

# HUMAN LONGING AND FULFILMENT: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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## *Introduction*

As the existential philosophers have pointed out, an enduring, even if not explicit, human awareness is that of "being-in-the-world". Human consciousness has always struggled with questions associated with this primordial awareness of "being in the world" — who am I? Who is the "other"? Where have I come from? What am I here for? Where am I going from here? Associated with each of these questions and these questions taken together are the inner responses of anxiety, fear, hope, longing, and anticipation of fulfilment. Both these existential questions and the accompanying inner response have to be understood from the individual's specific and unique experience of "being in the world".. In other words, both the act of human longing and the object (person, thing or a state of being) of longing can be understood only in relation to the subject of longing who is struggling with these existential questions within specific developmental or evolutionary balances (cognitive, affective, spiritual, moral and so on), specific worldviews (magical, mythical, rational, Transrational) and shared meanings and values, and specific techno-economic environments and social structures (hunting and foraging, horticultural, agrarian, industrial, technological and so on).

The specific domain of psychological investigations has, by and large, been the subjective phenomenal world of the psyche as it struggles with its existential questions, its inner responses to the struggles and their physical and symptomatic expressions. The mainline psychology wanting to be scientific like the physical sciences has, by and large, stayed away from larger meanings and values, fundamental longings and ultimate hopes for the simple reason that they would not lend themselves to scientific investigation within the paradigms of physical sciences. Yet, psychology in its applied form as therapy has always attempted to address the existential impact on its clients of their experience of "being in the world".. We can trace in those attempts partial understanding of what the fundamental human longing might be.

### *Conventional Perspectives*

From the Psychoanalytical perspective what we can safely say about the human longing is contained in the famous statement of Freud: "where id was, there shall ego be". The individual can be understood as striving toward a state of reduced anxiety and tension wherein the "ego" attempts to define, assert, and defend itself as it realistically negotiates and balances the "demands" of the libidinal-sexual-aggressive "id" and the "commands" of the culture-bound "superego". It is in that state of negotiated and, perhaps, tenuous balance and relative peace that the individual can "work and love", can be a productive member of society and a satisfying partner in sexual-emotional relationships. More fundamental or basic concerns of being in the world are not the explicit concerns of psychoanalysis. Moreover, much of the answers to the existential questions sought by humans through philosophical speculations and religious-contemplative practices were looked upon with real scepticism, if not downright cynicism, fearing that they were the regressive attempts of an immature ego to project its infantile inadequacies, fears, anxieties and wishes on to fictitious representations of omnipotence and benevolence.

From the Jungian angle, individuation (becoming one's own unique person in relation to the larger context of life and reality) can be considered to be the most cogent term to point to the deepest human longing associated with the existential awareness of being in the world. For Jungians, individuation<sup>1</sup> refers to a long and arduous process of differentiating, strengthening, assimilating and integrating the various parts (opposites that need to be united) of the psyche. This process involves an "open confrontation and honest collaboration" between the conscious and the unconscious, between the various archetypal polarities like the masculine principle and the feminine principle, the individual self and the larger or cosmic Self, the recognized, illumined and "polished" persona, and the unrecognised, un-illumined, and undeveloped shadow aspects of the individual self. This open confrontation and honest collaboration, this differentiation and integration can gradually lead to an inner harmony among these components of the psyche and a state of psychic wholeness and balance (becoming indivisible, or at one with oneself) which could be considered the most basic longing of the psyche.

According to the more recent psychoanalytic developments of self-psychology and object-relations theory, the most basic human longing may be for achieving a coherent and stable sense of the self, characterized by independence and integrity. The central dimension of psychological develop-

1 Hopcke H. (1989).

ment, from this perspective, is the move from a state of complete dependence and relative lack of differentiation between self and the "other" to increasing differentiation and definition of self leading to growing independence, "integrity" and autonomy<sup>2</sup>.

Steering clear of notions like depth and meaning, so to say, the behaviourist approach concerns itself with theories of learning and unlearning, conditioning and de-conditioning and adjustment and maladjustment in terms of productivity and functional fitness within the society. The realm of meaning, value and basic longing of the humans are not their explicit concern. Meaning and hope, longing and fulfilment are not variables that can be measured and quantified for any "meaningful" and "useful" investigation.

The existential humanistic psychology (coming into existence primarily as a reaction to the overemphasized "positivism" of behaviourists) began paying attention to the exigencies of being in the world and the concomitant experience of pain, guilt, anxiety, fear and hope along with the belief that humans are endowed with an inherent capacity to develop optimally and actualise to the full their potentials, given the right conditions and opportunities. It is within this framework that Maslow<sup>3</sup> and Rogers<sup>4</sup> speak of "self-actualisation" and "farther reaches of human nature". From this perspective humans are internally "propelled" by their self-actualising tendency and self-regulating propensity to move "toward the farther reaches" of human nature in and through a self-aware, authentic, and congruent mode of "being in the world". The nebulous and loosely knit transpersonal psychology considers the human longing as going beyond the Freudian reorientation and reconstruction of psyche through analysis, awareness and insights. It sees the human longing going deeper than the Jungian individuation through the integration of the conscious and the unconscious, the individual and the universal, the personal and the archetypal aspects of the psyche into an integrated whole. It sees the "farther reaches of human nature" going farther than self-actualisation and self-fulfilment proposed by the existential humanists.

In an effort to weld together, if not smoothly integrate, the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions and the insights of modern psychology, transpersonal psychologists acknowledge the human potential as reaching beyond the conventional self-definition, self-assertion and self-fulfilment. They refer to human consciousness as developing beyond the construction and stabilization of the mature ego, beyond the constitution of the fully differentiated and independent self-sense, beyond the achievement of formal operational think-

2 Eagle, Morris N. (1984).

3 Maslow, A. (1971).

4 Rogers, C. (1961).

ing and hypothetic-deductive reasoning, and beyond the development of personality. They refer to deeper and wider identities<sup>5</sup> beyond individuality and personality. Just as the depth psychology invites us to go "beneath" the confines of the surface structures of day-to-day consciousness to the deep structures of the dynamic unconscious, the transpersonal perspectives invite us to go beyond the surface structures of the familiar and the parochial to the deep-structures of consciousness that lie "beyond".

Just as modern physics struggles to grasp and make sense of what seems to be energy, information and communication underlying the surface view of matter<sup>6</sup>, contemplative wisdom struggles to comprehend and articulate what seems to be the underlying "spirit", "pure consciousness" and "ground of being" whose manifestations everything including human consciousness is. Wilber in his first and groundbreaking work presented a brilliant synthesis of the two sets of insights in his *Spectrum of Consciousness*.<sup>7</sup> Consciousness (Spirit and Ground of Being), he persuasively argued, can be understood as manifesting itself as a spectrum of shades, flavours, textures and densities ranging from the densest as matter and the most refined as spirit.

### *An Integral Framework*

Wilber, ever since the publication of his *Spectrum of Consciousness*, has been making invaluable contributions to the study of human consciousness. Of particular interest to us is his most recent work entitled *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*. The following is a somewhat simplified summary<sup>8</sup> of the integral framework proposed by Wilber through *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*<sup>9</sup>, *Eye of Spirit*<sup>10</sup>, and *Integral Psychology*<sup>11</sup>.

Reality is multi-dimensional and consists of at least four distinct dimensions or faces, so to speak. They are the individual interior or the *intentional*, the collective interior or the *cultural*, the individual exterior or the *behavioural* and the collective exterior or the *social* dimensions. All these dimensions have been objects of quest and the discoveries and forms of truth from all these pursuits, if honoured and incorporated, can help us to have a more integral understanding of reality.

5 Cortright, B. (1997).

6 Capra, F. (1976).

7 Wilber, K. (1977).

8 Mattakottil, A. (1999), 5-26.

9 Wilber, K. (1995).

10 Wilber, K. (1997).

11 Wilber, K. (2000).

*The Intentional.* A thing or a person has an individual interior (*intentional*) aspect, which may be described as consciousness, depth, interiority, the subjective aspect, the view from inside, the experience or "the feel" from within. This is true in the case of an atom as well as in the experience of a human individual. No matter how rudimentary, dense, and least self-conscious matter is, it is "conscious" and it has an individual subjective interior. When a new particle is introduced into the "context" of an atom, the subatomic particles behave as though they "know" (prehension) the new situation and both the new particle and the existing ones "respond", make adjustments to each other's "presence". In the case of lower organisms, we speak of their "sensitivity" or "protoplasmic irritability" with which they "respond" to one another and the environment. We speak of more complex organisms (like a dog) as "knowing", "recognising" and "responding with affection". In the case of humans, we speak of awareness, subjective depth, interiority, and consciousness, which cannot be reduced to an object. Joy or pain or a thought is a subjective experience, which can be correlated with but not reduced to "objective" observables like brain, components of brain, or physiology of brain.

*The Behavioural.* Every interior also has a physical or *behavioural* dimension. An interior event like a thought or a perception or subjective meaning is manifested materially, physically, bodily and behaviourally. A depressing thought or a joyful disposition will be manifested most obviously in my body stance and behaviours and, in less obvious ways, in my blood chemistry, endocrine secretions, neuro-immunological changes, body temperature and in my brain-wave patterns. Even if all these manifestations are carefully observed, quantified, measured and interpreted, one will never get to know what they mean except through having access to my "subjective" interior space. One simply has to depend on my truthful communication of my subjective intentional world.

*The Cultural.* This individual interior dimension exists not in a vacuum. It emerges, evolves, and functions within an inter-subjective context, described as the collective interior (*cultural* dimension). For us humans, this context is our culture, our worldview, our collective and shared meanings, our language and symbol systems. This cultural or collective interior dimension not only provides the context but also heavily influences and, in some instances, determines the scope and nature of the emergence and evolution of my individual interior, depth, consciousness, or subjective world. A single thought, for instance, cannot emerge in my interior awareness except against the context of my language and symbol system. This inter-subjective context is in fact context-within-context-within context. For example, the first intimate context I encounter in evolving my sense of self is my "mothering culture" which

itself is set within the larger context of the family system, which in turn is placed within other larger contexts of clan, ethnic group, religious group, nationality and so on.

*The Social.* My culture and the intersubjective context, again, do not exist in a vacuum. They are correlated with developments in the evolutionary movement of the society. That is the *social* dimension. In his book, *Up From Eden*<sup>12</sup>, Wilber gives a fascinating account (basing his research on actual cultural-anthropological evidence) of the evolution of the collective exterior. He describes the evolution of human societies from foraging to horticultural to agricultural to industrial-technological and their correlates in the evolution of their shared interiors (their world views, their myths and rituals) and the unfolding of the individual interiors (the structures of consciousness).

Thus, the quality, depth, and developmental maturity of our individual interiors, where interpretations are made and meanings are constructed, will influence our inquiry and our quest for answers to the existential queries. Our inquiry into and search for truth (including answers to the existential questions) must be set within the intimate "contexts-within-contexts" provided by the worldview, the shared meanings and symbol systems of my culture, which in turn is shaped by or set in the context of society and its structures. Therefore, our quest and inquiry must respect and honour truths about all the aspects of reality. The focus of our inquiry may be any one of these aspects. But our perspectives should be set within a larger framework capable of honouring all the aspects of reality. In other words, our quest for truth must be as integral as possible.

Quest is the open-minded and open-ended continual search for truth with the awareness that Truth is eternal but the maps of Truth, the made-meanings of Truth, the "context-within-context-bound" interpretations and expressions of Truth evolve<sup>13</sup>. An integral quest for Truth will honour truths coming from the intentional, behavioural, cultural and social spheres. A map of Reality that is capable of providing directions to the maximum number of travellers from the maximum number of backgrounds to the maximum area of the Territory is definitely a better map for the explorer to use. That does not mean that we do not need some "close-ups" of particular territories (sections and sub-sections) showing the terrain in greater clarity and specificity of details. We use those close-ups as part of the larger map of the Territory and as part of the larger Journey or Quest for Truth.

12 Wilber, K. (1996).

13 Wilber, K. (1997), 8.

The explorations of depth psychology of various flavours (psychoanalytic developmental psychology, object-relations theory, self psychology, etc.) are very useful sectional maps detailing terrain and contours of the individual interior. The objective scientific investigations of physiological psychology, neuropsychology and psychology of behaviour are excellent sectional close-ups of the individual exterior. Investigations of cultural anthropologists, sociologists and social psychologists of different persuasions are extremely valuable close-ups of the collective interior. And the contributions of sociological and political sciences provide us with valuable insights into the collective exterior.

The intuitive-empirical (empirical because the findings follow strict scientific criteria: instrumental injunction, direct apprehension of data and communal validation or rejection)<sup>14</sup> map of perennial philosophy apprehends Reality as a "Great Chain of Being" and sees the terrain as a "play of the One and the Many". It views this "play" as a "spectrum of consciousness", and describes the master motion of Reality as development, unfolding, or evolution. The map of the seamless (not formless) unfolding of Being ranging from the least consciousness to the most consciousness, from matter to Spirit, from unconsciousness to superconsciousness can provide a larger map of Reality. In relation to this larger or more encompassing map (with the humbling awareness that map is not the territory) the detailed, sectional and sub-sectional maps of the four domains of Reality can make more sense.

The subjective experience of being in the world evolves, like everything else in the universe, following what appears to be certain universal principles of evolution like increasing complexity, increasing differentiation/integration, increasing organization, increasing relative autonomy, and increasing telos.<sup>15</sup> This evolutionary movement appear to follow the principles of differentiation and integration: differentiating from the given in favour of the emergent; and taking along and integrating the given with the emerging newer whole.

The human self or, more accurately, the self-system experiences its being in the world, from "ordinary" states of consciousness like deep sleep, dreaming, and waking, and from "non-ordinary" states like peak experiences, religious experiences, drug-induced altered states and deep-meditative transpersonal states. This experience is accessed and interpreted through different structures (holistic patterns that blends all of its elements into structured wholes, exhibiting relative autonomy), of consciousness manifesting developmentally hierarchical levels (unfolding in a relational sequence, with each

14 Wilber, K. (1998), 155-156.

15 Wilber, K. (1995), 32-78.

senior structured whole transcending but including its juniors), and functioning like waves (these levels nonetheless are fluid and flowing, embracing and enfolding, constituting concentric spheres of increasing embrace, inclusion, and holistic capacity)<sup>16</sup>.

At the risk of over-simplification we could describe these structures (levels and waves taken together) of unfolding in terms of matter, body, mind, soul and spirit as manifestations of the ultimate ground of being (the great chain), or in terms pre-personal, personal and trans-personal structures of consciousness<sup>17</sup>, or in terms of pre-operational, concrete operational, formal-operational and cognitive structures<sup>18</sup>, or in terms of pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional moral stages<sup>19</sup>, or in terms of the magical, the mythical, the rational worldviews<sup>20</sup>. Aurobindo described the unfolding from the sensory/vital, through the lower mind, concrete mind, logical mind, higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, overmind, to the supermind, as spectrum of hues in the rainbow of consciousness stretching from the densest to the finest to the ground of them all.<sup>21</sup>

Some of these structures (waves and levels) are basic and enduring (like pre-operational, concrete-operational, and formal-operational cognitive structures) and get taken along and integrated into the hierarchically emerging higher-order structures (like preoperational becoming subsumed under the concrete operational which become integrated into the formal operational which becomes part of the post-formal operational cognitive structures and so on) and some are transitional (like the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional moral stages) which are replaced (like conventional morality replacing pre-conventional morality and post conventional morality replacing the conventional) rather than taken along and integrated.<sup>22</sup>

An important thing to keep in mind is that speaking of consciousness development as a spectrum ranging from unconsciousness to consciousness to supraconsciousness, and describing this development through structures, levels and waves do not mean that the unfolding of the self is smooth and linear and ladder-like. In fact, an individual possesses various abilities, intelligences and functions and they can develop at different rates. They are called

16 Wilber, K. (2000).

17 Wilber, et al. (1986), 65-105.

18 Piaget, J. (1977).

19 Kohlberg L. (1981).

20 Gebser, J. (1985).

21 Wilber, K (2000).

22 Wilber, K. et al. (1986), 65-105.



lines or streams of development<sup>23</sup> like cognitive stream, moral stream, faith stream, the stream of self-sense, the stream of needs, etc.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that the different states of consciousness (like the unconscious, the conscious, and the supra-conscious or the waking, the sleeping and the dreaming) contain different streams of consciousness (cognitive, moral, ego-development), at different levels (prepersonal, personal, transpersonal) of unfolding. From a given structure-stage of development (whether cognitive, moral, worldviews, ego-development) the self system can have access to any of the states of consciousness (unconscious, conscious, supra-conscious) but the way these states are accessed and interpreted will be largely dependent on the level-wave (maturity) of the structure-stages. A transpersonal truth glimpsed from a preoperational cognitive level and a preconventional moral stance and a narcissistic ego-developmental space will be very different when the same truth is accessed and interpreted from a formal-operational cognitive level and a post conventional moral stance and mature ego-developmental space. Needless to say that it will be very different if accessed and interpreted from the farther ends of the spectrum of development which we call transpersonal or mystic.

Structures unfold through levels like waves and the self-system has to juggle, struggle with and coordinate this unfolding through identification, defence, balancing, and discrimination and choice. Lines, levels and states of consciousness appear to be devoid of any inherent self-sense and therefore the self can identify with any of them. As a result of this identification a specific self-sense or self-identity, specific needs and desires and specific hopes and fears emerges. The unfolding of this process itself is a developmental process and studied by developmental psychologists like Loevinger<sup>24</sup> and Kegan<sup>25</sup>. A failure in this juggling, struggling and balancing act of the self-system along different developmental lines, through different developmental levels and through different structures of consciousness can result in serious imbalances or pathology.

### *The Fundamental Human Longings*

Let us now get back to our central question under discussion. In what does the fundamental human longing consist and where would an individual find fulfilment of this longing? It is clear from the above considerations that it is

23 Wilber, K. (2000).

24 Loevinger, J. (1976).

25 Kegan, R. (1982).

a rather difficult question not only to answer but even to ask. Firstly the reality of existence is multi-dimensional consisting of the intentional, the behavioural, the cultural and the social. Secondly, reality is developmentally unfolding in all the four dimensions toward increasing structural complexity, unity and simplicity, depth and consciousness and directionality following the principles of transcending and including. Thirdly, this developmental unfolding appears to take place in stage-like fashion from developmentally lower to higher levels, each level-stage showing structural wholeness, hierarchical sequence and wave-like fluidity. Fourthly, there are multiple lines and modules of capacities and functions like the cognitive structures, the moral stages, the spiritual states, and worldviews unfolding at different rates and rhythms. Fifthly, these structure-stages exist and function within ordinary and non-ordinary states of consciousness. Lastly an individual can have access to any of the prepersonal, personal or transpersonal states of consciousness though the experience can only be interpreted and made sense of within the structural confines of the given stage-structure of development.

The question should, then, be: what is the fundamental human longing experienced in relation to which aspect of existence, interpreted and made sense of from which state of consciousness, accessed and interpreted from which structure-stage of unfolding along which line or module of development?

Thanks to modernity and enlightenment, science was freed from the cultural tyranny of the collective and the capriciousness of the individual whims and fancies to pursue truth in its own domains using its own valid methodology which has come to be known as the scientific method<sup>26</sup>. Thanks again to modernity and enlightenment, science, both physical and social, has made tremendous strides in unravelling the mysteries of nature, culture and society, and holds tremendous promise for the future. Seen from the physical and behavioural perspective, a fundamental human longing is to comprehend the working of the universe including life and consciousness, formulate laws and governing principles to explain and predict and ultimately control the universe including life and consciousness. The excitement about the mapping of the human genome or the alleged speeding of the light beyond the speed of light points to the human desire or longing to master and subdue the mysteries of existence.

But the problematic thing is that the nuclear power, the gene map, the potential hyper-super computers with artificial intelligence, all based on insights of highly original, intuitive, exceptionally gifted, practically mystic scientists, can fall in the hands of lesser individuals functioning from the lower

26 Wilber, K. (1997), 1-36.

ends of the spectrum of consciousness. That is the nightmare and fallout of the gift of modernity. Imagine the fate of the earth and that of humanity if the final decisions about the future are left in the hands of individuals who function from a preconventional (essentially narcissistic and egocentric) or even conventional (essentially ethnocentric) moral stage of development, with a self-sense which has not developed beyond the inter-personal or institutional (concerned with autonomy of the self and the clan), operating within a world-view which has not gone beyond the mythic or mythic-rational (still very preoccupied with own clan, own myth, and own ideology), and a spirituality which has not reached anywhere near the universal-spiritual and the compassionate! Imagine what it would be like if these individuals had at their disposal the nuclear devices and the technology for genetic manipulation!

This is where Wilber<sup>27</sup> is absolutely right in insisting that the future of humanity is integrally tied up with an integral approach. Response to the nightmares alluded to in the previous paragraph is not a fight against science (scientism, yes!) but a fight for the neglected interiors both individual and collective. While the gift of modernity was the differentiation and freeing of science, morals and art from the tyrannies of each other, the curse of modernity was the tyranny of scientism which attempted to choke out of existence all the interior dimensions of existence. The interior dimensions of meanings, longings, values, and morals could find their justification only to the extent they were willing to confine themselves to the dictates of scientific paradigms about physical observation, physical measurement, and physical falsifiability. Kosmos (with integral connotation) was collapsed into cosmos (with restricted meaning without any reference to the interior dimensions).

Human longing is integrally connected with interior dimensions of reality. Human longing is much more than the scientifically formulated objectives and goals whether they are economic, political or social. Human longing belongs to the individual and collective interior which are mutually related with their physical and behavioural correlates in the objective domains. The individual interior consisting of thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, anxieties and fundamental longings are set in deeper contexts of one's culture of shared meanings, values and language. Similarly collective interior is constituted by the development or transformation of individual interiors in their various lines and levels.

The crisis of the modern world is, in some basic sense, a crisis of interiority. The physical-behavioural and the objective-social domains have advanced incredibly but the interior domains have hopelessly lagged behind, thanks to the tyranny of scientism (not science). Interior domain of conscious-

27 Wilber, K. (2000).

ness evolution has to advance and catch up with the exterior and the objective. This is true despite the claims of evolutionary psychology and socio-biology about the formation of human values, attitudes and response patterns as a result of neo-Darwinian principles of natural selection and survival.

The centre of gravity of human interior (consciousness) has to integrally (taking along the advances in the exterior domains) move higher along the major lines (emotional, intellectual, ethical, spiritual) toward post-conventional and universal-ethical levels of wisdom and compassion and global planetary worldview if humankind were to survive its own scientific and technological leaps.

In one sense, the fundamental human longing of today is for the mere survival of the species in the face of its own scientific and technological advances and the dismal failure of its interior dimensions to catch up. Contained in that longing is a deeper longing (consciously perceived and acknowledged or not) for the integral (in all the domains) survival of the species where one can have the benefits of science and technology inspired and governed by wisdom, care and compassion which will become deeply rooted in cultural-religious contexts that are cleansed of parochialism, ethnocentrism, and egocentrism, and sheltered and nourished in democratic institutions that value and protect individuals as persons with their rights and moral obligations.

Beyond the "integral survival" of the species is the longing for individual fulfilment. Reorganization and reconstruction of the psyche (psychoanalytic approaches) through analysis and insight to the point where much of the "seething cauldron of instincts and drives" are appropriated and incorporated by the ego to the point where one can love and work with relative freedom from anxiety and a coherent sense of the self are definitely important. Tending toward greater inner harmony, psychic balance and sense of well-being through open confrontation and honest collaboration (Jungian analysis) between the conscious and the unconscious, the persona and the shadow, the animus and the anima, the individual self and the archetypal Self are important. Understanding how much conditioned (Behaviourism) we are and learning to de-condition and re-condition ourselves towards better adjustment and adaptation are important. Recognizing, affirming and befriending the existential predicaments of being human (Existential-humanism) including our pains, anxieties, fears and hopes and freeing ourselves from the inauthentic self-sense we have developed and embracing a more and more authentic self-sense so that we can become all that we are capable of becoming are important. Recognizing realms lying beyond the personal and discovering our spiritual ground of being (Transpersonal psychology) through spiritual and meditative practices are important.

### *Conclusion: The Ultimate Human Longing*

Is there a still deeper longing carried in the heart of humanity and beyond the well-differentiated self-sense, beyond mature ego capable of love and work, beyond adaptation and adjustment, beyond psychic harmony and sense of wholeness, beyond self-actualisation and self-fulfilment?

As Wilber,<sup>28</sup> quoting Koestler,<sup>29</sup> says, everything in the universe is a self-sufficient relative whole and, at the same time, an essential part of a larger whole. The term "holon" was coined by Koestler to refer to this simultaneity of the relative wholeness, autonomy and self-sufficiency on the one hand and the essential partness in relation to the larger whole, on the other. Atoms are relative wholes and, at the same time, parts of the larger whole that is a molecule. Molecules are relative wholes, which are simultaneously parts in relation to cells. Cells are autonomous relative wholes which are at the same time parts of an organelle. This way everything that we can perceive and understand seems to have this dual characteristic and therefore is a holon.

Not only that everything is "holonic" in nature, continues Wilber, but everything is in an evolutionary process of self-transformation through self-transcendence and certain "patterns of existence" or "tendencies of evolution" can be traced to be operative in all domains of evolution.

Paraphrased in a lighter vein we could restate these patterns of existence operative in the evolutionary processes as follows. When the subatomic particles established their own relative autonomy, their agency, their inviolable boundaries, their right to assert themselves as entities in their own right and their duties to preserve and defend themselves, when they began to "recognize" their partness in the face of their capability for and longing to become part of something larger than themselves, when they were "ready" to let go the absoluteness of their relative wholeness and were willing to accommodate, adjust and enter into a "dialogical" relationship with other peer holons, and when they began to "feel" the longing, the yearning, the pull toward self-transformation through self-transcendence toward a higher, more encompassing, deeper, and wider whole, molecules emerged. Molecules emerged (taking along and going beyond the atoms) with their newfound relative autonomy, the accompanying "recognition of their essential partness, the concomitant tendency for communion and dialogue and the inevitable "yearning" and "longing" toward a higher and deeper whole. And, as a result, cells, organelles, organs, and organisms successively emerged manifesting the same tendencies and going through similar processes of self-transformation

28 Wilber, K. (1995), 35.

29 Koestler, A. (1964).

through self-transcendence. While the resulting new holons called organisms were capable of reproducing themselves, some emerged to the point not only of reproducing themselves but representing themselves through images, symbols, concepts and language. Humans emerged with their gift of consciousness. Developmental studies have traced similar process of self-transformation through self-transcendence in the sphere of consciousness through lines, levels and waves we have discussed above.

If human beings too are holons (whole/parts) like everything else in the universe, if human consciousness too is evolving through self transformation through self transcendence, and if the intuitive-scientific insights of contemplative-mystic traditions are right about the Great Chain of Being, about the spectrum of consciousness ranging from matter to Spirit, and about their understanding of reality as the manifestation of the One in and through the Play of the Many, then the most fundamental longing of humans is more than all that we have talked about so far. While the wholeness aspect of the humans would like to see themselves as the centre of the universe and the universe as having been created for their sake, the partness aspect would keep longing and yearning for the larger, more encompassing, deeper whole/parts along the spectrum of consciousness, in the Great Chain of Being. Then, their longing will be more to be "in" the centre of the universe occupying their rightful place rather than to be "the centre" of the universe attempting to subdue and conquer it.

From such a perspective, the deepest human longing (emanating from the partness aspect) is for self-transformation through self-transcendence tending toward the farther reaches of human nature and the farther ends of the spectrum of consciousness until the longing for wholeness is fulfilled by the Whole. The longing (coming from the wholeness aspect) for the survival of the species including the integral survival of the species, the longing for self actualisation, the longing for the mastery of the universe, the longing for immortality and similar other longings may be, as Wilber argues in his *Atman Project*<sup>30</sup>, substitute gratifications substituting for the fulfilment of the most fundamental longing for self-transformation through self-transcendence toward integral (all domain-all lines-all levels) wholeness and the Whole (described in numerous ways such as "Pure Consciousness", "Pure Emptiness", "Spirit", "Void", "Atman" and the "Godhead"). We could say it in another way: the craving for the mastery of the essential mystery of being in the world, the craving for being the centre of reality rather than being "in the centre of reality", the craving for self-actualisation and even self-transcendence, the craving for cultural supremacy and religious superiority, and the craving for eco-

30 Wilber, K. (1980).

nomic and political utopia are all substitute gratification for the real longing lodged in the "human heart" for the unfolding of the enfolded Spirit toward the farthest end of the Great Chain of Being.

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