From Oneness to Goodness

Steve Taylor
Dear friend,

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.

Herr Hitler
Berlin
Germany.

I remain,

Your sincere friend

M.K. Gandhi
A Continuum of Connection

EXTREME DISCONNECTION
- Psychopathy
- Narcissistic personality disorder
- Lack of empathy
- Brutality
- Selfishness
- No Morality

Spiritual practices and paths

COMPLETE CONNECTION
- Wakefulness
- Enlightenment
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Selflessness
- Universal moral principles

Most humans (With fluctuations)
Wakefulness and Connection

• ‘A higher-functioning state of expansive and intensified awareness that transforms our sense of identity and our vision of the world.’
• An expansion of awareness in four areas: perceptual, subjective, intersubjective and conceptual

• An increased sense of connection (a corresponding decrease in separation)
• Greater empathy and altruism
• A shift from a mode of accumulation to a mode of contribution
“I feel a part of nature. I feel a connection with people, but I also feel connected with trees and birds and grass and hills.”

“I started seeing every single person as myself. I have a feeling of connection to everything, whether it’s living or not living. If I walk into a store, if I’m walking down the street, if I’m talking, I have to have eye contact with the person. I have to connect.”

“There is a shift in focus from what can I get from life to what I can give to life.’

“The purpose of my life is to be here for others, to help them grow and see their own importance.”
Recall a situation when you acted with kindness to another person.

And/or: Recall a situation when somebody acted with kindness to you e.g. helped or supported you in some way.

What was your (or the other person’s) motivation for acting with kindness?
Altruism – Materialist Explanations

- Disguised self-interest: e.g. increased respect and status from others, feeling good about ourselves, increased reproductive possibilities
- Reciprocal altruism
- Kin Selection – we are altruistic to people who are closely genetically related to us
Panspritism

- Fundamental consciousness (or spirit) is the primary thing in the universe. It pervades all space and all material things.

- Our own personal consciousness is an ‘influx’ or canalisation of fundamental consciousness/spirit.

- The role of the brain is not to produce consciousness but to transmit it.

- Living organisms are internally conscious and sentient.
Altruism: A Panspiritist Perspective

- We are interconnected through fundamental consciousness. We share fundamental consciousness; we are all manifestations of it.

- Connection brings empathy. **Empathy is a spiritual experience of interconnection – stemming from our shared network of consciousness.** We can sense each other’s pain and suffering.

- Sensing other people’s suffering generates an impulse to alleviate that suffering, or to enhance their development, or change social conditions to bring more justice and equality.

- Altruism is innate and natural; selfishness and brutality are aberrational.
“My inner being exists in every living creature as truly and immediately as in myself. This realisation...is the ground of compassion, whose expression is in every good deed.”
Schopenhauer, On the Basis of Morality.

“In everyone there is something of his fellow–man. Therefore whoever sins injures not only himself but also that part of himself which belongs to another.” It is important to love others “because the other is really oneself.” Cordovero
“To a survival machine, another survival machine (which is not its own child or another relative) is part of its environment, like a rock or a river or a lump of food. It is something that gets in the way, or something that can be exploited….Natural selection favours genes that control their survival machines in such a way that they make best use of their environment. This includes making the best use of other survival machines, both of the same and of different species.”

(Dawkins, 1976)