

NEED TO MANAGE THE THINKING BEHIND THE THINKING

Sandeep Gupta — senior corporate consultant,
Faridabad Center of Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed University)
(Agra, India)

E-mail: sandeep1956@gmail.com

“Crisis” can be defined as a situation that is not conducive to human welfare. It can be either manmade or an act of nature. Acts of nature are beyond the control of man, whereas manmade crisis is controllable and reversible. If we let go of our modern scientific notions about the creation (macrocosm) and man, we find that the macrocosm is much larger than as perceived by science. It is a well-organized closed system having different dimensions, and man, a microcosm of the macrocosm, an open system within it. The laws of the macrocosm are fixed and unchangeable; and within the laws, there is also a law that gives man the discretion to either align with the higher laws of the macrocosm and create an internal and external environment of peace and harmony by getting rid of his “crisis” promoting tendencies (lower nature of man) viz. Desire (kama), Anger (krodh), Attachment (moha), Greed (lobha) and Ego (ahankar), or continue to live in an environment of internal and external confusion, conflict and crisis. The lower nature of man vitiates the basic law of the creation — the law of mutuality and harmony. Normally, we do not realize the implications of our lower nature; and even if we do, we justify ourselves by saying ‘I know it is wrong, but since everyone is doing it, I had no option but to follow suit’. An irresponsible thought, a reflection of our personality. Our personality is driven by our mentality, and our mentality is a product of our awareness level also known as consciousness level (degree of our internal alignment with the cosmic laws) i.e. the thinking behind the thinking.

The crisis that we face today is majorly manmade. It is a repercussion of leading a life dominated by our lower nature, our mentality of “I-Me-My”. Since, the cause is inside us, the solution also rests within us. We need to change our mentality from the “I-Me-My” mode to the “We-Us-Ours” mode; and the only way to make it happen is to work on expanding our consciousness level i.e. ‘manage our thinking behind our thinking’ by leading a righteous life.

In this background, this paper makes out a case that the permanent solution to all the confusion, conflict and crisis that the world is facing today, rest inside us and not outside us. Drawing from the ancient Indian text and modern mysticism, known for its scientific temper, this paper has been divided in five sections: (I) Introduction; (II) Macrocosm and its Reality; (III) Communion between Man (Microcosm) and the Macrocosm; (IV) Phenomenon of Human Consciousness (Thinking behind the Thinking); and (V) Prevailing Crisis and the Way Forward.

Key Words: Crisis, Consciousness, Awareness, Macrocosm, Microcosm, Society

Section I — Introduction

“We don’t see reality, we interpret what we see and call it reality; and we base our behaviour on what we perceive as reality, rather than reality itself” [Langton, 2007]. India has always been conscious of this human trait, as is evident from the Vedic (1700-1100) statement “Yatha Drishti Tatha Srishti” — meaning “as you perceive, so is the world you create”. To educate the masses of this human failing, the Indian seers evolved the story ‘The Blind Men and the Elephant’; which has been used by Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and the Sufis for centuries, and continues to be popular in

the modern world. Drawn by its universal appeal, John Godfrey Saxe the 19th century American poet poeticized it in English as below².

- It was six men of Indostan, To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant, (Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation, Might satisfy his mind.
- The First approached the Elephant, And happening to fall,
Against his broad and sturdy side, At once began to bawl:
«God bless me! but the Elephant, Is very like a WALL!».
- The Second, feeling of the tusk, Cried, «Ho, what have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear:
This wonder of an Elephant, Is very like a SPEAR!»
- The Third approached the animal, And happening to take,
The squirming trunk within his hands, Thus boldly up and spake:
«I see,» quoth he, «the Elephant, Is very like a SNAKE!»
- The Fourth reached out an eager hand, And felt about the knee
«What most this wondrous beast is like, Is mighty plain,» quoth he:
«'Tis clear enough the Elephant, Is very like a TREE!»
- The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, Said: «E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most; Deny the fact who can:
This marvel of an Elephant, Is very like a FAN!»
- The Sixth no sooner had begun, About the beast to grope,
Than seizing on the swinging tail, That fell within his scope:
«I see,» quoth he, «the Elephant Is very like a ROPE!»
- And so these men of Indostan, Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion, Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right, And all were in the wrong!

The story brings out four important learning — (i) man possesses a compulsive tendency to interpret rather than investigate; (ii) what man experiences or interprets is the only truth for him; (iii) anything short of absolute truth has the propensity to create divisions, confusion and crisis; and (iv) collective thinking and action is the solution to confusion and crisis. While the first three learning are apparent, let us look at the fourth. The fundamental law of nature is ‘mutuality and harmony’ and is the crux of all sustainable human evolution and growth. Had the blind men recognizing their challenge of sight, agreed to perceive the elephant collaboratively, their understanding of the elephant would have been more complete with no dispute amongst them. Thus, collective thinking and action (collectivism) leads to coherence and harmony in society, whereas individual thinking and action (individualism) creates a situation of confusion, conflict and crisis. Highlighting the importance of collective thinking and action, Albert Einstein says “When we survey our lives and endeavours, we soon observe that almost the whole of our actions and desires is bound up with the existence of other human beings. The individual, if left alone from birth, would remain primitive and beastlike in his thoughts and feelings to a degree that we can hardly conceive”.

² John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887); see http://www.constitution.org/col/blind_men.htm

We live in two worlds simultaneously — the internal world of thoughts, values, aspirations and experiences, and the external world of action and material gratification. Both these worlds are intricately connected and they need to grow and evolve in unison. Unfortunately, in the last two centuries or so, our external world has developed leaps and bound, while our internal world has failed to grow correspondingly. This imbalance has led to the erosion of human values from all dimensions of life (social, political, economic or environmental) with scientism and materialism dominating our thinking and actions. Thinkers like Tawney, Sorokin, Schumacher, Carrel, Toynbee, Rifkin, Bohm repeatedly warned us of the disastrous consequences of this trend, but we chose to look the other way. Thus it is not surprising that our lower nature got unleashed — desire (kama), anger (krodh), attachment (moha), greed (lobha) and ego (ahankar). These are human weaknesses, which if left unchecked, makes us an island unto ourself.

Let us briefly look at the genesis of the present day culture. Traditionally the creation was viewed as an ‘integrated whole system’ (‘idealistic’ view) with the material world as a sub-system. However, with the advent of modern science, the material world started being viewed as ‘whole system’ in itself on account of modern science professing that material reality is the only reality. This soon turned into a worldview and the subjective world (God, spirituality, consciousness) was declared as a figment of human imagination, therefore of no relevance to human life. The ancient wisdom about time, space, matter, and causality was systematically assaulted, and the concept of God, justice, love, power, and beauty redefined [*Toffler*, 1981: p.110]. Influenced by scientism and materialism, we first alienated natural philosophy (material laws) from philosophy (universal laws). Gradually we removed all references to subjective human requirements from all disciplines of education. Neoclassical economics removed the value quotient from economic and business decision making process. Medical research reduced human consciousness to a function of the neurons in the brain. Educational institutions became a factory to produce educated workforce to meet the demands of industrialization (material growth) and religion a tool in the hands of the politicians to manipulate society for vote purposes. Relationships became contractual and a socio-economic culture evolved in which co-existence got replaced by competition. The ‘We-Us-Ours’ got pushed out by ‘I-Me-My’. In simple words, mater started dominating the spirit, leading to a crisis of character in ourselves and society.

Section II — Macrocosm and its reality

As man is the microcosm of the macrocosm, to find a solution of the various crises that we are facing today, it becomes pertinent to understand the true nature of the macrocosm and man’s relationship with it. According to the Indian tradition “the center of experience is the center of the universe — physical as well as metaphysical, and this supreme center is the real center of man, the Atman (soul) the unchanging basis of an ever changing universe composed of both nature and personality, above cause and therefore above time, the seer of the space-time events, in the abyss of whose silence, the distinction between the space-time and its perceiver, the object and the subject, the non-self and the self is transcending in the perfect truth of perfect non-duality” [*Ranganathananda*, 1987a: p.122-124]. In contrast, the modern science holds, that ‘the material cosmos is the only reality. It has evolved over billions of years

forming galaxies, suns, and planets, and on earth an incredible variety of complex biological organisms. All human experiences, feelings, thoughts, hopes, dreams and the very consciousness itself are nothing but an activity of the neurons in the brain. All notions such as God, Tao, Brahman, and primordial Awareness are nothing but wishful superstitious fantasies of the brain which is complex enough to recognize its own inevitable demise' [McFarlane, 1999].

Shortcomings of the scientific view: The primary difference in the above viewpoints is the inclusion and exclusion of subjective experience as a valid means of knowledge. In the Indian thought subjective experience is as real as the objective experience, while in the modern scientific thought it holds no place. The universe of experience is one; and experiences do not distinguish themselves between the subjective and the objective. This categorization of experience as subjective and objective is a man-made division for the convenience of understanding the difference between the destructible (material) and the non-destructible (spirit which pervades the entire creation and is the essence of life). According to Bhagavat Gita (XIII.2) absolute reality rests in the unification of both i.e. the knowledge of 'not-self' (ksetra) gained through objective experiences with the knowledge of 'self' (ksetrajna) gained through subjective experiences. Modern science only tells us what will happen in a given, such and such condition, but has no opinion on the activity by which it happens [Radhakrishnan, 1988]. Heisenberg remarks "We have to remember that what we observe is not nature in itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning" [Heisenberg, 1962: p.58]. The exclusive materialistic investigative approach of modern science does not permit it to investigate the reality that exists beyond the material reality. Thus, it is not surprising that modern science refuses to acknowledge man's ability to transcend the material world and consider him as an object of scientific enquiry except through his body. Lincoln Barnett in his study of Einstein's contribution to modern scientific thought (The Universe and Dr. Einstein, Mentor edition, page 126-127) remarks "In the evolution of the scientific thought, one thought has become impressively clear; there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. Man is thus his own greatest mystery. He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. Least of all does he understand his noblest and his most mysterious faculty: the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception" [Ranganathananda, 1987b: p.183].

With the rejection of anything and everything that has subjectivity attached to it, modern science also rejects the powers of mind. Mind is the driver of the brain and the pathway for desires to actualize and create experiences. The great neurologist Sir Charles Sherrington (1857 – 1952) wrote ('Introductory' to the Physical Basis of Mind, Edited by Peter Laslett, page 1): "knowledge of the physical basis of the mind is making great strides in these days. Knowledge of the brain is growing, and our theme is almost equivalent to the physiology of the brain. Mind, meaning by that thoughts, memories, feelings, reasoning, and so on, is difficult to bring into the class of physical things. Physiology, a natural science, tends to be silent about all outside the physical. And so the study of the physical basis suffers from falling between two stools".

Like we cannot come to know about the electricity energy by studying the bulb, similarly, we cannot come to know about the nature and origin of human

consciousness, the phenomenon of mystical experiences, communion of man with the macrocosm, spiritual dynamics, etc. by studying the material (body) through which it manifests in this world. At the most we can come up with some theories and hypotheses. In 2004 neurologist Dr. Richard Frackowiak admitted “We have no idea how consciousness emerges from the physical activity of the brain and we do not know whether consciousness can emerge from non-biological systems, such as computers Consciousness has not yet become a scientific term that can be defined in this way. Currently we all use the term consciousness in many different and often ambiguous ways. Precise definitions of different aspects of consciousness will emerge, but to make precise definitions at this stage is premature” [*Frackowiak, 2004: p.269*].

Further, with Quantum Physics establishing that at the subatomic level a dual wave-like and particle-like behaviour exists between the interaction of energy and matter, and the laws of classical physics flow out from the laws of quantum physics, the materialistic worldview of reality becomes a question mark. In the words of John Stewart an evolutionary scientist, “With our current level of knowledge and intelligence, we cannot say much about the nature of any larger-scale processes in which our universe is embedded. But as a number of theorists have noted, an intriguing possibility exists that — The known universe exists (there is something rather than nothing), and it is reasonable to presume that it owes its existence to processes that exist outside it” [*Stewart, 2010*].

The Indian perception of reality: The philosophy of ‘oneness in creation i.e. single point reality with multiple manifestations of the same in different shades’ has always been the mainstream belief in India. This belief is based not only on perception but also on reason. In Indian mysticism ‘Man is the Central Mystery of the Universe’, both from the perspective of the ‘science of matter’ and the ‘science of life’. He is an evolution of nature and in him are hidden the deepest secrets of nature. This unique position of man warranted the development of a science which Huxley calls ‘a science of human possibilities’. “It was such a science, the science of religion, which India sought and found in her Upanishads, and which she integrated with the science of matter and life to emerge as the unifying philosophy of the Vedanta” [*Ranganathananda, 1987c: p.12*]. The Vedanta philosophy of ancient India, which holds good even today, is a way of life, wherein the secular needs of man are given due importance but subservient to his non-secular needs, as the secular needs of man have arisen out of the non-secular needs of man.

Evolution and emergence of new knowledge is a natural phenomenon and it applies to all dimensions’ of life, be it philosophy, religion or science. No knowledge is created in abstraction; it exists in the universe and unfolds itself under certain conditions. Our understanding of the revealed knowledge frames our views about reality. When new knowledge emerges, we revise our understanding. This does not imply that the old knowledge was wrong; it only means that the old knowledge was partial and now it needs to be looked afresh and accordingly modified or supplemented with the new knowledge. Thus, a variety of viewpoints regarding the origin of the creation and its nature are found in the Indian tradition, but as man evolved new dimensions got added to it and old ones refined. However, one finds a common tenet across all theories, that the entire macrocosm has arisen out of an “all knowing intelligent source of energy and the essence of man is the same as that of the intelligent creative energy”.

Sant Kabir the 15th century Indian mystic, expanded the then prevailing Vedantic cosmology of two regions i.e. regions of mind and matter, by adding a third region of spirituality. A somewhat similar cosmology is also found in the Sufi tradition. Post, Sant Kabir a number of Saints have appeared on Earth and have taken forward the thought process which is now popularly known as “Religion of Saints — Radhasoami Faith”. The philosophy is simple and explainable in modern scientific terms. Professor Mark Jurgensmeyer (1995) of the University of California (Berkeley) in his book ‘Radhasoami Reality — The Logic of a Modern Faith’, writes: “Its central notions — that truth and authority can be embodied in a person, that transformation of the self occurs through the purification of perception and energy, that love and community can be experienced in dispersion, that social service is based on personal commitment, and that time and place have ultimate centres — each contain features of modern, and in some cases even post-modern religion. As such, the Radhasoami Faith may be a harbinger of the religion of the future, not only in India but elsewhere in the world”.

According to the Radhasoami Faith cosmology the creation has originated from an infinite spiritual energy source or reservoir known as the “Supreme Creator” or “Being” (with attendant features of supreme energy, supreme intelligence, supreme refulgence and supreme bliss) with its accompanying quantum spiritual force-field spanning the entire macrocosm. Each constituent fundamental particle of this quantum spiritual force-field is known as spirit-force, and is the one which possesses prime-energy. All other forces (mind-force or physical-force) of nature have been evolved by the association of this spirit-force with media (mind and physical matter) of different kinds. The concept of “spirit-force” is no more intrinsically mysterious than “mass”.

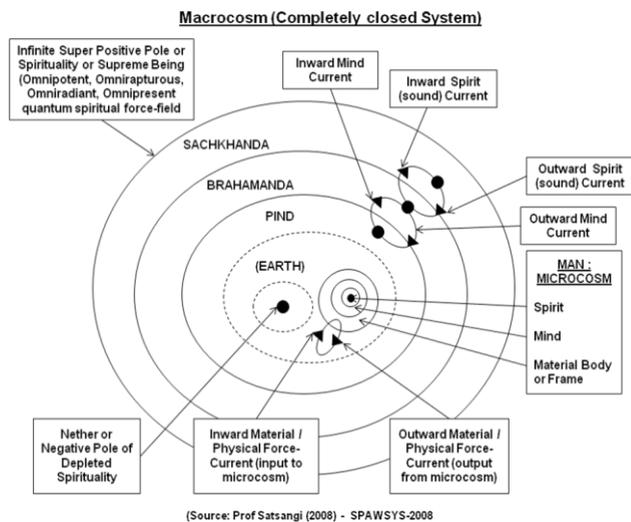
The creation comprises of ‘Three Grand Divisions’ viz. the ‘Region of Universal Spirit’ (first division), the ‘Region of Universal Mind’ (second division) and the ‘Region of Universal Matter’ (third division). The Region of Universal Spirit was the first to come into existence and is the subtlest of the three, as it consists of pure spirit-force. Its attributes are eternity, supreme spirituality, supreme energy, supreme intelligence, supreme refulgence, supreme bliss and non-differentiation (qualitative). The Region of Universal Mind was second to come into existence and is also subtle and spiritual, but not as much as the first region. This region is a resultant of the interaction between the spirit-force and the mind-force. The pre-dominance of the mind-force resulted in bring about a qualitative differentiation in subtle form in this region, which in turn became the scaffolding for the qualitative differentiation that exists in gross form in the Region of Universal Matter. This qualitative differentiation is also the cause of the variety of nature (good, bad, ugly) found across nature and mankind. Unlike the first region, the second region is destructible. The Region of Universal Matter is the last region to come into existence and it is gross in nature. Spirituality in this region is the least as the spirit-force virtually becomes dormant, after getting covered by the mind-force in the second region and further getting covered by the physical-force in this region. This region is destructible, lacks intelligence and is ego predominant. The creational hierarchy of these regions is based on the principle of reducing spirituality (reducing spirituality does not mean loss of spirituality, but means the powers of spirit-force becoming latent as it moves downwards from the first region); and the common factor across the regions is the power of the spirit-force which is providing

vitality to the entire creation. The power of the mind-force is confined to the second and the third regions and that of physical-force only to the third region. Thus the life force of the creation is the 'spirit force', which is also present in man (known as atman / soul) on this planet Earth (part of the third division 'Region of Universal Matter'), but it fails to manifest itself fully as it is covered by layers of mind-force and physical-force.

In the economy of the creation each region is divided into six planes, namely, Radhasoami Dham, Agam Lok, Alakh Lok, Anani Lok, Sat Lok and Bhawar Gufa in the Region of Universal Spirit, Sunn, Trikuti, Sahas Dal Kamal, Vishnu Lok, Brahma Lok & Shiva Lok in the Region of Universal Mind, and Spirit or Moon Orb, Sun, Earth, Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune in the Region of Universal Matter (Note: the moon and sun are not the same that are visible from earth). Further, there also exists a buffer zone called Mahasunn between the first and second region, and a buffer zone called Chidakash between the second and third region. These eighteen planes are connected in a sequential order both ways (top to bottom and bottom to top) by two independent spirit-force currents about which we shall talk going forward.

In the pre-creational stage, the 'Supreme Being' i.e. the Supreme Reservoir of spirit-entities was in a self-absorbed state with intense rapture within Himself. The spirit-entities located in the apex of the reservoir (positive pole) possessed higher spirituality than the ones located at the bottom (nether pole). The difference in spirituality between the two poles was on account of spirit-entities in the nether pole having a tendency to associate with mind or matter or both.

Over a period of time the potential difference in the spirituality between the two poles on account of polarization grew to such an extent that there was huge commotion in the Supreme Being. The prime energy becoming kinetic due to the process of spiritualization (similar to the process of magnetization) and a quantum spiritual force field between the super positive pole and the nether pole was established. The commotion in the Supreme Being was accompanied by the premeival sound current 'Soa-mi', which having an inward focus attracted spirit-entities from the nether pole to the positive pole. Simultaneously, the first current of spirituality having an outward focus or center forming capabilities was issued forth whose vibrations gave rise to the emanation of the prime sound 'Ra-dha'. The vibrations of the two currents when combined produce the sound 'Radhasoami' which is the manifested name of the 'Supreme Being' and it is constantly resonating throughout the creation. The



(Figure 1)

spirit-entities who were successful in shedding their tendency to associate with mind and matter got place in the Region of Universal Spirit, spirit-entities who could shed their tendency to associate with matter got located in the Region of Universal Mind and those who continued to harbor tendencies to associate with mind and matter got located in the Region of Universal Matter.

Having originated from a single source ‘The Supreme Being’, the creation (macrocosm) is an all-encompassing completely closed system with three sub-systems, viz., (1) Primary — Region of Universal Spirit (includes the Supreme Being as the Infinite Reservoir of Spirituality), (2) Secondary — Region of Universal Mind, (3) Tertiary — Region of Universal Matter (including man) [Satsangi, 2008a: p.189]. The three regions interact with each other and with man as schematically depicted in Figure 1.

Section III — Communication between man (microcosm) and the macrocosm

There is an ancient saying in India ‘Yatha Samashti Srishti Tatha Manav Vyasthi Srithi’ meaning ‘as is in macrocosm, so is in human-microcosm’. The Free Dictionary (www.freedictionary.com) defines “microcosm” as a complex structure, such as the universe or society, regarded as an entirety, as opposed to microcosms, which have a similar structure and are contained within it; and “microcosm” as a small, representative system having analogies to a larger system in constitution, configuration, or development. This suggests that for man to qualify as a microcosm of the macrocosm — (a) he needs to be similar in constitution or configuration or development to the macrocosm; and (b) he needs to be a sub-system of the macrocosm i.e. responds to the laws of the closed system (macrocosm) like a sub-system.

If we analyze the human frame and its subjective functions we will find that there are three main factors in the economy of human construct and existence.

- The first is the “human body and the appended senses”, composed of solid, liquid, gaseous, calorific, and ethereal condition of matter along with non-intelligent forces of nature, generated by the action of energy through the medium peculiar to each.
- The second is the “mind” consisting of four actions — (a) responses at mental plane which give rise to thoughts; (b) projection of the thoughts on an object and forming an association with it, enabled by the spiritual current; (c) intelligence, which is the source of comprehension, a resultant of the convergence of the spiritual current; and (d) ego, which differentiates its comprehension from that of the others.
- The third is the “spirit” which provides vitality to the other two factors and without the help of which, the other two factors would remain dormant and inoperative. [Sahab, 2006, p.19]

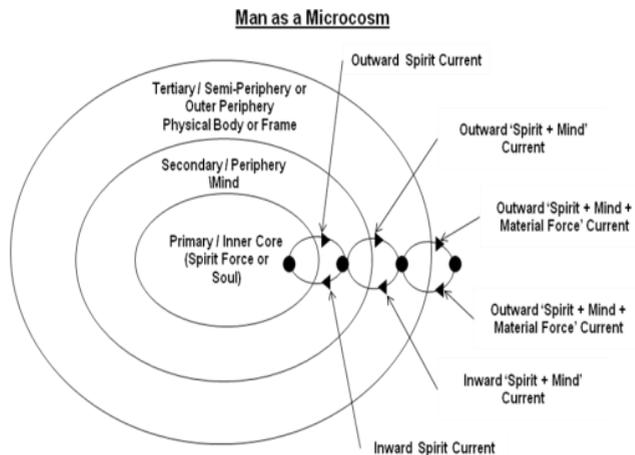
Thus, the ‘soul-mentality-body’ continuum found in man is identical to the ‘spirit-mind-matter’ continuum found in the macrocosm. Thus there also exists a 1:1 correspondence between the two continuums in terms of construct.

Regarding the second question, how man responds to the environment of the macrocosm. The traditional Indian wisdom (Vedanta) through its theory of three

human bodies (Shariras) – Gross Body (Sthula Sharira), Subtle Body (Linga Sharira) and Causal Body (Karana Sharira) and five human sheaths (Koshas) – Food Sheath (Annamaya Kosha), Vital Air Sheath (Pranamaya Kosha), Mind Sheath (Manomaya Kosha), Intellect Sheath (Vigyanmaya Kosha), Bliss Sheath (Anandamaya Kosha); does give us some idea about the communion that takes place between man and the macrocosm at the physical, mental and spiritual level, but not in as much detail as found in the writings of ‘Religion of Saints – Radhasoami Faith’.

As per the teachings of Radhasoami Faith there exists a 1:1 correspondence between the human body and the macrocosm. The human body is blessed with six “Apertures” called “Padmas” located in the white matter of the brain, six “Nerve Centers” called “Kamals” located in the grey matter of the brain, and six “Chakras” or “Ganglias” located in the human body. The six Padmas are located between the top of the forehead and the top of the head and have a direct correspondence with the six planes of the Region of Universal Spirit. The six Kamals having a direct correspondence with the six planes of the Region of Universal Mind are located between the lower forehead and the top of the forehead; and the six Chakras located at the rectum, reproductive organs, navel, heart, throat and between the eyes in the human body have a direct correspondence with planes of the Region of Universal Matter. The human frame is also directly linked with the Region of Universal Spirit and the Region of Universal Mind as the spirit (atman/soul) resides at Ganglion # 6 (between the eyes), and the subtle mind and mind reside at Ganglion # 5 (throat) and Ganglion # 4 (heart) respectively.

The six Ganglia in the human body are kinetic, while the six nerve centers in the forehead and the six apertures in the head are dormant. All the eighteen sub-divisions are connected by two currents – (a) the outward center forming spiritual current which moves from top to bottom connecting two successive planes, and (b) the inward sound current moving from bottom to top also connecting two successive planes. In this manner a loop is formed between two planes which facilitate the spirit to move from a lower plane to a higher plane (expansion of consciousness). Further, each plane of first region and the second region possess a unique mystic sound (e.g. Om, Sat, Rarang, Sohum, etc.) which is constantly resonating in that plane. When man meditates at Ganglia 6 (focusing all his attention inwards and brings his body and mind to a standstill) and repeats any mystic word, it produces vibrations that emanate sound which is in resonance with the sound of the spirit current of the plane represented by the mystic name. As the concentration increases one starts hearing the sound more clearly. It works in the form of a



(Source: Prof Satsangi (2008) - SPAWSYS-2008)

(Figure 2)

crescendo and attracts one to higher planes. As one experiences new spiritual domains (planes), he begins to share all the powers and intuition of that plane. In this manner, one responds to the laws of the macrocosm and ascends to higher planes. With each ascend, doors to new experiences are opened which bring about a profound change in the internal and external personality. He starts transcending from self-centeredness to selflessness — 'I' predominant to 'We' predominant. The macro schematic depiction of the communication process is as per Figure 2 [Satsangi, 2008b: p.190]. The communication mechanism between the two successive planes is identical to the mechanism shown between the grand divisions in the figure.

Section IV — Phenomenon of human consciousness (thinking behind the thinking)

There is no denying that from the times computers have entered our lives, we have become more connected, knowledgeable and productive. The question is, 'is it really the computer or something else that is giving us the connectivity, knowledge and efficiency?' It is not the computer. It is the software which tells the computer 'what to do', and the efficacy of the software depends on the intelligence of the software developer. Similarly, the human brain is only a processing unit. Mind is the software of the brain and consciousness is the software writer. Thus, the quality of human thinking and actions reflects the quality of one's consciousness. A developed consciousness makes us think and act in the "We-Us-Our" mode, whereas an undeveloped consciousness makes us think and act in the "I-Me-My" mode.

The phenomenon of 'Consciousness' has always intrigued man and like reality it has also been viewed in the idealistic and materialistic terms. For the idealist "consciousness" is something primordial, independent and the all-creating essence of existence, while for the materialists 'consciousness' is a function of the brain, the essence of which lies in the reflection and constructive-creative transformation of the world. Since, in 'section — I' the shortcomings of science in deciphering absolute reality and its related phenomenon have already been discussed, the same is not being discussed again. However, it would be important to mention that even in the West (the land of modern science) there are thinkers and scientists who hold views contrary to the popular materialistic perception of consciousness. Arthur J Deikman says "This naïve reductionism is all the more striking in the context of numerous reports from physicists indicating that the world is actually more like the one that the mystics describe than the one on which psychology and psycho-analysis are based. Contemporary scientists have ample evidence that the world of discrete objects is an illusion, a function of a particular scale of our perception and time sense. The great mystics, like our great scientists, envisage the world being larger than our tenets, as transcending our traditional views. By not recognizing our defensiveness, and by permitting our vision to be narrowed so as to exclude the unfamiliar, we betray our integrity as psychiatrists, showing no more capacity for freedom from prejudice than persons totally ignorant of psycho-dynamics-perhaps less" [Diekman, 1979: p.192-194].

While Diekman urged the scientists to open up to the wisdom provided by mystics, John White and Joseph Campbell were much more forthcoming in their writings. John White said "Political action, social work, this ism, that ology, are all incomplete,

futile actions, unless accompanied by a new and elevated mode of awareness. In other words true revolution is revelation” [White, 1972: p.ix]. For Joseph Campbell “It is part of the Cartesian mode to think of consciousness as being something peculiar to the head and that the head is the organ originating consciousness. It isn’t. The head is an organ that inflects consciousness in a certain direction or to a certain set of purposes. But there is consciousness here in the body. The whole living world is informed by consciousness. I have a feeling that consciousness and energy are the same thing somehow” [Campbell, 1991: p.18].

In the Indian thought, consciousness is a unique datum that emerged in evolution with the appearance of the living cell. Prior to the evolution of the living cell the only datum revealed was of being or existence. Thus, the living cell has both the attributes – being (existence) and consciousness. And, with the emergence of man, this datum further developed a new dimension i.e. a dimension of awareness of the self (soul) and the awareness of the not-self, of the external environment. “It is from this stage onwards that man as subject becomes confronted with the problem of training of his consciousness to higher levels. This is the challenge that evolution poses to man, who is nature’s highest evolutionary product, to which nature has also given the organic capacity to undertake this task consciously and deliberately. No non-human species have to face this task of training their consciousness. Nature has built the necessary genetic mechanism in all of them for their consciousness to react to external situations for the purpose of organic satisfaction, organic survival, and numerical increase. Nature has provided this built-up mechanism in man also, but along with it, nature has also given man the capacity to rise above this genetic limitation. This is value called freedom – freedom to alter the environment and/or alter oneself” [Ranganathananda, 1987d: 474-474].

Consciousness is singular in nature and it connects the Supreme Being with man. At its one end rests the absolute powers of the Supreme Being and at the other end the animalistic instinct of organic survival, organic satisfaction and numerical increase in this material world. Depending on the level of consciousness from that one operates, the animal in him can become God and the God in him can become the animal. According to philosopher and seer Sri Aurobindo, man functions at four levels – physical, vital, mental and spiritual, and the quality of his consciousness is dependent on the level from which he functions. Below is given in tabular form the various levels at which man functions and the qualities of consciousness associated with each level

Pure Spirit & Spiritual Plane of Existence	The Absolute	The Divine Consciousness (integral vision of all planes) – Existence (Pure Spirit), Conscious Force, Delight
	Super	Knowledge by Identity – Truth (object of knowledge sought created within)
	Intuitive	Intuitions, Revelations (total object of knowledge without thought)
	Illumined	Light & Illumination (descent of knowledge without thought)
	Higher	Silence of Mind (enabling better thought, greater knowledge)

Mental Plane of Existence	Pure Mental	Ideas, Concepts, Rational Thinking, Logical, Pure Thoughts, Conscious Self-Conception
	Vital Mental	Knowledge Imbued with Emotions, Feelings (interests, opinions, sentiments, beliefs, values, ideals)
	Physical Mental	Input of Information, Storage, Understanding, Comprehension, Decision making
Vital Plane of Existence	Mental Vital	Emotional Thoughts as Attitudes, Life Intelligence, Higher Emotions (incl. conduct, social norms, conscience)
	Pure Vital	Emotions, Feelings, Passions, Intense Human Relationships
	Physical Vital	Sensation of the Nerves (urge, desire, fear, seeks action, relationship)
Physical Plane of Existence	Mental Physical	Body Knowledge of How to Act, Primary Skills of Existence
	Vital Physical	Physical Urges and Sensations (pain, hunger, lust, craving, etc.)
	Pure Physical	Origin of Physical Movement, Instinct for Survival
(Source: http://www.gurusoftware.com — compiled by Posner Roy)		

The role of consciousness in human life is best understood by understanding the human psycho-physical organism. Using the ‘chariot imagery’ Katho Upanishad (text of ancient India) says: Consider the body as a chariot, the self as the rider in the chariot, buddhi (intellect) as the charioteer, manas (mind) as the reins, sense organs as horses, and the world of sense objects as the road on which the chariot has to move. Consider the self-united with the sense organs and mind as the enjoyer of the journey. One whose mind is not disciplined, his sense organs will be uncontrollable like wild horses that cannot be controlled by the charioteer. But, one who has a disciplined mind, his sense organs will be perfectly under control, like the disciplined horses are under the control of the charioteer. One, whose mind is not held together and is impure, will not attain that state of freedom, from his lower nature (desire, anger, attachment, greed and ego). But one who is mindful and pure in thoughts, he attains freedom from his lower nature. One who has an enlightened buddhi (intellect) as his charioteer, whose mind is like a tough and strong set of reins, he reaches the consummation of his journey in the supreme state of universality and fulfillment.

Chaos, conflict and crisis are an indication of an un-disciplined mind, and the only solution is to bring the mind under control i.e. change the quality of mind. The quality of mind can change only when an expansion of consciousness takes place. When man increases his inner awareness (consciousness), he not only benefits in terms of self-knowledge, but also gains increased knowledge and awareness of the forces, events and forms in the outer world [Aurobindo, 1990]. It leads to discovery, further discovery and finally to the ultimate truth. “Consciousness is intrinsic to the

grand cosmos, both at macroscopic as well as microscopic levels. Man, a creation on planet Earth happens to be a perfect microcosm of the macrocosm. Spirit-mind-brain consciousness interactions are at the microscopic levels analogous to consciousness interaction between Supreme Being (Universal Spirit) – Universal Mind – Physical Universe at the macrocosmic levels” [Satsangi, 2012].

Section V – Prevailing crisis and the way forward

In essence, man is a spiritual being and his inherent nature is of love, goodness, harmony and peace. But, due to the coverings of mind and matter, his inherent nature becomes dormant; and spiritual inertia with an outward focus sets in. Desire, anger, lust, attachment and ego, become the dominant forces, and they entice him with the temporal pleasures of power, wealth and sex. As these three forces are essential for the fullness of life, man gets so engrossed in them, that he loses all discretion and balance. “Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action it belongs to the Divine. But like other powers of the Divine it is delegated here and in the ignorance of the lower Nature can be usurped for the uses of the ego or held by Asuric* influences and perverted to their purpose. This is indeed one of the three forces—power, wealth, sex—that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the Asura and are most generally misheld and misused by those who retain them. The seekers or keepers of wealth are more often possessed rather than its possessors; few escape entirely a certain distorting influence stamped on it by its long seizure and perversion by the Asura” [Aurobindo, 1972: p. 11-12] (*“Asura” is a vital being with a demonic character that attempts to dominate and control life). Thus, taking a realistic view of human nature, the Indian philosophy is based on the fact that “though the individual is lit with the divine spark, he is not wholly divine. His divinity is not an actuality, but a potentiality, a prophecy and not a fulfillment. Man is a part of God aspiring to be the whole. As he is, he is dust and deity, God and brute crossed. It is the task of the moral life to eliminate the non-divine element, not by destroying it, but by suffusing it with the divine spirit [Radhakrishnan, 1914: p.168-183].

If we analyze the root cause of all crisis (economic, political, business, societal, environmental or personal), we will find man’s greed for power, wealth and sex as the root cause behind them all. Greed never works alone; it is always accompanied by desire, anger, attachment and ego in some form of the other. Combined, these five evils of mind promote insensitivity in man towards his fellow beings; inject a false sense of achievement in man, and warp his discretionary capabilities. Slowly and gradually this spreads like an infection amongst the weak willed and a community of weak willed surfaces. Thus, at the scale, at which the influence of the five evils is visible in society i.e. the number of people and the magnitude, clearly reflects the mentality of modernity.

The challenge before us is how to change the mentality of the masses and arrest the decadence that has taken place in society. The solution rests in changing the quality of mind and that can happen only through ‘consciousness or awareness expansion’. The power of mind as recognized in the Indian thought; is also recognized in the West. Ralph Wado Emerson notes, that the greatest revolution of our generation is the

discovery that man can completely change the outer aspects of his life by transforming his inner thought patterns. The ancient scriptural statement reinforces this truth: “As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” *Yatha drishti, thatha srishiti*. The law of our being is that whatever we hold in our consciousness becomes manifest as our experience. Our thoughts and dreams form the only blueprint that the eternal builder in us uses to shape our future. In other words, our lives and affairs are completely influenced and shaped by the character of our thinking. A person is not limited by God’s will or heredity or by fate or circumstances but by his own dominant state of mind. Stirrings of greatness and groans of downhill slide begin within the mind. This is the unalterable eternal law of our being, the abiding dynamics of success and glory or failure and misery, radiant health and longevity or suffering and death.

Today what is needed is neither worldliness nor un-worldliness, but ‘Better Worldliness or Better World Order’. ‘Better Worldliness or Better World Order’ is a state where the inner and outer personalities of both (man and society) are developed and balanced. There is integration of the secular and non-secular needs of man and mutuality in the air. The focus of each individual is to keep his/her small corners of the universe clean and efficient, so that collectively there is overall cleanliness and efficiency. All live and thrive in the spirit of ‘Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man’. This may sound utopian in nature, but it is not. The model given below has already been implemented in Dayalbagh, Agra, India. The rationale behind the model is “*not to destroy the lower nature of man, but to suffuse it with the higher nature of man*”, through meditation, participation in social service and spiritual service.

Meditation entails far more than the simple self-observation of mental activities. It includes control of the mind, and focusing of attention at the particular center of consciousness located within the human frame (ref. to section III). This practice is based on centuries of research carried out by the seers and mystics of India and often includes a detailed ‘map’ of the area of consciousness under exploration. A high code of moral conduct — both outward and inward — is also a part of all such practices as it is understood that purity of mind and expansion of consciousness are closely linked.

Model to Achieve Better Worldliness [Satsangi, 2006: p.127-167]

- ***Objectives***

- To achieve better worldliness or better world order
- To render selfless service to mankind
- To evolve complete man with a balanced physical, mental and spiritual personality

- ***Obstacles***

- Ego
- Temptation (greed, anger, lust)
- Selfishness (attachment)

- ***Solutions***

- Engage in community service, religious service and spiritual practice
- Provide education, more education and education made perfect inculcating values such as obedience, tolerance and cooperation
- Set up habitats that facilitate leading exemplary life of better worldliness

The following research findings demonstrate the efficacy of the model to bring about the necessary change in the internal personality (consciousness levels) of man and society. It is interesting to note that even mechanical observance of spirituality, brings about a change in self and society.

Neuroscience research

- a. Effects of meditation on the brain: results suggest that long-term, or short-term practice of meditation results in different levels of activity in brain regions associated with such qualities as attention, anxiety, depression, fear, anger, the ability of the body to heal itself, and so on [Davidson, 2007: p.171-174].
- b. To verify the hypothesis that 'self' is seen as separate in the Western culture and connected with others in the Eastern culture, a group of Americans and Chinese were asked to think about their self and their mother. fMRI showed that when the subjects thought of their 'self' the ventral MPFC (and perigenual ACC) of both groups was activated, but when they were asked to think about their mother, the ventral MPFC only of the Chinese got activated [Zhang, 2011: p.514-519].

Impact of religious practice on social stability in USA

- c. There exists a powerful and positive relationship between religious commitment and personal well-being; overall, psychological functioning improved following a resumption of participation in religious worship for those who had stopped [D'Antonio, 1980: p.89-104].
- d. In a nationwide survey of strong families, it was observed that 84 percent identified religion as an important contributor to the strength of their families [Murry, 1992: p.483].
- e. In an important study published in 1987, it was observed that the main cause of problematic adolescent sexual behaviors and attitudes is not only family dynamics and processes, as previously thought, but the absence of religious behavior and affiliation. The study suggests that healthy family dynamics and practices are themselves caused to a powerful degree by the presence or absence of religious beliefs and practices [Jones, 1985: p.53-63].
- f. A four year longitudinal, stratified random-sample study of high school students in the Rocky Mountain region, published in 1975, demonstrated that religious involvement significantly decreased drug use, delinquency, and premarital sex, and also increased self-control [Cochran, 1989: p.147-162].
- g. In research conducted in the late 1980s a research team from the University of Nevada found that black men who eventually ended up in prison and those who did not, came respectively from two different groups: those who did not go to church, or stopped going around ten years of age, and those who went regularly. This failure of faith at the onset of adolescence parallels the pattern found among those who become alcoholics or drug addicts. Clearly, the family's inability to inspire regular religious worship among emerging young adults is a sign of internal weakness [Freeman, 1985].

- h. Regular church attendance is the critical factor in marital stability across denominations and overrides effects of doctrinal teaching on divorce. For instance, black Protestants and white Catholics, who share similarly high church attendance rates, have been shown to have similarly low divorce rates [Larson, 1985, p.121-147].
- i. Drug and alcohol use is lowest in the most conservative religious denominations and highest in non-religious groups, while liberal church groups have use rates just slightly lower than those for non-religious groups. But for all groups, religious commitment correlates with absence of drug abuse [Amoateng, 1986: p.53-76].

(Note: For more research findings please see “Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Practice of Social Stability By Patrik F. Fagan, January 25, 1996, The Heritage Foundation, www.heritage.org)



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