it comes to things of the spirit, understanding secrets goes hand in hand with inner transformation. Only then can knowledge become wisdom, a real source of strength. Today we can again 'put the sacred wheel into movement' as we learn about our spiritual journey and realize the importance of the present time. This is, no doubt, an important step in attaining victory in the most difficult of battles - the one with one's own negativities. As we understand the secrets and move forward, we get to see how *Dharnat Dharmah* - the law that nurtures and sustains the world - is again being re-established.

Waves of Change

We are living in a period of rapid transformation when the gradual effects of a shift in consciousness are starting to become visible and that includes the reviewing of old paradigms. Science, psychology, spirituality and economic development are part of this dynamics. Holism is rescuing ancient concepts by viewing humankind and nature in their wholeness, while environmental awareness is aiming to inspire sustainable development.

The rational, mechanist thought that has for so long defined the scientific approach has started considering intuition and subjective aspects. The old analytical posture now searches the synthesis; the linear view considers the cyclic. Feminine attributes such as spirituality, intuition and courage are again recognized.

Ethics and transparency are being emphasized together with the replacing of old attitudes: competition giving way to cooperation, quantity giving space to quality, domination trying to seek participation.

The shifting away from personal interests to values and feelings that belong to the spirit suggests not only that the old formula had failed in succeeding but that there has been a change in the sense of self-identity.

If before the fear of losing prestige and power used to feed the competitive system in a hierarchic structure, now a number of administrators and strategists seek to take understanding, empathy and mutual support into account. These changes are still small in scale but significant in their approach for they encompass almost every area of human activity. They show that something is emerging from the individual and transforming the collective.

A growing interest in spiritual matters and, in particular, in the legacy of ancient traditions is also part of this movement. If a few decades ago, the blunting of the will and the submission to blind faith triggered 'the death of God', today people speak of a return to spirituality.

It has become impossible to deny that our soul is eager to experience that which is part of its innermost nature. Therefore the success of things labeled 'esoteric'. One needs, however, to be careful when stepping onto this field.

In this context we have come to appreciate the greatness of what it was, and in many ways, still is, the love of the people of India towards the universe of spirituality. The very narrative of this story was made possible because an ancient and yet new approach has once again become available. The cyclic conception could be, in fact, resumed to the story of the ancient *Dharma* - from its gradual decline to its eternal recurrence. But there is much more. Something like a spiritual renaissance - unique and still incognito - is taking form in the minds of people all over.

It is, however, almost impossible, in the limited space of a short essay, to outline a perspective that is multimillion times greater, a fascinating story which will always defy words and writing. A great deal was left aside, along with a deeper approach which definitely belongs to a posterior stage of knowledge, where the meditative experience is definitely required. As goes the Indian saying - 'even if the oceans turned into ink and all trees into paper, even then, History could never be written'.

In any case, the essence can be the tip of the iceberg as it can come to awaken a genuine interest for something more. For the moment spirituality truly touches our being, a new dimension is discovered and things seem to be willing to reveal their meaning. We start to read the signs of the play of life.

As actors and spectators of this unlimited cosmic drama, we can be sure of being close to a real *grand-finale*. For the time will come when a spiritual reality will not only be visible and experienced by some, it will be for everyone. One day the search will meet its destiny.

In India, *Gyan* is the word used for spiritual knowledge and *Vigyan* for science. When that which works in silence finally meets and reveals something to the eyes, it won't take long for a series of changes to happen; events that will culminate into a new era.

Everything new begins in the invisible.