Peace: A Psychological Perspective

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Abstract: In this article I wish to reflect on the concept of peace from the perspectives of a psychotherapist, one of whose main tasks is to help people with their *peace-process.* I use the expression peace-process to underline the point that peace actually is a life-long process one engages in. The central points of my discussion are as follows. Evolution is the master motion of existence in all spheres. Evolution is a holarchical process (tending toward developmentally deeper, wider and more encompassing wholes, with each senior level transcending but including its juniors). The very evolutionary process is sustained, maintained and carried forward through a constructive tension between four basic principles % self-preservation and dying to self, on the one hand, and self-transcendence and self-dissolution, on the other. Evolutionary resolution of these tensions allows holarchically evolving definitions of self, structures and ways of knowing, ways of ethical and moral choosing, and systems of meanings, values and world-views to emerge. In the absence of the summons of larger meanings, wider perspectives, developmentally better ways knowing, developmentally superior moral perspectives, developmentally deeper and more encompassing world-views, the evolutionary tensions can become enduring and destructive conflicts. These conflicts can lead to violence of all kinds, and violence can lead to actual or virtual bloodshed. Peace, in one sense, is the absence of conflicts, violence and bloodshed and *not* the absence of tension, which is the energy of evolution. Peace, in another sense, is the relatively stable state of harmony and well-being resulting from temporary resolutions of the temporary conflicts caused by the perpetual tension of evolution.

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Introduction

In this article I wish to reflect on the concept of peace from the perspectives of a psychotherapist, one of whose main tasks is to help people with their *peace-process*. I use the expression peace-process to underline the point that peace actually is a life-long process one engages in. The central points of my discussion are as follows. Evolution is the master motion of existence in all spheres. Evolution is a holarchical (Koestler 1976) process (tending toward developmentally deeper, wider and more encompassing wholes, with each senior level transcending but including its juniors). The very evolutionary process is sustained, maintained and carried forward through a constructive tension between four basic principles ¾ self-preservation and dying to self, on the one hand, and self-transcendence and self-dissolution, on the other. Evolutionary resolution of these tensions allows holarchically evolving definitions of self, structures and ways of knowing, ways of ethical and moral choosing, and systems of meanings, values and world-views to emerge. In the absence of the summons of larger meanings, wider perspectives, develop-

mentally better ways knowing, developmentally superior moral perspectives, developmentally deeper and more encompassing world-views, the evolutionary tensions can become enduring and destructive conflicts. These conflicts can lead to violence of all kinds, and violence can lead to actual or virtual bloodshed. Peace, in one sense, is the absence of conflicts, violence and bloodshed and *not* the absence of tension, which is the energy of evolution. Peace, in another sense, is the relatively stable state of harmony and well-being resulting from temporary resolutions of the temporary conflicts caused by the perpetual tension of evolution. Peace is described as relatively stable because peace coming from a given developmental resolution is upset soon enough by the next summons of the evolutionary master motion. It is evolution and development that we need to seek, and peace, understood as relative wholeness, harmony and well-being, will follow.

The Peace-process

The infant in the womb, probably, experiences a state of peace resembling what is attributed to paradise. Suspended effortlessly in a completely

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"cabin-controlled" environment practically devoid of conflict and violence, the infant needs, so to say, a convincing larger meaning and a compelling larger perspective to begin "hearing" the summons of the master motion of evolution and venture outside its "culture of embeddedness" (Kegan 1982: 3). After the eternal-seeming but temporary tension and struggle through the birth-canal, the infant eventually resolves the temporary conflict (to hold on or let go) and settles down in the relative peace and well-being of its symbiotic union with the mothering or care-giving culture. The conflict and struggle "look" and "feel" worthwhile from the perspective of the larger meaning of immersion into the outside world and the beginning of a separate existence and self-sense. The symbiotic culture of embeddedness and the relative peace and well-being have soon to be surrendered in favour of the master motion of evolution toward other developmentally higher stages (from body-self through emotional self, mental self, role-rule self, interpersonal self, institutional self, inter-individual self to transpersonal-spiritual self[1]) of unfolding. This seems to be an ongoing process, which may well continue beyond the ultimate tension and struggle, at the time of death, to release one's embeddedness in the current existence itself in response to a summons one does not really understand. The following seems to be the peace-process. One experiences relative peace being embedded in a current state of being. That relative peace and well-being is upset by the summons to go beyond. There then, begins a new tension and a fresh struggle between the *want-*

ing (experienced desire) to hold on and the *needing* (intuited necessity) to let go. A temporary resolution of the tension and struggle is achieved in the emergence of a deeper, wider and more encompassing new state of being bringing with it a sense of harmony, well-being and peace. That is followed by a new summons, a new tension, a new struggle, and a new conflict as to whether to hold on to the given or to let go of it in favour of something deeper, wider and more encompassing. And the process goes on and on.

The Master Motion of Existence

Everything in the universe, everything from the simplest known particle of matter to the most complex of conceivable life forms, is simultaneously a *whole* in its own right and a mere *part* of something larger, wider, more encompassing and more whole. To understand the whole we need to understand the parts, and to understand the parts we need to understand the whole. That is the hermeneutic circle of understanding (Wilber 1997: 1). It is within this hermeneutic circle that the master motion of existence can be better understood. The relative wholeness and the simultaneous partness of everything that exists, we could say, is held together by the dialectical tension between four basic principles (1995): *agency, communion, transcendence and dissolution.*

Agency refers to the relative autonomy of a unit of existence, its tendency towards and ability for self-definition, self-preservation, self-assertion, and self-enhancement. Communion refers to the partness aspect of a unit of

existence, which makes it disposed to and capable of responding to the well-being of the larger whole of which it is a mere part. Communion also refers to the ability to accommodate, adjust, surrender, and even die to itself in favour of the larger whole. Existence is made possible and health (and relative peace) is maintained through a constructive tension between these principles of agency and communion. Even as I am writing these lines, the old cells in my body are dying so that new ones can be formed, subatomic particles forming atoms which in turn form molecules to constitute cells too undergo similar tension between agency and communion, self-preservation and dying to self, and relative wholeness and partness.

If this constructive balance is tripped, I can have an unproductive conflict resulting in either pseudo-self-sufficiency and morbid self-preservation ("cancer" for short), or pseudo-communion and purposeless self-annihilation ("suicide", in other words).

Another pair of principles in tension, which is responsible for maintaining and sustaining units of existence, is transcendence and dissolution. Transcendence is that propensity observed in all open systems, animate or inanimate, to let emerge developmentally superior, more complex and more encompassing structures and forms. Atoms let emerge molecules, molecules let emerge cells, cells let emerge organelles, organelles let emerge organs, organs let emerge organisms, and so on. Or, as in the case of human structures of cognition, sensations let emerge perceptions, perceptions let emerge images, images

let emerge symbols, symbols let emerge concepts, concepts let emerge abstractions and networks of concepts, and so on until structures of consciousness capable of direct un-mediated apprehension emerge. Dissolution refers to the propensity for vertical breakdown along essentially the same path through which transcendence travels. For instance, when a human being dies, the animate body becomes inanimate and breaks down to molecules and atoms.

Agency and communion, on the one hand, and transcendence and dissolution, on the other, operating in dialectical tension, maintain both the wholeness-partness balance of units of existence and the master motion of evolution. Existence is possible because of this tension. Evolution is possible because of this tension. Tension is an essential aspect of existence. When tension goes out of balance, conflict, violence and destruction follow. This can happen either through *over-agency* (cancerous self-preservation and self-assertion) or through *over-communion* (mindless and purposeless submissiveness and accommodation), or through *over-transcendence* (repressive transcendence without taking along what is transcended) or *over-dissolution* (killing oneself instead of dying to oneself)

Integral theorists like Wilber point out that this master motion and the underlying dialectical tension are operative in all spheres of existence: the physical world, the psychic (or mental) world, the cultural sphere and the social sphere. In the physical sphere we can trace evolution from atom through molecule, organelle, and neural chord

to neo-cortex in the humans. In the psychic world, we can trace, for example, the evolution of cognitive structures from sensations and perceptions through images, symbols, concepts and networked perceptions to direct and unmediated apprehension of reality reportedly accessible to mystics and sages. In the cultural sphere, for instance, we can trace evolution from archaic-instinctual, through magical, mythical and rational to transrational world-views (Gebser 1985). In the social sphere, in similar ways, we can trace evolution from hunting and foraging, through horticultural, agrarian and industrial to informational eras (Lenski, Nolan and Lenski 1995).

The Master Dynamics of Evolution

Developmentally superior units of existence with their relative wholeness and simultaneous partness aspects emerge and emerge holarchically. The holarchical emergence results in increasing complexity, structural richness and depth. The increasing complexity and depth seem to constitute the directionality or teleology of the evolutionary movement. The emergence of the developmentally superior units from their prior units appears to be through a three-fold process: *identification, differentiation and integration* (Wilber 1995).

Let us try to understand in some depth and detail this three-fold process since it has implication for our discussion of peace. We begin with the human infant we talked about a while ago. The intrauterine paradise in which the infant finds herself is her primary culture or context or school. Kegan (1982) calls this culture the "culture of embeddedness". It is absolutely essential that the infant be firmly, securely and comfortably identified with her culture of embeddedness. A failure in that embeddedness will make it difficult for the child to respond to the summons of the evolutionary momentum to let go of and die to the given developmental space in favour of the necessary emergence to more complex, wider and deeper forms of existence outside the womb. On the other hand, the infant has to *heed to* the evolutionary summons and begin the troublesome, burdensome, and painful process of differentiating itself from the secure and firm immersion in its current culture of embeddedness.

The relative wholeness of the infant bathing itself in the comfort and security of the intrauterine paradise has to, now, "encounter" its essential partness. It cannot keep indefinitely *"translating"* (Wilber 1985) (self-preservation and self-enhancement of a given developmental gain without self-transformation) itself in its current state of evolution using all its agentic powers of self-definition, self-assertion and self-enhancement. It has to heed to the call of transcendence and transformation. It has to start its journey outside the intrauterine comfort and security. It has to undertake that hazardous journey toward the outside world, toward another form of existence. The world-renowned psychologist, Grof (1985, 1988) has accumulated an enormous quantity of immensely suggestive evidence to show how this primary journey through the birth-canal is full of promises and perils and capable of leaving permanent *psychophysical grooves*

¾ basic perinatal matrices ¾ using which the individuals tend to navigate through other existential crises of the future.)

While identification or wholesome embeddedness is a "must" and differentiating in favour of the larger motion of evolution is a necessity, transcending without denying or repressing what is transcended is equally vital. When the infant moves farther along the evolutionary path, it can dissociate itself from and leave behind (through repression) what is transcended. The initially achieved separate "body-self" can repress its cosmic rootedness. The mental self can repress the body along with the sexual-aggressive emotional realm. The "rule-role" or "membership self" can repress its own needs and interests in favour of conformity and approval. The autonomous self can repress its interpersonal realm, and the transpersonal "spiritual" self can repress its individuality and personhood in favour of a "pseudo-self realisation".

Over-embeddedness, over-differentiation (which is dissociation), and *over-transcendence* that fail to take along and include what is transcended, can all sow the seeds of conflict, violence and psychopathology. Meaningless *translation* without qualitative transformation in any given state of unfolding, physical, psychic, cultural or social, will eventually break down under its own weight. Mindless repression, in a similar way, cannot be maintained indefinitely. The alienated and repressed aspects or units (body, emotions) and sections (culture, society) that are denied their legitimate existence and rights (to identify with and be embedded in their relative wholeness and well-being) are bound to engage in their own overt or covert "civil wars" disrupting and even sabotaging the hard-won developmental gains. Repressed body, repressed sexual-aggressive energies, repressed ecology, repressed sections of society, repressed aspirations and longing of people are bound to hit back with a vengeance even under the threat of total destruction of both the parts and even the whole. Peace being an ongoing process is dynamically linked with the master motion of evolution. Peace is dynamically linked with healthy identification, timely differentiation and wholesome transformation (transcending and including).

The Paradoxes of Evolution

Paradoxically the forward movement of evolution contains within it the propensity for dissolution and vertical breakdown. Every evolutionary achievement brings with it new and more complex problems and perils demanding more complex and diligent solutions. For instance, mental self brought with it the capacity for self-reflection, self-discipline, abstract thinking and, above all, the region of infinite possibilities. Along with these came also the possibility of denial, repression, and falsehood. Industrial revolution ushered in wealth, comfort and productivity and also alienation of labourer from his labour and more effective means of repression. The gift of modernity (enlightenment) (Wilber 1997: 58-67) was that it helped to differentiate the realms of art, science and morals from the tyrannies of each other. Unfortunately, the

differentiation turned out to be down-right dissociation paving the way for repressive scientism (denying validity and legitimacy to modes of being and knowing that do not conform to the methods of physical sciences). Revolution in information and communication technology has ushered in hitherto unimaginable possibilities of communication, networking, planning and management along with the pernicious implications of globalisation, economic cannibalism, and neo-colonialism. Yet evolution is the master motion of existence. Existential dialectical tension, temporary conflict and temporary violence are the price we have to pay for being on the right side of this master motion of existence. When we opt for deeper and more encompassing forms of existence, we are accepting more complex and more difficult challenges and a more demanding peace making (not mere peace loving) process.

Reality and Ways of Knowing

Personal meanings of events, situations, persons and "reality" are, to an extent, personal constructions – an insight substantiated through empirical studies by Object Relations psychologists M. Mahler, F. Pine, and A. Bergman, 1975. These personal constructions are very much shaped by ways of being, knowing and meaning making. Developmental psychology has amply demonstrated how cognitive structures (J. Piaget 1977) or "*ways of knowing*" (Kegan 1999) evolve like every other aspect of consciousness and how constructions of reality differ, depending on the mode of being and knowing or the "order of conscious-

ness". Our instinctual and intuitive knowledge that the constructed sense of self, the other and the world differ not only from person to person but also, within the same person, from one developmental stage to another has been empirically demonstrated by Piaget and elaborated upon by other researchers (Kegan 1982). This evolution can be described, in non-technical terms, as follows.

Initially reality is fused with me. I don't, or I am not able to, distinguish the inside-of-me from the outside-of-me. I can only have fleeting images of objects and events outside and sensations inside. I don't yet *know* me as separate from the world and the world of others. I am embedded in or identified with movements and sensations.

The next mode of knowing is characterised by my ability for *single point, immediate, atomistic perceptions* (Kegan 1999: 30-31). I am able to know that objects exist independent of my sensing them, though I am not yet able to distinguish my own perception of an object from the properties of an object (the volume of water actually *does* increase or decrease according to the shape of the container). I can distinguish that persons exist separate from me though I cannot yet recognize that other persons have meanings and purposes independent of me. Neither am I capable of taking their point of view as distinct from my own (and I fly into a rage when my needs are not met how I want, when I want and where I want). I can distinguish my inner sensations from stimulations from outside but I am not yet able to distinguish myself from my own im-

pulses. I am my impulses. I am embedded in them.

Later, I acquire the ability, as my mental self and language develop, to know that I am different from the world around me. I recognize that my perceptions and images of reality are not quite the same as the reality outside, and that objects have properties irrespective of my perceptions of them (the volume of water *does not* actually increase or decrease according to the shape of the container). With this ability I am able to construct durable categories or classes into which I can place concrete objects (my Fido is a dog like my neighbour's Castro), though I do not yet have the ability to reason abstractly, think in "as if" and "what if" modes, and discern overall patterns and construct ideals. I am able to construct my own point of view and grant to others their own point of view, take the role of another person, manipulate others to meet my goals, and make deals, plans and strategies. But, I am not yet able to take my own point of view and another's simultaneously and construct obligations and expectations to meaningfully maintain mutual interpersonal relationships. From this mode of knowing, I am able to construct enduring dispositions, needs and goals, delay immediate gratification, and identify enduring qualities of self, according to social or behavioural manifestations (" fast runner", "dislike cabbage", "late riser"), but not according to inner psychological manifestations (" I feel conflicted", "I have low self-esteem"). Neither do I have the ability yet to internally coordinate more than one perspective or need system (I want a new

bicycle and my parents are struggling to make both ends meet). This is *categorical* (Kegan 1999: 30-31) mode of knowing.

The next major step in my evolution is the *cross-categorical* (Kegan 1999: 30-31) mode of knowing. The developmental feat here is that I can not only recognize durable categories and classes but also hold categories and classes together and abstract cross-categorical and trans-categorical perspectives, considerations, values and principles. From this mode of knowing, I not only recognize that there are roles and rules to heed to but also become conscious of my relationship with them. I become conscious of the fact that I am a durable self with my own needs, interests and preferences, others are durable selves with their own needs, interests and preferences and that the two are related in terms of reciprocity, mutuality, relationship, trust, fidelity and accountability. I am also able to think, from this mode of knowing, in "what if" modes and construct what might happen if trust is betrayed, reciprocity negated, relationship strained and accountability destroyed. I am also able to think in "as if" categories and construct possibilities, ideals and values.

The *system/complex* (Kegan 1999: 30-31) mode of knowing, which is capable not only of cross-categorical perspectives and considerations but also of constructing abstract systems, is the next mode to emerge. I am capable of networking several cross-categorical perspectives (going beyond mere reciprocity, exchange, and deal) and considerations (Being an Indian *taking along*

being a Christian by faith, Hindu by culture, Tamilian by language, secular by conviction, and so on). Only from such a mode of knowing or "order of consciousness", can I recognize, relate to and become conscious of abstractions like ideology, social order, civic responsibility, social justice, gender equality, accountability to posterity, ecological sensitivity, secularism, pluralism, and the like.

An even more evolved, a more developmentally refined, a wider and deeper mode of knowing or order of consciousness is *trans-system* or *trans-complex* (Kegan 1999: 30-31) order of knowing. Only from this mode of knowing can I extend cross-categorical perspectives and considerations of trust, fidelity, sensitivity, respect, mutuality, justice, fairness and similar considerations to include myself and the other, my group and the other groups, my nationality and the other nationalities, my species and the other species of life, life forms and material forms, the earth and the cosmos. From this mode of knowing, contradictions may become paradoxes, opposites may become polarities, and conflicts may become dialectic tensions. Individuals may become inter-individuals and systems may become an interpenetrating System. The subject-object differentiation, and time and space may once again become (qualitatively different from the pre-differentiated original state) more of modes of knowing rather than statements of truth. Matter and spirit may become more of differences in shades of manifestation and "probabilities of occurrence" than fixed objects of categorical knowing. Love and compassion may become

more of states of being rather than acts of virtue.

The neatness of the stages, the cross-cultural generalisability of the specifics of the stages, and the necessity of the sequences proposed by these evolutionary studies may be contested. What is important for our discussion is that the mode of knowing or the order of consciousness is found (by both the investigations of developmental psychology and the intuitive-empirical findings of perennial philosophy through communal verification and consensual validation) to undergo holarchic stage-like unfolding from simplicity of fusion through increasing complexity and depth toward differentiated and transcended simplicity of integration.

The human evolution and unfolding is a complex process. As the self navigates through the successive phases of unfolding, the sense of self (Loevinger 1976), the view of reality (Gebser 1985), modes of knowing and meaning-making, self-needs (Maslow 1971) and moral reasoning (Kohlberg 1981), to mention a few of the dominant streams, unfold holarchically. The "identification-differentiation-transcendence" master dynamic of this unfolding draws its primary energy from the inherent dialectical tension between the wholeness and partness aspects of each successive stage of unfolding. Each emerging stage or state brings with it not only greater depth and wider embrace but also newer tensions and deeper conflicts. They may be successfully resolved toward transcendence or unsuccessfully handled resulting in stagnation, developmental arrest, or even ver-

tical breakdown. A common theme that underlies the unfolding in the diverse streams is that of the self or self-system (individually and collectively) moving from self-centredness to group centredness to world-centredness and beyond to a larger centredness which may be described as "Spirit-centredness". This holarchic unfolding of the order of consciousness in the individual psyche might very well be reflected in the collective unfolding of human consciousness from the dawn of humanity to our post modern times.

Intra-individual Peace Process

It is within the constructive developmental framework I have briefly discussed above that I wish to examine some of the major challenges to our peace or peace-process. Events, situations, persons and things in our world find access to our consciousness through our perceptual channels both intuitive and sense-based. This perceptual data is processed within our consciousness through a highly personal, complex meaning-making or meaning-constructing process. The complexity of this process can be imagined if we keep in mind that our meaning construction takes place in that inner space influenced and often determined by our self-sense, our cognitive mould, our mode of knowing, our moral reasoning, our world-view and our self-needs, in addition to numerous other streams in our self-system at their own specific stage of unfolding. On the basis of the meanings that we keep constructing, we form beliefs and opinions about ourselves, others and the reality around us. Some of these beliefs are prized above the others and they become values, directing our further perceptions, meaning making, choices, attitudes and behaviours. From some of these prized beliefs we call values, come our culture.

One major source of conflict is the discrepancy between these prized values with their concomitant injunctions and prohibitions, on the one hand, and the developmental adequacy of our self-sense, our mode of knowing, our self-need, our world-view, and our moral reasoning ability. When the demands are "in over our heads"(Kegan 1999), we become conflicted and stressed. This is where Freud was partially right when he maintained that human existence is conflictual and that the healthiest mode of functioning can only reduce the paralysing effect (anxiety) of this conflictual state. Jung emphasized the need for the persona (constructed largely in response to the culture's demands) and the shadow (un-examined and un-illumined truths about oneself including truths about where one is in the evolutionary journey with regard to the different streams of unfolding) to openly confront and honestly collaborate so that the individual moves in the direction of inner peace and harmony. Erikson (1950, 1959) identified some major psychosocial conflicts between developmental demands coupled with culture's expectations on the one hand and the developmental reality of the evolving self-sense, world-view, modes of knowing, self-needs and moral reasoning) individual, on the other.

The culture's demands (through expectations, values, superego, psychosocial tasks, ideals) are the summons of

the master motion of evolution and transcendence only if they can be received and responded to within the given evolutionary level of the individuals with regards to the different developmental streams of the self-system. But if the culture and the superego fail to affirm the given developmental balance and only engage in developmental challenges beyond the capacity of the individual's self-sense, mode of knowing, world-view, moral reasoning and self-sense, several things can go wrong. The healthy tension between the wholeness and partness aspects of the self-system becomes unproductively conflictual and the individual may resort to defensive ceasefires, tactical retreats or even blatant breakdown. When a challenge becomes a threat, when a stimulant becomes an irritant, when a summons becomes an ultimatum, the existential dialectical tension between agency and communion, and between transcendence and dissolution become an unproductive conflict. We can, then, only expect defiant resistance (over-agency), inconsequential ceasefire (over-translation), and shameful surrender (over-communion) or, in some cases, suicidal encounters leading to self-destruction (vertical breakdown). Neither over-agency, nor over-translation, nor over-communion, nor vertical breakdown is at the service of the master motion of evolution. The apparent peace and well-being brought about through these is pseudo-peace and contain within them the seeds of eventual conflict and violence.

What makes things even more difficult for the self-system navigating through the rough waters of the evolu-

tionary unfolding is the fact that the multiple streams (self-sense, emotions, cognitive structures and modes of knowing, world-views, moral reasoning, self-needs, and so on) of consciousness may each follow their own developmental schedule and these may not keep pace with one another. Cognitive development may leap ahead while emotional development may lag behind with disastrous interpersonal implications. Moral reasoning may lag behind cognitive development resulting in masterly tailored self-seeking and narcissistic grandiosity ("what feels right, good and convenient for me is the right thing"). The world-view may lag horribly behind my cognitive development resulting in an inability to relate to perspectives, interests, ideals and values beyond that of my group (ethnic, religious or racial). My conformist self-sense may sabotage my intellectual pursuits resulting in intellectual dishonesty and blind loyalties. My inadequately addressed self-needs might interfere with the evolution of my moral reasoning compelling me to operate within preconventional moral stance, which can justify dishonesty and corruption.

Inter-individual Peace Process

I come to the group with my developmental history of achievements, failures, accidents and lesions. I interact with the others in the group from my self-sense, my self-needs, my world-view, my moral reasoning, my cognitive structures and mode of knowing. Others do so from theirs. These can cause both constructive tensions as well as disruptive conflicts. Scott Peck (1987: 86-106) identified the following

as stages through which a group goes in its becoming a true community. Initially the group is likely to embrace what he calls the stances of a pseudo-community which engages in inane generalities, clichés and platitudes to make itself, on the one hand, believe that it is a community of people and, on the other, to deny the differences and their potential for both constructive tensions and destructive conflicts. From a Jungian perspective, the members will be busy building, polishing and displaying their personae and hiding their shadows.

The second stage, according to Scott Peck, which the group enters into, is one of chaos characterised by pain, guilt and anger as differences, tensions and conflicts come right out into the open. When self-sense, modes of knowing, world-views, moral stances and self-needs come face to face with each other, either constructive tension facilitating transformation and transcendence or destructive conflicts and breakdown can occur. Often the temptation of the group is to enter into ceasefires and creep back to pseudo-community. On the other hand, if the group is willing to ride out the confusion, chaos, pain and anger it is likely to enter into the next phase of community making, namely emptiness.

Emptiness is characterized by the recognition by the members of their partness and communion aspect and their propensity to let go of and die to self in favour of the whole, i.e., the community. When members are willing to empty themselves of their over-agentic need to convert and fix one another, and their over-communion needs to accom-

modate and acquiesce, they enter into open confrontation and honest collaboration with the differences and tensions of growing up, evolving, transforming, and transcending.

After having gone through the phase of emptiness, the group begins to function more as a group where differences are respected, where disagreement and tensions are seen as growth promoting, where each person's developmental phase is both affirmed in its integrity and challenged in terms of developmental validity. Then, translation gives way to transformation. In a genuine community, peace is achieved not through ceasefire and accommodation but through constructive tensions and temporary conflicts (of differentiation) challenging the superficial translation of the pseudo-community. In a true community, there is willingness to endure the pain of chaos as differences are recognized and allowed to surface, and genuine strength of character and depth necessary for self-awareness and for emptiness.

A group, which has reached a certain level of community living and peace making, is in danger of slipping into pseudo-community if it does not guard itself against stagnation and translation. Evolution is holarchical, teleological and transformative but the seeds of dissolution are always there lying dormant.

Inter-group Peace-process

The stages and processes discussed above can be observed even in larger groups. Let us for instance look at our nation. When it emerged from the clutches of the British colonial power,

it emerged as a nation of little "nations". Under the influence of the then charismatic leaders we became a democratic republic and a nation with its own Constitution, government and a post-independence euphoria. Many differences, many identities, many loyalties, many ethnic affiliations, and caste boundaries were submerged or even suppressed with good intention in order to form a nation. We became a "*pseudo*-nation", in some sense, and began feeding ourselves with clichés, platitudes and generalities like "*Bharat Mata*" and "*Vande Mataram*", and "the largest democracy in the world".

It did not take us very long to begin experiencing the pain of *chaos*. We began with it right at the moment of the partition. Today, more than ever, we experience the emergence of submerged, benignly "suppressed" and inadvertently "repressed" differences of caste, creed, language, and culture. Old clichés, platitudes and generalities are not able to sustain the translation of this "pseudo"-unity. Even new ones like "*Hindutva*" and "*Ramarajya*" do not seem to do the job. Differences, tensions, conflicts and a certain degree of violence are coming right out into the open. Even coalition politics affirming regional and linguistic identities and aspirations seems to have come to the national scene to stay. Conflicts between our proclaimed ideals of "equality, fraternity and liberty" and the lived reality of blatant inequalities, abject poverty, caste violence, cruelty toward women and minority groups are clearly manifest. Conflicts between our lofty cultural and spiritual heritage and the newly emerging religious fundamentalism, in-

tolerance and magical-mythical rituals and practices are becoming embarrassingly pronounced.

These conflicts and strife bring with them pain, guilt and anger. There seems to be a dual[2] longing in all of us. On the one hand, we would like a strong party, a strong government, or a strong force of some kind to emerge on the scene and ensure peace, harmony and unity. We wish to get back to a *pseudo-community* by ignoring, suppressing and repressing the differences and contradictions. On the other hand, we recognize that the pseudo-unity and the bathing in the glory of the past have to go, and we need to squarely face the truth of our differences, inequalities, and contradictions. We intuitively perceive the need to go to the phase of *emptiness* and face the differences, confront the conflicts, and encounter the truth. We realize that it is a difficult, complex and precarious process for more reasons than one.

Just as individuals have their gravitational centre of developmental unfolding (the overall evolutionary balance), a group has its own centre of gravity. The gravitational centre of the group is made up of the shared gravitational centres of the individuality and interiority of its members and expresses itself in its world-view (the shared view of the reality) consisting of perceptual moulds and meaning making patterns, systems of images and symbols, cognitive sets and conceptual categories, and myths and rituals. Like the various streams of individual consciousness, the world-view of the group too unfolds, responding to the master motion of evolution,

following the master dynamics of identification, differentiation and transcendence, experiencing the dialectical tension between agency and communion, translation and transformation, and transcendence and dissolution.

Different scholars have given different names to earmark these eras in the evolutionary journey of the group. What is common in their delineations is the observation that the world-view seems to evolve roughly along the following lines. It begins with an undifferentiated or predifferentiated subject-object and inside-outside fusion ("being-in-the-world" of the early human experience). Then there is the stage of narcissistic self-definition, ego-centric and inadequately differentiated interpretation of the world, single-point and categorical mode of knowing, and hedonistic preconventional moral reasoning (with strong elements of animism and magic). That is followed by a stage of group-based self-definition, ethnocentric relationship with the world, cross categorical mode of knowing, and conventional or conformity based moral reasoning (with strong flavours of left-over magic and the mythic). It may, then, be followed by a phase of rational-individual self-definition, objective-scientific interpretation of the world, cross-categorical and system mode of knowing, and post conventional universal ethical moral reasoning (autonomous self-contained ego and personhood, society and human rights). A stage of body-mind unified inter-individual self-identify, networked systemic understanding of reality, inter-system mode of knowing, and ethical-spiritual moral reasoning (hope of post-modern phi-

losophy, science and spirituality) may be the next to emerge. A transpersonal self-definition, trans-rational view of reality, trans-system mode of knowing and universal spiritual moral reasoning (the world of mystics and sages of all times) would mark the farthest ends of cultural evolution.

Differentiation (self-definition, self-preservation and self-assertion), is a messy, painful, and to some extent violent business. (The country's process of differentiation from the slumber of colonialism is a good example of the complexity of differentiation in the life of a larger group). Differentiation is messy, painful and violent for a variety of reasons:

❑ The average consciousness or the centre of gravity of consciousness of a given culture or subculture is reflected in its meaning system, value systems, symbols, rituals and myths. The unfolding of individual consciousness takes place within the context of one's culture and language which in turn is determined to a large extent by the social structures supporting and maintaining the culture, educational system, world-views, meaning and value systems, rituals and myths.

❑ The differentiating groups have to, first of all, free themselves from the weight of their own fruitless translation institutionalised by their culture and world-view and, very often, imprisoned by the larger socio-economic and political structures.

❑ The group has to deal with the mindless repression of the "more devel-

oped" (but who may not have gone beyond the ethnocentric, conformist, socio-centric self-definition and moral reasoning) units of the society who have at their disposal modernized means of repression and destruction.

❏ The differentiation can become over-agentic and mindless of the larger whole and commit temporary or "permanent" blunders resulting in cancerous over-agency perpetrating violence and hatred and set the stage for possible vertical breakdown and dissolution of both the parts and the whole.

❏ The process of the essential differentiation project can fall into the hands of a leadership that can hijack the process for downright narcissistic purposes or pathological hidden agendas. Then, the mode of knowing, the view of reality and moral reasoning may all operate from the lower ends of the spectrum of development.

❏ When differentiation and integration in one line of development is not accompanied by proportionate differentiation and integration in other lines, the overall evolutionary balance can be lost.

❏ Differentiation and transcendence, if not done in a "transcending and including" manner and in favour of the master motion of ongoing evolutions, may result in a scenario that is far from enviable. A differentiating and transcending minority group has to deal with the resulting further tension as to which is the larger relative whole in favour of which its new-found relative wholeness should eventually be released.

❏ Before the newfound relative wholeness can be surrendered and released in favour of the larger relative whole, it should have the opportunity for robust embedding and identification and adequate time for healthy translation.

Conclusion

If evolution is the master motion of existence, if identification, differentiation and transcendence (and integration) is the master dynamic, and if the dialectical tension between the relative wholeness aspect and the essential partness aspect of units of existence is the master fuel of evolution, tension is an essential aspect of life. Temporary conflicts and even occasional violence is bound to happen. The peace we seek should be a peace at the service of evolutionary transformation and not counter-evolutionary *translation*. The peace we seek should be a peace not at the service of pathological hierarchy indulging in mindless repression coercing accommodation and acquiescence from those repressed and oppressed. The peace we seek should be a peace capable of affirming the integrity and relative wholeness of temporary identification, embeddedness and translation of a given evolutionary balance, on the one hand, and challenging the developmental validity of this balance toward the recognition of its essential partness in relation to the larger whole on the other.

Despite the complexity involved and the hazards referred to above, evolution must continue, differentiation must take place. Tensions will continuously arise and conflicts and even violence are bound to be there. The difficult but important question is how the catalysts as well as the participants of this evolutionary motion can ensure that the differentiation is toward transcendence. How can we ensure that it is as integral (transformation of consciousness and its various streams, transformation of culture and its world-view, and the transformation of social structures) as possible, and that the relative wholeness of the desired phase is understood along with its partness in view of the larger wholes ahead?

With or without our cooperation the master motion of evolution will continue with its concomitant potential for regression and breakdown. It is up to us to participate in it with both *wilful* (agentic aspect) efforts to go beyond and *willingness* (communion aspect) to surrender (May 1982: 5-6). It is human to seek what is pleasurable and avoid what is painful. It is human to stay embedded as long as possible and keep translating the given mode of existence, the given mode of knowing, the given mode of moral reasoning, the given mode of need-fulfilment, and so on. But we cannot go on translating in the same mode of being for very long without either moving up or moving down the path of evolution. We need charismatic catalysts to initiate the tension of evolution. We need catalysts of integrity, authenticity, moral character, and developed mode of knowing.

Crisis, according to Erickson, provides us with moments of increased vulnerability and heightened potential (for mere translation or transformation). The crises our country, and the world at large, are facing are not only moments of increased vulnerability but also moments of heightened potential. Notwithstanding the fact that the developmental potential of these crises can be (and, in fact, appear to be in some cases) highjacked by narcissistic elements and ethnocentric forces, I would like to see them as manifestations of the evolutionary tension. Like tight-rope walking, this evolutionary thrust keeps *finding and losing and finding* its balance moving toward higher modes of existence, more developed modes of knowing, more evolved moral consciousness, and more realistic and truthful justice and peace. Dalits, women, tribals and other minorities are risking tensions, conflicts and violence in defining themselves, asserting themselves, differentiating from their embeddedness in a culture of helplessness and hopelessness. Will their larger cultures of embeddedness comprising the national polity, its Constitution, its executives and judiciary affirm and validate the integrity of their efforts? Will they be given the political, economic and cultural space required for healthy *translation* and eventual transcendence?

For these to happen, we need the centre of gravity both personal and collective to shift from ego-centrism and ethnocentrism to genuine global perspectives, from mere categorical and cross-categorical knowing to system and trans-system perspectives, from

largely preconventional and conventional morality to universal ethical and universal spiritual morality. Only then can we hope to have democracy with accountability, religious revival without fundamentalism, pluralism with affirmed diversity, secularism with genuine respect for all that is sacred, peace with justice, and economic development with a soul. "Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country *(nay, the human race)* awake"(Tagore 1913: No, 35).[3]

Endnotes

1. A non-technical description of these stages of unfolding is given in "Quest for Freedom and Psychotherapy" in *Jnanadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies* II/2 (July 1999) pp. 9ff.
2. Community in chaos, according to Scott Peck, has two options. One is to get the group out of the chaos by taking it back to pseudo-community with the help of some strong leadership. The other is to allow the community to experience the chaos and associated pain and stress, and move into the stage of emptiness under facilitative leadership.
3. The parenthesis is mine.

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