New Race

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Human Unity
SPECIAL

The Mother's Blessings for the Journal

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New Race

blessings

New Race~~New Consciousness

Like flames to the kingdoms of Truth and Bliss:
Down a gold-red stair-way wend
The radiant children of Paradise
Clarioning darkness's end.

Sri Aurobindo, "A God's Labour"

In this issue

Editorial

Towards Human Unity

In the present world conditions, the idea of Human Unity seems too far-fetched and utopian. There are wars, disturbances, disruptions, destructions, disequilibrium, doubt and death all around. How can then one think of world unity or world peace? Each individual, state, community, nation and continent is fighting to keep its integrity intact. Each is trying to expand and is thus encroaching others' boundaries. Some are fighting to get back their rights which were denied to them over centuries. The world is polarized into North – South, East – West, Right – Left like never before, yet can we think of unity or peace or harmony and prosperity?

While Sri Aurobindo wrote his essays on human unity right in the midst of the First World War, he was not oblivious of the condition in which humanity was heading. He had the vision to look beyond these binaries and contraries. Therefore he wrote in Savitri: "All contraries prepare her harmony".

Possibly, through all these contraries, a new world order is emerging. There is a reset on all fronts of an individual's life and in the life of a nation. People and politicians are forced to think out of the box. They are forced to look within, as the solutions outside seem to fail.

Therefore, there is a mushrooming of various, innumerable spiritual cults. In these tumultuous times, it is spirituality which will save humanity. It is based on spirituality that human unity can be achieved. It is on this foundation that the world will come together and fraternity will be achieved. This is the vision of Sri Aurobindo and it is taking shape slowly through all the turbulence and turmoil in the world at present.

This issue of New Race is dedicated to experiments and attempts at Human Unity. We hope you will enjoy reading the scholarly articles.

Shruti

The Ideal of Human Unity
(excerpts)   *Sri Aurobindo*

A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development.

A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here.

"The perfection of the individual in a perfected society or eventually in a perfected humanity — understanding perfection always in a relative and progressive sense — is the inevitable aim of Nature."

It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded.

There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race.

To go into all that this implies would be too large a subject to be entered upon here; it is enough to point out that in this direction lies the eventual road. No doubt, if this is only an idea like the rest, it will go the way of all ideas.

But if it is at all a truth of our being, then it must be the truth to which all is moving and in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life.

> **"...this ideal of human unity is likely to figure largely among the determining forces of the future..."**

A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence. Could such a realisation develop rapidly in mankind, we might then solve the problem of unification in a deeper and truer way from the inner truth to the outer forms.

Until then, the attempt to bring it about by mechanical means must proceed. But the higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent,—perhaps when it finds that its mechanical solutions are all temporary and disappointing,—the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection.

Excerpt 1 (The Ideal of Human Unity CWSA:25 1997, pg. 577)

At the time when this book was being brought to its close, the first attempt at the foundation of some initial hesitating beginning of the new world-order, which both governments and peoples had begun to envisage as a permanent necessity if there was to be any order in the world at all, was under debate and consideration but had not yet been given a concrete and practical form; but this had to come and eventually a momentous beginning was made.

It took the name and appearance of what was called a League of Nations. It was not happy in its conception, well-inspired in its formation or destined to any considerable longevity or a supremely successful career.

But that such an organised endeavour should be launched at all and proceed on its way for some time without an early breakdown was in itself an event of capital importance and meant the initiation of a new era in world history; especially, it was an initiative which, even if it failed, could not be allowed to remain without a sequel but had to be taken up again until a successful solution has safeguarded the future of mankind, not only against continued disorder and lethal peril but against destructive possibilities which could easily prepare the collapse of civilisation and perhaps eventually something even that could be described as the suicide of the human race.

Accordingly, the League of Nations disappeared but was replaced by the United Nations Organisation which now stands in the forefront of the world and struggles towards some kind of secure permanence and success in the great and far-reaching endeavour on which depends the world's future. This is the capital event, the crucial and decisive outcome of the world-wide tendencies which Nature has set in motion for her destined purpose. In spite of the constant shortcomings of human effort and its stumbling mentality, in spite of adverse possibilities that may baulk or delay for a time the success of this great adventure, it is in this event that lies the determination of what must be.

All the catastrophes that have attended this course of events and seem to arise of purpose in order to prevent the working out of her intention have not prevented, and even further catastrophes will not prevent, the successful emergence and development of an enterprise which has become a necessity for the progress and perhaps the very existence of the race.

Two stupendous and world-devastating wars have swept over the globe and have been accompanied or followed by revolutions with far-reaching consequences which have altered the political map of the earth and the international balance, the once fairly stable equilibrium of five continents, and changed the whole future.

A third still more disastrous war with a prospect of the use of weapons and other scientific means of destruction far more fatal and of wider reach than any ever yet invented, weapons whose far-spread use might bring down civilisation with a crash and whose effects might tend towards something like extermination on a large scale, looms in prospect; the constant apprehension of it weighs upon the mind of the nations and stimulates them towards further preparations for war and creates an atmosphere of prolonged antagonism, if not yet of conflict, extending to what is called "cold war" even in times of peace.

But the two wars that have come and gone have not prevented the formation of the first and second considerable efforts towards the beginning of an attempt at union and the practical formation of a concrete body, an organised instrument with that object: rather they have caused and hastened this new creation. The League of Nations came into being as a direct consequence of the first war, the U.N.O. similarly as a consequence of the second world-wide conflict.

> ## "The emergence of an ideal in human thought is always the sign of an intention in Nature…"

If the third war which is regarded by many if not by most as inevitable does come, it is likely to precipitate as inevitably a further step and perhaps the final outcome of this great world-endeavour. Nature uses such means, apparently opposed and dangerous to her intended purpose, to bring about the fruition of that purpose.

As in the practice of the spiritual science and art of Yoga one has to raise up the psychological possibilities which are there in the nature and stand in the way of its spiritual perfection and fulfilment so as to eliminate them, even, it may be, the sleeping possibilities which might arise in future to break the work that has been done, so too Nature acts with the world-forces that meet her on her way, not only calling up those which will assist her but raising too, so as to finish with them, those that she knows to be the normal or even the unavoidable obstacles which cannot but start up to impede her secret will.

This one has often seen in the history of mankind; one sees it exampled today with an enormous force commensurable with the magnitude of the thing that has to be done. But always these resistances turn out to have assisted by the resistance much more than they have impeded the intention of the great Creatrix and her Mover.

Excerpt 2 (The Ideal of Human Unity CWSA:25 1997, pg. 579)

The True Method...

Earth needs a place where men can live away from all national rivalries, social conventions, self-contradictory moralities and contending religions; a place where human beings, freed from all slavery to the past, can devote themselves wholly to the discovery and practice of the Divine Consciousness that is seeking to manifest.

In modern civilisation, men work on the surface. The mind is the surface of existence; they work on the surface and they try to find the Truth that is behind by studying more and more deeply. Whereas the true method is to enter into direct contact with the inner Truth, and impelled by that, guided by that, to make an outer construction which is not a seeking for the Truth, but a creation of the Truth, that is to say, the Truth-force realises itself outwardly through the human instrument.

All the human reasons that are given for solidarity and mutual love are of little value and also of little effect. Only by becoming conscious of the Divine and uniting with Him can one attain and realise true Unity.

Unifying Humanity:
The Role of Global Consciousness Project 2.0

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Abstract

The **Global Coherence Initiative** (GCI) is a multifaceted, international research endeavor investigating the interactions and interconnectivity between human consciousness and Earth's magnetic and energetic field environment. This initiative aims to advance scientific understanding of collective consciousness and promote global harmony.

The GCI employs several interrelated methodologies, including the **Global Coherence Monitoring System**, a network of magnetometers measuring Earth's magnetic field fluctuations; a **Global Tree Potential Monitoring System**, which measures the electrical potentials in trees worldwide; the **Global Coherence App**, a mobile platform for measuring individual and collective heart rate variability coherence and **Citizen Science Projects** which engage public participation in heart-based meditation events, data collection, and analysis.

Abstract (cont.)

The most recent addition to GCI is the **Global Consciousness Project 2.0** (GCP 2.0), an evolution of the original **Global Consciousness Project**. This project utilizes a globally distributed network of random number generators (RNGs) to investigate potential correlations between collective human consciousness and deviations in Network Coherence. While RNGs are designed to produce unpredictable sequences of binary digits, underlying research has indicated coherent behavior among RNGs during periods of widespread coherent attention and/or emotion across humanity. This paper discusses the theoretical framework, methodological approach, and some of the preliminary findings of GCP 2.0, situating it within the broader context of consciousness studies and global coherence research. The project aims to provide insights into the nature of collective consciousness and its potential interactions with the physical environment, with implications for our understanding of human interconnectedness and its possible role in addressing global challenges.

Key words: HeartMath; interconnectivity; consciousness; global consciousness; random number generators; coherence, citizen science

Introduction

The concept of consciousness, generally implying awareness or sentience among sentient beings, encompasses the capacity to perceive external stimuli, engage in internal reflection, and possess a sense of self (Wahbeh, 2021). Recent discourse has expanded this notion to include global consciousness, which extends individual awareness into a multidimensional worldview encompassing identification with all of humanity (Zhang et al., 2023).

The exploration of extended consciousness has roots in various philosophical and spiritual traditions across cultures, which have explored the interconnectedness of nature and all life and the concept of a universal consciousness. In the late 20th century, developments in consciousness studies began to challenge reductionist perspectives through scientific inquiry. Notable contributions include David Bohm's implicate order theory (Bohm, 1980), Rupert Sheldrake's morphic resonance hypothesis (Sheldrake, 1981), and the extensive research by Robert Jahn and Brenda Dunne on consciousness-influenced physical processes (Jahn & Dunne, 2009).

Building on this foundation, Roger Nelson's work at the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory led to the establishment of the Global Consciousness Project (GCP). The GCP was the first contemporary effort to scientifically explore interconnectedness and a form of human global consciousness. Using a globally distributed network of random number generators, the project demonstrated that global events and shared intentions and emotions could influence the correlation of random patterns generated by these devices (Nelson, 2014, 2019).

Introduction (contd.)

The Global Consciousness Project 2.0 (GCP 2.0), an expanded iteration of the original project, is currently being developed by the HeartMath Institute as part of the Global Coherence Initiative (GCI). The HeartMath Institute is a nonprofit research and education organization whose primary focus is research examining the dynamic relationship between human consciousness (physiology, attention, emotions, collective behaviors, etc.) and Earth's energetic (electromagnetic) environment. Established in 2008, GCI is predicated on the hypothesis that human consciousness has reached an evolutionary juncture conducive to developing more interconnected and cooperative global systems.

The following hypotheses guide GCI's research framework:

1. Solar activity and planetary geomagnetic fields influence human, plant, and animal health, cognitive functions, emotions, and behaviors.

2. Earth's magnetic fields can act as carriers of biologically relevant and patterned information.

3. Each individual is connected to a global information field.

4. A critical mass of people creating heart-centered states of care, love, and compassion will generate a more coherent field environment and information in the energetic field, which can benefit others and help offset the current planetary-wide discord and incoherence. This more coherent energetic information can be encoded within the earth's geomagnetic fields, which act as carrier waves of physiologically patterned and relevant information.

Our research suggests a profound interconnection between all human beings and Earth's magnetic systems. We propose that coherently aligned individuals, with collectively shared intentions, can radiate physiologically coherent magnetic fields that effectively resonate with and encode information in the planetary magnetic and energetic fields. This process has the potential to uplift other living systems within the field environment and significantly enhance collective consciousness and well-being (McCraty, 2010).

Several GCI studies have indicated significant correlations between Earth's magnetic fields and human activity (Al Abdulgader et al., 2018; McCraty et al., 2017; Timofejeva et al., 2021, 2017). A comprehensive review of the evidence supporting these hypotheses can be found in McCraty & Al Abdulgader (2021).

Introduction (contd.)

The GCI comprises five interrelated components: The Global Coherence Monitoring System, the Global Tree Potential Monitoring System, the Global Coherence app, the Global Consciousness Project 2.0, and initiatives promoting connection among participants actively engaged in enhancing global consciousness.

Global Coherence Monitoring System

Biological systems on Earth are immersed in fluctuating magnetic fields encompassing a broad frequency spectrum, and virtually every cell and circuit in biological systems can be affected (Bischof & Del Giudice, 2013; McCraty & Deyhle, 2015). Numerous studies have identified correlations between human physiological rhythms, collective behaviors, and solar and geomagnetic activity (Al Abdulgader et al., 2018; Halberg et al., 2011; McCraty et al., 2017; Tchijevsky, 1971; Timofejeva et al., 2017).

The Global Coherence Monitoring System (GCMS) consists of a network of six globally distributed ultra-sensitive magnetometers designed to measure geomagnetic and resonant frequencies in Earth's magnetic fields, including Schumann resonances, Alfvén waves, and other field-line resonances. The measured frequency ranges overlap with human physiological frequencies, such as those of the brain and cardiovascular systems. This network facilitates investigating interactions between Earth's magnetic fields and biological systems. The data collected is made available to the scientific community for further research on interconnectedness, solar-geomagnetic interactions, and potential predictive capabilities for seismic events.

Global Tree Potential Monitoring System

Recent research has demonstrated that plants and trees possess complex information-processing capabilities, including various sensory modalities that extend beyond the traditional five senses (Mancuso & Viola, 2015). Trees exhibit coordinated activities and responses that necessitate sophisticated signaling and communication systems, including long-distance electrical signals, specialized vascular tissues, and production of neurochemical analogues.

Researchers have also tracked the exchange of chemical signals and nutrients among trees through an invisible underground fungal network. The oldest trees, or "mother trees", function as hubs and help nourish their offspring until they're tall enough to reach the light. In other words, trees recognize their seedlings as kin (Simard, 2021). Trees also cooperate by trading nutrients across species. For the forest community, this cooperative and coordinated underground economy provides better over-all health, and greater resilience in the face of disturbance that allows them to thrive collectively (Simard, 2021).

Global Tree Potential Monitoring System (contd.)

The Global Tree Monitoring project, an unprecedented scale citizen scientist initiative, aims to investigate the electrical life of trees as part of a broader study on biological interconnectivity. This project hypothesizes that all life forms are interconnected through intersecting energetic magnetic fields. We have developed novel equipment and software that can simultaneously measure electrical potentials generated by trees at various global locations, demonstrating our commitment to understanding the global nature of life on Earth.

Research questions being explored include:
1. The potential influence of human emotions on tree electrical activity
2. Correlation of electrical responses in multiple trees to large-scale emotional events
3. The possibility of trees as seismic precursor indicators
4. Long-distance, energetic communication between trees
5. The impact of tree biofields on human well-being

Our methodology involves analyzing the collective activity of multiple trees to detect subtle signals or responses that may not be observable in individual specimens. This approach is akin to investigating group coherence in trees. Our current investigations focus on the effects of various environmental factors on tree electrical potentials, including temperature, light, water availability, gravitational influences (earth tides), and geomagnetic field variations. Additionally, we are monitoring global tree electrical activity for potential correlations with significant human emotional events, such as global peace initiatives or disasters, with the hope that our findings could contribute to a better understanding of the impact of tree biofields on human well-being.

The project also explores the possibility that changes in tree potentials may serve as a proxy for measuring deeper terrestrial electrical potential changes, which have been associated with seismic precursors (Freund et al., 2006).

Global Coherence Mobile App

Evidence suggests that social coherence can be facilitated through feedback on individual and collective heart rate variability (HRV) coherence (McCraty, 2017). Factors such as proficiency in heart coherence practices and emotional bonding appear crucial in mediating heart rhythm synchronization among group members (McCraty, 2017; Timofejeva et al., 2017).

This synchronization has been correlated with increased pro-social behaviors and improved communication while decreasing social discord (McCraty, 2017). Furthermore, synchronization between group members' heart rhythms and Earth's magnetic field rhythms is enhanced by heart coherence techniques (Timofejeva et al., 2021).

Global Coherence Mobile App (contd.)

The Global Coherence Mobile App, developed by the HeartMath Institute, is a powerful tool for personal, social, and global coherence. It measures the real-time heart rhythm coherence of individual users and groups of any size, and its geolocation features display the approximate locations of current users, fostering a sense of connectedness with others from around the world. The app also offers event listings, heart-coherence enhancement guides, guided meditations, and notifications for directing heart-focused care and intention toward specific global events or locations, all of which contribute to personal development.

This multifaceted approach to monitoring and promoting coherence at individual, social, and global levels provides a unique platform for investigating the complex interactions between human physiology, collective consciousness, and Earth's magnetic/energetic environment.

Global Consciousness Project 2.0

The newest addition to GCI is the Global Consciousness Project 2.0, which generates data from a globally distributed network of random number generators. These are designed to produce completely unpredictable sequences of 0 and 1 bits. Still, they also can exhibit coherent behavior among each other – known as Network Coherence – when there is emotional coherence across enough of humanity. This has been well-established by the original Global Consciousness Project (GCP 1). GCP 2.0 is extending this research with a larger, more sensitive citizen scientist-based network of 4,000 random number generators (RNGs), advanced technology, and fundamental measurements of quantum random processes.

GCP 1: On the Shoulders of Giants

The Global Consciousness Project 2.0 (GCP 2.0) represents an evolution of the original Global Consciousness Project, which Roger Nelson initiated at Princeton University. The original GCP utilized a global network of random number generators (RNGs) to investigate correlations between collective human consciousness and deviations in RNG outputs during significant global events (Nelson, 2014, 2019). It was inspired by Teilhard de Chardin's vision of a "noosphere," or sheath of intelligence, in the biosphere of planet Earth (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959).

The emphasis is on assessing if there is a type of global consciousness detected by increased correlations or coherence in the network of RNGs during a wide range of events where there is focused attention and collective emotions of a large number of people. Examples include events such as the Hindu Kumbh Mela pilgrimages in the Ganges and the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York (Nelson, 2019). The results showed strong correlations in some cases and virtually none in others.

GCP 1: On the Shoulders of Giants (contd.)

Overall, however, the composite across all formal tests, as shown in Figure 1, showed clear, highly statistically significant evidence that something remarkable happens when many people are drawn into a community with similar interests, focus, and emotional responses. In other words, when an event evokes a synchronous emotional response in a large number of people, it creates a type of coherence in what we think of as a global field environment that interacts with and changes the output of physical devices based on random quantum tunneling processes. A composite analysis across all the individual cases is presented in Figure 1, a chronological graph where the red line shows the steady accumulation of events with Network Coherence (also known as Network Variance in GCP 1), differing from the normal expected randomness in the global network (Nelson, 2019).
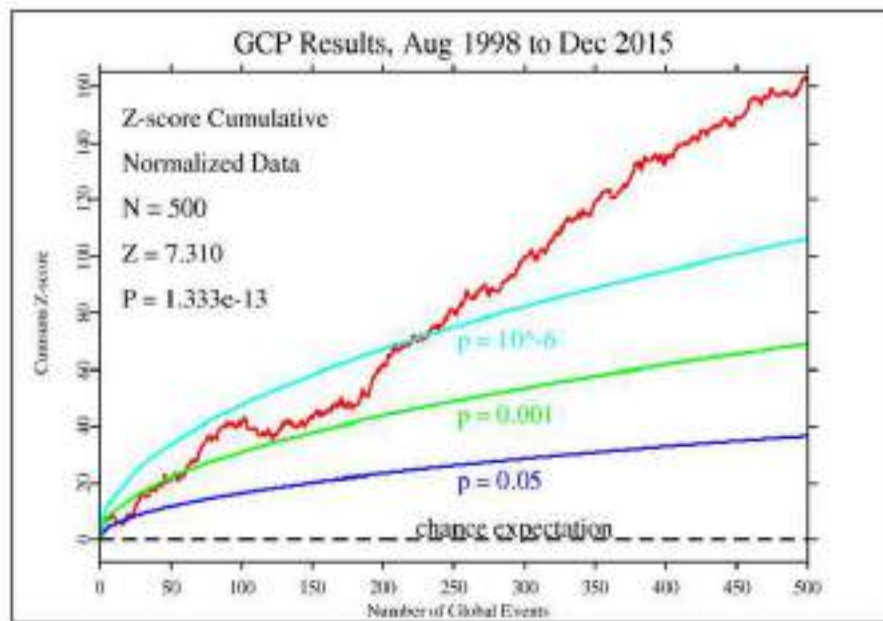

Figure 1 : *Graphical Summary of the Experimental Results accumulated by the Global Consciousness Project with its worldwide network of RNGs over the course of 500 formal events per-registered in the GPP 1 database from August 1998 to December 2015. The statistical significance bands are shown for increasingly small p values, beyond which the observed results become increasingly less likely due to random chance. GCP 1's composite statistic shows a probability on the order of 1 in a trillion that the correlation is merely a chance fluctuation.*

If there were not an increase in the Network Coherence, the red line would tend to wander randomly up and down while staying near the horizontal dashed zero line. As the figure shows, the actual data have a steady upward trend indicating a highly significant Network Coherence. After 17 years of data accumulation, GCP 1's composite statistic shows a 7-sigma departure from expectation, a probability on the order of 1 in a trillion that the correlation is merely a chance fluctuation. In other words, events that created an emotional response in the collective consciousness of a large enough number of people induced a type of coherence in the global network of physical RNG devices. It was found that the RNGs begin to act synchronously, even though they are fundamentally independent by design and are separated by great distances.

GCP 1: On the Shoulders of Giants (contd.)

Post hoc analysis revealed that in some significant events, such as the September 11, 2001 attacks and more significant earthquakes, the data deviations began several hours before the onset of the event, suggesting a type of pre-stimulus response along the lines of what is seen in human brainwaves and other physiological measures in non-local intuition studies (McCraty et al., 2004; Nelson, 2020; Radin, 2003). In these studies, the magnitude of the pre-stimulus response (before the occurrence of the event) is related to the magnitude of the response evoked by the actual event, suggesting that information about the future is enfolded in a non-local field (McCraty et al., 2004).

While these findings can't be taken as proof of global consciousness, they clearly show that focused emotional energy and attention can interact with and affect the physical world. Given the basic premise of interconnection, it is not surprising that events that evoke feelings of love and compassion show a greater overall effect on increased Network Coherence than any other emotion that has been examined. High levels of love and compassion correspond to stronger effects. In a related analysis we have also found that events that promote "global harmony" (like Earth Day, global meditations, and major peace demonstrations) show a strong effect (Nelson, 2019). Figure 2 shows an analysis of 110 events that took place between 1998 and 2012, where all event descriptions had a positive message for the future of humanity, promoted peace or healing to the Earth/nature and yielded a Stouffer's Z score of 3.283 with p = 0.00051.
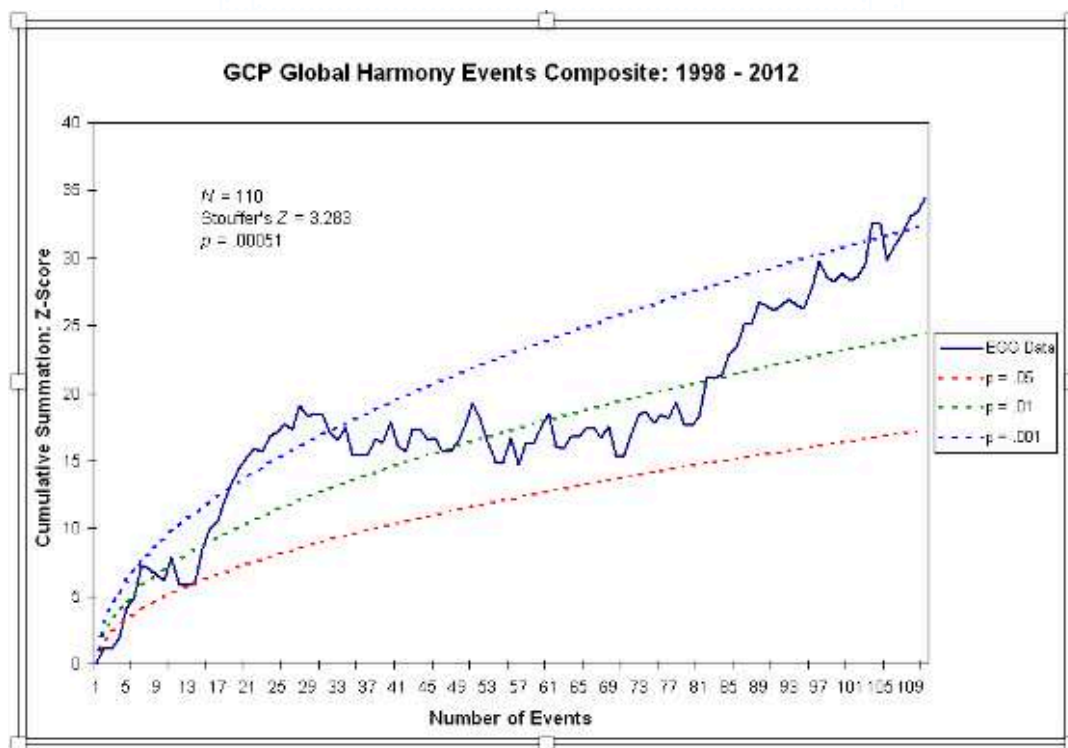

Figure 2 : Global Harmony Composite Analysis

GCP 1: On the Shoulders of Giants (contd.)

There have also been correlations between RNG network behavior and Solar and Earth's magnetic fields. Although the RNGs use multiple stages of "whitening" to ensure the random output cannot be affected by power line fluctuations, magnetic fields, etc., the long-term trend in the Network Coherence correlates with the solar radio flux (F10.7 cm) data from the Sun over more than 20 years with a correlation of 0.83, as shown in Figure 3. This could be a correlation between the RNGs and natural forces or may be mediated by humanity's mood, as it has already been shown that solar forces physically and emotionally affect humans (McCraty & Al Abdulgader, 2021). This is an intriguing finding as it suggests an as-yet-unknown source of interaction and interconnectivity between solar activity and the RNGs in the RNG network.
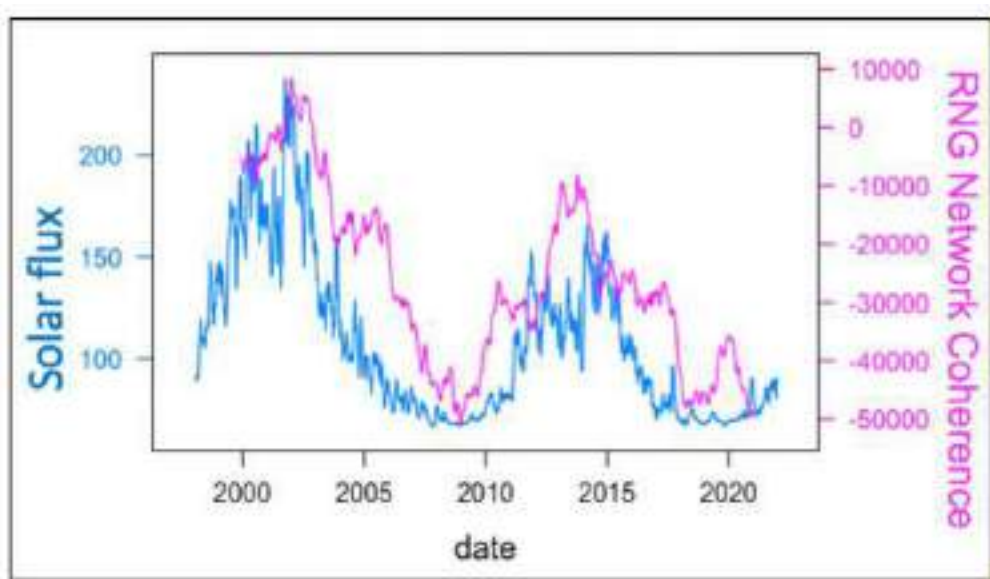

Figure 3 : *Time series data of the intensity of F10.7 cm Solar Radio Flux compared to the long-term trend data from GCP 1.*

On average, the deviations from expected Network Coherence associated with a single event are small, but in the aggregate, they are clear. It has been determined that they are not attributable to simple explanations such as electromagnetic influences, changes in the voltages in the power grid, mobile phone use, etc. We don't yet know the mechanisms by which events of importance to people affect the output of the RNG devices, but the correlations are clearly meaningful.

They suggest something akin to the concept held by almost all cultures of oneness and unity, based on a deep interconnection that is fundamental to life. We hope that our efforts to understand these complex interconnections may contribute insight into the role of consciousness as the creative force in the physical world, as predicted by quantum physics.

GCP 2.0: Modern Advances in Global Consciousness Research

The scientific questions raised and the results found by GCP 1 are intriguing and essential in studying global interconnectivity. Dr. Nelson has done extraordinary work by building on years of research at the Princeton PEAR lab to envision and maintain GCP 1. He is now retired and asked the HeartMath Institute to become the new home base for the project. The research team at the HeartMath Institute believed it was time to re-envision and expand the project to delve deeper into the scientific exploration of collective consciousness and its effects on the physical world and living systems. In collaboration with a diverse team of scientific advisors and Dr. Nelson, GCP 2.0 was created. GCP 2.0 is a substantially more comprehensive and robust version, including new NextGen RNGs, infrastructure, databases, data analysis and visualization approaches, and a new website (GCP2.net).

GCP 2.0 seeks to scientifically explore interconnectivity between humans and nature and to demystify how large-scale or focused emotional experiences impact others and our environment. The hope is to spur positive social change when people realize the consequences of our fundamental interconnectivity and how our emotions and intentions, can affect others and potentially our physical surroundings. In other words, what we "Feed the field" matters.

The GCP 2.0 project employs a network of RNGs engineered to generate entirely unpredictable sequences of 0 and 1 bits. Despite their design for randomness, these RNGs demonstrate coherent behavior across the network in response to periods of emotional coherence and interconnectivity among humans. This phenomenon, termed Network Coherence, is characterized by an excess of correlations between devices, indicating that the RNGs are synchronously producing a higher number of 1s or 0s simultaneously than would be expected by chance (Bancel, 2019; Nelson, 2019).

GCP 2.0 is a "citizen scientist" initiative that utilizes a new generation of standalone random number generators specifically designed for the GCP 2.0 network. These advancements make participation more affordable, simpler, and accessible for citizen scientists. Unlike the original GCP 1 system, which required a continuously running computer and broadband connection, the GCP 2.0 devices are state-of-the-art NextGen RNGs based on quantum tunneling, developed by experts in cryptography and computer science. Each GCP 2.0 device contains four independent RNGs.

The project aims to deploy 1,000 of these RNGs globally. Half of the devices will be strategically placed in 25 clusters, each comprising 20 devices, located in densely populated or significant areas. The remaining 500 RNGs will be randomly distributed worldwide. Data from the global network of RNGs is continuously recorded in a closed archive. As of this writing, the network has already expanded significantly beyond the peak size of the GCP 1 network.

GCP 2.0: Modern Advances in Global Consciousness Research (contd.)

While GCP 1 was primarily an academic endeavor, GCP 2.0 distinctively utilizes citizen science to investigate collective consciousness. This "crowd-sourcing" approach engages participants at multiple levels, from hosting RNGs to analyzing results, identifying potential network issues, and formulating new research questions. The involvement of the public in this manner enhances data collection and increases awareness of our hypotheses. It also allows participants worldwide to contribute to significant new scientific insights into complex global problems. The expansion of the participant base has naturally led to a substantial increase in the network's size. This growth in the number of RNGs is expected to improve the network's sensitivity, enabling more precise measurement and analysis of potential patterns resulting from mass shifts in human consciousness.

This expected increase in sensitivity is based on a scaling analysis of the Z scores obtained from the event registry in GCP 1. By randomly sampling a subset of all the devices in each event, a Z score for the entire registry was generated for different scales, as shown in Figure 4. It indicates that the more devices in the network, the stronger the result. Thus, a more extensive network should be more sensitive in reflecting the inputs of human consciousness into the global consciousness field.
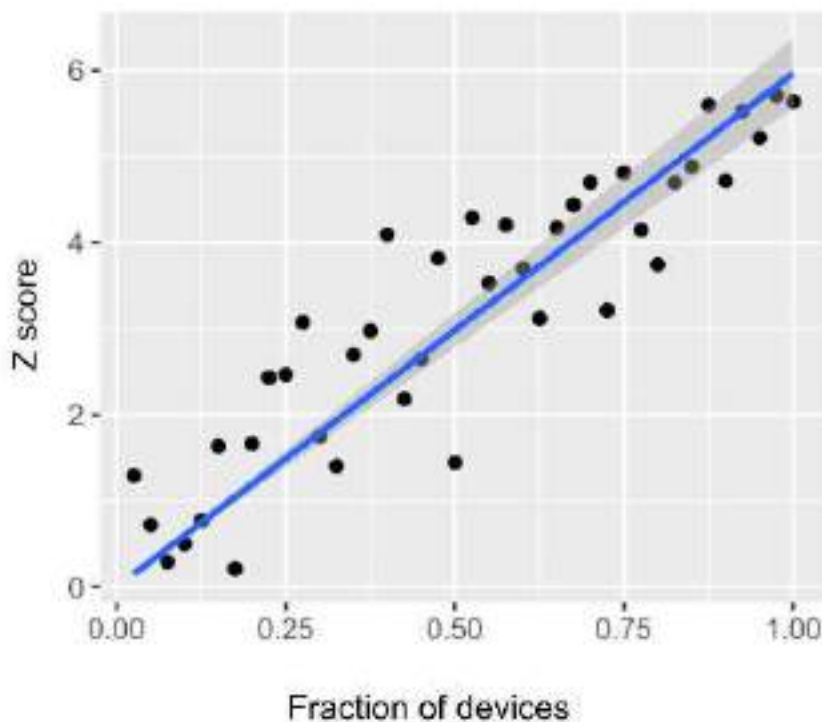

Figure 4 : *Scaling analysis: Stouffer's Z score for hypothesis registry compared to the fraction of online RNG devices included in the analysis. A linear fit line is superimposed..*
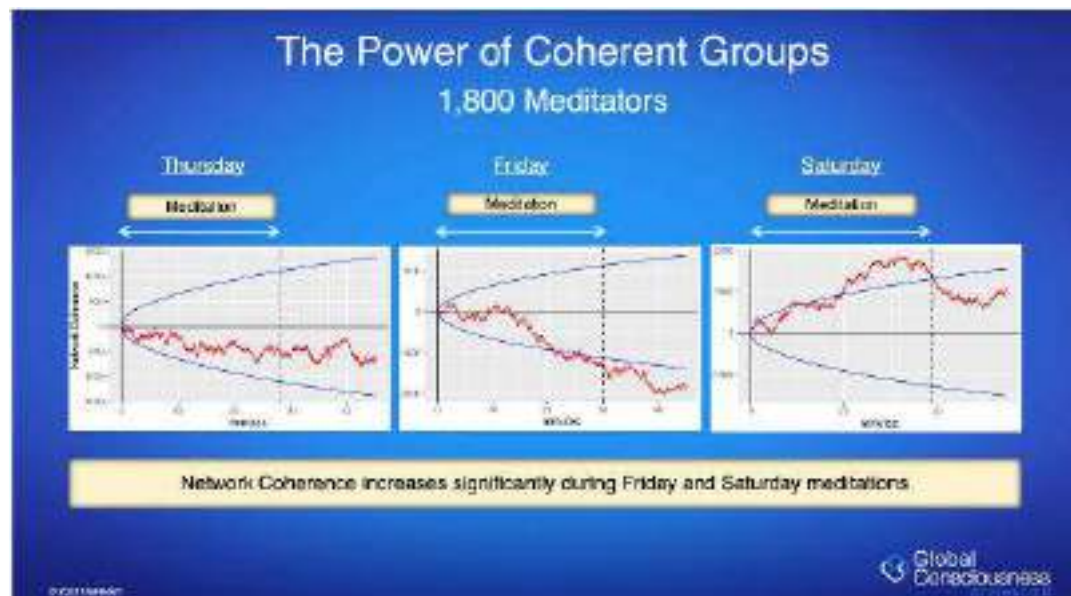
New Research Focus Areas in GCP 2.0

Another reason for expanding the network is to explore a range of new research questions, such as the impact of distance between humans and the devices on the influence of human consciousness on Network Coherence. Preliminary evidence from GCP 1 suggests that distance does matter in some cases, but the more extensive GCP 2.0 network should provide clearer and more detailed insights. As previously mentioned, 25 focus cities (clusters) are planned globally, each hosting 20 devices. This setup will enable researchers to investigate local effects within these clusters and their impact on global Network Coherence.

Another new research question relates to obtaining a better understanding of the fundamental mechanisms involved in how human consciousness appears to interact with RNGs. Traditional RNG experiments, such as those conducted in GCP 1, only recorded the final output of the RNGs to analyze consciousness-matter interactions. The NextGen RNGs record outputs at several stages, from raw data generation to various whitening stages. This design allows for tracing observed effects back to their roots in the quantum electronic behavior of the devices, potentially elucidating the fundamental mechanisms underlying the GCP effect.

Moreover, there is some evidence emerging that focused attention from smaller groups with a high level of heart coherence during meditations can have a significant impact comparable to global events involving a broader, less-focused population. To study this phenomenon, smaller groups of devices can be deployed at concentrated events. One example of this is from data obtained during a week-long meditation workshop led by Dr. Joe Dispenza in November 2022, where a tower of 10 NextGen devices (totaling 40 RNGs) was placed on stage at the event. The encouraging results, shown in Figure 5, indicated that during two of the three Coherence Healing meditations, the local Network Coherence deviated significantly from the expected value of 0, exceeding the significance envelope.

Figure 5 : Network Coherence (red) during Coherence Meditations over the course of a workshop, compared to blue chi-squared significance envelopes (p = 0.05)

New Research Focus Areas in GCP 2.0 (contd.)

Figure 6 shows the results of the global Network Coherence before and during an experiment involving approximately 2,000 individuals radiating heart-coherent love and compassion to help raise the baseline consciousness of humanity on December 21, 2023. This was a collaborative experiment between the HeartMath Institute and the producers of the movie titled "The 1-Field". Before this experiment, the participants had participated in six meditations with the same intention over six months. They were encouraged to practice using the Global Coherence mobile app to increase their level of heart-rhythm coherence before the experiment took place. The figure shows that the network coherence (red line) increases at the start of the 30-minute heart-focused meditation. It continues to increase and reaches significance as the meditation continues. This and similar experiments suggest that relatively small, heart-coherent groups can positively affect the global consciousness field.

Figure 6 : *Global Network Coherence increases with approximately 2,000 individuals radiating heart-coherent love and compassion with the intention to help raise the baseline consciousness of humanity.*

Figure 7 shows the results of another example of relatively small group doing a heart-focused meditation on the Global Network Coherence. This was on the last day of The Global Spirituality Mahotsva conference organized by the Ministry of Culture of India, which brought together leaders from many global wisdom and spiritual traditions with the theme of "Inner Peace to World Peace". It was hosted by the Heartfulness Institute's global headquarters in Kanha Shanti Vanam, near Hyderabad, India, which has the world's largest meditation center.

New Research Focus Areas in GCP 2.0 (contd.)

On Sunday, March 17, 2024, the last day of the conference started with a Heartfulness meditation with approximately 40,000 in attendance. The meditation was about 20 minutes long, followed by a number of emotionally moving presentations, including an award of Global Ambassador for Peacebuilding and Faith from the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth to Daaji (Kamlesh Patel), the Global Guide of the Heartfulness Movement. Similar to the results shown in Figure 6, there was a sharp increase.

Figure 7 : *Top: Meditation with approximately 40,000 individuals at the Heartfulness Institute's meditation center. Their intention was to radiate heart-coherent love and compassion, to help raise the baseline consciousness of humanity. Bottom: Global Network Coherence increased during the meditation.*

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New Research Focus Areas in GCP 2.0 (contd.)

An example of a much larger event is shown in Figure 8. The Mahashivratri festival is one of the largest and most significant among the sacred festivals of India. The festival celebrates the Grace of Shiva, considered the "Adi Guru" or the First Guru from whom the Yogic tradition originates. The Network Coherence on March 8th, 2024, trends upward and remained significant over the 24-hour analysis period, with an estimated 100 million followers present.
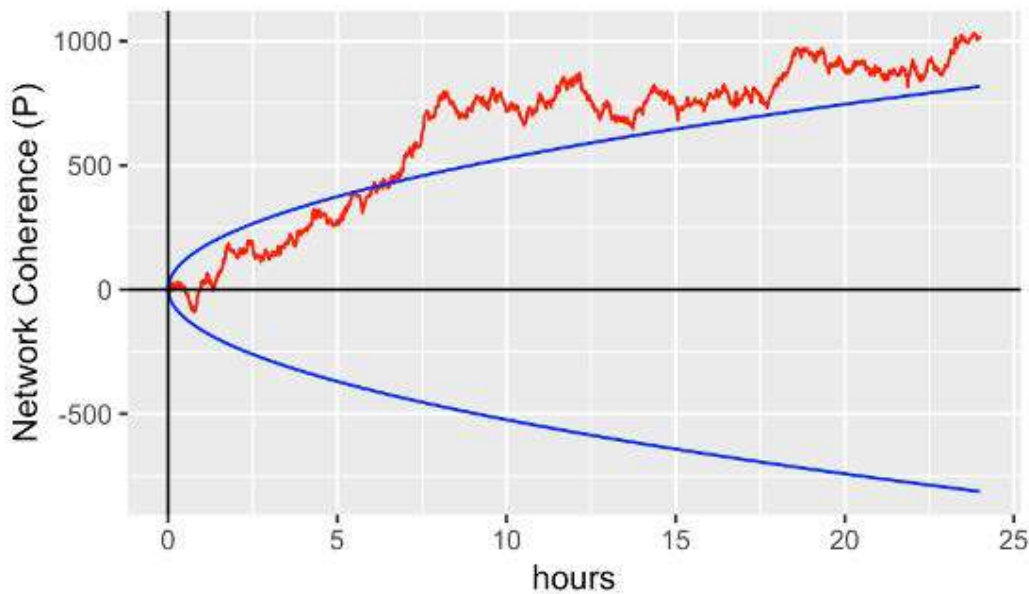

Figure 8 : *Global Network Coherence increased during a 24-hour period of Mahashivratri festival on March 8th, 2024. The start time was at 18:00 IST.*

Discussion

The traditional materialistic view of physics, which perceived reality as composed of elementary, solid building blocks existing in empty space, is gradually being supplanted by a more holistic perspective. This emerging viewpoint, informed by discoveries in electromagnetic fields, radioactivity, and quantum physics, conceptualizes physical objects not as isolated entities but as integral components within a network of interconnections. In this paradigm, fields and relationships assume primacy, blurring the distinction between nonmaterial fields and the physical world (Bischof & Del Giudice, 2013; Penrose, 1989; Tiller, 1999).

Early 20th-century biologists Paul Weiss and Alexander Gurwitsch proposed the existence of "biological fields" as crucial in organism development, suggesting that human beings comprise not only a solid physical body but also a field component extending beyond bodily confines (Beloussov et al., 2004).

Discussion (contd.)

Contemporary biophysics has significantly advanced our understanding by confirming that all living organisms are enveloped by weak electromagnetic fields composed of optical photons, radio waves, microwaves, and extremely low frequencies (Bischof, 2008; Hammerschlag et al., 2015).

The experimental validation of bio-electromagnetic fields, or 'biofields,' has led to new biophysical models that offer profound insights into human existence as multi-dimensional. These models encompass various levels of nonmaterial field-related aspects of thoughts, emotions, and intuitions (Bischof & Del Giudice, 2013; Ho, 2005; McCraty et al., 2009; Persinger, 2011; Pribram, 1991, 2013).

Several researchers have proposed theoretical field-based models of consciousness (Joye, 2020; Pribram, 2013), some positing that consciousness is not solely a product of localized brain activity but emerges from interactions within a broader field or network. These models suggest consciousness may be a non-local phenomenon, transcending individual brain boundaries, conceptualized as extended consciousness (Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Hameroff & Penrose, 2014; Joye, 2020; Radin, 2009; Valencia & Froese, 2020; Wilson, 2005). Extended consciousness proponents cite physiological synchronization instances in group settings, such as during meditation or collective consciousness practices, as potential evidence. Participants in these settings often report shared experiences or enhanced connections, suggesting the potential for consciousness to extend beyond individual boundaries and interact locally and non-locally (McCraty, 2015, 2017; Radin, 1997, 2009; Valencia & Froese, 2020).

Social interactions are profoundly influenced by the spontaneous synchronization or connection between individuals. During meaningful conversations, subtle harmonization occurs in physical movements, body postures, vocal tones, speaking rhythms, and inter-response pause durations (Hatfield, 1994). Recent research indicates that significant aspects of physiology can also become interconnected and synchronized. In group dynamics, increased physiological synchronization has enhanced conformity (Dong et al., 2015), fostered cooperation and trust, and strengthened social bonds among group members (Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009).

For the physiological activity to synchronize among separate individuals, some form of meaningful signal (electromagnetic, light, tactile, sound, or quantum-level information) must transport information between them (Currivan, 2017; McCraty, 2017).

One of the Global Coherence Initiative's hypotheses posits that Earth's magnetic fields can act as carriers of biologically relevant and patterned information.

Discussion (contd.)

Numerous studies have demonstrated that human and animal physiological rhythms fall within the same frequency range as the resonant frequencies in Earth's fields. Furthermore, brain and heart rhythms are affected by and often synchronized with the rhythms of the earth's fields (for an in-depth discussion, see McCraty & Al Abdulgader, 2021).

These findings collectively suggest a complex interplay between individual consciousness, group dynamics, and global electromagnetic fields. The Global Consciousness Project 2.0, with its expanded network and advanced methodologies, aims to elucidate further these relationships and their potential implications for our understanding of consciousness and global interconnectedness. The future of this field is promising, with potential insights into the nature of consciousness, the mechanisms of social cohesion, and the potential for collective human consciousness to interact with the earth's geomagnetic environment.

Recent empirical evidence supports the hypothesis of interconnectedness between human physiological rhythms and geomagnetic field activity. A large-scale global study involving groups of twenty participants across five countries corroborated findings from a previous investigation (McCraty et al., 2017), demonstrating that slower rhythms in participants' heart rate variability (HRV) can synchronize with changes in the amplitude of resonant frequencies produced by geomagnetic field-line and Schumann resonances. This study assessed participants' HRV synchronization with local magnetic field activity daily over 15 days. On the sixth day, all participants engaged in a 15-minute heart-focused meditation technique called a Heart Lock-In®. This intervention significantly increased heart coherence for each participant and enhanced heart rhythm synchronization among group members during the meditation period across all groups.

Notably, on the day of the Heart Lock-In meditation, the synchronization between participants' HRV and local magnetic field activity was significantly higher for all groups compared to other days in the study period (Timofejeva et al., 2021).

Further analysis of the groups revealed that over the two weeks, the heart rhythms of group members exhibited significant synchronization in groups with higher levels of bonding and emotional connections but not in groups with lower levels of connection (manuscript in preparation). This finding is particularly intriguing as most studies on physiological synchrony involve some form of joint action, such as walking, singing, gameplay, or communication. In this case, participants engaged in regular daily and night activities.

Discussion (contd.)

These results support emerging research related to extended consciousness, suggesting the existence of an energetic field that interconnects individuals within a group, facilitating simultaneous, non-local information exchange among group members. This concept aligns with the social communication theory developed by Bradley and Pribram, which elucidates common structural patterns found in diverse groups, irrespective of size, cultural background, or degree of formal organization (Bradley, 1987). Bradley and Pribram's investigation revealed that most groups exhibit a cohesive global organization, forming an interconnected emotional bond network that collectively establishes a multi-level hierarchy. By mapping self-reported relationships among all potential pair combinations within a given group, they discovered a robust link between the number and structure of reciprocated positive emotional connections and control relationships. This correlation could predict the stability and performance of the group two years later. The most fitting theory to explain their data was founded on a field concept, wherein information about the group's overall structure was disseminated concurrently to all members. Consequently, the group's collective consciousness, referred to as a "social hologram," could be accessed by any individual member.

The Global Coherence Initiative (GCI) and Global Consciousness Project 2.0 (GCP 2.0) aim to explore further and understand the nature and validity of interconnectivity and extended consciousness. This includes additional studies of physiological synchronization in local and non-local scenarios. GCP 2.0's expanded capabilities, including its larger network of random number generators and advanced analytical tools, may provide new insights into these non-local phenomena.

Long-term correlations have been identified between the output of the RNG network and various measures of societal sentiment, such as Google Trends (Holmberg, 2022), stock market indices (Holmberg, 2020), and presidential approval ratings. Holmberg hypothesized that events eliciting solid emotional responses would also drive a need for information, resulting in internet search trends correlating with GCP data.

This hypothesis was tested by constructing several search indexes from Google Trends data and correlating them with GCP data aggregates using time series statistics. Significant correlations were found between GCP data and these indexes, enhancing the statistical model's in-sample fit. Additionally, out-of-sample forecasts were more accurate when incorporating GCP data. Holmberg's study substantiates the GCP data hypothesis and demonstrates its practical utility.

Discussion (contd.)

A significant body of research has established connections between solar activity and human consciousness, underscoring the concept of interconnectivity. Russian scientist Alexander Tchijevsky first linked the heightened intensity of World War I battles to peak sunspot periods. Subsequent studies have revealed strong correlations between solar cycles, geomagnetic field disturbances, and significant societal trends, such as increased violence, crime rates, social unrest, revolutions, and terrorist attacks (Ertel, 1996; Grigoryev, 2009; Halberg et al., 2011; Mikulecký, 2007; Persinger, 1999; Smelyakov, 2006; Tchijevsky, 1971). Notably, periods of heightened solar activity have also been associated with human flourishing, characterized by innovation and creativity in architecture, arts, science, and positive social change (Ertel, 1998).

During periods of elevated solar activity, the sun emits increased ultraviolet (UV) energy and solar radio flux, measured by the 2.8 GHz signal (F10.7 cm) (Lean, 2000). Although the precise physiological mechanisms through which these solar and magnetic energy surges affect humans and animals are not yet fully understood, they are thought to serve as sources of energy (Al Abdulgader et al., 2018). This likely arises from a coupling between the human brain, cardiovascular system, nervous system, and resonating geomagnetic frequencies, such as Schumann resonances, Alfvén waves, and other ultralow frequencies like field-line resonances within the earth-ionosphere resonant cavity.

Interestingly, Shnol and colleagues at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Biochemical Physics conducted extensive experiments over many years, examining the fine structure of radioactive decay processes, particularly alpha decay, at various locations on Earth. They noted that alpha decay is resistant to trivial factors affecting the random distributions of decay rates. However, they discovered repeating patterns in the distributions of the measurements with periods of 24 hours, 27 days, and one year, depending on the Earth's position relative to the stars and the moon (Shnoll et al., 2000; Shnoll S.E. et al., 1999; Zenchenko et al., 2004). Radin also identified a correlation between moon phases and long-term GCP 1 data.

The observed correlations between GCP data, solar radio flux, and moon phases are essential in studying interconnectivity. They provide empirical support for the hypothesis that human consciousness is interconnected with external environmental factors like solar activity and lunar phases. This research broadens our understanding of how human consciousness and the environment interact by revealing links between human consciousness and celestial phenomena. It suggests that factors beyond immediate social or psychological influences may impact collective consciousness, challenging the conventional view that human consciousness operates in isolation from others and external environmental factors.

Discussion (contd.)

Hopefully, these findings will encourage further investigation into how and why such connections might exist, potentially prompting a shift in how we perceive the boundaries of human consciousness.

Conclusion

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronaut and founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Dr. Edgar Mitchell, experienced an epiphany on his return journey from the moon, recognizing the oneness of all life and unconditional love as the organizing principle of the Universe. The notion that all life forms an interconnected "whole" is gaining acceptance as scientific advancements progress and the world navigates through multiple crises. Although this growing acceptance marks significant progress, we must fully harness our fundamental interconnectivity to develop effective, sustainable global responses to humanity's challenges. Our objective is to establish a scientific foundation for an actionable strategy that leverages collective consciousness for positive transformation during this critical period of global change.

Adding GCP 2.0 to the Global Coherence Initiative's scientific toolbox represents a significant advancement in the study of energetic interconnectivity, building on the considerable empirical evidence provided by GCP 1. Up to 2015, GCP 1 utilized a maximum of 70 RNGs. The upgraded GCP 2.0 aims to deploy approximately 4,000 state-of-the-art RNGs designed to address a range of new research questions. From a research perspective, the increased number and strategic placement of RNGs are expected to yield more definitive findings.

The vision of the Global Coherence Initiative is to integrate several globally-focused networks of rich data sources to facilitate a new generation of research into the effects of global consciousness and interconnectivity. For instance, we will be able to conduct studies involving the physiological monitoring of large groups of people "feeding the planetary field" by sharing coherent intentions and emotions while simultaneously observing potential effects in physical devices (RNGs), living systems (trees), and Earth's energetic field environment. With adequate resources, the database structures supporting these studies will incorporate social metrics, providing independent measures of human interests and emotional activity.

The planet is currently rife with discord, prejudice, and conflict. Addressing these and other issues highlighted in this paper, the advancement of science in energetic interconnectivity and global consciousness holds immense potential to promote health, education, and global harmony, transforming the planet and all sentient beings. GCP 2.0 promises to be a unique undertaking that opens new areas of consciousness research and elevates humanity's baseline consciousness, where love, compassion, cooperation, and harmony become the new norm.

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Exploring Unity, Responsibility, & Inner Growth Through Technology

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Introduction:

Technology is value-neutral—a cell phone can save someone's life, connect with people, or blow up a bomb. We look at how we can add universal values (like dignity, compassion, and equality) to technology to make it a force of good.

Auroville is a universal township based on the ideals of Sri Aurobindo and realised by the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram to achieve actual human unity, where men and women of all countries of goodwill can live together, aspiring for unity with the Divine. The Auroville Charter serves as the operating principle for all activities of Auroville. In brief, the charter suggests that Auroville belongs to everyone; it seeks to bridge the past and the future, a space for unending education and constant progress, and it will further be a site for material and spiritual research. All of this is with the sole aim of achieving human unity.

Auroville seeks to be a city of the future. When we imagine the future, we imagine a smart city where technology permeates all fields and sectors. While we are aware of the anxieties surrounding vast technological shifts, how do we reimagine technology as something that supports self-growth, builds community, and can help us explore unity and responsibility?

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C3STREAM Land Designs (C3SLD) is a commercial unit under the Swagatham Trust of Auroville Foundation that allows rural youth to learn, grow, work, and teach.

The organisation's name and tagline signify its unique mission: C3—conscious for self, conscious for others, and conscious for the environment. STREAM stands for Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.

The tagline of *learn*, *grow*, *work*, *teach* is added to signify its goals.

The organisation was started as a research project of SAIIER (Sri Aurobindo Institute of International Educational Research) to explore the possibility of creating a learning organisation where the learning and growth of those who work in it and those they work with can survive or even thrive in the 'real world'.

What started as a social experiment with three youths and only a 1-year commitment of partnership with Aura Semiconductor in 2014 has grown into a robust collaboration over the last ten years and has supported over 60 youths.

"...help children and adults create a space to operate from their universal values and create positive change in the world."
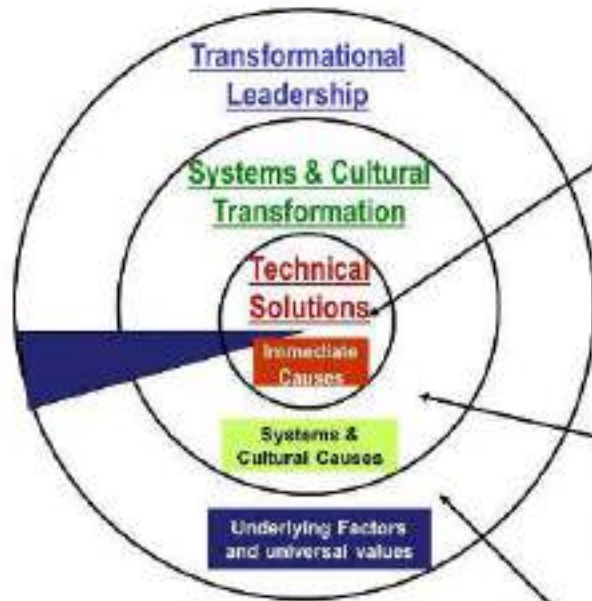
In addition, it serves over 300 children in various schools and has two resource centres at Auroville outreach schools – Udavi School and Isai Ambalam School. It has trained and partnered with over 100 teachers in STEM education.

C3SLD and its learning resource centres—STEM Land (SL)—have become an ecosystem of STEM Education and Engineering that helps to make constant progress and bridge the gap between the past and the future. Here, education serves not only the purpose of passing exams but also developing the innate faculties of the child as imagined by the Mother.

Additionally, the aim of youth is not only to financially support themselves through working in Engineering but also to help children and adults create a space to operate from their universal values and create positive change in the world.

The design of C3SLD as an organisation uses the Conscious Full Spectrum Response Model (Sharma, 2017), which addresses technical issues and works on shifting systems and cultural norms based on universal values. C3SLD's core values are **Responsibility**, **Equality**, and the **Courage to Create**, which are reflected in all practices adopted at C3SLD.

C3STREAM Land Designs

Transformational Leadership

Systems & Cultural Transformation

Technical Solutions

Immediate Causes

Systems & Cultural Causes

Underlying Factors and universal values

RTLEADS - Sanjeev Ranganathan & Monica Sharma ©2023

Rural Youth
1) Engaging high-tech employment
2) Opportunity to teach children
3) B.Voc and Masters (Shifu) course to develop
skills, competencies and inner capacities.
Rural Schools (across gender)
4) High-quality STEM education
5) International research
6) Teacher training

1) Mediocracy → Excellence
2) Dependence → Independence
   → Interdependence
3) National Education Policy (NEP)
   Theory → Practice
4) Overpriced non-transparent business
   → Transparent long-term partnerships

Responsibility, Equality and Courage to create

The cultural shifts C3SLD works on are from "mediocracy" to "excellence", whether in school or the youth's technical work. To move from "dependence" to "independence" and "interdependence".

While technology-based commercial units are non-transparent, C3SLD works on transparent budgets and building long-term relationships with partners.

The budgets are based on abundance, not scarcity. They include not only the needs of the unit but also a contribution to the city and a relationship with its partner, where 10% of the costs are also donated to Auroville for educational projects.

The organisation offers high-end technology employment opportunities for the youth in Auroville and the villages around it in embedded systems software, chip design, chip verification, and design automation.

C3SLD is working towards empowering the youth to become independent and providing opportunities for inner development so they can be interdependent and foster positive social change by engaging in activities beyond their accountabilities at work. They are provided access to technical practitioners and an opportunity to teach the children at both the outreach schools to work towards the upliftment of the community. They also receive high-quality STEM education, teacher training, and exposure to international research.

Each youth contributes their time and finances to Auroville by working in schools. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo believed in Karmayoga, i.e., the "yoga of work" is done with an attitude of consecration and personal growth. Karmayoga is distinguished from the capitalistic manifestation of "working" in that Karmayoga is done without the desire to gain recognition, fame, or monetary gains; it is done in the service of the Divine (Sri Aurobindo, Pg 232, Vol 29, CWSA).

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The Auroville Charter also elucidates the importance of constant progress and a youth that never ages in the spirit that needs to be manifested towards perfection and progress.

The following are ways C3SLD has furthered the values of unity, responsibility, and personal growth in the IT sector.

Responsibility:
The youth are provided unique opportunities to develop and enhance their skills and commitment towards being responsible agents of change.

Apart from engaging in teaching, the youth are enrolled in programmes like Radical Transformative Leadership (RTL) that help the youth become aware of their universal values and apply the same in various areas of their lives, as well as instil values in their understanding of technology so that it can be used responsibly.

It also helps them find purpose in their work, and research has shown that purpose predicts better recovery from stressful situations (Schaefer, 2013).

The programme also builds many other competencies such as self-awareness, critical enquiry, deep listening, etc.; it also helps to rethink guilt to hold space for the possibility of change.

"...purpose predicts better recovery from stressful situations..."

A youth with C3SLD shared that after applying RTL Tools in their daily lives, they were able to gather the courage to communicate effectively with people. Another youth shared that they are more aware of their social responsibility after undergoing RTL and are happy that C3SLD allows them to engage with the community meaningfully. Yet another youth who has been a part of the organisation for three years added that RTL helped them identify their purpose. Furthermore, the youth even (voluntarily) undergo training to become practitioner coaches and share RTL's transformative power.

C3SLD, as a learning organisation, has a hierarchy based on taking on more responsibility. Breakthroughs come from declaring breakdowns responsibly and tapping into the team's collective wisdom when we consider it from a perspectivist perspective. This includes developing the organisation's policies. An example of a policy that encourages responsibility is the leave policy. In this case, the policy does not require a person to ask for permission or give reasons; it is guided by the belief that we can be responsible, gauge our need for time, and tell people who work with us in advance.

The leave policy is articulated as follows so that the youth can take a leave for either of the four conditions:

1.	I am doing something for my growth.
2.	I am doing something to care for myself (health) or someone I care about.
3.	I am doing something important to me that I want to do.
4.	I am doing something that bothers me and does not allow me to reach my full potential at work, or I am doing something I have got to do.

The first condition in the leave policy is considered to be of the highest quality of leave. It also aligns with the constant progress mentioned in the Auroville Charter. Taking time off from work to foster growth allows youth to progress in ways that serve them and humanity.

Examples include attending a Vipassana (10-day program), participating in educational workshops, etc. The hope of the policy is also to allow one to reflect on how to move away from having to do things based on social pressure to making a conscious choice.

The employees feel cared for because they are free to take a leave for either – "mental" or "physical" health without the shame or guilt attached or having to defend what is important to them. A youth who has been a part of C3SLD/SL for eight years shared that the freedom of taking leaves helps him plan his day. He also mentioned feeling inspired and committed to his growth at C3SLD; work does not feel like a chore. That helps take leaves responsibly as it does not feel like a burden.

The youth distribute the accountabilities of running the organisation, from managing the finances to managing the campus infrastructure and resources, taking care of the dogs on campus, etc.

This creates a sense of ownership in the youth and allows them to see themselves in roles beyond meeting the "duties" at work.

However, it is understood that while accountability is for one person, the responsibility rests on all. Everyone provides support so others' accountability is achieved. This increases interdependence rather than independence.

"Taking time off from work to foster growth allows youth to progress..."

Every Saturday, the group meets for reflections; often, the colleagues acknowledge each other based on what actions of others inspired them by posting notes on a soft board that stays till the next time acknowledgements are done. While this initiative is undertaken for personal growth to acknowledge the support one has received or seen, a survey by McKinsey has also shown that when employees are socially recognised for their work, it leads to a 55% increase in their engagement at the workplace, which is much higher than financial recognition (McKinsey, 2022).

Undertaking manual work—such as cleaning the space or arranging the items—allows opportunities for the youth to do the "yoga of work". The Mother recognised manual work as something indispensable for inner discovery. A youth also shared that now he feels an innate responsibility towards everything he does, which is not exerted on him by others.

In an attempt to deal with the ever-evolving world and ensure that children are equipped with the skills to deal with the future, OECD's 2030 Learning Compass framework recognises the importance of being digitally literate. The framework also identifies the importance of connecting STEM concepts and knowledge to everyday life and the role of student agency being central to learning so that children can use their sense of purpose and responsibility to influence the world positively.

The youth of C3SLD work Intensively with children at the two outreach schools. In addition, the youth take once-a-week sessions in Edayanchavadi and Bommayapalayam government schools and offer workshops for children in Auroville and the surrounding villages. Children are taught math unconventionally by adopting the methods of making, tinkering, and engineering.

The team has developed "Mathegramming", a process of learning Mathematics visually/intuitively using programming. This process allows children to participate actively in their learning. While children are taught STEM education, they are also encouraged to connect the concepts they are learning to the real world; by relying on contextual examples, educators help children connect knowledge and their daily lives. This teaching method, in addition to imparting ways to learn to pass exams, also, and more importantly, allows children to recreate their expertise uniquely.

The children are given freedom on what to work on and how they want to work when they use STEM Land. However, they need to agree to follow three ground rules - respect yourself, respect others and respect materials.

These three rules serve as principles rather than directives. Respecting oneself reminds one to use one's time meaningfully, respecting others encourages collaboration, and respecting the materials allows for responsible use.

The children are introduced to a subset of RTL tools. These practices help build self-awareness by enabling them to identify their universal values and socialised fears. Children are also introduced to the idea of how we need to choose to integrate values into technology.

Additionally, in the past, children also underwent "Mitra Upakram," a meditation specially designed for schoolchildren. It teaches them the practice of "Anapana" meditation (breath meditation).

A research study conducted in Nepal with 240 school students found that practising "Anapana" meditation improved their mental health and interpersonal relationships (Pandey, 2022).

Courage to Create:
When C3SLD started, the youth used to take classes in a typical chalk-and-talk style. The youth had come out of school, but the school had not come out of the youth!

Reflection on this led to the breakthrough of STEM Land, a space designed by children to work as they preferred—alone, in teams, working in the spaces they wanted, doing what they wanted, and inviting facilitation when needed. Each year, C3SLD tends to start some new initiatives that support learning and growth.

"...how we need to choose to integrate values into technology."

Take, for example, the Becoming and Being a Shifu (Master) programme—BnB Shifu Programme—a one-year residential programme that works on technical skills and inner capacity. It differs from a regular course, where the aim is to finish education and get a job. Here, the youth is motivated to imagine education as an unending process of constant improvement, i.e., one that aligns with the Auroville Charter.

The programme is designed to be highly immersive; it demands them to take responsibility for their whole being, i.e., heart, body, mind and soul; attention is paid towards not only learning the technical skills but also towards developing skills like self-awareness and critical thinking, and values like dignity and equity. Sri Aurobindo's idea of integral education focuses on the all-round development of an individual, and at C3SLD, the necessary steps are undertaken to ensure the same.

Knowledge of programming, as envisioned in the BnB Shifu Programme, is not recognised as something unrelated to real life; the programme builds courage so the participants can engage with and provide solutions for real-life problems.

The youth is mentored by professionals committed to the shared vision of human unity and can imagine technology as supportive. Shifus, who underwent the training 4-6 years ago, have now become mentors.

Additionally, every week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the youth employed at C3SLD and Shifuians undertake a learning session and RTL tool delivery, respectively.

Based on the success of this program, B.Voc (Bachelor of Vocation) was started in 2023 in collaboration with the AIAT (Auroville Institute of Applied Technology) to provide a three-year degree program for students after the 12th grade.

C3SLD's work in education moves away from viewing education solely as a means to an end – to bringing attention to the unending nature of education as imagined by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

C3SLD's philosophy borrows from constructivist theory, which rests on the belief that knowledge is not delivered to the learner but recreated by the learner on their own (Bruner, 1960).

The constructivist theory aligns with Sri Aurobindo's beliefs, as he suggests that nothing can be taught to a child and that the teacher can only support the student's learning.
(Sri Aurobindo, 1910).

Design Thinking Process

When given a space to explore their ideas, children take agency of their learning and connect what they have learnt and what is around them. When the same process is instilled with universal values, children can utilise their values and think of influencing a positive change in the world.

At C3SLD, education by design is important, which means that design thinking principles are adopted to promote self-regulated learning in students.

An example is when children at Isai Ambalam school made equipment to understand the problem of acute water shortage at depth. Children made instruments to check the depth of the water; they also understood the concept of the water cycles and made "bunds" at various places in the school to increase water recharge (Ranganathan, 2018).

It was noticed that such pedagogical methods allowed children to find something they deeply cared about and direct their learning. It was found that children remembered precisely what they did even after six months from their self-directed learning experiment (Ranganathan, 2018).

Additionally, the youth who engage with children feel responsible for teaching and helping them grow. When asked how C3SLD will stay with the youth for the rest of their lives, they promptly shared that teaching children and learning about teaching techniques will stay with them forever.

Equality:

Auroville strives to be a township where people of all castes, creeds, religions, and sexes can live harmoniously. At C3SLD, we ensure we apply the same in our organisational structure. To begin with, there are no hierarchies between colleagues or teams. C3SLD puts intent into building a diverse workforce and takes steps to ensure equality.

While the IT industry is known for low female representation, at C3SLD, 31.4% of the employees are women, holding the same positions as men and having an equal say in decisions being made at the organisation.

The ground rules applicable to children and adults are respect yourself, respect others, and respect materials. The rules do not differ depending on seniority or gender. A youth shared that they do not feel pressured by the rules because they and their leaders follow the same code of conduct.

"...respect yourself, respect others, and respect materials."

Equality is not just between colleagues; even adults are open to learning from students. A youth who joined C3SLD 8 years ago shared that when he first came to STEM Land, he noticed that despite having an Engineering degree, he could not do what the eighth graders were doing here, so he started learning programming from eighth graders.

Premier institutes like IIT in India are accused of caste-based discrimination (The Hindu, 2023). The IT sector has also been accused of discriminatory hiring practices (Mint, 2022). C3SLD is consciously working with the rural youth to break the barrier. Through programmes like BnB Shifu, youth from disadvantaged communities are trained to enter tech spaces.

Those who have worked at C3SLD choose to continue working here in Auroville or find employment in IT companies in cities like Bangalore or Chennai. C3SLD aims to provide youth who want to stay and contribute to their community but have no bonds or agreements that will attempt to hold them back if they choose to move to cities. Through a partnership with organisations like Thamrai in Auroville, they have also worked with children from the Dalit communities in Annainagar and Edayanchavadi.

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The digital divide has been a problem in India; Oxfam's India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide (as cited by India Development Review 2023) showed that only 31% of the rural population uses the internet instead of 67% of the urban population. The report also highlighted that only 38% of the households in the country are digitally literate. At C3SLD, we have consciously taken steps to narrow this divide by teaching children and teachers to work on laptops and access the internet. We have also held webinars on digital literacy and sessions on a Feminist approach to technology.

"The digital divide has been a problem in India"

Conclusion:

C3SLD's role as a learning organisation is rooted in its aim of ensuring personal growth and adding value to the community. A youth shared that they feel like they are in college as there is no pressure to keep delivering. Even when such pressures arise, they are rooted in self-growth and personal transformation, which helps them not feel burdened.

Instead of adopting a scarcity mindset and worrying about "how" we will be able to influence any change, we focus on adapting and operating from abundance and exhibiting the courage to make it happen.

When asked what changed for those who have been a part of C3SLD, a youth replied, "I had a scarcity mindset when I joined C3SLD; I now have an abundance mindset where I can support others by sharing my learnings and sometimes even financially supporting them. Working with C3SLD has helped me appreciate a simple life as I now understand my impact. I was concerned about wearing branded clothes, but now I sense a greater purpose."

C3SLD is aligned with Auroville's vision and mission and strives to realise the "Dream" as imagined by the Mother.

Becoming & Being a Shifu (Master)
*S**can the above code**

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Independence, Harmony, and Challenges to Achieving Human Unity

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In his great wisdom, Sri Aurobindo has written much about personal freedom and action, relating this to his vision of Integral Yoga in general. This paper aspires to give some indication of the Master's perspective. However, it is always best, and we certainly benefit most, when we read Sri Aurobindo's actual words. The source for this paper is all contained within the book *The Ideal of Human Unity* (CWSA Vol. 25).

In this thought-provoking and paradigm-shifting book, Sri Aurobindo, among other thoroughly developed ideas, espouses the importance of the individual's independent life. He begins by explaining and describing the importance of understanding the depths of life and going beyond the superficial and partial knowledge grasped by sociology and history to a truly deeper understanding.

All our generalizations appear worthless or shallow and need a deeper understanding. Of course, this is challenging to attain. A deeper understanding comes as consciousness develops and individuals and societies evolve.

This text maintains Sri Aurobindo's view of the importance of independence, individual autonomy, and the possibility of human unity.

In his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo writes, "All Nature seeks a harmony." It would indeed be a harmonious state for fundamental human unity to emerge.

Sri Aurobindo asserts that human unity is an ideal that can be realized in the future at some indefinite time.

Human Unity is exceedingly difficult to realize primarily because of the influence of the ego.

Sri Aurobindo explains that human unity may be brought about by mechanical means, which would not be desirable for establishing human unity.

A far preferable way for human unity to develop would be through developing a "spiritualized" sense of the common good—a religion of humanity, as will be described later.

Regarding independence, Sri Aurobindo is emphatic that individual freedom to progress according to what is true to one's nature is essential for the evolution of the individual being.

He states this quite clearly in *The Ideal of Human Unity*:

"But freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime; diversity is as necessary as unity to our true completeness. Existence is one only in its essence and totality; in its play, it is necessarily multiform. Absolute uniformity would mean the cessation of life, while on the other hand, the vigor of the pulse of life may be measured by the richness of the diversities it creates. At the same time, while diversity is essential for the power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement, and stability. The unity we must create, but not necessarily uniformity. If man could realise a perfect spiritual unity, no sort of uniformity would be necessary; for the utmost play of diversity would be securely possible on that foundation." (Ibid., 423)

We can extrapolate a lot from this statement: Not only are freedom and diversity necessary to life, but order is also necessary.

This orderliness can be attained as humanity evolves, but until it does so, reaches a certain level of development, and makes significant progress, some form of order is needed.

Sri Aurobindo also describes the kinds of order available to humanity for its organization and notes the virtues and disadvantages of each in *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

Here, Sri Aurobindo describes three stages of development of modern nations that have occurred since medieval times.

These states are:

The external method attempts to mold humanity's psychological state under the pressure of circumstances, such as an external threat, into forms and habits instead of developing a psychological unity that would emerge from forms characteristic or expressive of that society or nation.

Next follows a period of stringency of organization and strictness of central control.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo identifies the third phase, which is a phase of free internal development, as necessary for a nation to remain vibrant.

However, externally devised change to bring unity could be more effective, especially when some coercion is involved. Pursuing this unity is only worthwhile if it results in a more harmonious individual and collective life.

Generally, Sri Aurobindo observes that collective life is best fulfilled and made more genial when concentrated in smaller and simpler groupings.

Smaller groupings, comprising more culturally expressive groupings, also permit the individual more range for self-expression and are more likely to enable the freedom to be oneself, a freedom essential for the development or inner evolution of the individual.

Sri Aurobindo often emphasizes the smallest grouping, where the full expression of each member's characteristics is seen as vital. This complete expression may pertain to cultural traits or national characteristics.

Next, he envisions alliances of groupings, which are associated and familiar affinities.

The crux of this perspective is that people should form their natural groupings based on various affinities. These affinities should not be enforced by economic, political, or military means but should arise naturally.

Sri Aurobindo asserts that, ideally, there should be a system of free and natural groupings (Ibid., 443) leading to a "psychological unity".

Furthermore, he reiterates, "A dominant psychological element will bring about union, which will naturally subordinate the role of race and culture within the nation-unit." (Ibid., 569)

...ideally, there should be a system of free and natural groupings...

Sri Aurobindo notes that strong divisions of feeling can exist, even though nations or groups are geographically close, since this may not lead to sufficient affinity in other, more crucial areas.

We see an obvious example of this at the southern border of the US, the border with Mexico, and the conflicts in the United States related to immigration.

Generally, the motive force for forming groupings is a response to the urge to create a more significant communal social life wherein individual and communal interests can be included in religious, political, and economic unity.

This leads to the first stage of social order, in which there is usually a fixed hierarchy for a time. Then, the structure is modified to enable a more robust and visible center of political and administrative order.

This stage sometimes occurs as a monarchy. Sri Aurobindo describes the "old monarchical absolutism" as "a movement of concentration, stringency, uniformity, strong control and one-pointed direction; to universalize one law, one rule, one central authority". Also, he regards these as oppressive and "an outrage on the human soul… an inevitable stage in the formation of the nation-unit by political and mechanical means." (Ibid., p. 380)

Several distinct forces oppose natural groupings of nations, which Sri Aurobindo has identified. Among them are national egoism, which we can consider to be a sense of national importance that exceeds patriotism, the seeking of authority and control, wanting an economic advantage, and the sense of cultural supremacy. (Ibid., 549)

In addition, smaller groupings may feel threatened by impermanence, defenselessness, or disorder, especially when faced with opposition from a larger nation or when unable to attain widespread well-being for the population, which seems crucial to a nation's survival.

Sri Aurobindo describes the disadvantages of disorder as obvious, leading to strife, waste, and confusion, and notes that:

"But they arise from the absence or defect of the sense of unity between individual and individual, between community and community, which pushes them to assert freedom for themselves at the expense of each other instead of growing by mutual help and interchange and to assert freedom for themselves in the very act of encroaching on the free development of their fellows." (Ibid.,425)

A real, psychological unity certainly would not have this result.

For a true solution to this discord and disorder, Sri Aurobindo proposes what he calls "the religion of humanity." Intellectually, this state already exists, at least partially. Sri Aurobindo tells us that this exists in a few minds and at least as a shadow in the human race's consciousness.

Several distinct forces oppose natural groupings of nations, which Sri Aurobindo has identified. Among them are national egoism…

How can we not feel deep concern for our fellow human beings in such dire circumstances...

Essentially, it is a shadow of an unborn idea waiting to be realized. In this idea, humanity as a general idea would be worshipped and revered.

The collective's best interests—the "All"—would be served, putting humanity's service first and emphasizing its progress and well-being.

This idea first came to the fore in the 18th Century and holds out hope for human unity and the overall unification of humanity.

Sri Aurobindo proposes that putting the good of society at the forefront of consciousness and serving our collective best interests would result in a unifying effect.

This may happen with growing awareness of the importance of humanity as a whole and especially with issues such as climate change, which impact everyone—the whole earth—matters related to this affect the entire world and go far beyond borders.

The prevalence of news also has an impact—not only do we know news and events in our town or community, but we hear reports of events worldwide.

Our concerns about the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East are vivid examples that readily come to mind.

How can we not feel deep concern for our fellow human beings in such dire circumstances and feel our common humanity acutely?

In the main, the religion of humanity, as an idea in the consciousness, as a faith, has humanized our outlook and resulted in a more compassionate and sympathetic view—humanizing law and punishment and eliminating slavery, stimulating philanthropy and charity, and generally enhancing the life of humanity.

Overall, our beliefs have come to increase the sense of our service to humanity as a whole, essentially viewing the world as an entirety and not as separate national entities—generally increasing a sense of the common good and leading in the direction of understanding oneness, at least at the mental or intellectual level.

Sri Aurobindo describes the hopefulness of his concept of the religion of humanity in the following statement: "A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this, it does not mean what is ordinarily..." (contd.)

(contd.) "...called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. ...A religion of humanity means the growing realization that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit on earth." (Ibid., p. 554)

Nature intends to bring this about; however, arriving at such a point or stage involves a process of considerable growth and progress for humanity.

Of course, this will ultimately occur as humanity evolves, arrives at being in touch with the psychic being, arrives at the cosmic consciousness, and realizes universality.

Regarding religion, as usually understood, in Sri Aurobindo's perspective, orthodox religion has not fostered human unity.

In general, religions have enhanced the stratification of societies, resulting in division.

Necessarily, different parts of the world have developed various forms of community—from village to city, with other aggregates, according to their cultures.

Sri Aurobindo notes that collective life is more fruitful in small groupings (e.g., small city-states, regional cultures) and observes that a "center" or capital of a state or nation also has value—it provides a rich cultural life, a focus of energy for individuals, and the advantages of having a central place to relate to.

Harmony requires balancing the individual's life with the life of the social grouping, the collective.

He has also written regarding governmental structure and organization and indicated that organizational structures have much progress to make in their evolution:

"As we have noted this need might have taken the form of an ideal of free cooperation guided and helped by a wise and liberal central authority expressing the common will, but it has actually reverted to the old notion of an absolute and efficient State—no longer monarchical, ecclesiastical, aristocratic but secular, democratic and socialistic—with liberty sacrificed to the need of equality and aggregate efficiency." (Ibid., 383)

"...a divine Reality, in which we are all one..."

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that egoism is the primary obstacle to resolving this conundrum. He underscores that without transcending egoism, there is no possibility for spiritual and psychological growth to elevate beyond communal association to the ideal level of Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity, as fervently proposed in the French Revolution.

In considering the balance between law and liberty, Sri Aurobindo is quite straightforward, as can be seen in the following statement:

"The quarrel between law and liberty stands on the same ground and moves to the same solution. The diversity and variation must be free. Nature does not manufacture or impose a pattern or a rule from outside; she impels life to grow from within and assert its own natural law and development modified only by its commerce with its environment. All liberty, individual, national, religious, social, and ethical, takes its ground upon this fundamental principle of our existence. By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfilment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment. The dangers and disadvantages of liberty, the disorder, strife, waste and confusion to which its wrong use leads are indeed obvious. But they arise from the absence or defect of the sense of unity between individual and individual,..." (contd)

(contd.) "...between community and community, which pushes them to assert themselves at the expense of each other instead of growing by mutual help and interchange and to assert freedom for themselves in the very act of encroaching on the free development of their fellows. If a real, a spiritual and psychological unity were effectuated, liberty would have no perils and disadvantages; for free individuals enamoured of unity would be compelled by themselves, by their own need, to accommodate perfectly their own growth with the growth of their fellows and would not feel complete except in the free growth of others." (Ibid., 425-426)

In other words, Nature aims for the perfection of the individual and the perfection of society.

Consequently, it uses different types of individuals for other purposes at various times, with certain personalities or natures predominating according to need.

For example, leadership has specific requirements or qualities, among them a vital nature that is supportive of initiative as well as for initiating movements, essentially the capabilities of taking charge and taking action. Specific attributes make a person successful in business or teaching, qualities that enable a person to become an artist or perhaps an engineer. All these qualities need to be allowed full (contd.)

Nature aims for perfection of the individual...

In Sri Aurobindo's terms, the nation's purpose is to provide a context...

(contd.) expression for a society to thrive and be successful—all these roles are required, as well as many others. All are expressions of the One, manifesting Their Reality.

When we reflect again on unity and diversity in a society, we usually think of national unity and the need to develop a sense of identity as a national unit.

Sri Aurobindo's analysis of nation development identifies several stages. Unity, he suggests, can be a product of external forces or circumstances, such as a common threat, or can be rooted in economic factors. These influences shape the structure of societies and the development of nations.

However, before a nation can be formed, a framework must consist of some common civilization, culture, or organization. Sri Aurobindo calls this a "scaffolding".

This is followed by a rigorous period of organization. In this period of focusing on organization, the thrust is toward unity and a focus on central control.

Necessarily, a sort of leveling occurs in which uniformity may also permeate the society.

Once the security of the basic organizational structure is established and people have developed a sense of security, a phase of "free internal development" can prevail.

In this next phase, which Sri Aurobindo explains is a period of free internal development, we can observe the expression of the community's needs, ideas, and instincts once assured that such expression will not bring disorder and disruption.

Natural groupings are according to natural divisions of locality, race, culture, and economic convenience.

In Sri Aurobindo's terms, the nation's purpose is to provide a context where all classes and individuals can fully develop as individuals and in the masses.

For this to be enabled, Sri Aurobindo details the characteristics of a just social order; he writes:

"Under a just social order, there must be an equal opportunity, an equal training for all to develop their faculties and to use them, and, so far as may be, an equal share in the advantages of the aggregate life's the right of all who contribute to the existence, vigour and development of that life by the use of their capacities." (Ibid., 453)

It is good to unpack this statement and examine the components Sri Aurobindo envisions as part of a just social order. We need to note that he mentions an element of "equal opportunity" and includes training, which implies education. He also mentions developing faculties and contributing from these faculties to the life of the community or society of which the individual is a part. (Ibid, 383)

Many people need to contribute to the society they are a part of. That is how to become truly and fully part of a society, engage in genuine interchange, and be invested in it.

So, in effect, people in a just society need to be educated or trained to become contributing members and enjoy the benefits and rewards of this participation.

He also notes that this state could have manifested in an ideal version "with a wise and liberal central authority, expressing the common will." (Ibid., 383) However, it has reverted to the old structure of socialistic, democratic order, in which liberty is sacrificed to the need for equality and collective efficiency." (Ibid., 383)

Essentially, Sri Aurobindo's perspective on independence, harmony, and community is deeply consistent with his evolutionary perspective. We can state this concisely: For the individual to develop and evolve according to one's nature, individual liberty is needed.

The factor of human nature is also subjected to the "gunas" or qualities of rajas, tamas, and sattwa that constitute individual propensities. The gunas drive the nature of the individual and are an additional factor.

So, we can see a central, crucial question: How can the individual evolve without the freedom to do so? Of course, we can factor in the need for order and law. Sri Aurobindo foresees certain elements in humanity's future and notes that until humanity evolves significantly and until the evolution of consciousness moves upward substantially, we will probably see the following: half-enlightened attempts influenced by human ignorance, confused experiments, clumsy compromises driven by ignorance and unreason.

Ideally, humanity can evolve to enable the free grouping of peoples according to their affinities, ultimately leading to a complex and diverse free world union. In this free world union, war would be eliminated, the right to self-determination would be recognized, and a confederation of free nations would result.

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Human Unity:
A Social, Spiritual, & Practical Perspective

IS HUMAN UNITY A MIRAGE DESTINED TO VANISH IN THE SANDS OF HISTORY?

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Is human unity an illusion? A mirage? A fantasy of a naïve, ignorant mind? Nothing of the sort. Human unity is the truth of our existence. Human unity is a fact of this terrestrial creation, as we understand from ancient Indian philosophical texts and the writings of Sri Aurobindo. The texts and writings say that there is only one "consciousness"—that of the Supreme Divine Reality. What we see as this diversity in the universe around us—call it by any name, such as individuals, nations, countries, creeds, groups, or nationalities—is a myriad expression of that Supreme consciousness, which in India is called Sachchidananda.

The seers in the Vedic times already realised this truth of oneness behind the multiplicity of creation. Because of this truth, people in ancient times spoke of "Satya Yuga"—the Golden Age. In Western philosophy, the Greeks and the Romans also discussed the Golden Age or the Saturnian Age. This dream of a golden age is quite common to all the primary cultures of the earth, be it China, Japan, India or Greece. Somehow, this has become a part of the psyche of human nature, and this concept of the "golden age" has been given a name and a description by each one of these cultures.

Unity in the distant past...

"Satya Yuga"

"Heaven on Earth"

"The Golden Age"

"The City of God"
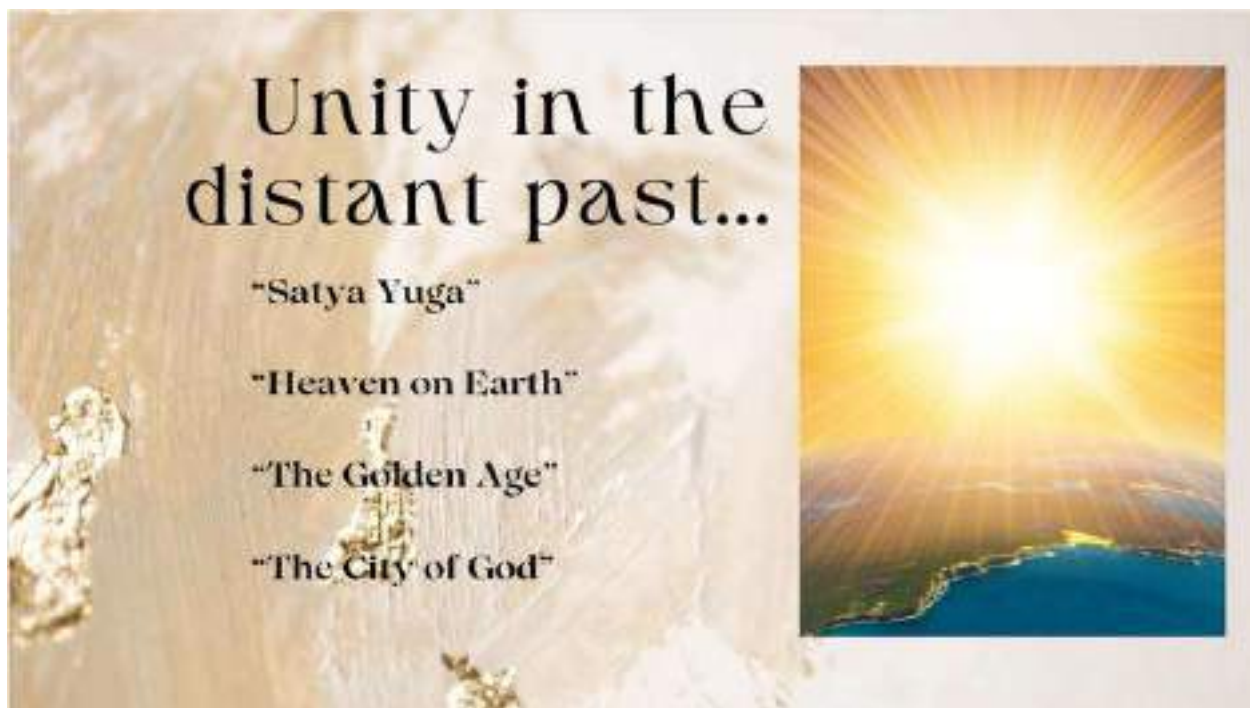
For most of us, it is hard to describe precisely what this "golden age" was or what it will be like. But here is how Sri Aurobindo writes about it when describing it in the past: "...an age of sincere being and free unity when the sons of heaven were leaders of human life and mind and the law of god was written not in ineffective books but on the tablets of man's heart." (CWSA 25, 634)

Many have written about the numerous beautiful qualities of that age. This eternal dream must have its basis in some deep subconscious aspiration of the human race. In the Bible, too, we see how Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden. It was a fall.

This 'fall' from timeless eternity to time-based earthly existence, from heaven to earth, is pretty much there in the sub-conscience of humanity, and it is because of this subconscient memory that we hark back to that golden age, to that radiance and harmony and joy as envisioned the dreamlike existence of Satya Yuga.

Also, based on the subconscient memory of humanity, there is this perennial belief in the "second coming", in the existence of "the city of God", and in the advent of the "Dashavatara"—the "ten avatars". All these are not just dreams and fantasies.

It appears that the human race needs to look forward and realise the spirit of that significant ancient period, the sum and substance of which, on the social level, is a perfected human society in unity and harmony. Now, looking at it from the point of yoga, let us consider if we have ever wondered why we talk about human unity.

The REAL Meaning of Unity:

## Uniting Earth Consciousness with the Supreme

We take it for granted that we must have unity, but unity with what? You may think of unity amongst human beings. However, exclusive unity among human beings is not possible. There is a vast implication in this phrase—"human unity".

Why do we not talk about animal or plant unity? Human unity has a unique possibility of binding the entire creation with the Supreme. This is the sole prerogative given to the human race to unite not only among themselves but unite this whole earth-consciousness with the Supreme. This is humanity's mission.

It is not for the animal or the plant world to accomplish this work. If you understand this possibility in humanity, you will see the secret possibility of human unity. It is such that humanity can unite within itself only in uniting with the Supreme.

However much one may come together in groups of nations or civilisations, true unity can be realised only after uniting with the Supreme Divine. This is the inner secret of uniting the whole earth's consciousness.

In this book, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Sri Aurobindo takes us through the cycles of Nature. Here, "Nature" refers to the totality and entirety of the Absolute and Supreme Divine manifestations—visible and invisible, subjective and objective, perceivable and unperceivable—the Prakriti aspect of the One True Reality, the Brahman. In that respect, one of Nature's dreams is for human unity.

Nature's Mechanisms for Unity
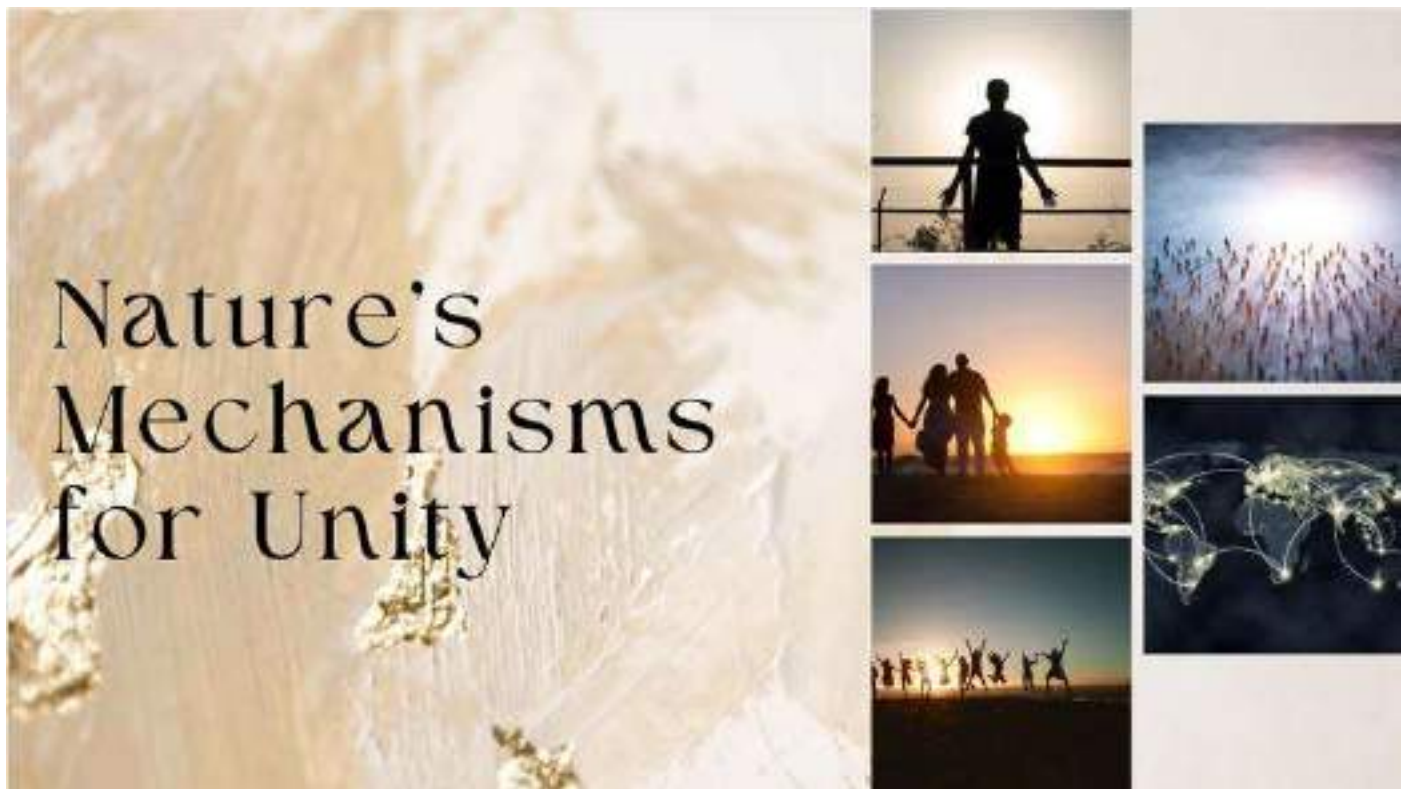
This innate dream aims to unite humankind through the various individual, familial, racial, religious, communal, social, political, national & global expressions and formations throughout the cycles of time. For example, centuries ago, one of the expressions was attempted through political empires such as the Roman Empire. However, this experiment of the Roman Empire failed because of external pressures and because it aimed at uniting only the body-politique— the external, political form—without achieving inner psychological unity amongst its inhabitants.

Then came the British Empire, which colonised nations. Through this, Nature achieved a critical mission of nations spreading each other's culture, connecting one with the other. These empires fulfilled their role, but this experiment had to be withdrawn after some time once its role was over.

Later, an attempt at racial unification was given an incredible opportunity when there were movements like Pan-Slavism, Pan-Arabianism, etc. That, too, did not last long. Subsequently, there were experiments based on religions like Pan-Islamism, and before this, there was the Pan-Christendom.

So, Sri Aurobindo analyses all these as experiments by Nature—political, racial, religious and the more contemporary experiments of the unity of the proletariat (Russia, China). Each of these attempts spread social, cultural, political, and economic values extensively but reached a plateau or a dead end after some time.

Humanitarianism

The Intellectual Religion of Humanity
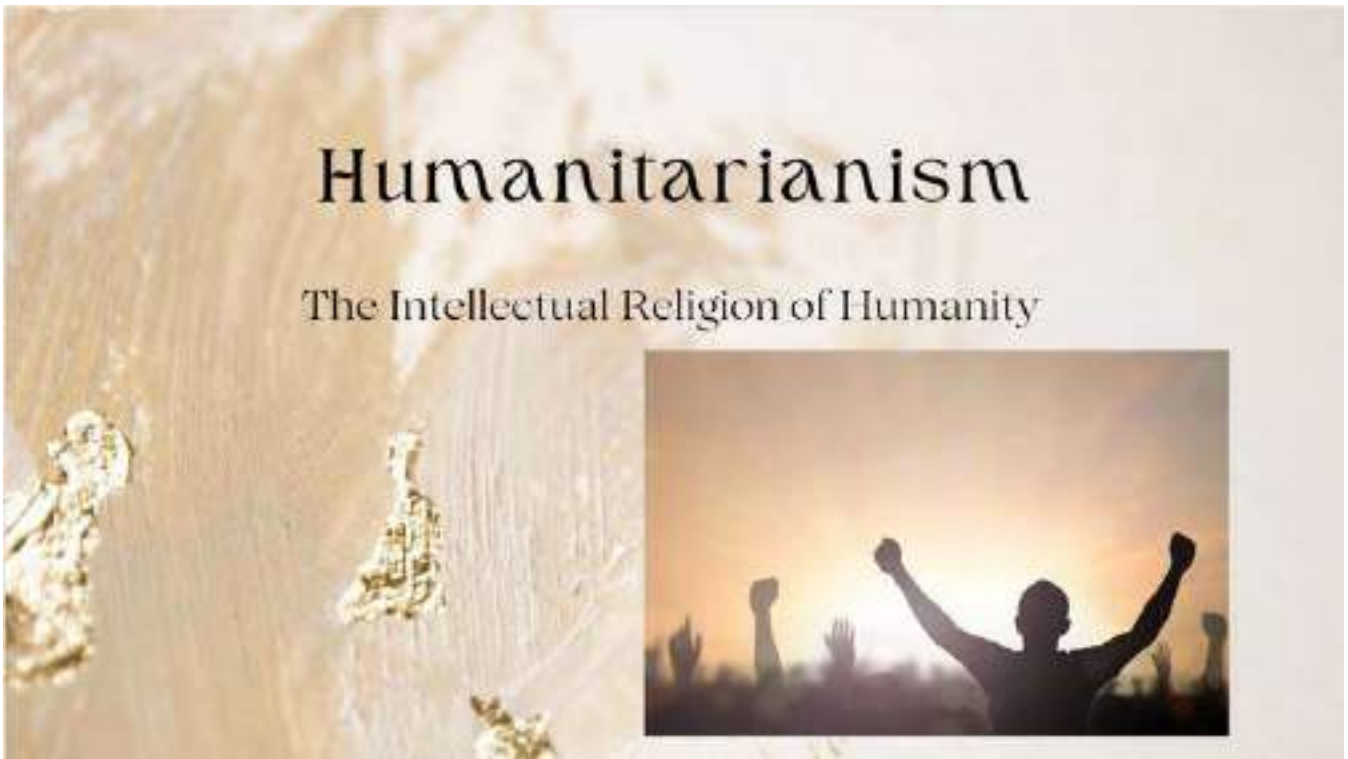
Sri Aurobindo then describes the experiment by Nature of some form of unity through federal groupings. One was the Commonwealth of Nations, when the British Empire withdrew from its colonies—an experiment that lasted a long time. In some ways, this led to the yet larger grouping of the European Union.

Sri Aurobindo makes us aware that Nature has always tried experimenting with different kinds of unification. Still, as something was missing in all these attempts, she had to dismantle all, one after another.

Sri Aurobindo then says that the brightest thing that has happened in the past centuries, to be precise, at the beginning of the 18th century, was the development of the intellectual religion of humanity or the religion of humanity—humanitarianism. This was based on the principle that every human being is sacred regardless of any distinctions regarding race, creed, colour, nationality, political status or social advancement.

This was the fundamental basis when the human being became the ideal for worship. Humanity became the most critical factor in every field. In these different and diverse categories of existence, humanity became the centre of all attention more than the gods. Out of this, we had great philosophies of humanitarism, where religion also offered great support, and it flourished.

This philosophy culminated in the great mantra of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—the three core "qualities" of humanitarism. This, says Sri Aurobindo, is the flowering of the consciousness of humankind's "intellectual" religion.
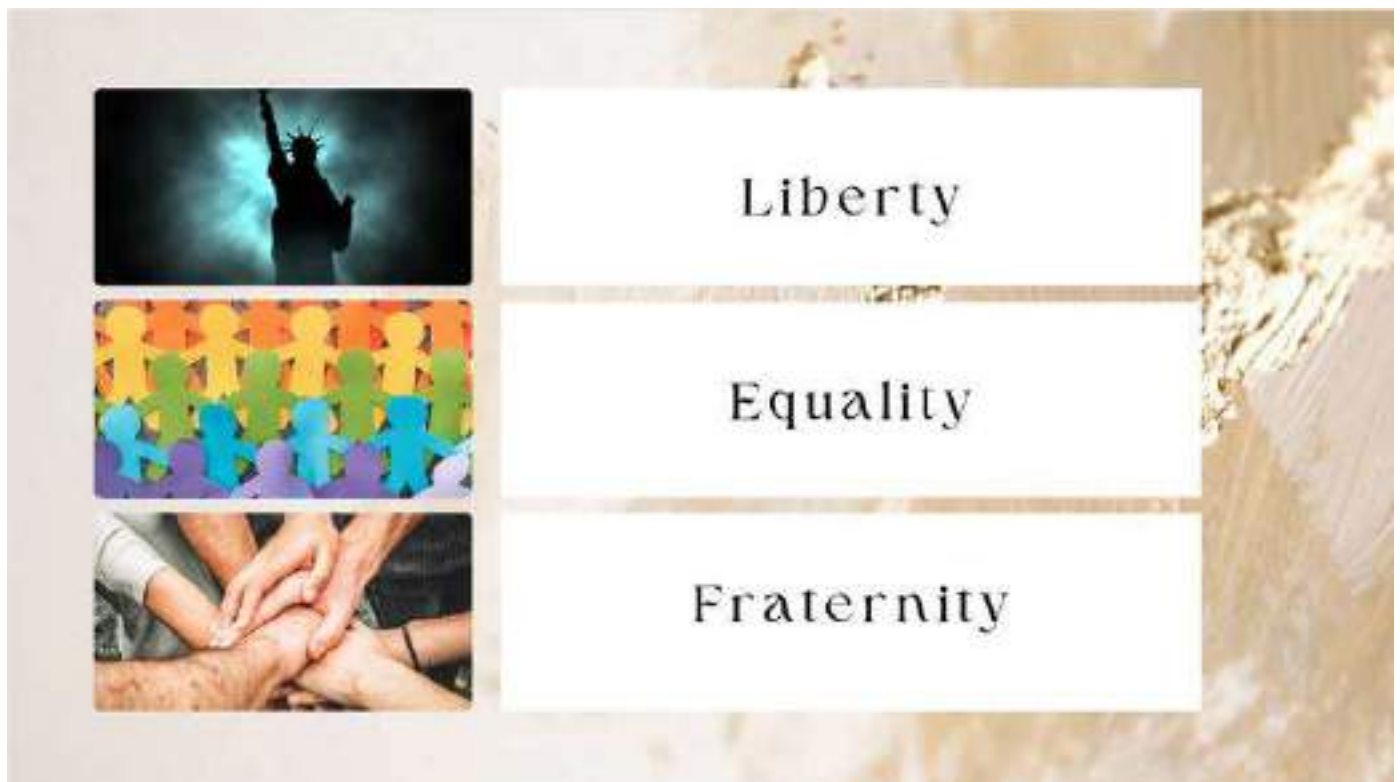
While some nations took up one quality, for example, "liberty," others took up "equality." Many experiments have been conducted on these two qualities, resulting in the political ideals of democracy, socialism, communism, and combinations thereof.

Over the many decades, these ideals have turned into political dogmas with varied degrees of success and failure.

Sri Aurobindo had foreseen a logical end to it. He had predicted its natural end. His logical analysis on all levels—individual, social, psychological, political, etc.—is so fascinating that it feels like Sri Aurobindo forces us to peer into the future from the vantage point of the present.

For example, he says that communism faces difficulties because the equality it believes in is somewhat unreal. This external form of equality, as we have seen in communist countries, is often a misrepresentation of true equality. In other words, on paper, the opportunities are available to all equally; however, the main power lies with a central authority.

This concept takes away the most critical factor for equality—liberty. This ideology cannot be sustained for long since equality is emphasised at the cost of liberty.

Equality must be well balanced with freedom because freedom is the central birthright of every individual. This concept of freedom has a more profound significance.

HUMANITY'S QUEST FOR PERFECTION

Sri Aurobindo, in his *magnum opus*, *The Life Divine*, says that man (in Sri Aurobindo's writings, we can equate the term "man" with all human beings irrespective of gender identifications) is a "God in the becoming". God has "delimited" or self-limited and reduced Himself when manifesting and becoming a man. Man, being aware of this, and therefore, at all times, psychologically and subconsciously, is trying to break this limitation to experience greater freedom on the way back to divinity—becoming a God again.

So, freedom is not a political ideology or wishing to do what they want. Humanity has a deep spiritual necessity to have freedom, which we have given different names to in religion, politics, ethics, and morality. That is why freedom cannot be suppressed forever.

Now, let us take up those countries who took up liberty as their philosophy and call themselves democratic. Have they been successful? They have emphasised the freedom of the individual without the principle of equality. An absolute hierarchy of rich, more affluent, poor, and poorer classes causes a serious societal imbalance.

In *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Sri Aurobindo notes that the politicians of the day often do not represent the hopes and aspirations of the people. They invariably represent man's lowest common denominator of consciousness: pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception, corruption and pretence. Governance is the sum of selfish, class, and commercial interests mixed with conflicting ideologies and value systems with little or no sympathy for the masses.

Nature's Movement

Higher, Vaster, Better—Always towards Perfection

If leaders in such democracies are our representatives, would we like to be governed by the worst in human nature? This is where Sri Aurobindo predicts the decay of democracy, too. Regarding India, Sri Aurobindo says that modern democracy, with its constant turmoil and tumult, is perhaps not the most unsuitable option.

To know what the new pattern of government should be, we must read his two books on social and political philosophy—*The Human Cycle* & *The Renaissance of India.*

Sri Aurobindo's analysis says that while some socialist, democratic, or communist countries had initially evolved into great nations, they became hardened, self-centred, and constricted after a certain point. This left no room for further growth and progress. Then, Nature brought forth the world wars since she abhors anything that blocks development and advancement for the individual and the collective.

In Nature, there is always a movement toward the higher and vaster course of development and unity. Simple human units that start as a family and grow into clans, villages, towns, cities, and states, culminating into nations. Likewise, Nature always wants to move on to a vaster and harmonious unity.

So, when further unification is restricted because of nationalism or other social and political causes, Nature creates conflicts and wars to break up the barriers of solid and unyielding "nation-egos."

Before World Unity can be achieved, something else is needed...

In other words, before they become too solidified, Nature tries to "loosen up" national boundaries and consciousness. It is as if she wants to show humankind that it is high time it looked forward to the next step in evolution!

Sri Aurobindo says that one of the experiments in this unity was the formation of the League of Nations, which was born after the First World War. Although that experiment was less than successful, after the Second World War, there was a better form of unity under the auspices of the United Nations. Nature wanted humanity to unite, think, and work together instead of getting shelled up in nation-egos that hinder unity.

Sri Aurobindo further analyses that several possibilities exist beyond the formation of the United Nations.

Out of the many possibilities, he thinks that something will emerge that we can perhaps call a "World Unity"—this is what he writes: "The first principle of human unity, groupings being necessary, should be a system of free and natural groupings which would leave no room for internal discords, mutual incompatibilities and repression and revolt as between race and race or people and people." (CWSA 25: 429)

Sri Aurobindo says that the external political "frame" of world unity would be a federation of nations. He further examines the details of the world body's judiciary, executive, army, police, etc., providing us with a complete description of such a framework.

...PSYCHOLOGICAL UNITY OF HUMANITY

But then, as he constantly reiterates throughout his treatise, we must remember that no external form can last long without the indispensable inner factor of psychological unity. The reason for this is that while a so-called "world state" may hope to bring about collective peace, economic well-being, general security, and a combination of general social and cultural activities—all progressive in their characteristics—they alone are not sufficient in themselves to create a human unity that would have prolonged survival.

In a surprising turn, Sri Aurobindo says, "...peace and security we all desire at present, because we have them not in sufficiency; but we must remember that man has also within him a need for combat, adventure, struggle, almost requires these for his growth and healthy living; that instinct would be largely suppressed by a universal peace and a flat security and it might rise up successfully against suppression. Economic well-being by itself cannot permanently satisfy and the price paid for it might be so heavy as to diminish its appeal and value". (CWSA 25: 562)

In other words, Sri Aurobindo says that neither peace, security, nor economic well-being will satisfy most human beings until their outwardly expressed sense of adventure, combat, or struggle has been transformed into something "higher." This "outward" expression is an extension of an "inner" being that resides in every human being. Until this inner being is allowed to express itself, all efforts are insufficient.

Spiritual Religion of Humanity
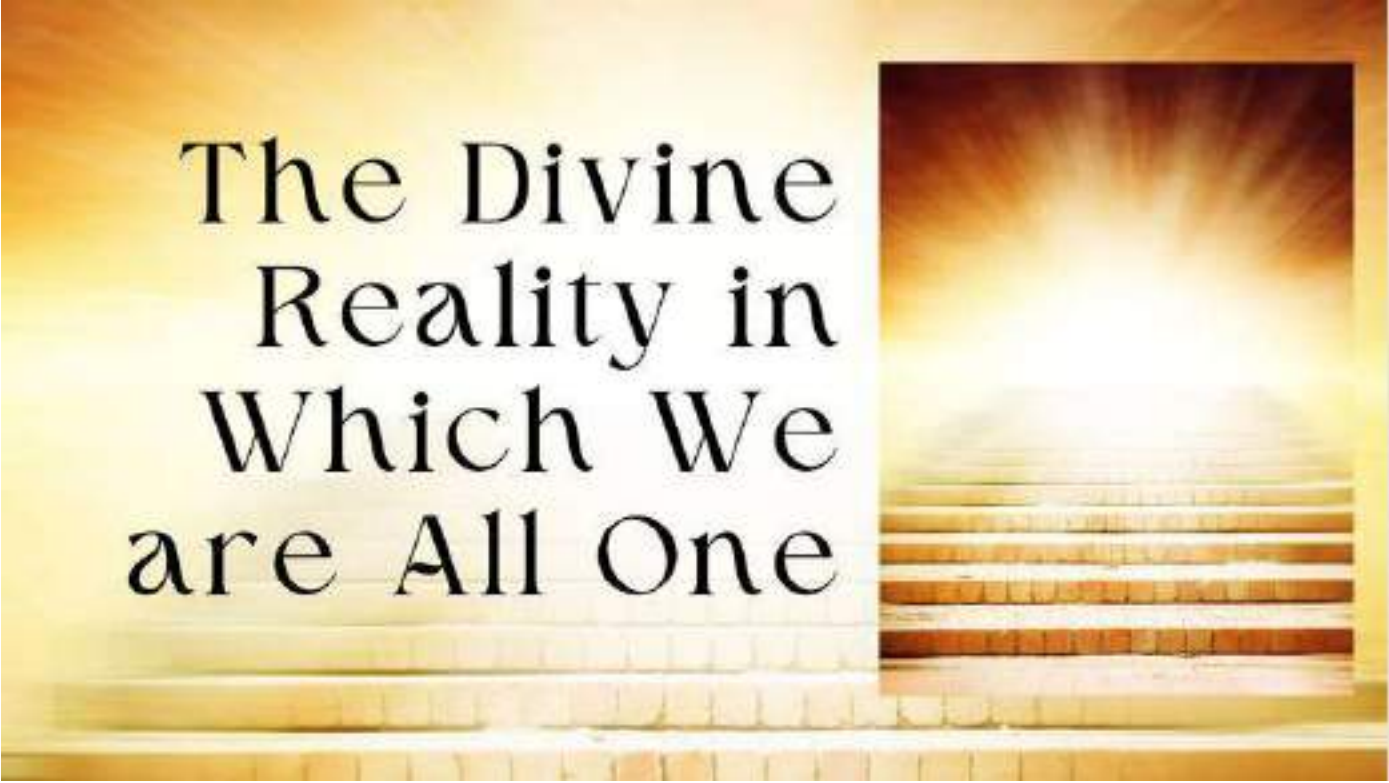
The spiritual core of all religions

According to Sri Aurobindo, "to move or go inward" is the spiritual religion of humanity—as opposed to the "outward movement" of intellectual religion—religious thought based on reason, rules, and rubrics. While the intellectual religion of humanity or humanism has brought forth a lot of values and development, it has been insufficient to change humanity.

Therefore, humankind's spiritual religion is the only factor sustaining all these unifying efforts. In other words, a religion imbued with spirituality rather than drowning in the whirlwinds of rituals, dogmas, and rigidity.

Sri Aurobindo calls the spiritual religion not the advent of yet another new religious theosophy but *rather* the re-emergence and re-emphasis of the core, original spiritual truths inherent in all religions' deepest cores.

Lest we prematurely emphasise spirituality in our quest for human unification at the cost of everything else, we must recognise materialism's great importance and role in this regard, for it has brought humanity together. Materialism, including science and technology, has brought us close to each other to the extent that today's world has become a global village.

This sense of unification at the material level has contributed to growing material and social consciousness via better communication, interactive entertainment, social media, and shared human aspirations worldwide. By the power of science and technology, we have already tasted what human unity could be like when humankind becomes one.

The Divine Reality in Which We are All One

What science and technology have done for humanity is reveal the Supreme Brahman, the Spirit, the Divine intelligence inherent but hidden in matter—a fact that has remained unrecognised by humanity for the most part because of its excessive and exclusive focus on what is visible and enticing to the naked eye and the external senses.

The inherent fusion of spirit and matter is one form of divine unity. But Sri Aurobindo asks us not to get stuck in this reality of matter, for there are yet higher levels of truth that humankind must discover and experience.

Although initially born out of spiritual seeds, most modern religions have developed into mental, intellectual, and theological renditions of philosophers, thinkers, and theologists over the centuries.

Beyond the mental formation of modern religion lies the higher spiritual formation—the spiritual religion—that alone can sustain human unity in its truest sense. Sri Aurobindo describes what this spiritual religion of human unity signifies: "A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life." (CWSA 25: 577)

THE DIVINE SHALL REVEAL GREATER TRUTHS TO US...

This is the essence of a spiritual religion. First and foremost, we realise, as the Upanishadic masters had told us, that there is a Higher Being beyond the reality of matter, life and mind. We may not have realised Him yet, but as the disciple Brighu, in *Taittiriya Upanishad*—the ancient Indian text—was asked to meditate for 12 years (which has symbolic rather than numerical importance) to realise the Divine Spirit, we too may have to meditate and concentrate to discover this Higher Truth that exists beyond all our present worldly experiences.

We cannot reject this Higher Truth because we have not discovered and experienced it yet. What most of us register and recognise with our senses is only a partial and limited truth. We tend to label anything beyond the prerogative of our five senses dubious and doubtful.

This is where our intellectual mind becomes a block and an obstacle. Sri Aurobindo says that when it comes to evolutionary development, "...humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth", but the Divine will not stop with this development of humankind alone.

By the vehicle of evolutionary development, the Divine will prod us to higher and higher levels. The Divine will reveal greater truths that will only be revealed when humanity reaches higher levels of consciousness.

With that greater consciousness, humankind will achieve more significant and permanent unity. This will lead to the realisation of the third principle—fraternity—which forms the trinity of the great mantra of humanism—liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Fraternity
The Neglected Triune

As a principle, fraternity has received limited political and social support from leaders in most nations. So far, every country has yet to adopt fraternity as the mainstay of its political, social, economic, and diplomatic agendas. However, some lip service has been paid occasionally, depending on the political and economic climate.

Interestingly, when it comes to India, Sri Aurobindo says that deep down, this principle must be the "ideal" for India. He has pointed out the weaknesses of the traditional Western democratic systems in India, which may not entirely suit India's social and spiritual temperament and background.

Western systems have traditionally followed philosophies rooted in the beliefs of "survival of the fittest," "winner-takes-all," and "Us-against-them." This has essentially put large swaths of humanity in a permanent mode of confrontational and aggressive mindsets, often with tragic and violent results.

India, with its ancient soil rich with the fertiliser of spiritual essence and traditions, maybe in a somewhat better position to play an essential role regarding new systems, frameworks, and methodologies for the future of humanity based on unity through fraternity while balancing the twin principles of liberty and equality.

The city of Auroville in Southern India is an experiment envisaged by the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in that direction. It continues to provide hope and practical guidelines to humanity in that regard.

It may take a few more decades to arrive at a conscious formation of spiritual reality in a spiritualised society—Auroville is a blueprint of that society in its visualisation. Sri Aurobindo gives us the essential characteristics and creeds of this spiritualised society. As mentioned by Sri Aurobindo, the three creeds of spirituality are God, freedom and unity. At an intellectual level, the mantra of humanity is liberty, equality, and fraternity. But the future mantra of the future humanity in a spiritualised society will be "God, freedom and unity".

God is the first necessity. Only in God or Divine Consciousness do we obtain absolute freedom; when we unite with His Consciousness, we arrive at the everlasting condition of true human unity. So long as we do not have the Godward consciousness as the pivot of our life, the various social justice and development experiments cannot succeed. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo says that a spiritualised society shall have God as its pivot and anchor instead of the human ego that has ruled us from ages immemorial.

The axis of our consciousness must be turned from ego to God or the Divine. To whatever extent we reach this Godward/Divine consciousness, we will experience the true freedom we seek. God is the primary vortex of the triangle that has liberty and unity as the other two vertices. Without God-consciousness, we cannot achieve the other two conditions of liberty and unity in their truest form.

For those who are not entirely comfortable with the word "God", fear not—please feel free to replace that word with whatever resonates with you—a Higher Power, the Truth, the Unknowable, the Unknown, Something Beyond, the Greater Being—whatever aligns with your ideal of the "power beyond".

INVOLUTION & EVOLUTION
THE DIVINE REALITY

Through history's kaleidoscope, it is interesting to see the ways and means by which prior attempts have been made towards human unity. This is because the drive towards human unity is embedded in the very subconsciousness of the human race. To analyse this drive, we must look at developmental evolution from the twin lens of philosophy and mysticism while considering the scientific and proven evolutionary theories that have developed over time.

Indian philosophical and mystical theories focus on the central truth of evolution as the drive towards unity. Sri Aurobindo speaks of involution and evolution as the processes that signify this journey towards unity.

Involution is the creation process from the One Supreme Divine, leading to a multiplicity of diversity in an immense and mind-boggling variety of forms. In other words, involution is the process that leads from oneness to multiplicity. The One Supreme Divine—Brahman or Sachchidananda—becomes this multitude we call the universe or even many universes.

When it comes to evolution, it leads from multiplicity back to oneness—in other words, the diverse "many" evolve to become the original, primordial One. This cycle, or "spiral" of involution and evolution, is dynamic at any given time.

This never-ending dynamism accounts for the constant flux of ebb and flow we witness in and around us and everywhere. However, the underlying drive from the multitude of diversity back to the one source is never-ending.

SPIRITUALISED INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS: THE FULCRUMS OF UNITY

This drive must be rooted in the Absolute Truth of sincerity, pureness, sacrifice, and knowledge for this drive to progress smoothly, painlessly, and joyfully. In everyone and everything, this Absolute Truth exists and is ever present within and is potentially conceivable in what we call the soul and the spirit.

On the other hand, when this drive encounters artificiality, falsehood, selfishness, and ignorance, it results in conflict, misery, confusion, and despair—something that the collective humanity has witnessed all too often. But this drive towards evolution is carried forward by Nature by any and every means possible.

In the future spiritualised society, two conditions must be followed to hasten the desired outcome of true unity. In this unity, based on a spiritual society, one of the conditions is the need for individuals who can recreate themselves in the image of their in-dwelling Spirit, and the second is the group formation of such "spiritualised" individuals that constitute the group body of "spiritualised" souls.

It is not easy or even possible for everyone to recreate themselves in the image of their pure Spirit. However, what is required is for humanity to reach a "critical mass" of "realised" individual souls that can become the core of the more significant "group soul"—similar to the "Tipping Point" principle so lucidly described by the famous researcher and author, Malcolm Gladwell in his book *The Tipping Point*. The critical point to note here is that these two movements of individual and group realisations must be simultaneously and in parallel, meaning both must be attempted in unison.

# What is Needed?

The Tipping Point...

Until now, great individuals have been aspiring for liberty, freedom, equality, salvation, and the immortal Spirit. At the same time, we also have isolated but beautiful examples of groups like various monasteries, study groups, ashramas, and abbeys of retreats—in other words—small "centres of light" that flicker and burn with intensity and ardour and try to guide humanity towards the larger Truth.

Such gatherings have generally existed widely spaced out in time and geography and, therefore, too dispersed and discontinuous to allow humanity to reach that "tipping point" practically.

However, we are approaching that critical phase in human history when a sufficiently large number of spiritual aspirants are particularly eager and yearn to advance in their spiritual endeavours, individually and collectively, worldwide.

In addition, modern means of rapid and cost-effective communication and technology can provide the facilitative infrastructure for close cooperation and coordination at a speed and scale previously unavailable.

Sri Aurobindo, in his extensive writings on human consciousness in books like *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Letters on Yoga*—based on first-hand spiritual experiences, verifiable with comparable experiences described in numerous Indian spiritual texts—has described the various levels and stages of consciousness.

Consciousness is the Key
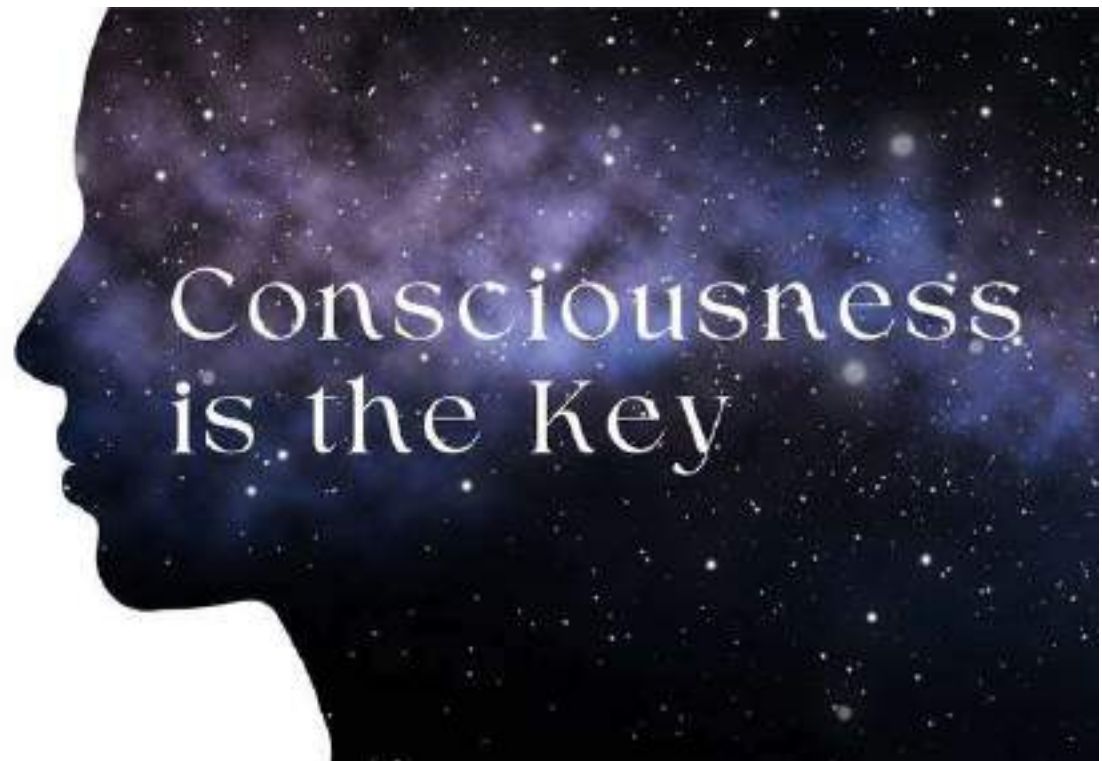
These are: inconscient, subconscient, material, life-inducing, vital, mental, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, and Overmind, leading up to the highest that will ultimately transform and create true "heaven on earth"—the Supermind or Supramental consciousness.

Most of humanity is currently at the vital and mental levels but needs to quickly accelerate its journey to the higher levels without wasting another day. The sooner we begin our travels on this upward journey, the faster the worldly travails will begin to mitigate.

Will the journey be arduous? Yes. Difficult? Yes. Long? It could be, but it does not have to be. The key criterion is that a sincere start must be made without wasting time—not next week, not tomorrow, not today, but *right now*. And it begins with each one of us. And the trigger point for that effort is within us—watching, observing, and quietening the incessant ego.

Sri Aurobindo has famously called the ego the "helper" and the "bar"—the barrier. Use the ego as your helper/guide, but also recognise it when it suddenly and in unexpected and naked ways assumes the personas that exemplify self-importance, separation, jealousy, anger, desire, and attachment.

Self-awareness, reflection, sincerity, and patience fuel our spiritual propulsion. But the one final "ingredient", without which even the sincerest efforts can be derailed, is the "Divine Grace"—do not seek it—*surrender* to it!

Surrender Your Ego to the Divine

Regarding "surrender", Sri Aurobindo says, "All must be done for the Divine; all must be directed towards the Divine." That's the true meaning of surrender. He continues, "Nothing must be attempted for ourselves as a separate existence; nothing done for others, whether neighbours, friends, family, country or mankind or other creatures merely because they are connected with our personal life and thought and sentiment or because the ego takes a preferential interest in their welfare. In this way of doing and seeing all works and all life become only a daily dynamic worship and service of the Divine in the unbounded temple of his own vast cosmic existence." (CWSA 23: 113

In Sri Aurobindo's definition of "surrender", we do not reject anything—that is why his system of "yoga" is called Integral Yoga—we are *only* asked to direct our thoughts and efforts towards the Divine.

When directed to the Divine, our acts, thoughts, and feelings pave the way for the shortest way to realise unity with our deeper psychic being and consciousness or the soul. The essential characteristics of this psychic consciousness are love, unity, and being, so the more we move towards our psychic/inner being, the more we reach out towards human unity.

In Sri Aurobindo's words: "It is the divine love which so emerges that … will be more potent for the perfectibility of life and a more real instrument than the ineffective mental ideal of brotherhood can ever be. It is this poured out into acts that could alone create a harmony in the world and a true unity between all creatures." (CWSA 23: 166)

Realise the Consciousness of One in Yourself
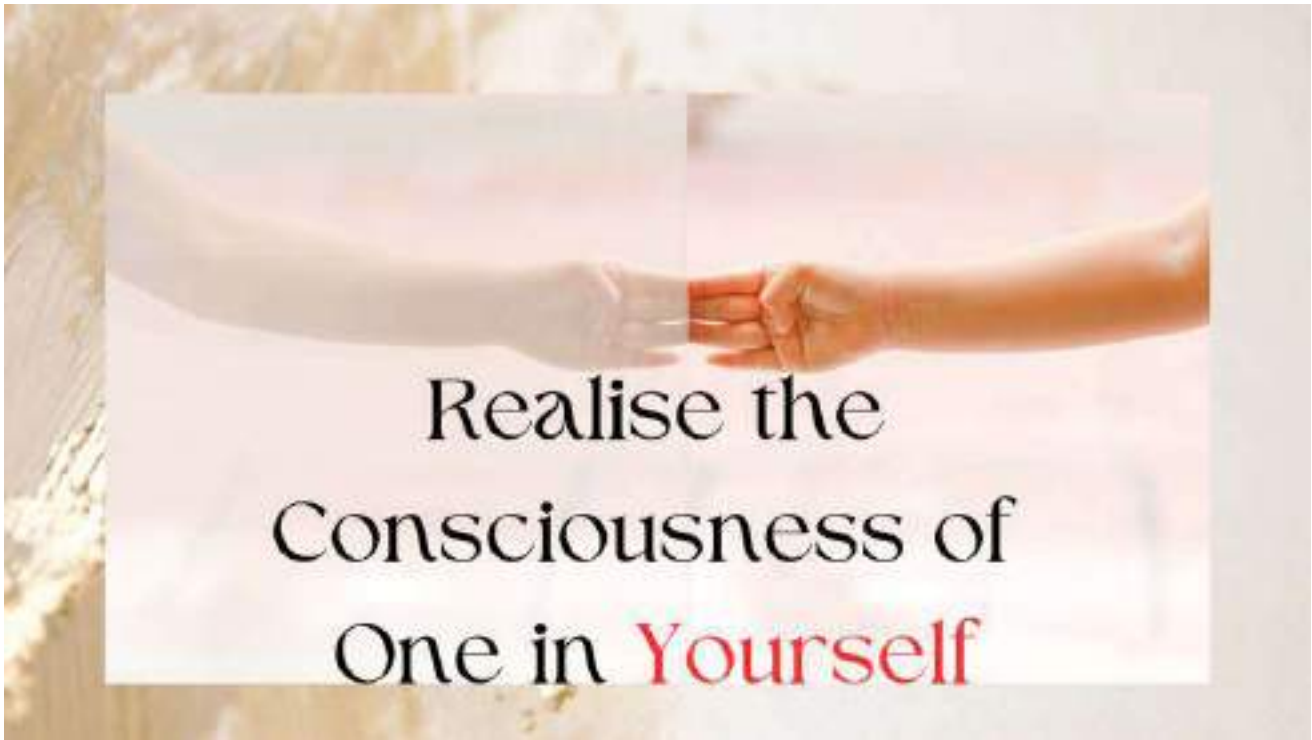
In conclusion, let us consider the Mother's response to the question, "What is the right way of achieving lasting world unity?"

Mother's response: "To realise the consciousness of the One."

In another place, she says: "If you want peace upon earth, first establish peace in your heart. If you want union in the world, first unify the different parts of your own being."

The starting point for peace and unity in humanity is YOU. Start from here.

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Unity Through Conformity Vs. Uniqueness and Universality

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A more comprehensive, holistic vision of life includes the lesser views. It puts forth the proper significance and value of all its aspects that a diminished or limited perception cannot comprehend.

Chaos exists at one level of reality—clashing forces of desire and ideas. In a global cosmic perception, reality is order and harmony, desire becomes love, and ideas are pure intelligence.

Without self-knowledge, our present predicament cannot be resolved. Sri Aurobindo's approach to knowledge is integral. In other words, to be complete, self-knowledge cannot be separated from world knowledge—an understanding of the universal energies which constitute the world.

Therefore, self-knowledge and world-knowledge are entwined; the universal and the individual coexist and are necessary for each other to unfold and fulfil their divine destiny. Furthermore, Sri Aurobindo tells us that transcendental knowledge is the key to understanding our manifested world.

The Transcendent is the source and explanation of the universe and the individual: the Self of all, the origin of all creatures and worlds. We face the mystery of a double infinite—the Timeless eternal infinite and the Temporal infinite from which all finite beings have emerged. In retrospect, we can understand our deeply polarised world with all these principles: our universe individualises itself, and the individual universalises himself. This mighty bond polarises the truth of our being and our nature. The pressure of one on the other ensures never-ending growth. Sri Aurobindo says:

"We miss the divine reality in man and the secret of the human birth if we do not see that each individual man is that Self and sums up all human potentiality in his own being." (Sri Aurobindo, Social and Political Thought, Vol. 15, p.60, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary-Popular Edition, 1971.)

Chaos exists at one level of reality...

All truths pre-exist in their pristine form in the Absolute and are seeds or archetypal ideas that Mother Nature releases to create our manifested world. Nature's purpose is to actualise all these seeds of truths to bring the formless into form.

True and authentic knowledge can be revealed only by delving into things' origin. Polarity is one strategic manoeuvre of Nature that brings things together, which starts at the beginning of evolution as separated, fragmented, and isolated in the compound of the atomic structure.

All things are unconsciously pulled magnetically towards that Oneness of being. Human beings, therefore, have a dual origin—one in the Absolute, the undifferentiated Oneness, and the other in the earth principle, matter, from which our separated body has evolved. A "One" which has become the "Many" through the complicity of Nature.

A divine polarity whose function is to create a world starting from the lowest common denominator of Matter returning to Spirit.

A magnetic pull is exerted between these two poles of creation, giving impetus for evolution.

Our journey starts with separation, isolation, and frustration and ends with the delight of Union and the pure love of Spirit.

Each thing or being—a finite—is an "infinite" which does not know itself. It is ignorance that triggers an unquenchable thirst or lust for things and knowledge to possess and acquire. A force from an unknown resource begets a continuous pressure that compels us to grow and evolve. Each stage has its objects of desire on the ladder of being, but no object that captivates our attention can fully satisfy us.

In our journey from gross to subtle objects, we unconsciously search for the ambrosia of that lost oneness, a "re-found" Union with the Ultimate Reality—the Being of our being. All the objects which polarise our desires are substitutes for that Ultimate Being.

In Sri Aurobindo's own words, "the struggle for possession has been the first crude means towards union, the aggressive assertion of the smaller self the first step towards a growth into the larger self" (ibid, p.157).

All the objects that polarise our desires are substitutes for that Ultimate Being.
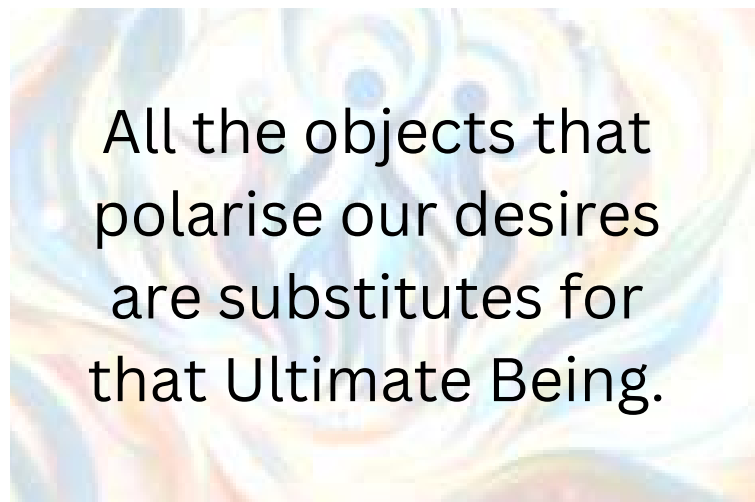
The Union is the most potent force that polarises all that exists. The entire creation exerts itself towards this act of union. The fall of Spirit into matter is the ultimate separation, followed by an overwhelming need to unite.

The initial movement of manifested life was to possess, conquer, take, and have, to regain a feeling of unity before our world's birth.

In the process of evolution, this first instinct was counteracted by an equally powerful opposing instinct initiating the second movement of manifesting life towards love, sharing, association, cooperation, and self-sacrifice.

The individual, separated from the "Totality", begins their return journey of reunion with substitutes. 'To unite' is, therefore, our most powerful instinct. This is how the return journey begins, and its completion will occur once the individual has discovered their transcendental origin.

Is it possible to reconcile individual uniqueness with a social systematised order of unity and conformity?

According to Sri Aurobindo, individualism and collectivism are two equivalent phenomena in which nature has evolved. They are clashing, for the individual is trying to retain their autonomy while the collective wants to absorb them.

The outcome is competition, egoism and self-assertiveness or a repressive ordinary mind of the group, which pressurises the individual into conforming to its dicta and sacrificing all personal self-seeking. This negative polarity is unavoidable.

Space and freedom are necessary for the individual to survive. However, to be united in one sole voice of the community, each separate self must be reduced to the common denominator of its motto.

Is it possible to reconcile individual uniqueness with a social systematised order of unity and conformity?
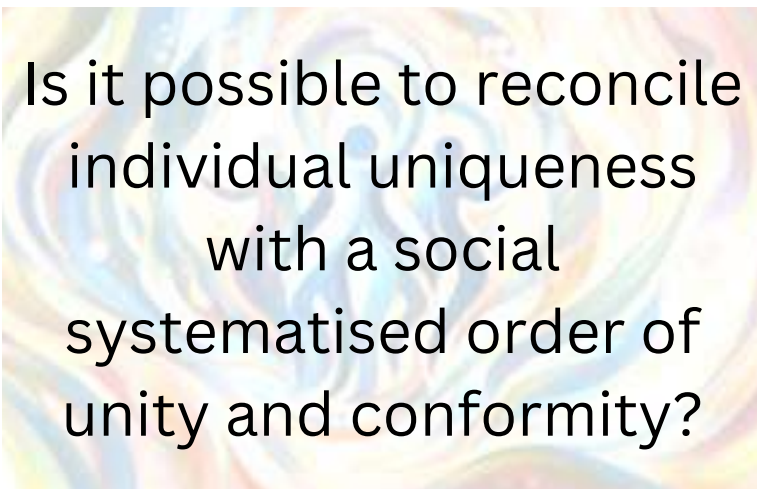
This antagonism is, in fact, a temporary and evolutive phenomenon. The duality of the individual and the group or society will be healed when humanity has reached true maturity and spiritual realisation in the Oneness of life.

The clashing of the waves on the surface subsides in the realisation of the unalterable oneness of the ocean. (contd.)

(contd.) In this metaphor, the depth supports the surface without imposing itself. Likewise, the individual and the society express a unified field in which all individuals coexist. The solution to this false problem of opposition and brutal competition is neither to sacrifice the individual for the group nor to reject community life for separate self-affirmation, but to realise their bonded unity rooted in polarity, which allows for creativity.

In the following quote, Sri Aurobindo, in his own words, expresses the true relation of the individual and the group:

"He is not merely a member of a human pack, hive or anthill; he is something in himself, a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his own individual truth and law as well as his natural or his assigned part in the truth and law of collective existence. He demands freedom, space, initiative for his soul, for his nature, for that puissant and tremendous thing which society so much distrusts and has laboured in the past to suppress altogether or to relegate to the spiritual field, an individual thought, will and conscience." Ibid, p. 20

"…the individual and the society express a unified field…"

These words, written over one hundred years ago, are strikingly relevant today.

With the advent of our computerised world and the new subtly disguised tyrant—Artificial Intelligence (AI)—the individual is unaware of the danger of being willingly subdued and manipulated into thinking according to specific patterns in a mould which promotes the loss of individual freedom in favour of a robotised society.

Nonetheless, the merging soul, the psychic being evoked by Sri Aurobindo, revolts inwardly when faced with events such as a state or a world government controlling humanity.
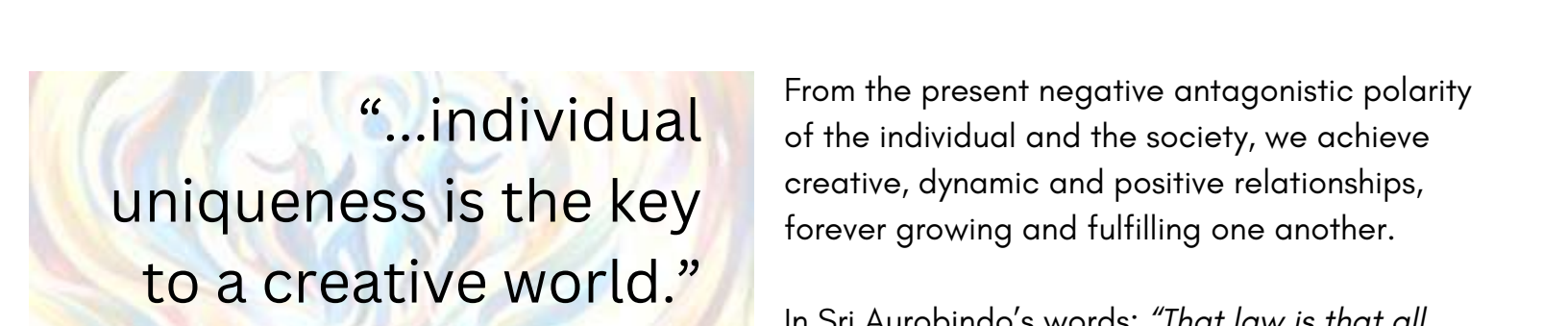
In a way, that danger of complete control encourages the individual to grow and awaken their initiative.

The freeness of the soul cannot be easily harnessed by compulsion or utilitarian profit.

Even if it is not apparent, adversity to humanity's "God-seed" always brings tremendous opportunities for growth and re-evaluation of the true meaning of life.

Eventually, that collective pressure on the individual to conform will trigger the opposite reaction, a drive towards self-finding and spiritual realisation engendering a new impetus for our civilisation.

> **"...individual uniqueness is the key to a creative world."**

Sri Aurobindo's evolution is not unilateral but bilateral. It is a "polarised unity" where the individual and the universal dynamically interact to fulfil their divine destiny of Oneness in an infinitely enriched diversity. There is no end to perfection.

Achieving human unity by flattening down all that diverges to produce well-trained people for the common good is not what Mother Nature has in store for our ultimate accomplishment and well-being.

Through us, she is trying to accomplish a far more profound Oneness in which individual Uniqueness is the key to a creative world.

Instead of the individual moulded to the expected format—a cog in the social machine—we have a completely different paradigm.

The individual awakened to their soul within becomes, at the same time, Unique and Universal.

With this new realisation, society becomes a ground for that uniqueness to flourish, which benefits the whole.

From the present negative antagonistic polarity of the individual and the society, we achieve creative, dynamic and positive relationships, forever growing and fulfilling one another.

In Sri Aurobindo's words: *"That law is that all things are in their being or origin, one in their general law of existence, one in their interdependence and universal pattern of their relations; but each realises the unity of purpose and being on its own lines and has its own law of variation by which it enriches the universal existence."* (Ibid, p. 56)

What is "unique" is an absolute in itself and cannot be tamed or educated according to any specific, typical pattern. With the birth of the new consciousness and the emergence of the soul, a new polarity of divine origin becomes the driving force of our lives.

Our "finiteness" opens to its infinite counterpart, who inspires all our movements. The polarity is now from the above down, and the soul becomes a window whose transparency allows the divine light to shine through in its pure state, thereby recreating a new, beautiful world through us. The soul, being unique, can only produce a uniqueness of vision.

The world, thus newly recreated, carries the stamp of that uniqueness. Each soul participates in a new creation, which becomes the delight of every soul, multiplying the wholeness of being in the rich texture of infinite uniqueness.

"The ideal of human existence personal and social would be its progressive transformation into a conscious outflowering of the joy, power, love, light, beauty of the transcendent and universal Spirit." (Ibid, p. 55)

This is the future of humanity predicted by Sri Aurobindo.

For this future to manifest, a mutation has to occur from the ego to the individual soul. The ego—a phenomenon of Nature—is only a product of Her mechanism and involvement.
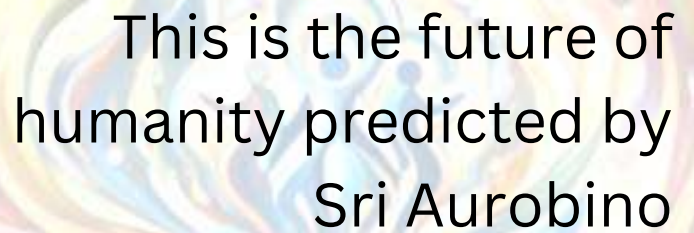
When the ego is hungry, it is Nature in its organism which is hungry. When the ego desires, whatever the objects, Nature is the instigator.

Sex and attraction are a blinded force of Nature fulfilling her task of reproduction, which compels all creatures.

At this stage, there is no true individuality; the ego is only an amalgam of conditioned responses to stimuli.

In other words, conditioned individuality has no real autonomy: that is why society or government forces feel the right to submit the masses to a workable, manageable pattern within a fixed system.

As long as we live in an ego consciousness, unity can only be achieved through conformity and uniformity.

In one way, the undeveloped individual revolts against such an intrusion, as their basic instincts impulsively crave fulfilment without restraint. On the other hand, the emergence of the soul brings about a complete revolution in consciousness: the ego of desire, which brings strife and division, is transformed into the soul, which exists in divine unity and love.

To produce this mutation, the ego must cease. In other words, the ego must die in complete understanding for the true Soul to emerge. Sri Aurobindo writes:

"Therefore, we must find out that the true individual is not the ego, but the divine individuality which is through our evolution preparing to emerge in us." (Ibid, p. 39)

The ego and the soul have different origins, which helps us perceive their differences. Knowing these differences is fundamental for transformation.

The ego is the result of universal Nature, whereas the soul is divine and comes directly from that Transcendent Source.

While Nature conditions the ego, the soul is beyond Nature. Only when we manage to dis-entangle and dis-identify ourselves from our body-mind compound can we see that transcendent light is immanent in our very being and discover our soul.

No matter how much the ego strives for freedom of being and unity, this cannot be achieved at the ego level of consciousness, which begets division and fragmentation.

What can be achieved is a forced or artificial unity but not a "true" unity, which arises only through love and identification with the "whole", with everyone and everything.

That is why no individual or global action can bring us any closer to the ultimate truth of life, being, and harmony while we remain locked in ego consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo lucidly explains the reason why:

"A One there is in which all the entangled discords of this multiplicity of separated, conflicting, intertwining, colliding ideas, forces, tendencies, instincts, impulses, aspects, appearances which we call life, can find the unity of their diversity, the harmony of their divergences, the justification of their claims, the correction of their perversions and aberrations, the solution of their problems and disputes." (contd.)

(contd.) *"Knowledge seeks for that in order that Life may know its own true meaning and transform itself into the highest and most harmonious possible expression of a divine Reality. All seek for that, each power feels out for it in its own way : the infrarational gropes for it blindly along the line of its instincts, needs, impulses; the rational lays for it its trap of logic and order, follows out and gathers together its diversity, analyses them in order to synthesise; the suprarational gets behind and above things and into their inmost parts, there to touch and lay hands on the Reality itself in its core and essence and enlighten all its infinite details from that secret centre."* (Ibid, p. 137)

The soul is the true centre of our being, which radiates the Divine Reality. Being in direct contact with its transcendent source, the soul is intimately in harmony with the divine intentions that are now its mission to realise.

Unity is the expression of the Oneness of life. From this overview of reality, nothing is divisible, like the very cells of our own body. It is a Oneness which allows undivided infinite diversity.

The ego does not see the unified field of the energy of Being, of which everything is an expression. Therefore, it moves politically in all directions to seize a fabricated unity from the left to the right to the centre in an ever-modifying pattern to forcefully achieve its ends, finishing like Sisyphus forever rolling his rock.

Life in the world is neither merely individualistic nor collective nor an amalgam of the two, but something beyond which the individual and the group are the necessary dynamic expressions of a creative polarised energy of Being.

Following Sri Aurobindo's pattern, we could say that in the infra-rational stage of evolution, the vital ego is hunger and desire and knows unity through absorption and devouring. Each one lives for oneself and self-interest. In the rational stage, the mental ego forces unity in an individualistic and collective pattern, shaping it to its ideas of reality, a mixture of subjective and objective observations derived from the surface phenomenon of life: thought imposes its limited perception on intangible life arrogantly. In a suprarational stage, the soul perceives the authentic indivisible unity.

Only the soul beyond the mind can see life's oneness directly, for they share the same texture. It sees unity and love through a holistic perception, through the wholeness of life, that which Sri Aurobindo calls "knowledge by identity".

"It is the old Indian discovery that our real 'I' is a Supreme Being which is our true self and which it is our business to discover and consciously become and, secondly, that that Being is one in all, expressed in the individual and the collectivity and only by admitting and realising our unity with others can we entirely fulfil our true being." (Ibid, p. 40)

We are facing a critical period in history when the power of science, technology, and Artificial Intelligence, controlled by a few unscrupulous and ambitious leaders and entrepreneurs, threatens to reduce humanity and all its individuals to a cog in the social machine, existing merely for things, objects, and conveniences.

It is high time that we awaken our spirit and uniqueness of being and reshape the world with the eternal values of Beauty, Love and Goodness in the Oneness of life. Uniformity must give way to "unicity" and spiritual unfoldment for a new world to emerge.

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