

than it presently seems to be. In this view, proper preparation of consciousness allows for the infusion of higher levels of consciousness into the lower structures of consciousness we typically experience.¹¹²

At least as practiced in the Western world, science, one might say, has not shown such possibilities to be real. But science, beyond the neurosciences which correlate brain activity with aspects of consciousness, has hardly attempted to do so. It took years of development in theory and billions of dollars to discover the Higgs boson at the Large Hadron Collider. What if we spent as much effort in theory development and in money on the exploration of consciousness? Who knows the result? Doing so would also revolutionize current conceptions of what science is. Whatever we think, the gap between so-called subjective experience and so-called objective reality is narrowing, thanks to quantum science, in which the observer cannot be separated from what is observed. We have a long way to go, but the future looks promising.

THEOSOPHY AND ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Theosophical perspectives can serve to reorient a basis of thought which can elevate and illuminate hidden connections in modern ecological consciousness. Theosophy points to man's capability to perfect himself and to ascend in states of consciousness, co-evolving with all of living Nature. Theosophy speaks of the living power of human thought to awaken and unfold in consciousness more ethical and encompassing views of unity, universal interdependence, and harmony—all of which are central concepts in modern ecological consciousness.

Theosophy as a Divine Science posits the unity of all life in Spirit. It is from spirit, H. P. Blavatsky tells us, that Man and Nature emanate from

¹¹² The problem of emergence, mentioned before, might be solved by a view such as this. Rather than thinking of consciousness “emerging” from an organization of matter, one might think of consciousness manifesting in the appropriate organization. It would have its own principles which were always present but latent rather than miraculously emerging from such organization. (See footnote 6).

the Cosmos, and that the evolution of the universe and the evolution of man (and nature) form a seamless whole. All matter is imbued with the presence of the divine. All of Nature is alive with spirit intelligence and possesses varying degrees of latent, unfolding consciousness. The One spirit in matter pervades the universe.

Using a model of analogy and correspondence, we may turn to biological science for illustration. Oneness is expressed throughout the design of the cell. From Andre Lwoff's lucid observations we find: "When the living world is considered at the cellular level, one discovers unity. Unity of plan: each cell possesses a nucleus imbedded in protoplasm. Unity of function: the metabolism is essentially the same in each cell. Unity of composition: the main macromolecules of all living beings are composed of the same molecules...For in order to build the immense diversity of living systems, nature has made use of a strictly limited number of building blocks."¹¹³

Speaking from the perspective of ecology, physicist Fritjof Capra comments, "The extensive explorations of the relationships between science and spirituality over the past three decades have made it evident that the sense of oneness, which is the key characteristic of the spiritual experience, is fully confirmed by the understanding of reality in contemporary science...The awareness of being connected with all of nature is particularly strong in ecology."¹¹⁴ The poet, William Blake, gives beautiful expression of this concept in his verse:

To see a World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour....¹¹⁵

Capra stresses the primacy of human consciousness to modern ecological thinking. "It is becoming more clear that the qualities of consciousness—the perceiver of—and the ability to awaken and perceive patterns of wholeness at different levels of perception (as the knower becomes one with the known in the Platonic sense) allows us to belong to the universe as its ethical trustee." "Connectedness, relationship, and

¹¹³ Hermes, Nov. 1978, "The Cell", Concord Grove Press, Santa Barbara, CA, P. 300

¹¹⁴ Capra, Fritjof, *Network Review*, 2017/1, "Mystics and Scientists in the 21st Century: Science and Spirituality Revisited," P. 17.

¹¹⁵ Blake, William, in *The Jewel in the Lotus*, CGP, Santa Barbara, CA, 1983, P. 273.

interdependence are fundamental concepts of ecology.”¹¹⁶ Oneness is the unifying principle which serves as the vertical axis of fundamental connectedness and universal causality of the myriad diversity of nature.

The Platonic ascent in consciousness can be thought of as an urge for perfection, or the harmony of the whole. A Theosophical student reflects that when the seeker attains a higher level of awareness, the mind’s perception of the perfection of nature is the recognition of eternal Beauty, a reminder of divinity in Nature and in humanity, the One Life. *Eros* or spiritual aspiration is the desire to return to that divine or oneness. The ascent requires a purification of the heart of the observer to release the love and wisdom of the soul’s vision. The purity and quality of the observer influences his or her capacity to apprehend and understand principles of Natural Law which are based on harmony.

Being more than an urge for perfection, human perfectibility represents our ability to make adjustments in attitude and outward actions. In Theosophical thought, these adjustments can be seen as an illustration of the operations of the law of Karma. “Karma is an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly.”¹¹⁷ Thus, a disturbance in one part of the universe produces effects in others and sets up action causing the return to harmonious relationships in due time. Wherever there is a breakdown in harmony there is discord and conflict. Perfectibility refers to all thought and action that promotes harmony.

With the development of self-consciousness and related sense of responsibility, there is a point of challenge for the individual. Platonic becoming is an existential struggle, yet valid. As Raghavan Iyer discusses, it is a question of identity for the individual who would make the ascent in consciousness, who would express his own capacity to make the intuitive reality that he senses come alive, to choose to exercise his reality-assigning function. To participate in the higher level of reality is to approach closer to the One, the homogenous and the noumenal. Understanding at the level of *nous* is that which gives a more inclusive perspective, a wider vision and a greater strength. It provides a continual stimulus to growth. In this becoming the individual is “able to grow in a direction that is in harmony

¹¹⁶ Capra, Fritjof, *Network Review*, 2017/1, “Mystics and Scientists in the 21st Century”, P. 17.

¹¹⁷ Judge, W.Q., *Theosophical Tenets*, CGP, Santa Barbara, CA, 1987, P. 100.

with the whole of nature. His moral growth is marked by an increase in the intensity and potency of his power of thought and ideation.”¹¹⁸

A passage from H. P. Blavatsky epitomizes a noetic outlook on a down-to-earth human situation. The following is a prescient and stunning message – universal, perceptive of root causes, looking to the whole, compassionate, and providing a profound vision of interdependence. H. P. Blavatsky narrates in 1879 “a most painful experience” of her travel through numerous hillsides of North India where she saw, “treeless, sun-parched waste, the presage of doom unless the necessary steps were at once taken to aid lavish Nature to reclothe the mountain tops with vegetation....” She comments further:

“the stripping of hills and the drainage slopes of their vegetation [are] a positive crime against the nation, and will decimate the population more effectually than could the sword of any foreign conqueror...the ruin and ultimate extinction of national power follow the extirpation of forests as surely as night follows day. Nature has provided the means for human development; and her laws can never be violated without disaster...he who would learn one great secret why food-grains fail, poverty increases, water courses dry up, and famine and disease ravage the land in many parts, should read the communication of ‘Forester’ ...”¹¹⁹

Our human responsibility is to restore and maintain harmony. Addressing this principle, educator and ecologist Satish Kumar writes of the need to realize that harmony is a fundamental principle of ecology.¹²⁰

In his systems analysis, Fritjof Capra describes how an ecosystem is a flexible, ever-fluctuating network. Its flexibility is a consequence of multiple feedback loops that keep the system in a state of dynamic balance. No single variable is maximized; all variables fluctuate around their optimal values. Biologically, homeostasis is an active adjustment to

¹¹⁸ Iyer, R. N., *Parapolitics, Toward the City of Man*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, Pgs. 38-43.

¹¹⁹ Cranston, Sylvia, *The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, G. P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1993, Pgs. 205-06.

¹²⁰ Kumar, Satish, *Soil, Soul, Society*, Leaping Hare Press, Brighton, UK, 2013, P. 23.

retain balanced functioning in relation to a core value and dynamic cycles of interchange—birth, maturity, and decay – with other entities.¹²¹

Satish Kumar reminds us that “nature is not just out there; we are nature too.” When we learn ‘from nature’ and not ‘about’ nature, we establish a close relationship or kinship with her. Nature’s tremendous complexity requires an implicit humility and reverence towards the mysteries of natural processes.¹²² Similarly, in the mystical work, *The Voice of the Silence*, given from verses of the ancient Buddhist tradition by H. P. Blavatsky, we are urged to “Chafe not at Karma nor at nature’s changeless laws. Help Nature and work on with her and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.”¹²³

Acceding to the responsibility of humankind to restore and maintain ecological harmony in our era would require at the same time a change of thinking, a move to a holistic rather than a reductionist or instrumental line of scientific approach to man and nature. Spiritual experience is an experience of aliveness of mind and body, as unity with all of life. A holistic approach does not separate man from nature or self from the world. It is not transactional, and it is cognizant of the operation of law -- a perspective in which human beings are part of nature, sharing an essential oneness or spirit, reflecting nature’s visible and invisible aspects.

An approach to the process of changing our moral and mental perspective and a critique of our use of reason shines in the reflections of Arne Naess on ‘deep ecology’. Naess writes:

“Rational action for him is action involving absolute maximal perspective--that is, where things are seen as fragments of total Nature....The rationality of a total view, like Spinoza’s is perhaps the only form of rationality capable of breaking down the pseudo-rational thinking of the conservative technocracy that currently obstructs efforts to think in terms of the total biosphere and its continuing blossoming...”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Capra, Fritjof, *The Hidden Connections*, First Anchor Books, Random House, New York, 2004, P. 231.

¹²² Kumar, Satish, *Soil, Soul, Society*, Leaping Hare Press, Brighton, UK, 2013, Pgs. 22-23.

¹²³ Blavatsky, H. P., *The Voice of the Silence*, The Theosophy Co, Los Angeles, CA, 1928, P. 15.

¹²⁴ Naess, Arne, *The Ecology of Wisdom, Writings by Arne Naess*, Eds. Drengson and Devall, Bill, Counterpoint, Berkeley, CA, 2008, P. 130-31.

While it is the case that if the sense of the oneness of all life is lost, harmony breaks down, yet we can correct disharmony with a rational view of the whole situation.

Let us then pose a key question concerning true ecological living--what is the best use of the power of the human mind? Consider first the following, as an allegory of Humanity on what it has discovered about the present time: In modern life, we repose in what we can see and measure which is usually outside of ourselves. Thus we have become other-directed rather than inwardly-directed, and as a result, the strength of motivation toward ecological action tends to be sporadic and half-hearted. Consciousness itself is too externalized and diffused – we view all as separate objects. This produces a reliance on instrumental action, using nature for selfish purposes rather than revering nature as kin to us and in intrinsically right relation to the whole.

A constellation of thinkers have come forward to articulate the meaning and health-giving conceptual directions of ecology – Naess, Capra and Satish Kumar (and we notice relevant principles are prefigured in writings of H. P. Blavatsky).

Capra speaks of our capacity to awaken and perceive patterns of wholeness, an ability that allows us to belong to the universe as its ethical trustee. Our challenge for an ecological consciousness is to gain spiritual and scientific knowledge in order to create a balance or harmony between our spirit, soul, mind and body. This would be to evolve in consciousness as trustees of our own best natures, our neighbors', and the globe's well-being. For Mahatma Gandhi, trusteeship begins with revering the divine in nature and in others, self-examination, and ordering of our own values. We can begin to subtract our growing multiplicity of wants from our true needs. As Tolstoy wrote, "How much land does a man need? A six-foot box for his grave." We can, then, as Gandhi stated, "live simply so that others may simply live."¹²⁵

Satish Kumar advocates simplicity as a kind of mindfulness. He has articulated elegant simplicity as a way of clarifying one's true needs and of creating, Thoreau-like, space for contemplation, space to allow the individual to continually revere and adore the beauty of all of nature.

A Theosophical student writes, "Intellectual culture has its place. But the heart unfolds through its hands and feet. To release the heart is to live a

¹²⁵ Gandhi, M. K., quoted in *Elegant Simplicity*, Kumar, Satish, New Society Publishers, Gabriola, Canada, 2019, P. xiii.

sanguine, affectionate, spontaneous and joyful life... This is to transform the feeling nature and merge it seamlessly with the intellect.” With a clean heart we can gain sparks of insight into nature’s noumenal essence.

H.P. Blavatsky illuminated the idea of noetic psychology as the action of higher reason producing universal thinking beyond simple comparison and contrast or rigid separation of perceiver and objects. It involves choosing to give up a passive and false sense of psychic identity. Noetic thinking is our ability to see the whole which is more than the sum of its parts yet inclusive of their ratios and harmonies. It is our ethical power of perceiving spiritual truth with the laser light of higher intuition or apprehension gaining an active higher joy. As Ralph Waldo Emerson states, “Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm.”¹²⁶

Growth in ecological consciousness at present is consistent with a heightened sense of global awareness and a willingness to shed vested illusions, to abandon an ethic of self-aggrandizement. We are aware at present of a greater tendency to undergo practices in meditation, to choose to take the inward ascent toward compassionate, self-awakening consciousness. Related to this movement, practical action may be undertaken to make sure that everyone is fed and sheltered, that our sacred, life-giving seeds and soil are fertile, and that our local and regional (wild) ecologies are kept in a just balance and dynamic harmony. Such an attitude and changed global environment of life with raised awareness of the oneness of the Self in all, points to the prospect of a greater realization of Universal Brotherhood for all that lives.

PLANETARY AWARENESS: THE WORLDWIDE DEMAND OF THE XXI CENTURY

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¹²⁶ Emerson, Ralph, W., quoted in *Inspirational Mind: The Fusion of Love and Knowledge for the Good of Mankind*,” Theosophical Seminar, Dnepr, Ukraine, June, 2017, P. 10.