

INTEGRATION IN THINKING

We have been endowed with an innate propensity of striving to understand the world around us. We go to great lengths to comprehend this fully functioning reality. That desire, as well as the potential for creativity, is innate in every human being. Wisdom of wild animals ends at the level of survival instincts. Even the displays of animal solidarity in packs, cunningness, parental sacrifices, and so on—all have deep roots in the instinct to survive. It is only the human species that is endowed with the mind capable of embracing much more than just the prowess of physical survival. Understanding of the world, however, is a very complex task and there are undoubtedly many different ways of approaching such a subject.

Reductionism is a one way of inquiry, whereby a complex system is taken apart to its smaller components, preferably the smallest possible. Then, through a detailed investigation of the parts and the way they interact, an understanding of functions of the entire system may emerge. This is a legitimate and very effective way of inquiry into complex systems. In our analysis, we have to come down several organisational levels to reduce the system to its simplest components, functioning processes of which we can understand. A lot of skill and in-depth understanding are required from investigators, for them to be able to arrive at reasonable interpretations. Depending on the subject of inquiry, they need to understand the physiology, biology, chemistry, mineralogy, physics and particle physics, thermodynamics, weather patterns, social sciences, and sometimes many more other areas. Inevitably, at some stage of their analysis, they will come to that part of the investigation where they will begin to examine the functioning of the entire system formed by the investigated separate parts. So, gradually, step by step, the analysis will have to climb to a higher level of organisation of the system. The investigators need to comprehend the role or functioning of a part in the context of the system at a given organisational level. In this part of the enquiry the investigators perform a function of integrating the components back together. The process of integration is therefore the opposite of the process of reduction.

Endowed with rational minds and developing ever more sophisticated tools of inquiry, human beings have predominantly interpreted natural systems ruled by the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, zoology and human physiology. When compared with the depth of understanding of the above areas, human sciences such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and human evolution are at the very early stages of understanding. There are very profound reasons for the existence of limitations to our perception in human sciences. In this area we do not

investigate some external systems existing 'out there'. Here we are engaged in investigating of **ourselves** and such a task is an enormous challenge.

When we observe and try to understand everything else around us, whether in the physical, biological or astronomical dimensions, we cannot do it in any other way but with the use of the human tools of inquiry we possess. Even if we do not think about it consciously, we interpret the world through our human perception tools, and these tools, of course, have their restrictions. There are numerous limitations imposed on us by the physical limitations of our senses, and to our aid, many instruments have been built to extend the range of investigation in the physical areas of inquiry. However, as many of us find out sooner or later, the major real limitation to our inquiry is **the way we think**. Even if educated in exactly the same manner, two science researches think differently; they both have different genetic personality inheritance and have been uniquely shaped by different family upbringing and other life's environmental factors. Each of those researches will limit the field of inquiry by the nature of questions they ask, they will limit the investigation range by the choices they make, and they will influence the outcome by directing their attention to specific events, as demonstrated by the experiments in particle physics.

When we come to investigating of ourselves, our emotions, our minds, our own perceptions and internal processes, the inquiry can become quite limited. We are restricted here not only by the deficiencies of the particular way we think, but also by the lack of understanding of our own emotions and motives, which are lurking in the unconscious part of our psyche. If it happens that now we decide to start investigating them, how can we know that what we think is not biased and based on some unacceptable conjectures, which may lead us to a completely wrong set of conclusions. How are we to know that what we think is correct or incorrect? And how, one may ask, can a human mind examine itself? The mind is a tool a human person is using, but what kind of mind is involved in thinking about a human mind? Can a tool think of itself? Hopefully, most of us would agree that it cannot. So, how to understand this difficult issue?

Let us go back to the process of going up and down the ladder of investigation: reducing (down) and integrating (up). Human mind can understand things, processes and beings operating at a lower organisational level than itself. We can examine and understand subjects such as mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, because our intelligence has those lower levels of consciousness nested within and can identify with them. We are capable of conducting investigations on these organisationally lower subjects, because we also have the ability to see them in the contexts of larger systems, in other words, we understand their operation from a higher organisational point of view. We can do it, because we understand the meaning of their existence in this particular higher setting. For example, we understand how minerals are placed in our physical

world and what role they play. Without knowing the larger context of the physical world with its processes and applications of minerals, we could not make sense of the existence of minerals. Their existence would be meaningless, and hence never considered for any serious investigation. Similarly with plants: we know how they have been placed in the scheme of Nature, how they produce oxygen, provide food for us and maintain a primal role in the food chain. Knowledge of this background and applications gives us a possibility of understanding the functioning of plants; we comprehend the meaning of their existence in the larger context—the context of the entire Nature.

Consequently, to be in a position of understanding a human person in his or her entirety, beyond the fate imposed by Nature, we need to transcend our thinking to the next level of organisation. And what is this next level of organisation? Modern sciences have no answer to such a question. But the fact that the modern science does not even ask these questions does not mean that the problem does not exist or that there are no answers. To be able to investigate these questions we have to transcend our basic selves, we need to go deeper into the world of meaning and understanding, because answers to these profound questions exist, and have been around for as long as deeply thinking people lived on the planet.

It is possible to know a human person in their entirety. However, to find oneself in such a position, we first need to understand the *inner world of man*, we need to understand how man thinks, what he thinks, why he thinks what he thinks; we need to understand the role of emotions in thinking, and finally we need to understand our own intentions and motives. If we successfully accomplish such an analysis of the inner man, that is a self-analysis, then we will be in a position to understand other people. Normally, our understanding of people's behaviour is quite limited. Behavioural psychology, itself, can only be equated to observing shadows of figures hidden behind a screen. Thus, as a science, behavioural psychology provides only partial answers. People's behaviour (whether group, mass or individual) are driven by their inner compulsions and inner forces. If we do not understand the inner world of man, how can we presume to understand him? Usefulness of behavioural psychology can be greatly enhanced if it is combined with other fields of psychology, especially the inner psychology of man. The inner world of man is far more important to investigate than his external behaviour, which always follows the inner compulsions.

Let us, however, first answer the question how a human mind can investigate itself. The fact of the existence of a possibility of such an investigation alone is a proof that our mind is not a pinnacle in the development of humanity. The mind has only been a tool, perfected in the past epochs, but nevertheless, only a tool. Awareness about the mind, about its functions, content, habits, deceptions, crystallisations of ideas, etc., lies, obviously, on a higher level of organisation. Otherwise, it would not have been possible to observe the mind. So, let us

equate this inner awareness about the mind's processes to our own internal observer watching our mind at work.

Human beings have the potential to be aware of their inner being in a more profound way than most people realise. And although in social terms we are all equal: men and women, black and white, educated and non-educated, farmers and city people, rich and poor, we all differ in the ability to observe our inner being. In other words, those who become interested in knowing matters of this kind, find that their inner awareness can be identified to exist at a certain level of development. And as we know from the vast literature on the subject, no gender or social boundaries can prevent people from developing their understanding about themselves. In fact, no boundaries exist in the area of development of our understanding of the human psyche. People who are poor may represent a much higher level of inner development than those who are rich. This of course is not always the case. And no rules apply here nor any simplistic social or cultural classifications. We cannot judge a person's inner knowing in any other way but by their conduct. We, the outsiders, so to speak, stand always in front of that screen, which hides the person's inner being; we only see the shadows, but those shadows' conduct always reveals where the person stands in terms of personal development.

Because in a real sense, human beings are an integral part of the Cosmos, they can develop their integrative thinking capacity to embrace the deeper levels of reality, including intimate knowledge of their own psyche. In this context we may conclude that there can never be an end to human inquiry. Knowledge in the Universe exists at all levels of development. Its comprehension is not limited in any way, apart from the abilities of the inquiring minds to embrace it. The nature of the questions people ask depends on how far in the development of their human potential the investigator himself (herself) has actually progressed. Scientific disagreements or differences in professional opinions in any field may simply be the results of differences in integrative capacities of the minds of people involved. The more the person's mind can embrace, the wider the field of inquiry which constitutes the context of that person's thinking, the greater is their mind's integrative capacity. Most geniuses in the history of humanity have been the people who could embrace wider horizons of knowledge than their contemporaries. No one doubts in the genius of Albert Einstein. But do many people know how wide has his field of inquiry been? Without his interests in numerous areas of knowledge, including philosophy, spirituality and mystical literature, he could not have become the greatest thinker and a wise man of the twentieth century and a role model for many people.

No amount of reductionistic enquiry can ever be useful unless the gained fragmented knowledge is integrated back to meaning. No person's life can be useful for this person until he or she can do the integration and finds that meaning. If life is lived without even an attempt to find the meaning, the person can be assured that they are living a life without personal reference for them. Understanding of the meaning of life is the understanding par excellence. To comprehend the meaning of life, we need to understand our larger reality, beyond the existence of human beings. And if we reflect on this issue further, we will find that Cosmos, our Universe, is an expression of a chain of never ending progressions in levels of reality. Cosmos here is understood as total reality, not only the physical reality, observable by the five senses.