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The Next Millennium A Definitive Guide

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The Next Millennium

A Definitive Guide

THIS BEING the last issue of *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* in this century—by the reckoning of some, I felt seduced into joining the prevailing forecasting fever. The pronouncements about the next millennium seemed to be shrilly pessimistic or shrilly optimistic. How to pontificate? Then, one day *The New York Times* (6 July 1999) announced boldly:

**Evidence
Puts Dolphins
In New Light
As Killers**

**Smiling Mammals Possess
Unexplained Darker Side**

I went on to read how “scientists, following a trail of bloody clues, are discovering that dolphins are far from the happy peaceful creatures that humans think they know.” They are now suspected of “killing fellow animals in droves” and have been “observed in recurring acts of infanticide.”

The news gave me a sinking feeling. It wasn’t so long ago that the fortunes of these endearing creatures leaped into an Empire of Sealife Parks. Nor was it so long ago, that on the transpersonal front, John Lilly helped to elevate dolphins to aquatic avatars. Soon transpersonal commercialism set in: Swim with the dolphins and cavort with the gods; Achieve enlightenment with Perfect Masters through a watery *satsang*. (Happily, no rumors surfaced about sexual predatory behavior by these rubbery gurus.) Now, however, scientists are claiming something was fishy about the smiley, divine denizens of the deep. Bad news for spiritual seekers.

The revisionist reputation of the dolphins upsets me. I feel myself being nudged into a disturbing mental whirlpool. If the Dolphin Masters are suspect, what other absolute truths might drown in the future? What other cherished icons and received teachings might be purged? Could the whole transpersonal movement prove other than inviolable?

My obsessive train of thought swings into high gear. Maybe the end of the millennium will usher in the beginning of the end of transpersonalism. And then what? Will it be replaced by another new vision to unite us with

the planet and the Cosmos? What if it doesn't happen that way? Could all the hard-earned currency in my spiritual savings account be wiped out? I am definitely feeling a bit queasy. Maybe even a bit unhinged.

But what *is* the "end" of transpersonalism? Is transpersonalism just a way of replacing perennial philosophy with a more enticing language of perennial psychology? Can something perennial be destroyed? And, anyhow, since transpersonalists espouse the principle of impermanence, why am I so bothered? Maybe because it's one thing to accept Heraclitus' proclamation that *we* cannot step twice into the same current, but now it seems that even the revered dolphins can't do it. I am definitely starting to feel seasick—adrift in a sea of uncertainty.

Taking a last sip of tea, my attention is drawn to the configuration of tea leaves remaining in the bottom of my cup. Maybe *they* will provide the requisite words of divination and soothing certainty. But, while trying to decipher the Delphic dregs, I recall that the tea is an exotic blend left behind by a diminutive visitor from Russia—a quaint visionary and an old believer.

Nothing seems sure anymore. Hardly a time to indulge in soothsaying, shrill or otherwise. Let the new millennium swim into view free and uncharted.

S. I. Shapiro
Executive Editor

