

To the people of Royal Way
A radiance of light . . .

A friend has asked: “Why do I need to surrender my ego? Why can’t I just learn from you?”

You absolutely do not *need* to surrender your ego. You can learn from me all you want, with my blessing. You do not even *need* to read the remainder of this letter. You can stop right here. However, if your question is: “Why should I *want* to surrender my ego?” then read on.

First: An authentic teacher does not *seek* disciples. He teaches because he cannot *not* teach. This needs a deep understanding.

The cosmos is filled with spheres, not with straight lines. Einstein discovered that light bends. In other words, everything is circular. Everything goes out and comes back. That is the nature of the circle versus the straight line. It goes out and comes back into itself. The very creation of the universe, the big bang, was nothing more than a pulsation: the expansion of the universe and the coming back, even as a heartthrob goes out and comes back. God’s creation of the cosmos is circular in nature. It is God going out and coming back. “Return ye,” cried Isaiah. “We are created in the image of God” means that we too create. The procreation of the race is precisely that phenomenon of going out and coming back. Light is circular, energy is circular, and spirit also is circular.

In order for something to come back, it must first go out. To stay full is not pleasurable. To be filled is pleasurable. In order to be filled, one must be empty. That is the ongoing process of emptying to be filled, which again is circular: going out and returning, going out and returning. Even as in the procreative act, going out and returning, emptying and being filled; there lies the procreative pleasure. The heart cannot stay filled or it will burst. This is true physiologically and emotionally. This is also true spiritually. The spirit cannot stand still or it will stagnate.

Spirit, as energy, needs to move. It is circular.

A barren tree gives no shade; a plastic fruit has no seeds; a still pool stagnates. The moving river becomes an ocean. The electric current, as long as it remains inside the wire, serves nothing and no one. Only when it pours itself into a receptacle does it become light, heat, and power.

The universe is a manifestation of God. Whether that first happening was volitional and whether that was indeed a first act is another story. What is relevant here is that the continued expressivity of that manifestation is certainly *not* volitional. The cosmos continues to manifest, and there seems to be no choice involved. Also, on this planet the oceans manifest clouds, clouds manifest rain, rain creates rivers, and rivers return to the ocean. A seed manifests a tree, the tree manifests fruit, the fruit drops the seed, and the seed returns to manifest another tree. The child, both animal and human, is a manifestation of the parent, and in time manifests another child. And so on every scale, large or small. The sun cannot stop its light from going out, and the caterpillar cannot stop the butterfly from manifesting.

In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light." It was not until the sixth day that God created the animals and man. One does not make a shoe and then create a foot to fit that shoe. If light was for the purpose of lighting the world for man and the animals, light would have followed the creation of man or at least have been simultaneous with that creation. Why then is light the first statement of God?

The ancient Taoists knew, and modern physics is now verifying, that indeed everything is light. "In the beginning, God said 'Let there be light'" means that light was the first manifestation, and from that manifestation all else came about. The Sufis call God "Nura," which means light. In the Koran, God is called light. And the nature of light is that it manifests. It cannot *not* manifest. That is why the nature of the universe is to continually manifest itself.

Love is the female counterpart to light. Love also cannot exist unless it manifests itself. Love cannot do otherwise. When it is said that God is love, that is precisely what is meant. Because God is love, he manifested the universe. In the ultimate reality, both light and love are only manifested aspects of God. They are not the *en sof* (source). The reason Sufis and others refer to God as light or love is that on this plane we can only relate to manifested divinity. God at source is beyond both light and love. One might say: Light, the male principle, impregnates, as it were, and love, the feminine principle, manifests, as it were.

When one becomes an awakened being, one is suffused with that light and with that love, and cannot keep that light and love from going out, even as a flower cannot keep its fragrance from going out. It *must* come out. That is why I say a true teacher cannot *not* teach.

When someone comes to me and says, "I love you, I admire you, you are wise, etc., etc. I want you to guide me and teach me, etc., etc., but I don't want to surrender my ego to you," I experience two responses. First I feel sadness: Human folly is so pervasive. This person is saying, "I'm not going to give up my lollipop," when it is in fact his cancer he is clinging to. My second reaction is one of great relief. Accepting the surrender of most people brings with it a burden and a responsibility that I prefer not to carry. Only compassion compels a teacher to accept someone's surrender. Hence I say a true teacher does not seek disciples. He acquiesces . . . and only in certain situations. A teacher who accepts all who come to him and even seeks them out is himself motivated by ego.

Second: We postulate unequivocally that all humans contain a divine seed that awaits development and growth. This is not a theory of evolution. It is the reality of the higher order in existence. This, in fact, is what the word "human" means. It defines a vessel that contains an entity, part animal and part spirit. It is this holy-profane mixture that creates the struggle. In that struggle lies the irritant that produces the pearl of a higher being.

The act of surrendering the ego to a teacher ignites in the teacher a pulsation of light that instantaneously returns and permeates all the walls separating the disciple from his own divine seed. Through his act of surrender, the disciple connects with and rides the light of the teacher back to his own divine place—sparking it, nourishing it, etc., etc.

Each time this happens, the divine seed in the disciple grows larger. Ultimately the disciple is awakened to his own divinity and is *home*. The way to one's own divinity has always been, and is today, the way of the teacher.

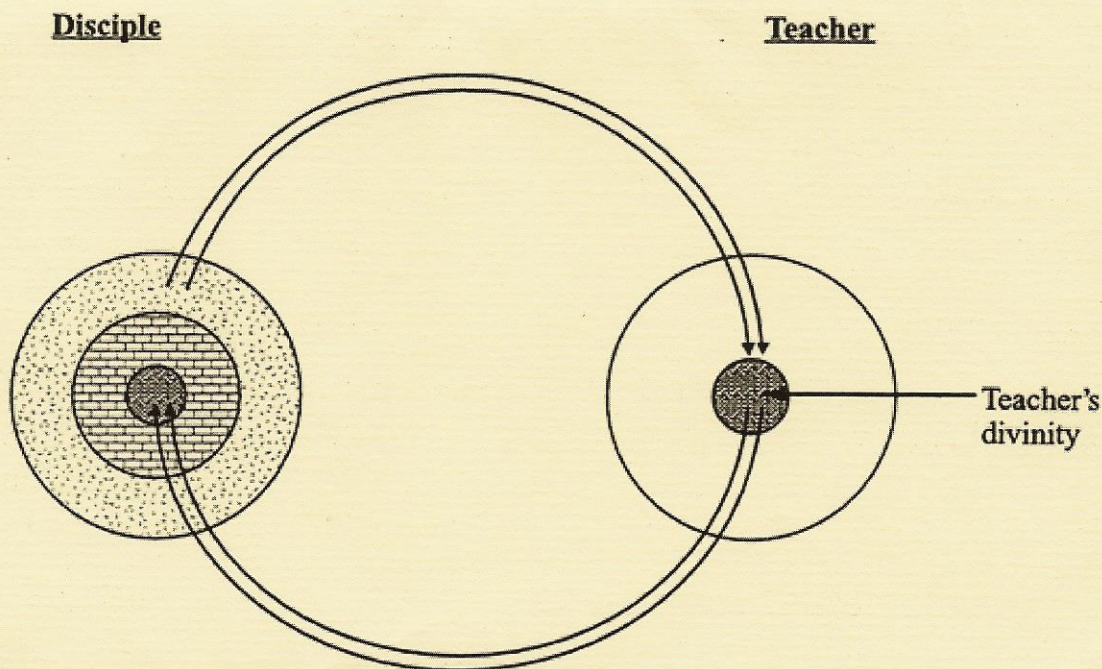


Figure 1

Theoretically, all humans should be equal. At the divine seed level of potential, they *are* equal. On this plane of struggle, however, no one is equal to anyone else. The differences arise out of the different levels of awareness and sensitivity to that seed of divinity. This is perfectly good, each individual reaching attainment at his or her own speed . . . nothing wrong.

What is wrong and heartbreaking is the sight of millions of humans coming and going without ever realizing even the existence of their divine seed, without ever being touched by their divinity. This is true not only of those who “never bother” and pass away like foam on an ocean wave, leaving no trace of themselves, but also of so-called seekers who “work” on growth and development.

The reason this happens is that by the time most of us reach our so-called adulthood, we have acquired so many layers of dysfunctional behavior, mental processes that are repetitive and limited, emotional gyrations that run the gamut from hysteria to catatonia, physical behavior that is slowly self-destructive, etc., etc., that we are lost in profound amnesia. We have forgotten what we really are, where we really are, where we are going, and how to get there. All we know is the ego, that tyrant who controls our loyalties and obedience in every area, that master magician who has hypnotized us so completely that we identify with him as our innermost being.

Still, most of us manage to keep things going under a lid of safety and are even able to have moments of joy, pleasure, intimacy, abandon, and beauty. This is, in fact, what keeps this merry-go-round going—these fleeting moments of pleasure. It is not unlike a table of roulette. Once in a while you hit the right number and *zap*—a moment of victory, of excitement and pleasure. Millions of civilized people spend endless hours and money in anticipation of this single moment of triumph.

Reflect deeply and you will realize all life is spent waiting for these fleeting moments. It is the great game of the ego—waiting, hoping, wishing, etc., etc. All our blocks, fixations, armor, walls, all our dark energies, spearheaded by the ego, lead us away from and lie between us and our divine seed. It is easy to see why even a seeker has almost no chance of attaining his truth, *because his very seeking is controlled and directed by his ego*. All the blundering confusion, blocks, and fixations

accompany every move. This perverse process of seemingly seeking spirituality and producing instead more ego-darkness and misery is the case not only with individuals but also with large groups and cultures and nations.

Has anyone ever explained to you the phenomenon of multiple religions? We are all created equally by one God, and we all possess the same divine spark. How did it happen that different people are equally fanatically loyal to different Gods? Better still, how can two nations who worship the same God devoutly believe with equal conviction that that same God is on their side and pray to that same God for the destruction of the other nation? The sweeping answer to these and similar difficult questions lies in the above paragraph. It reaches to the root of misdirected spirituality and its causes. Namely, our very seeking and understanding of spirituality is led and controlled by our ego, and the nature of ego, by definition, is divisiveness. Consciously, we function in the outer layer, which is all ego. Unconsciously, we function in the id level. Our true being is in the innermost level.

The ego convinces us that we are clear in our methods, clear in our search, clear in our spirituality. Hence multiple Gods and religions. Hence the profusion of “clearly” defined theologies, theosophies, etc., etc. Think of it: All these “clear” and “perfect” religions, and the *sword* still reigns supreme. So many spiritual teachers and seekers, and so few know the simplest things—for example, how to relate decently in a marriage, how to raise a child, how to drive the freeway without getting hysterical, how to really listen to what people are saying, how to read the obvious signs of nature, etc., etc.

Given the human condition as outlined, it is virtually impossible for anyone to touch his or her own divinity. That is why so many of the great minds in the philosophies and sciences were so pessimistic.

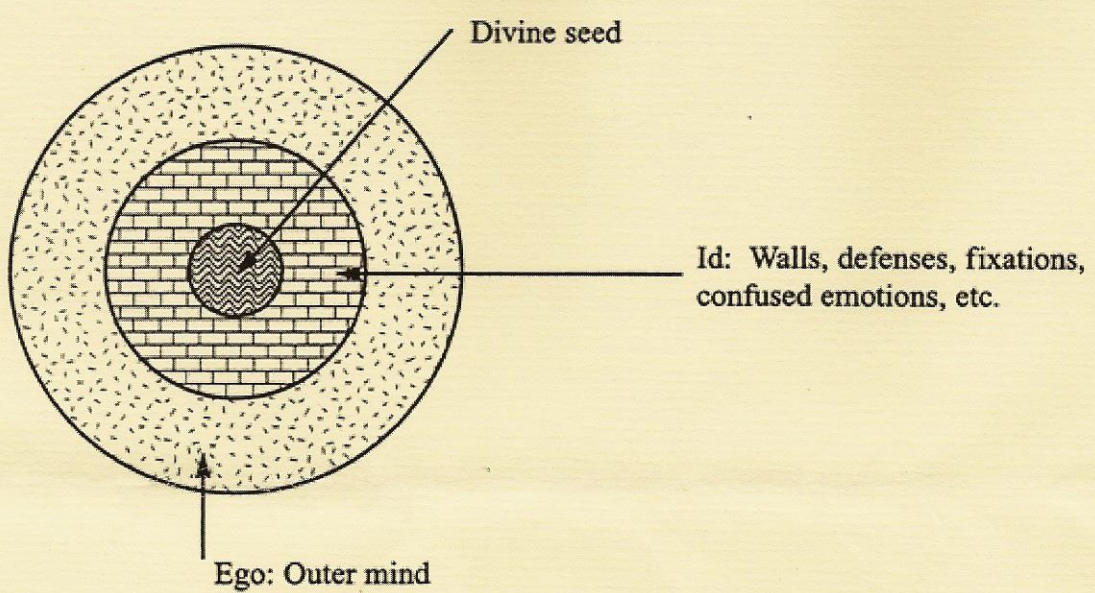


Figure 2

Third: The word “surrender” is distasteful to most people because it is generally associated with power versus weakness. The vanquished surrender to the victors. The conquered are forced to surrender unconditionally to the conquerors. A loser surrenders to a winner. When viewed in the light of struggle—winning and losing—surrender is understandably negative.

But this is precisely where we miss the point. When one is forced into submission, his surrender *is* an act of losing and weakness and possibly cowardice. To the contrary, when one chooses willingly and freely to surrender one’s ego to a teacher, it is in fact an act of great power and courage. It is probably the greatest single act of power one can experience. This needs to be understood.

The ego is the mainstay of one’s outer existence. It rules one’s life totally. Observe your behavior with alertness and awareness and it will become obvious to you how ubiquitous the rule of the ego really is. It is

so powerful that it outlasts all of your other strengths. It stays with you to the very last breath. To be able to surrender the ego means that you are more powerful than the ego itself.

Not only is giving up the ego an act of great strength, it is also an act of love. It is the ultimate expression of love. To love is to surrender to the Beloved.

Surrender from weakness brings slavery and silent hatred—for example, in battle, in the courts, etc., etc. Surrender from strength brings the paradox of the greatest attachment and the greatest freedom.

It is a question of identity. If you identify with your ego, then you are in constant surrender to his every whim—from smoking tobacco to cold-blooded murder, etc., etc.—all the time thinking: *I'm doing what I want to do. No one tells me what to do.* This is the ego's greatest success: giving you the illusion that his will is your will, that he is your true identity. Each time this happens, you create new walls between yourself and your true being, a greater distance between your outer mind and your inner divinity.

If you are fortunate and have found a true teacher, then you surrender your ego-will to your teacher, and through him return to your own divine self (see Figure 1).

Many Eastern gurus confused the issue of surrender by either claiming or implying a divinity over and above that of the disciple. This has created an aversion in some and wrong dependency in others. Buddha was called the enlightened one because he attained the highest level of manifested light. He was suffused with that light to the fullest degree. But the notion, which many have fostered, that he and other great teachers were divine incarnates—that is, God in human form—is patently absurd. The whole universe and its fullness thereof cannot contain God. How can one human contain God? An enlightened being manifests divine attributes and a holy presence because he is channeled into the divine light. This light, as stated earlier, is itself only a

manifestation. The concept of divine incarnations (human-God) is a residue of ancient primitive idolatry. Let it be clear: Your divinity is potentially and basically the same as the divinity of the teacher.

Parenthetically, there are many true teachers (perhaps not many, but certainly more than one). Anyone who claims to be the only true teacher is either disturbed or a charlatan, often a bit of both. However, for the true seeker there is only one true teacher. The one that is right for him is the *only* one. Even as there are many wombs, there is only one womb wherein you can grow and attain birth and life. Again, it is a question of identity. *Think carefully on this one.* It adds a whole new dimension to the issue of self-esteem.

Another objection to surrendering the ego is fear of intimacy. Since the greatest intimacy exists between a disciple and his or her spiritual teacher, it is natural and understandable that the pupil would experience great resistance to it. The only other time of real intimacy is between lovers, and that happens on rare occasions. Studies have shown that the average person experiences intimacy only half an hour in a lifetime. In order for true intimacy to happen, the ego must not be there. If the ego is there, intimacy is not there. Between lovers, ego is almost always there. The only time it is not there, the only time it is never there, is at the moment of orgasm. Ego and orgasm cannot exist simultaneously. But orgasm is not intimacy. Absence of the ego during orgasm is not voluntary. He is pushed out by the sheer animal energy created by the libidinal drive. Animals have no ego.

With a teacher, the disciple *chooses* to give up the ego. The moment the ego enters, the connection with the teacher ceases. The connection with the teacher means voluntary egolessness. So, the equation runs, being with a teacher equals egolessness; hence, the greatest intimacy is with a teacher. This is very scary to many people.

A third objection to surrendering the ego is the statement "I want to control my own life." What a colossal myth! *No one* is in control of his life. *You are either a slave to the ego or a servant of God.*

Both words, "God" and "ego," contain the word "go." The word "God" says "Go to D." D stands for divine. When you allow the ego to take over, he removes the D altogether and substitutes an E in front. E is merely a vowel. It has no substance of its own, even as the ego has no reality of its own. It leeches from its carrier. It is a shadow. With the D gone, you go nowhere. You are stuck in the E, which by itself is meaningless.

Plainly, surrender is not something new. It is not something you need to learn. You already know it perfectly well. You surrender all the time. Not a day goes by without the experience of surrender. Unfortunately, your surrender goes to and feeds your dark side. To surrender to a teacher is to touch the light. (See Letter 26, page 5, "the teacher, male or female, is the male principle, and the disciple, male or female, is the female principle.") It is an act beyond love.

Surrender to a teacher brings discipleship. Discipleship connects the disciple to the divine point of the teacher, thereby availing the transmission of light to the disciple's point of divinity. (The pupil cannot by himself touch his own divinity because of all the walls that separate him from it [see Figure 2]. A psychological example is the person who is not in touch with his or her feelings because of all the blocks between the head and below.) Each time the disciple consciously connects with the teacher, he or she automatically falls into that state of grace where whatever needs to happen . . . happens.

A fourth objection emanates from an unfortunate comfort with deception. Let me explain. The central point of my teaching is that there is a place in you that is so vast, so huge, so beautiful, so sweet, that it makes everything else seem infantile by comparison. In that place you are not confused. In that place you are not angry. In that place you are not frightened. In that place you are not a neurotic. In that place you are not an alcoholic, etc., etc. In that place you think differently and hear differently and see differently and behave differently and want differently.

And that is the whole work, to learn how to be in that place. Because of all the ego deceptions, the self-deceptions, it is next to impossible to achieve this without a teacher. People deceive themselves over and over, again and again. *A teacher stops the deception.* One of the main functions of a teacher is to always stop the deception. A teacher never allows you to lie to yourself. He is like a compass, always pointing north. No matter what you do with the compass, no matter which way you turn, it keeps pointing to the way, always pointing to the way. This is one of the reasons people sometimes leave a teacher. They want to deceive themselves—and the teacher will not let them. They leave and concoct all kinds of reasons why they leave. The real reason is almost always that they are afraid of their own truth.

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A few words on the qualities of a teacher.

First: There are those who claim they do not want to be anyone's teacher because, they say, "you don't need a teacher" or they tell you "be your own teacher." Most of the time this attitude is suspect. Most of the time, quite frankly, it is the result of selfishness. It is a desire not to carry any responsibility for their teaching. These are usually men or women who lack compassion and do not want to be involved with other people. They want their teaching to sort of float in the universe and let whoever wants to pick it up do so.

There are *indeed* times when telling a pupil to do it on his own is not only legitimate but crucial to the pupil's growth. But these are the exceptions, not the rule. There is a boundary beyond which it does not work. There is a space where the connection, the personal connection with the teacher, is the lifeline, is the crucial element for the success or failure of the pupil. I have known several teachers who were high souls and who had things to contribute, but they lacked compassion. They were cold, closed, and distant and constantly spoke of unconditional love. It was all in the abstract. It was all on a conceptual level. It had very little to do with loving on an experiential level.

I know the rationale that says that it is a higher state of love when you are not emotionally connected. Well, you do not need to be emotionally connected, but you do need to be connected. They are very clearly unwilling, unable in fact, to connect with anyone. It is all very objective. In a conversation with one of them, after going round and round about the issue of the real meaning of unconditional love, it finally came down to the fact that his love for his closest friend was no different from his love for the ashtray in front of us. His involvement with another human was on the same plane as his involvement with a plate or any object.

Now, in a dimension beyond this plane—beyond duality, at source—this is true. But to claim this state while still in the body and on this planet is pure BS. It is self-deception for the purpose of hiding the absence of compassion. Rather than universalizing one's experiential love, such people trifle with so-called unconditional love (which on this plane is pure mentalism), thereby removing the crucial element of compassion. This cannot stand, for compassion is the bedrock of a true teacher.

Unfortunately, because this plays into the ego of the seeker (telling someone “you don't need a teacher” or “be your own teacher” is the ego's jackpot), it causes many a man and woman to be lost, to not ever find the way. It is the blind leading the blind. What is absolutely certain, without any reservation, is that disciples of a teacher are far happier in their lives than anyone else. This is true in every culture, in every age, in every religion. Those truly connected with a teacher lead joyous lives.

Second: Anyone whose consciousness lives in the divine state can be a true teacher. The proportion is irrelevant to the pupil. That is, whether the teacher is in the divine state 75 percent of the time or 99.9 percent of the time is an issue only for the teacher. The remnants of ego, whether they be fame, power, fortune, lusts, or desires of all kinds on many different levels, need not concern the pupil at all, simply because when the pupil surrenders into discipleship, his connection to the teacher locks into the teacher's divinity—not to any other fragment of the teacher, only to his divinity.

That is the definition and nature of discipleship. It can be no other way. One of my favorite stories is about a guru who pretended to be able to walk on water. One day a young man arrived and became a true disciple. After a while the disciple was able to *really* walk on water. Of course, this is only a parable. The lesson here is that when surrender is genuine it touches the *divinity* of the master, not the other elements. That is the definition and nature of discipleship. It can be no other way. This happens each time the pupil experiences a conscious act of surrender.

Furthermore, how can you chew without teeth? The seeker has no accurate method for determining the correct proportions of divine consciousness versus ego consciousness of the teacher's existence. Only one who has attained that state knows its myriad subtleties and can move knowingly in those endless and mysterious chambers. A seeker attempting to judge the level of the teacher is engaging in futility. It is more absurd than a chemist doing a blood analysis with the naked eye. Only the ego is capable of such foolishness.

For various reasons, a seeker will often attempt to manipulate the teacher into his own ego state. Depending on a variety of circumstances and variables related to the seeker, the teacher will either destroy that attempt immediately or allow it to happen—even allow it to go on and on. Quite often, such a one ends up leaving the teacher.

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You ask: “Why do I need to surrender? Why can't I just learn from you?”

Good. You just learn from me. I have no objection. Learning will make you knowledgeable. If that is what you seek, it is perfectly good. If, however, your search includes finding your divine spark, if your goal is attaining higher consciousness, if your thirst is such that it will only be sated when you drink from your own divine fountain, then I say to you: Knowledgeability will take you nowhere. Knowledgeability will leave you empty. It is just another diversion. Knowledge simply feeds the ego.

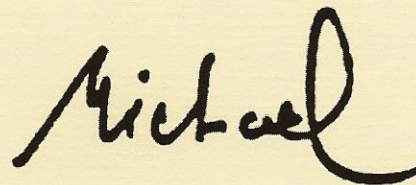
More knowledge equals more ego equals less reality. Ego and transformation are mutually exclusive. The process of transformation begins with surrender of the ego. That is a universal law. A rose flowers only after dying in the soil. The outer shell of the seed surrenders its existence to the soil. That is the inescapable first step into the paradox of a new life that has always been there.

If you strike a match, do not expect water to flow. If you open a faucet, do not look for fire. If you live in your ego, do not expect freedom. It is total slavery.

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Should you still need your ego, then you will need many more words and explanations to really hear what I am saying, and even then you will cleverly argue against it and find flaws in the logic of it, etc., etc. I myself could easily write a paper cleverly disproving this law. But logic and other mental gyrations of the mind are only powerful for the outer world, and are irrelevant and meaningless to the inner world. If you have reached a point in your life where you see the ultimate waste of the ego, *if you are ready to move*, then enough has been said here. You meditate on it. Do not think about the words. Meditate on them, and a deep intelligence will quiver within your being. An enlightening clarity of truth will penetrate your inner structures . . . and you will know.

May the higher blessings permeate your lowest planes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.