

## **Destroyer of worlds: the human as nature's agent of transformation.**

*"We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita; Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty, and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that, one way or another."*  
- Robert Oppenheimer, 1960

Oppenheimer was a scientist who headed the American war project to create an atomic bomb in the 1940s. Two infamous bombs were used on the civilian populations of Japan killing hundreds of thousands of people, first through instantaneous flashes of sun-like heat and then radiation fall-out. The above is the answer Oppenheimer gave in an interview regarding his feelings about the bomb and its aftermath while visiting Japan in 1960.

In Oppenheimer's dismay at been the figurehead of a movement that ended in the kind of destruction he saw, the image of Vishnu comes to him. This is a key image. While Oppenheimer felt the unquenchable grief of thousands of deaths that he began to take upon on his shoulders, something he would carry with him all the rest of his days, actually the image he used is something beyond blame and beyond morality. Vishnu is not a moral image, it is in fact an image of nature's cycle of life and death, of the hugeness unseen behind the individuality of lives and is the single entity that is all of life - the god with many hands is all of us, as billions of fingers of these hands.

So why are humans so destructive? If we look at ourselves and see how we have impacted the world in comparison to other animals, we are the only ones driven mad by this illusion of "self", going about the world in the way we do, expressing the way we do and being destructive all over the place. Wars, be they within families or within societies or international style, are all about the same energy flow, whether it be the process of picking up a stick or to press a button, just with larger and larger weapons. Oppenheimer is no different to the 10 year-old who pushes his classmate down some stairs. The energy of violence is the same.

Why have we gotten into such a state? Who is to blame? Why is this happening? When will it end? All these questions have been asked for thousands of years. Always we see a time of relative peace followed by a time of total destruction and generally as time goes on there is far more destruction than peace. Yet humans see themselves as higher entities than animals. We see ourselves as forms of life that have to be better in some way, otherwise why would we be struggling so much while the other animals have it so easy. There must be a "higher purpose"...this is the ideology of the modern human. However this is really not the case. The human is an animal and one that through nature's own expression has needed somehow to "go mad". Whatever the reason for this is as unknowable as why the sun rises and sets every day, however it is simply what it is. It seems the human being is set up as an agent for the destruction of the planet and this has been building up for thousands of years.

The Chinese describe the human being as “fire on the earth”, it is as if the human ignites whatever is in its local vicinity and burns it to the ground, like a fire or a lava flow. The energy always seems to eventually kill off the land and the expression of what’s going on in and around the vicinity of the modern human settlement. The human female is biologically able to conceive at any time, very different to many other female mammals where this is only possible at specific times in a yearly or life cycle. We are set up to be able to have more and more children...why would this be possible within nature’s expression? Again there is no answer. However, instead of just thinking of the human as a “higher being” trapped in turmoil, the human very seldom actually recognizes themselves to be a “destroyer of worlds”, an agent of nature that is bringing what is to an end. An important question is, why would this be “bad”?

Satanism and the “darker arts” have often been counter to the Godly expressions of the Church. But with Vishnu and ancient Indian culture we see the clarity of an age before good and evil started up in dualism, we have the image of a god that is all things and that expresses both life and death as one. The point is that instead of seeing ourselves as people who are higher or lower, we need to see what we are and realizing our true expression for that. It is clear that the general expression of the human, no matter how hard they try to reconnect to the land and be “at one with nature”, often through sheer number and overwhelming previous activity, is always going to be a destructive force in the world.

The Mayan calendar considers this time to be the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> age of humans and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> age. Many consider this to be the end of the world, and some consider this to be the movement into the new age of higher purpose and ideal. My feeling is that there is a time to live and a time to die and the human has lived very exuberantly over thousands and thousands of years. Along with James Lovelock, I believe the process of change that has already been done is a tidal wave that cannot be stopped. We have already set in motion our own doom or destruction many thousands of years ago and so the stopping of this now is inevitably impossible. I am not saying this is the end of all humans but probably most of them and this process might happen many times, of building up the population then clearing the population again until the human being changes or transforms into something other than what it is. I don't mean a multi-dimensional being but one that returns to an alignment with the nature of the planet and the sustaining of life that's on it. Until then, there may be many “great floods” until the human is washed away.

Many would like to describe themselves as the “higher beings”, as the ones who are going to “evolve”, “transcend” and become better and more, but what is wrong with what actually is? Why can't we be both the formers of life and the destroyers of worlds? In order to at least see the reality of life we need to accept all its transformations from birth to death. We are very good at birth, very bad at death. We want to hide death in the shadows, and place importance on life. But for the indigenous peoples of the world there is a realization that the end of all things is not only inevitable but also just as it should be. There is no fear at being in a time of ending, as this is what it needs to be, life will return to the Great Mother and form something anew, everything will be forgotten and there will be a return to the unknown. Perhaps the whole thing will happen again and again, universe after universe, coming in an out of existence over and over again infinitely.

When life and death can be seen as one, the human will return to peace. But for now the duality of the state of mind of “self” keeps us at war, and this has to burn off. The transformation to “selflessness” has not yet come and so we face death with fear, but when there is no “self” there is nothing to die, no fear. This is ripening within the human but has not yet come about. While it will inevitably do this it may not end our expression in the world, or our need to have more children and it may not end the process of global destruction. What it will end is the idea that the “destroyer is bad and creator is good”, it will end the idea that unconditional love is conditional only to those that “do good”, and it will end the idea that any of us are not both Hitler and mother Teresa at one time, or Oppenheimer and Louis Pasteur together. The ending of the idea that anything is spilt into separate parts will at least be the end of the suffering, the conflicted state, the madness of the human, and therefore the death of this duality is the only “death” there is, for in Oneness there is immortality, freedom from the duality of opposites.

In John Boorman’s great film “The Emerald Forest” the indigenous people call the people who are encroaching on the edges of their forest home “the termite people”. This is a brilliant description. If we recognise our similarity to termites who have extraordinary abilities to use resources and override the previous balance of nature, we can see that one day we will eat ourselves out of materials, or we will be struck by some dis-ease that kills just termites. If we can see ourselves and our ways as nature’s agents of change, even if that change is to reshape the planet, to agitate the surface to allow what is to be re-absorbed, then so be it. There is no right or wrong, no good or bad, just like the life of a termite.

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