

Prior Unity – Our Secure and Inalienable State of Belonging¹

Hans Jecklin-Speiser

As a businessman, I maintained a practice of responding to inquiries in accordance with the speed of the medium used by the inquirer. I have maintained this practice to this very day. I respond to e-mails, if not immediately, then at least on the same day they were sent, knowing full well their likely fate if left for another day.

It was in this spirit of simple expediency that I responded one day to the inquiry of an international initiative concerning the country or region I represent. I wrote, “Origin: prior unity.

Consciousness: cosmic. Place of citizenship: earth. Place of work: German-speaking countries. Nationality: Swiss. Place of residence: Autigny (Canton of Fribourg) and Zurich.”

And now, I can’t contain a sense of delight when I read through this profile and consider its implications! Isn’t it wonderful to have the privilege of embodying this existential range? Not as a matter of mental gymnastics alone, of course, but as an existential experience that resonates to the core of my being. The longer I abide in this state, the more my breath and heart expand. A vital sense of joy envelopes and flows through me, accompanied by a resounding, life-affirming pronouncement from the very heights and depths of my being.

Unlimited Creativity

I admit: that all sounds rather euphoric. Removed from the world? No, not that either. After all, I feel my fingers as they touch the keyboard of my laptop. They are nimble, as they must be, to keep up with my thoughts. I am sitting, wide awake, at the

¹ “Unity of existence - the primal, irreducible state of being in which the world and all things continually arise and pass away” (Adi Da: Not-Two Is Peace. Dawn Horse Press. 2009)

old octagonal table in my studio bedroom in Autigny. Sunlight suffuses the room. My feet, too, are positioned firmly on the floor. And above me, there is the familiar painted ceiling with its cavorting angels that dates back to the 17th century.

But now to the point! And first off, the matter of *origin*. If we, in keeping with the assumptions of the quantum cosmologists, cast our view back in time and attempt to explain the origin of the expanding universe, we find that a certain monolithic event must have taken place – around 15 billion years ago and somewhere out beyond the cosmic background noise that is impenetrable for our strongest telescopes – that was ultimately the basis for our existence, a primal explosion, if you will, of highly concentrated energy. Resembling a seed, this not only carried all of the potentiality manifested in the universe, it was also the basis of an extraordinary force of expansion that is still active today. The universe's unlimited creative energy is also one aspect of this, for instance, as a driving force of evolution, magnificently expressed on this planet in increasingly differentiated material and animate forms, and the continual unfolding of human consciousness via self-reflection. The various perspectives on the origin of the universe and humanity that are available to us today would have been unthinkable just a few decades ago. One thing these perspectives reveal is the capacity of all individuals to conceive of themselves as an expression of the original unity and, what is more, to directly experience themselves as an aspect of the all-encompassing unity that fills us and that we are.

Mystical Experiences

Do we owe this to the fact that many of the fundamental scientific discoveries made in recent decades actually correspond to ancient spiritual teachings? Or do we owe it to the many, ever growing number of people who, ever since the 1960s, have rediscovered and again set out upon the traditional paths to the mystical experience of unity that were charted long ago by the various cultures of world? Or is it the effect of cosmic rays

emanating from the solar system? Indeed, it looks as if the transitions from the dual world to the inner experience of pure being have become more open or less contingent. How much easier it is today to guide persons to their experience of unity or to allow them to again experience how often they have already been across or close to the threshold! How they – in the first moments of arriving at the mountain summit (or another goal of their yearning) – lost themselves unconditionally in the immediacy of the experience.

Almost all of us have experienced such mystical moments – experiences of pure joy from which we then quickly “liberated” ourselves by attributing them to external circumstances, and then kept them at a distance by immediately turning our attention to the desire for the reproduction of the same or other circumstances promising even greater happiness. And yet, when we simply accept the nature of these experiences as a manifestation of our innermost being and cultivate them as such, we will experience an authentic, secure and inalienable state of belonging.

Everything and Nothing – the Unity

Karl Rahner not only wrote that the believer of tomorrow will be a mystic – »one who has experienced« – but also that it is the responsibility of today’s spiritual guides to convey these experiences in an effective manner. The *democratization of enlightenment* is an expression that I like to use to recover this experience from its lofty and therefore inaccessible pedestal. It’s not that I’m lacking in terms of respect and devotion, it’s that all of us who concern ourselves with this subject know that a refined impulse often suffices today to scatter the notion of needing to overcome something. What remains is unity, prior unity, unlimited and timeless, all-encompassing, beyond birth and death. We may initially encounter unity as an essential *I*, as an all-encompassing *you* or as an externally diversified *it* that then ultimately leads us into an infinite *everything* and *nothing*.

This broad accessibility, i.e. for every man and woman who is sincerely interested, is something new. Up until a half a century ago, common human consciousness was not differentiated enough to perceive or even comprehend this more subtle dimension. This meant that it was the chosen few, the visionaries and the prophets, who maintained the link to the divine on behalf of the faithful and who were revered and heeded as the conveyors of spiritual truths.

Evolution

The material vibrational states from which reproductive life arose in the course of billions of years must have been impenetrable for a differentiated consciousness. During yet another period of millions of years, the existence of plants and animals was primarily focused on increasingly complex, vegetative survival functions before individual consciousness emerged in higher mammals, a development that then accelerated in a relatively short amount of time in the case of homo sapiens who progressed from hunter gatherers to globally linked interonauts, equipped with the rapidly growing powers of imagination of a boundlessly expanding universe – a universe perhaps continuously arising anew from a black hole, as one of possibly an infinite number of parallel universes.

The gain in the spatial extent of consciousness is one thing. What appears to me to be even more important, however, is the capacity to look far into the past as a means of arriving at a new understanding of the present. If we again narrow our view to our home planet, it is with trepidation that we perceive the present collective and individual entanglements on the part of humanity in external phenomena. We can feel what this means for individuals as parts of their ethnicities and nations. That which presents itself to us now is essentially a snapshot of the sum of all past states in the history of evolution: a continuously regenerating present.

Beauty and Terror

This leads us to a number of radical questions: In addition to affirming the beauty of this wonderful world, do we have the capacity to perceive and accept all of the imperfections visible at the moment, all of the aberrations of human action and the suffering they generate, as a part of the living present? As consequences of a consciousness that, in evolutionary terms, reflects a “not-yet-awakened” knowledge of the unity? Do we have the capacity to honor both the beauty and the terror of this all-embracing view and to take it close to our wide open hearts? Including all of the glaring deprivation, but also in an awareness of the more comprehensive miracle of evolution that emerges through all instances of resistance and relapse? Could we at least allow our personal participation and entanglement to melt in the wonder and in the love that surrounds us – into the unity which has forever been our true nature and which we now have an opportunity to live? What if an awakening humanity were now in a position to create peace on and with this planet precisely in this manner?

“Consciousness: cosmic,” I wrote in my original profile. Rather conceited, you may have thought, and thereby shared the response of my wife. But where, in what dimension, were we just now? Let’s take another step back. Let’s broaden our view together, beyond our view of ourselves, our cultural heritage and even of the human condition until we perceive the expanse of the universe around us. We see in front of us the beautiful planet earth as it turns on its axis while revolving around the sun, an entire system within a larger system of millions of galaxies that is spiraling outwards into the universe. Cosmic consciousness?!

This more comprehensive view of our planet allows us to visualize how humanity gradually spread out across the globe from its primal origins in East Africa – or, according to the latest findings, even from Asia. We can imagine how the various traits of body and character developed as a response to the various geographical and climatological conditions, and how, ensconced

in different environments, the various languages, cultures and religions of the world developed. Fears of the inexorable forces of nature and the wrath of the gods are reflected in the rules that emerged to secure the cohesion of community life and, ultimately, the survival of the group. The fear of banishment from the community and the total exposure to the life-threatening dangers of the world that it meant is still at work in society today in the form of most people's fear of being different.

Exploitation and Colonialism

The involvement of humanity in bitter conflicts over territory is as relevant today as it ever was. With the start of what is referred to historically as the modern era, pronounced forms of cognitive and constructive intelligence began to develop more quickly on the continent of Europe than in other parts of the world. New and rediscovered transport routes facilitated trade. The joining of human ingenuity to a new entrepreneurial spirit led to a technological superiority and spurred industrial production. The world's resources – the biosphere, raw materials, animals, plants and human labor – were used by one part of humanity to expand its wealth without any regard for the welfare of the rest of humanity. This is how the supremacy of the West arose within just a few centuries, a supremacy that is ultimately not sustainable.

Should it really come as a surprise to us that those whose development came later now demand – sometimes with an overt willingness to resort to violence – forms of compensation and a level playing field? The demands for restitution are known. While it is first a matter of respect for distinct cultures, the material aspects follow rapidly, including the relinquishment of a hegemonic exercise of power, the fair distribution of resources as assets belonging equally to all of humanity, compensation for wealth acquired at the cost of others and equality of opportunity for those who are in a position of having to catch up.

While the planet no longer offers options in the form of vast unexplored and uninhabited expanses of land, the potential wrapped up in human ingenuity offers ample grounds for hope. There can be little doubt that this ingenuity will give future generations opportunities that go well beyond what we can currently imagine. However, in order to ensure that this ingenuity leads to an enhanced quality of life in harmony with the earth, it will be necessary to consider the possible side effects of progress with a far greater degree of care and vigilance than was demonstrated by earlier generations. It will be no less important to ensure that the products or the fruits of ingenuity are not used to establish new classes of privileged and underprivileged people. Perhaps we need to learn that the fruits of human ingenuity are spin-offs of the development of human consciousness and, as such, belong to all of humanity?

The Threshold

In order to see and grasp all of this from an empathic and compassionate heart, I am required to venture out of global consciousness and into the cosmic realm. It is only from this more comprehensive perspective, detached from specific national, ethnic and personal sensibilities, that we humans can take an unwavering look at the complex current state of our planet. Only then will the knots that were created under the spell of delusion show all compassionate hearts the way to their release and redemption. The separate cultures, ethnicities, religions and nationalities are nothing more than manifestations of the unity of which their exponents are not yet aware. I think that humanity is standing on the threshold to comprehending the way to peace. From the awareness of the prior unity of all phenomena, many people already have awakened to a capacity to transform matter, living organisms and emotions. Just how and when this capacity will be expanded by the cooperation of those who have gone ahead into a collective opening of the heart – of

“humanity as a whole” - is a question that is currently on the threshold to discovering its answer.

As a co-responsible world citizen who is integrated in the global situation, I would like to apply the uniqueness of my talents and abilities in everyday life. Many of us have come to understand our roles in this global community and have begun to live this role to the best of our understanding and ability. The many positive facets of a globally active and networked civil society, as well as the astounding number of people who have embraced spiritual and esoteric paths as a means of discovering meaning, offer hope. However, the consciousness-changing power of these people, as individuals and members of groups and institutions, would magnify many times if they were to regard themselves as aspects of this continuously emerging unity – unified in the common purpose of living on and with this earth in peace and harmony.

The Transformative Power of a Unified Humanity

Consider the gain in energy, for instance, when the one group of activists no longer perceive themselves as competing with other groups, instead recognizing that all are actually taking a different approach to a common goal. Or when those more connected to the earth no longer derive their sense of worth from a contempt for those who strive for transformation via intellectual or spiritual means – and vice versa – and when religious leaders begin to orient their teachings to the spiritual emergence of people instead of denigrating esotericism, which you would think they would embrace as their own domain. The transformative power of a humanity that is unified to this degree can scarcely be imagined. While the energy is actually already present, the form and manner of its societal application remain to be discovered. The exercise of caution is warranted, especially in light of the many historical instances of the abuse of the masses, as well as the examples of such that are continuously brought to our attention in the present.

Many sense that it is a matter of a mass awakening to a new collective identity, a joining of forces among autonomous and empowered citizens of the world for the benefit of the whole.

On the way there, it will be necessary to give up our romantic yearning for a community that provides us with a kind of nest warmth. The expectation that we will be loved by others unconditionally for our own sake leads to a fatal, overburdening demand on our actual partners, groups and societies and, ultimately, on ourselves. These sorts of expectations and projections have an addictive appeal. Whether it is warmth, success, prestige, power or admiration that we desire, it is always a matter of a substitute for the authentic, secure and inalienable participation in the (prior) unity of our innermost nature.

Fear of Failure

During a critical phase of my entrepreneurial life, I came to the sudden realization that what I most feared about the possibility of business failure, a possibility that can never be ruled out, was not the loss of my material possessions, but the loss of esteem in the eyes of others. I know how this dynamic can also drive managers who are accustomed to success to fire employees or to sacrifice immaterial qualities as a safeguard against having to disappoint the expectations of shareholders and financial experts for ever rising profits. This same dependence recently led otherwise intelligent bankers to lose sight of the risks they were taking, with the result that the world was brought to the brink of financial collapse. Even Obama was not free of this dependence when he promised in his inaugural address to consider the use of arms in the interest of protecting the American way of life. We can gain a sense for the archaic force at work here when we reflect on the tendency of intelligent people to prefer death and destruction over admitting their failure to succeed. Addiction to success and fear of failure are only two facets of the self-deceptive game for the imagined love of others.

Sharing Responsibility

The origins of this fatal dependency on the approval of the group lie deep in our evolutionary past and represent a stubborn behavioral pattern that is determined in our subconscious mind. As long as not enough people liberate themselves from this collective bondage, by discovering their dignity in themselves and continuously affirming and standing up for this dignity with all their might, nothing will change in our global society. As long as we – i.e. those of us who live in democratic countries – elect politicians who solicit our approval, we have cast our votes in vain. As long as we as consumers nourish an economy that we know is misguided, we will get the economy that we deserve. We can continue this game of the frightened consciousness as long as we like, as long as our resources permit. It is up to us to assume co-responsibility for the well-being of the human community and to join hands with other empowered people who derive their dignity from themselves.

It is incumbent on each and every one of us to awaken to this autonomous power. While no one can assume responsibility for others in this matter, those who know from experience can help to shape an environment that will foster the awakening of others. This is my notion of modern bodhisattvas: those individuals who have knowledge of the entire extent of being and who do not rest when it comes to spurring the awakening of all of humanity. They do this by living their uniqueness. This allows them to touch the hearts of others far beyond the scope of their personal encounters. Much farther, perhaps, than we can imagine.