

A New Organizing Principle for Humanity

Agape Love

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Contemporary civilization is currently creating and living through the most rapid period of technological change that has ever occurred throughout all of human history. This change is having a profound effect on our civilization, our planet and all living creatures residing on it. As a global civilization we have little or no historical precedence nor experience for dealing with such a rapid change nor do we have a good understanding of its implications for our future. To put this incredible rate of change into perspective, we only have to look to our recent history to illustrate how profound it has become.

Following the end of Civil War in the US in 1865, many Americans sought to begin a new life in the West by traveling there in covered wagons pulled by horses, an arduous and dangerous journey that took several months. The railroads were not yet complete in spanning the West, the electric light bulb was not yet discovered and automobiles had not been invented. The Wright brothers demonstrated the first heavier than air flight in 1903, and a mere 66 years later in 1969 we sent astronauts to the moon. From covered wagons to manned spacecraft to the moon and back in little more than 100 years, hardly more than the span of a human lifetime today!

Certainly the pace of innovation and invention continues to increase. The computing power and many of the technologies necessary to accomplish the amazing feat to go to the moon and return safely was much less sophisticated than what we now carry in our pockets to make phone calls or to search the Internet. Now we are planning the mining of the asteroid belt within the next 20 years to insure our continued supply of raw materials necessary to maintain our civilization. Where is this incredible rapid pace of innovation taking us as a global civilization? Have our beliefs, our social and our cultural institutions evolved to keep pace with this incredible pace of technological innovation?

From the perspective of seeing Earth from deep space, it is easy to become both euphoric and despondent; euphoric because the journey into space epitomizes the amazing accomplishments we have achieved as a species during the past century and euphoric from new insights gained from the magnificence of the heavens; despondent because of the often unwitting, irresponsible and foolish behaviors we humans have exhibited toward Earth, our only home and oasis in the dark vastness and hostile environment of space. Forty five years after our first visit to another heavenly body the evidence is now unmistakable that our species is seriously endangering its very own existence.

Our solar system, including Earth and the Sun, have been around for about 4.6 billion years or roughly one-third the age of the observable universe. Humankind as a

species has roots that go back about three million years. Modern civilization is approximately 10,000 years old, which is a mere blinking of an eyelid in geological terms. Some 2,500 years ago modern religious stories and traditions were spawned from the efforts of a few inspired individuals from various cultures who endeavored to make sense of reality. Our contemporary world view, our social and our cultural institutions, in large part, have remained pretty much the same since the days of those early thinkers.

It has only been in the last 400 years (following Descartes) that humankind in the western world has made an organized attempt to understand our world, its processes and our relationship to it. This effort divided our quest to better understand reality into two separate realms, one related to matters of the physical world (science) and the other related to matters of spirit (religion). Clearly we are still a very young species as compared to the age of the Earth, barely out of the trees, and our understanding of reality is still embryonic, in spite of so many recent discoveries. Our current knowledge base is certainly incomplete and may even, in many respects, be totally incorrect. Certainly as a species we have a long way to go to gain a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the true nature of ourselves and our universe.

We are now confronting some of the greatest challenges we have ever collectively had to face. To name only a few are the: accepted and widespread use of violence for conflict resolution, use of asymmetric terrorism, proliferation of weaponry including those capable of mass destruction, global population explosion, massive environmental degradation, wholesale species extinction which threatens the web of life on the planet, unparalleled rate of consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources, corporate and political malfeasance on a global scale, etc.

At the same time there is a wisdom manifesting that is seeking a different way of being and a more lofty perspective of our place in the Universe. Clearly our current predicament is seen, in large measure, to be a crisis in our collective thinking or, as some would say, a crisis in consciousness. Either way, it was Albert Einstein who said "you cannot solve a problem with the same level of thinking that created it".

For all these reasons and many more we must recognize that civilization's understanding of the nature of reality, our place in it and hence our survival and future well-being is entirely dependent upon the emergence of a completely different worldview. This new paradigm must be one that properly addresses our collective relationship to each other, to the environment, to nature, and to the larger Universe.

Achieving new views of reality and, by implication, a sustainable modern civilization requires enlightened efforts to establish a fundamental shift in common perceptions leading to changes in thinking, values, behavior and actions based on the concepts of inter-connectedness, cooperation, and interdependence in all human endeavors. This shift can come about only if a significant portion of humankind develops this new awareness and understanding and incorporates them into individual, cultural and societal belief systems.

Science can support this shift by providing reliable and credible empirical data in support of these premises. However, since the 17th century, science has been based on the belief that all phenomena are the results of blind but predictable interactions of matter. This orientation has led to a reductionist view of reality and a materialistic focus – one of consumption, competition, conflict and domination.

Finally at the beginning of the 21st century, new scientific evidence has emerged from the field of quantum mechanics, biology, cosmology, complexity theory, the study of so-called supernatural phenomena and the study of many other emerging fields that render the reductionist view of reality not only untenable but incorrect as well. Instead, a new paradigm is surfacing which places great emphasis on consciousness and its role in the creation of physical reality and on the point of view that reality is a holistic, interconnected matrix, and that information, once gained, is never lost and that nature has been using this information to evolve continuously to higher and higher states of complexity.

A little over 100 years ago, many scientists were encouraging promising students to pursue careers in areas besides physics. These scientists claimed that basic knowledge and understanding of nature had already been uncovered and that there was nothing further to discover but to refine nature's constants to several more decimal places. In their view, there were only three problems that were left to be determined and they would likely be resolved in the near future. Those issues were:

- The processes that powered the sun. It had become clear that through the geologic record, the age of the earth (and by implication, the sun) had to be much older than previously thought. A sun made of coal would only burn for thousands of years, not the billions indicated by the geologic record.
- The blackbody radiation problem, predicting the intensity of radiation at specific wavelengths. Predictions worked for longer wavelengths but did not at shorter wavelengths. This became known as the ultraviolet catastrophe.
- The speed of light should be different depending upon where it was measured in Earth's orbit as the planet moved through the ether of deep space.

Of course prevailing scientific explanations and speculations turned out to be completely incorrect and eventually new investigations and discoveries spawned whole new branches of scientific endeavors and technologies which have had a major impact on all facets of modern life. Today, it seems that history has a way of repeating itself, there are many signs on the horizon that indicate that once again we are about to undergo a major revolution in our understanding of nature. Evidence is again accumulating of many observations that do not fit accepted theories nor can be made to fit them by extension. Several of the more significant anomalies that can no longer be ignored are listed below:

- What does the acceleration of the expansion of the universe and the missing mass of the universe imply?

- Why does ordinary matter make up only 5% of everything in the Universe? What is dark matter and dark energy that make up the remaining 95%?
- Do the quantum effects of non-locality, entanglement, coherence and resonance apply at scale sizes beyond sub-atomic matter? What are the causative factors of these phenomena?
- Why didn't the big bang create equal amounts of matter and anti-matter? Why is there so much more matter than anti-matter?
- What is the energy of empty space (the so-called vacuum energy or energy of the zero point field)? Can it be harnessed?
- Why is the universe so friendly to supporting carbon based life? Just what is life anyway?
- What are the drivers of biological evolution? Is it genetics, epigenetics, morphogenesis or random mutations? How did life gain a foothold on Earth?
- What is the role of consciousness in perceiving and influencing physical reality? Are we merely observers or are we participants?
- What is the "hard" problem of consciousness? What does it mean to feel an emotion like love or experience the beauty of a sunset? What is the world like to a dog?
- What do so-called psi phenomena of all types that occur regularly and with frequencies well beyond random chance tell us about the nature of consciousness?
- What are spiritually transformative experiences like near-death experiences or out-of-body experiences really hinting at about the nature of reality?
- Is science the only way of knowing about our reality or is there an experiential aspect of life that science will never be able to fully investigate?

Despite advances in science and technology over the last three centuries, these important questions either did not exist or have been largely ignored and remain the most challenging issues of the modern era. There are several reasons for this: some resulted from incorrect interpretations, inaccuracies or inadequacies in instrumentation or measurements and, for some of them, subjective experience, including the existence of consciousness, have to a large extent been neglected by mainstream science and left unchallenged by our philosophical or religious traditions.

Until recently these subjective areas of inquiry have been considered to be outside the scope of study. Indeed, the prevailing view is that these issues are strictly philosophical, psychological or theological and are not subject to the accepted modern scientific methods of inquiry. However, new discoveries in many disciplines now offer clues that are suggesting that such issues can be tested and studied reliably using commonly accepted scientific protocols.

Another reason that many of these areas have been ignored is because those with a vested interest in the current paradigms and those who derive their livelihood from them have little incentive to question the very paradigms that support them or have made them successful. Consequently few people have expressed interest in studying these issues until very recent times. Even those willing to address these anomalies fear

being ostracized by their peers or are so indoctrinated by the current scientific and economic paradigms that they ignore mounting evidence, contradictions, and anomalies that cannot be explained by current mainstream thinking.

Throughout the ages great spiritual teachers from all traditions have spoken of reality being a limitless, transcendent and holistic consciousness. Partly as a result of the legacy of the French philosopher Descartes and the separations of the domains of religious and scientific thought, the spiritual view of reality has all but been ignored by modern science. Yet, our spiritual teachers have taught us for millennia that we all have the ability to experience transcendent states of awareness and intentionality (so called spiritually transformative experiences or epiphanies) and that they are demonstrably resident in the human condition. These states are now beginning to be understood as fundamental properties of our consciousness.

We are finally beginning to recognize that these states have been visited and utilized for millennia by both our ancestors and contemporaries. These enlightened individuals have been called by many names including avatars, mystics, sages, saints, gurus and shamans. By whatever name they have been called, all held a similar world view and advocated oneness, unconditional love, living harmoniously with nature and one's fellow humans and recognizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of all creation.

Everywhere we look all things in nature exist and work together in total balance, resonance and harmony, the whole and all of nature's parts interact as one. When looking at it from this perspective, one is drawn to the obvious conclusion that the organizing principle of the Cosmos is agape love. This ultimate form of love, known since ancient Greek times, as the totally unconditional love that accepts all things as they exist in nature without regard to conditions, expectations, shortcomings, flaws or faults. All things in the cosmos without exception respond favorably to agape love. It is, therefore, easy to conclude that it is the organizing principle for all of creation.

As a consequence the recognition of the interconnectedness of all things, the time has come for the paradigm of "every man for himself" fueled by greed, scarcity and survival must be supplanted by the paradigm "all for one and one for all" driven by the spirit of harmony, altruism and unity. All of humanity must come to understand that we really are only as strong as our weakest link; that what we do to others we do to ourselves; that literally "what comes around goes around". When this realization comes about solutions to every major threat, problem or challenge we face will likely quickly find their remedy.

For millennia, many of the great philosophers, sages, mystics, shamans and wise men taught that life's true meaning and purpose is to love all things unconditionally, to accept all exactly as it is presented to us without conditions. One does not have to look very far to see that this operating principle, agape love, is found everywhere in nature. Since it is nature to all living things is to live in harmony with the natural world as it is, so it is for humanity to return to our roots to learn, to grow and to

evolve into a state where one becomes the complete manifestation of this organizing principle.

In the modern era, those who undergo a spiritually transformative experience such as a near death experience will attest that, after they have integrated their profound experience that loving each other and all of nature is the central reason for our existence. This message is a recurring theme, not just in these experiences, but in the belief systems of all of the world's major religions. As we have seen it is also the primary message of all the wisdom seekers of the last several millennia.

Truth of this understanding, though hard to come by, can be found as embedded elements in ancient teachings as far back as Confucius. An early version of the "Golden Rule" is attributed to him as its original source: "What you do not wish for yourself, do not unto others," or stated another way, "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself."

Confucius lived about 2500 years ago yet his words are still relevant and applicable today even though they were formulated and articulated so very long ago. Perhaps his teachings provide an enduring framework for human nature and behavior, which, if achieved and expressed, would result in the creation of a much better world, one which would know more joy than suffering, more plenty than lack, more peace than conflict, and more harmony than discord.

In the modern era, we grossly misperceive reality and nature, our relationship to them, and to ourselves. We cling to our false or incomplete knowledge, beliefs, values and perceptions. These misperceptions account for nearly all of the problems our species is encountering including the harm we are doing to ourselves and to all the co-inhabitants of our home, planet Earth. If we really understood nature in a deep sense, most if not all of the challenges currently afflicting humankind would likely be resolved in short order.

Many current world crises, including energy consumption, inadequate health care, rampant malnutrition, environmental degradation, and violent conflict between countries, ideologies, regions and religions, are not isolated events. Growing evidence suggests that myriad misunderstood phenomena in nature be they physical, mental, or spiritual, may be best explainable by a new framework that treats all things and events in the world as interdependent components of an inseparable whole or oneness.

Science certainly recognizes that if humanity is to survive and thrive in the future we must live in harmony with nature and among ourselves. We cannot destroy the environment that we evolved from and look to for supporting ourselves without it. To thrive and survive well into the future we must go further and fully explore the implications of the hypothesis of interconnectedness and oneness.

In order to create the fundamental shift in consciousness necessary to preserve our civilization, our goal must be to fully integrate the reductionist, and prevailing and

purely materialistic view, characterized by classical Newtonian science, with the holistic view emerging out of all promising disciplines in a manner that also addresses this enlightened consciousness and transcendent states of awareness. Once this happens this holistic view can then be applied to the macroscopic world including living systems, social and cultural phenomena.

Just as modern man displaced Neanderthal man, so too must modern man evolve to the next level of further knowledge, sophistication and evolution. Indicators abound that time is running out on what is now called “post modernism”. We must swiftly evolve to the next level by eradicating pervasive ignorance concerning who we really are and what our true destiny should be. We must recognize that the current behaviors and practices of global civilization are not sustainable or face the extreme likelihood of mass chaos and destruction, if not extinction all together. Indeed, some have called this “as the need for a conscious evolution” as we move into the future.

Sometimes evolution occurs voluntarily by choice prompted by invention, discovery or epiphany. Other times, evolution occurs involuntarily, forcibly and painfully where change is resisted and fought, but change comes nevertheless through chaotic upheaval, disaster and cataclysmic crises, often times involving a massive amount of death and destruction, such as the Dark Ages following the fall of the Roman Empire.

Humankind’s next phase of evolution will be more of a conscious evolution in thought, knowledge, awareness and spirituality than one involving our biology or physiology. It will likely be an evolution in consciousness triggered by a dramatic change in perceptions, values, beliefs and attitudes leading to a profound resultant shift in human behavior. And it will be grounded in the love for all things.....