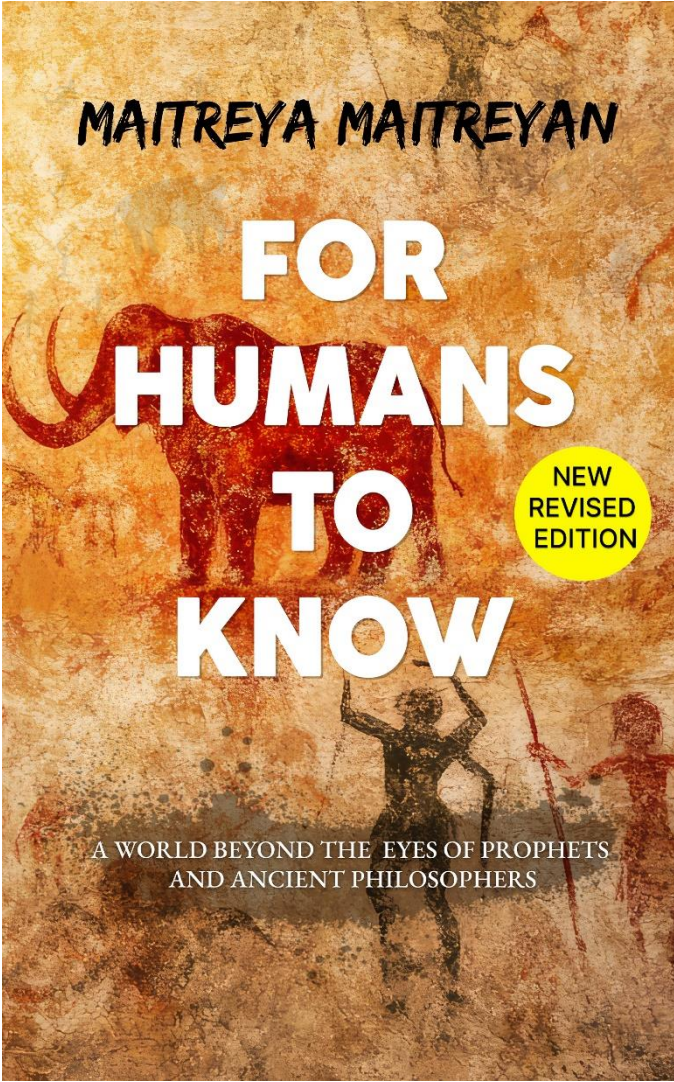


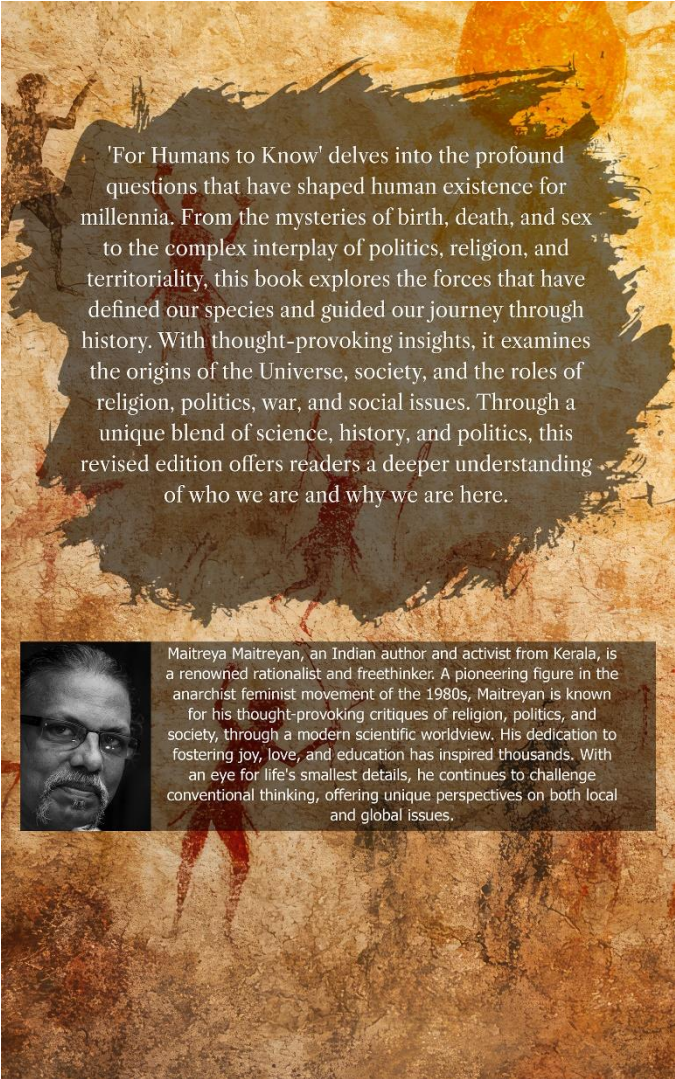
MAITREYA MAITREYAN

**FOR
HUMANS
TO
KNOW**

**NEW
REVISED
EDITION**

A WORLD BEYOND THE EYES OF PROPHETS
AND ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS





'For Humans to Know' delves into the profound questions that have shaped human existence for millennia. From the mysteries of birth, death, and sex to the complex interplay of politics, religion, and territoriality, this book explores the forces that have defined our species and guided our journey through history. With thought-provoking insights, it examines the origins of the Universe, society, and the roles of religion, politics, war, and social issues. Through a unique blend of science, history, and politics, this revised edition offers readers a deeper understanding of who we are and why we are here.



Maitreya Maitreyan, an Indian author and activist from Kerala, is a renowned rationalist and freethinker. A pioneering figure in the anarchist feminist movement of the 1980s, Maitreyan is known for his thought-provoking critiques of religion, politics, and society, through a modern scientific worldview. His dedication to fostering joy, love, and education has inspired thousands. With an eye for life's smallest details, he continues to challenge conventional thinking, offering unique perspectives on both local and global issues.

FOR HUMANS TO KNOW

MAITREYA MAITREYAN

EDITED BY PRADEEN KRISHNA G

Revised 2nd Edition

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*"Whatever exists in nature may not be fair to us,
but we must know what exists in nature."*

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FOREWORD

The original edition of ‘For Humans to Know’ was published in the Southern Indian language Malayalam over a decade ago, in 2013. Despite its valuable insights and content, the first English edition, published in 2015, failed to capture the essence and clarity of the original. Many readers found it poorly written, difficult to follow, and hard to understand. Recognizing these shortcomings, I took it upon myself to rephrase and rewrite each chapter, aiming to improve both readability and comprehension.

In this revised edition, I have carefully reworked the text to ensure that the language is clear and engaging. Additionally, I have expanded the content (especially chapter 2 regarding the Big Bang cosmology), providing extra context and clarification where needed. My goal has been to preserve the depth of the original while making it accessible to a wider audience.

For Humans to Know is a must-read for anyone seeking clarity in life and thoughtful exploration of the

challenging questions and contradictions humanity faces. While you may not agree with every opinion or claim in this book, I believe it will inspire you to search for answers and encourage a fresh perspective on the world. After reading, feel free to reach out to the author with any questions or doubts.

I am confident that this new version of the book will offer a more enjoyable and enlightening reading experience. I hope it serves as a valuable resource for all who seek knowledge and understanding.

Editor
Pradeen Krishna G

PREFACE

What is life? What is the meaning of life? Is there a purpose to it? Why do we experience suffering? Is there life after death? What is the nature of this world? These are questions many of us ponder. Despite these lingering doubts, we carry on with our daily lives with a sense of certainty. We wake up, brush our teeth, have breakfast, and go through our daily routines. Rarely do we encounter someone so consumed by these questions that they seem lost or directionless, though we might consider such individuals unusual or crazy.

All living beings, including humans, exist with a sense of certainty. This certainty often comes from not overthinking or constantly questioning everything. It's only when we start to think deeply that doubts arise. Living doesn't require much thought because it's a natural process. Everyone alive knows how to live; otherwise, they wouldn't be here. Confusion arises only when we question the 'why' behind our actions. As a result, most of us don't engage in deep thought regularly. We tend to follow what others around us do because these behaviors have proven successful. Only

when these familiar patterns fail do we start questioning our existence and how to live.

From these moments of uncertainty and setbacks, various philosophies of life have emerged worldwide. Humans reflect on their experiences, learn from their successes and failures, draw conclusions, and then venture out again into the world. There are countless paths, methods, and approaches to living successfully and correctly. We're flooded with this knowledge passed down through generations. Today, our confusion often stems not from ignorance but from an overwhelming number of choices offered by this accumulated knowledge from different ages, climates, and cultures.

This book aims to cut through the complexity of this vast body of knowledge to help us live simply and with less confusion. We have strived to present a modern scientific worldview that provides practical answers to everyday life questions. We believe this approach will help those perplexed about life. Our goal is not to offer absolute certainties but to provide relative clarity on various aspects of life.

This book doesn't claim to have all the answers but aims to reduce the number of questions you might have, making it easier to navigate life. This book serves as a guidepost at life's crossroads. While it can't cover the entire "book of life," which is too vast for any single

work, it aims to be a helpful companion for at least the coming century. We hope you will read it with patience and find it useful in your journey.

Maitreya & Friends

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?

IN THE VAST EXPANSE OF HUMAN existence, countless individuals have pondered the ultimate question: What is the meaning of life? Many philosophers, theologians, and thinkers have provided answers that have been passed down through the ages. Yet, the world we live in today isn't fundamentally different from the one in which those answers were first given. Because, the 'natural world' they observed for their insights still surrounds us. Therefore, we do not need to simply accept the answers they offered. Instead, we should take a step back, look at our surroundings with fresh eyes, and see what life has to tell us.

So, what do we observe in nature? When we examine the natural world, we see an abundance of life in all its forms. Mango trees sway in the wind, grasshoppers leap through fields, elephants roam the Savannah, and birds soar through the skies. Despite their vast differences, they all share a common purpose: to survive and reproduce. While we may have a multitude of different beliefs and ideas about the meaning of life, our actions

ultimately align with the same goal as other living beings: to live, reproduce, and create favorable living conditions. Whether we're running companies, building empires, writing books, or waging wars, we are all ultimately striving for survival. There's no grand purpose to life other than to live—to survive and reproduce as much as possible, uninterrupted, in the best conditions we can find or create.

As living beings, we constantly search for environments that suit us or we change the ones we're in to fit our needs. Even our attempts to explore other planets are driven by the pursuit of these same conditions—not because it's a grand, noble mission, but because we are searching for more places that can sustain life.

All living beings vary in their abilities to live and adapt, and that's why we see so much diversity in life. Even though we all share the same planet, under the same sun, moon, and stars, different species find unique ways to survive and thrive. This shows that there is no single "right" or "wrong" way to live—only different ways that work for different species. The only measure of success for life is this: Have you lived? Have you reproduced? Have you spread as far as possible, on Earth or beyond? Thus, we can conclude that the meaning and purpose of life is simply to "live." Nothing more, nothing less.

It's important to note that what may be an advantage for survival in one situation could very well become a disadvantage in another. That's why species go extinct. But if they can quickly adapt, they survive. Since life first appeared on Earth about 3.7 billion years ago, countless species have emerged and gone extinct. In fact, 99% of all species that ever existed are no longer here. But their essence lives on through the species we see around us today.

So, as long as some form of life exists anywhere on Earth, life as a whole remains victorious. It doesn't have to be humans—any life form is proof that life endures. We humans are just one among many, and there's nothing inherently “special” about us in the grand scheme of life.

IS THERE A BEGINNING FOR THE UNIVERSE?

EXPLORING THE ORIGINS OF THE UNIVERSE has been a timeless pursuit for thoughtful humans, whether they are saints, scientists, lovers, or philosophers. Questions like "How did the universe begin?" "Who created it?" and "Where do we come from?" have puzzled humanity for ages. Each attempt to pinpoint a beginning leads to the realization that every start is preceded by something else, creating an endless loop of questions that seems to lead us nowhere.

This relentless search for a starting point can be considered an incurable curiosity of humanity—a compulsion to find answers that may not exist. The only true "cure" is to understand that the universe does not have a definite beginning or end. The universe simply exists; it may not cease to exist and is in a constant state of "change." Scientists describe this ongoing transformation as "entropy," a process where things naturally progress from order to disorder. In other words, everything in the universe is always changing. It

is not beginnings or ends, but ‘change’ that is the fundamental and never-ending process that defines the universe.

This concept can be difficult for us to grasp because we are wired to think in terms of beginnings and endings. We observe sunrises and sunsets, read stories with chapters and conclusions, and apply this linear structure to the universe itself. However, these beginnings and endings are constructs created by our human brains—metrics or markers we use to make sense of an ever-changing world. We try to impose order and structure on the universe, yet it is inherently chaotic and unpredictable. As such, the search for the true beginning of the universe is a futile pursuit that only serves to highlight our need for meaning and purpose.

When I say this, I’m not implying that the event that we call ‘Big Bang’ did not happen. The Big Bang definitely happened, and we know this from all the observations we’ve made. However, we’re not sure if it was actually the beginning of everything. A common misconception about the Big Bang theory is that it claims the universe came from nothing—a notion frequently echoed in religious circles as well. But the fact is, modern cosmology rejects this idea. Anyone who tells you, “The Big Bang says the universe came from nothing,” is utterly ignorant of physics and is only repeating what their preacher told them. If you actually take a

university-level astronomy class, you'll learn that science doesn't claim the universe came from nothing.

The term 'nothing' is not accurate in this context. More precisely, all the energy in the Universe existed in a highly dense 'neutral state.' It is also highly likely that you're picturing the Big Bang as an explosion or a sparkling tiny dot in the darkness appearing out of nowhere, then exploding. This is also a mistaken mental image, widely circulated by religious folks, popular science articles, TV shows, and magazines. The Big Bang was not an explosion; it was simply the expansion of existing energy. An explosion has stuff pushing other stuff around, with a lot of forces acting on matter. A better name would be the Big Stretch. Space started to stretch, and matter was pulled along for the ride.

The Lambda-Cold Dark Matter (CDM) model (the formal scientific name for the Big Bang—note that "Big Bang" was coined by Fred Hoyle in a 1949 BBC radio interview to mock the expanding theory; it was not its actual name) describes the Universe's expansion from a hot, dense state to a more sparser, cooler state. Simply put, at the time of the Big Bang, the Universe is presumed to have been infinitely dense, which is not the same as infinitesimally small. Therefore, the expansion was not necessarily from having no size or from nothing to infinite size but rather from an incredibly dense state to a progressively less dense one.

The cosmology of the Big Bang Model does not start at $t=0$; it cannot be traced back any further than 10^{-43} seconds. It does not claim, nor does it attempt to claim, how the universe originated from nothing, only what happened starting an instant after the expansion began. Nevertheless, it suggests that all the energy in the universe already existed in forms that we cannot currently comprehend. According to Einstein's famous equation, $E = mc^2$, which states that energy can indeed transform into matter under certain conditions, and vice versa.

To address your confusion, in physics, 'nothing' usually refers to the quantum field of vacuum fluctuations. A quantum fluctuation is the temporary, random change in the amount of energy at a point in space. That is, Empty space is not truly empty; virtual particles can constantly appear and disappear. These particles and antiparticles are modeled as excitations of quantum fields. The vacuum is a very real and energetic state, just not in the same way as ordinary matter.

The reason scientists refer to the Big Bang as the "beginning" is that our understanding of time and space breaks down at the singularity. A singularity is not a physical entity; rather, it is a mathematical *artifact* (similar to trying to divide by zero, where $1/0$ is not defined). It represents the theoretical point where our current understanding of physics reaches its limit. This

happens because General Relativity (GR), our theory of gravity and the large-scale structure of the universe, cannot describe what happens at this point. These concepts only make sense when there are two different points or markers to measure change, but a singularity has no such points. Hence, we refer to the Big Bang as the "beginning" because it's a point where our conventional ideas about time and space break down completely.

This problem of not being able to measure or understand things at extremely small or large scales is something we may always face. However, we can use mathematics to create models—such as String Theory or Quantum Gravity—that help us understand these phenomena theoretically, even if we cannot test them in practice. This is what science is all about: developing models and theories that explain what we observe in the world, even if we cannot always test them directly.

When we discuss the beginning of life or the universe, we are essentially marking points in a continuous process of change to help us make sense of it. Think of it like cutting a tree into logs to transport it more easily. Similarly, we use constructs like days of the week or historical eras to understand the passage of time. These are human-made metrics to help us comprehend time's flow (because it is relative), but they don't necessarily reflect the universe's true nature.

The universe doesn't actually exist "in" time; rather, time is a tool we use to measure and understand changes within the universe. Time is a measurement of change, and we detect its passage by observing how things change from one moment to the next. Likewise, space serves as a metric for measuring the distance between points where changes occur. For example, there was never a literal 'first day' on Earth; instead, the Earth simply rotates, while we have Sundays and Mondays.

Similarly, there are various eras or calendars, such as the Buddhist calendar, the Christian calendar, and the Muslim calendar. These eras are constructs designed to help us measure and understand time, but they don't reflect any universal truth about the universe. The universe itself doesn't follow a schedule or have a start or end date. Time is a tool we use to make sense of changes in the universe, just as space helps us understand the location of things. To say that a city like London or New York has a beginning or an end, we need some kind of imaginary marker, like dates or geographical boundaries. Without these markers, we can't really define when or where something starts or ends.

Humans need these markers to grasp concepts easily. The idea of moving from one point to another is what we think of as space. Space and time are both ways we measure 'change' or 'transformation'. When we sense

change happening around us (externally), we refer to it as space; when we experience it within ourselves (internally), we think of it as time. The horizontal description of change is space, while the vertical description is time. Alternatively, all sensory experiences of change are spatial, while intuitive experiences are temporal. Most animals perceive change through their senses, which is why their understanding of change is spatial. Humans, on the other hand, seem to be uniquely capable of understanding change through time, a trait that may have developed more recently in our evolution. Time is our intuitive experience of change.

Throughout human history, we've created various measurement units, such as the ell, em, erg, fathom, gal, clove, chaldron, kelvin, palm, peck, stone, and millihelen. These were very real to those who developed them. As more accurate measurements emerged, the old ones were discarded, though they remain in language and occasional use. In any measurement system, the key is a standard that everyone agrees upon. Once a standard is established, measuring becomes straightforward. For instance, the millimeter is defined through mutual agreement. Once this value is set, we can easily measure decimeters, decameters, meters, or kilometers. Older measurements could not achieve such precision due to the lack of standardization and relied on things like the length of an individual's foot. While one 'foot' varies

from person to person, our needs were less precise, allowing for slight variations. Precision, however, is crucial in an industrial society where exact measurements are required.

The main point here is to highlight that all measurement systems are human inventions. Today, we can measure the distance between Paris and London with remarkable accuracy, but it's pointless to dig into the Earth to find the metrics of this measurement. The scale itself isn't hidden in nature or material substances; it's a conceptual tool we've invented. Similarly, when trying to understand the universe and life, we've developed various conceptual tools over time, such as 'god,' 'soul,' 'mind,' 'energy,' or 'life force.' These concepts are akin to old-fashioned units of measure like the ell, em, or erg—useful in their time but not precise or real. We won't discover these concepts by examining the human body or digging into the ground. They aren't hidden in the subtlest aspects of existence; rather, they're just ideas created by earlier generations. There isn't a 'mind' inside the body as the old mind-body duality suggests, nor is there a 'soul' that departs from the body at death.

Therefore, all questions about what happened "before the beginning" or what happens "after the end" or where is the "edge of the universe" are essentially human constructs. They stem from our limited understanding of the physics of the universe and our tendency to

impose boundaries on things that are, in reality, boundless. We have a habit of putting everything into neat boxes or timeframes. However, the universe itself is timeless and eternal—it has always existed, so there is no true "beginning" or "end" in the way we often think.

According to cosmologist Alan Guth, who developed inflation theory, the laws of physics do not fundamentally differentiate between the future and the past. What we call the "future" is just the direction in which the universe is becoming more disordered, which scientists call increasing entropy. The "past," on the other hand, is simply a state where the universe had lower entropy, or less disorder. Now, here's something interesting: if you take this initial 'low entropy' state and follow it backwards in time, toward what we previously called the past, the entropy will also start to grow in that direction. The people living along that arrow of time would not feel anything different from what we feel. Everyone would think that they're living from the past toward the future; except, what they call the future would be what we refer to as the past. As for big events like the Big Bang, they can happen again. The heat death of the universe—when it runs out of usable energy—could resemble a quantum vacuum state that is similar to what we understand as the Big Bang, as pointed out by physicist and recent Nobel laureate Roger Penrose in his cyclic model of the universe.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

DESPITE COUNTLESS inventions and discoveries, the origin of life remains an inexplicable mystery to everyone, including scientists. However, recent breakthroughs in the microscopic world are slowly piecing together the jigsaw puzzle of life. One of the main questions scientists are trying to answer is how life appeared naturally and spontaneously on Earth.

Given the first cell, evolutionary biologists can explain how natural selection worked and how life evolved over vast geological timescales. However, the question of how the first cell came into existence remains unsolved. The cells we know today are too complex to have been the first cell, yet a first cell was necessary to start the process. One of the earliest hypotheses proposed that life originated in a "chemical soup" on primordial Earth, bombarded by lightning strikes. Although we've discovered most of the amino acids necessary for life on primordial Earth, we still haven't determined how the first cell originated.

The problem is that in the primordial soup, it's impossible to maintain the concentration required inside a cell because natural conditions don't allow for the formation of a cell membrane to separate the inside from the outside. One possibility is that a drop of oil could create a natural barrier in water, forming an inside-outside condition. However, sustaining such a condition long enough for all necessary ingredients to gather and initiate life is challenging.

Another hypothesis suggests that clay hydrogel played a crucial role in early geological history. As silicates leached from rocks, clay first appeared just as biomolecules began forming into proto-cells or cell-like structures. These structures were incomplete and needed to evolve into membrane-enclosed cells. Clay hydrogel, with its mass of microscopic spaces capable of soaking up liquids like a sponge, could have confined biomolecules and biochemical reactions. Over millions of years, chemicals trapped in these spaces could have undergone complex reactions, forming proteins, DNA, and eventually all the machinery necessary for a living cell. Clay hydrogel would have protected these processes until a membrane developed to enclose the living cells.

Another possibility is that magma flowing from inside the Earth under the sea solidified into pillar-like structures, releasing various chemical compounds. These porous pillars, resembling modern skyscrapers,

creates an impression of a lost city under the sea. The porous pillars had tiny holes where amino acids might have accumulated. Over vast periods, these holes could have provided an inside-outside environment for life's precursors to develop. Primitive life forms might have existed in these holes for a long time, eventually evolving and breaking away to form independent structures—the first cells—through natural selection and evolutionary change.

What's fascinating is that, unlike previous theories about the origin of life, we're now looking at the most extreme and unwelcoming places on Earth: the depths of the ocean. These areas are devoid of sunlight and subject to intense pressure and harsh conditions. In such environments, it's challenging to clearly define what is "alive" and what is "dead." As we delve deeper into these conditions, the lines between life and lifelessness become increasingly blurred.

The process of evolution is so gradual that it makes it difficult to separate the living from the non-living. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the idea of a clear "beginning" is more of a human construct than a reality. In the universe, there aren't clear starting points. Evolution is a slow process where different qualities slowly build up, making some things seem alive. Consider viruses as an example: they can be seen as both "dead" and "alive" at the same time. On their own,

viruses are inactive and can't be considered alive. However, when they interact with a living cell, they become active and can reproduce, which gives them a sort of "life."

We used to believe that life couldn't exist without the sun and that oxygen was essential for life. These ideas actually limited our search for the origins of life. In reality, oxygen, which we often call the 'breath of life,' is the result of tiny living organisms working over millions of years. These microorganisms, known as cyanobacteria or blue-green algae, use sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide to produce oxygen and carbohydrates through a process called photosynthesis. Today, all plants rely on these microorganisms, now part of their cells as chloroplasts, to perform photosynthesis.

To understand where amino acids—the building blocks of life—come from, we need to look beyond Earth. We now know that we might not find all the answers to the origin of life just by studying Earth. Initially, we thought Earth was unique compared to other planets in our solar system, so we only looked for life's ingredients here. However, some of the crucial components of life were actually created inside stars long before Earth was formed. For example, the carbon atoms in our bodies, including those in our bones, were formed in stars much larger than our sun. These stars exploded, scattering

their elements across the universe. This process of star formation and explosion occurred three times, or in three epochs, over the 13.8 billion years since the Big Bang. It was only after these explosions that our sun and Earth began to form.

The first generation of stars contained only hydrogen and helium. Some of these stars were massive and quickly went through their life cycles, forming heavier elements in the process. These elements were then spread into space, leading to the formation of second-generation stars with more complex elements. As time went on, the universe accumulated even more of these elements, eventually leading to the third generation of stars, which contributed to the formation of our solar system. So, when searching for the origins of life, we shouldn't limit ourselves to Earth alone. We also don't need to look for ancient civilizations on distant planets in the early universe because they wouldn't have existed if the 3 epochs are to be trusted. We currently know that comets may have played a role in delivering amino acids to Earth. Recent lab experiments have also shown that ribose, a sugar needed for RNA and DNA, was present in simulations of the early Solar System. These findings support the idea that life could have originated elsewhere in the universe. Thus, Earth may not be the birthplace of life but rather a place where life's potential had infinite possibilities.

Today, we're learning more about molecular biology faster than ever, even creating the first hints of artificial life in laboratories. This research helps us understand what the earliest forms of life may have looked like. For example, we've found traces of ancient life within formations called stromatolites—these are rock structures from Earth's early days. However, these discoveries challenge our previous beliefs about how life began.

We've now reached a point where we understand that life might be possible even in extreme conditions found on places like the Moon and Mars. But figuring out what counts as "alive" in these strange conditions can be very tricky and nearly impossible. This leads us to recognize that what we consider the start of life is limited to what happened on Earth; we can't definitively claim it marks the absolute beginning of life in the universe. As humans, we need to define beginnings to make sense of the world around us, so our understanding of life's start becomes the reference point for further exploration. It's also important to realize that life on Earth only began once; it hasn't started over multiple times. Some people believe that Earth is in the "Goldilocks zone," where conditions are just right for life. But if Earth has these ideal conditions, why hasn't life started more than once? The fact that all life on our planet can be traced back to a single common ancestor shows just how rare life is. This suggests that finding life

on other planets might be futile, but it also means that while complex life may be rare, life in general could be more common in the universe. Therefore, life could either be extremely rare or as common as the stars in the galaxy. As we get ready for space exploration, we're likely to discover new insights into these questions and learn more about life beyond Earth.

So far, we've mostly looked at life from a chemical perspective, tracing its journey from the beginning to where we are now. However, in the past, many ancient philosophies tried to understand life by focusing on its most expressive and meaningful experiences. They concluded that the universe was born from consciousness, or awareness. Now, if we think about evolution, it's fascinating to consider how life experienced its separate existence in the vast oneness of the universe, whether on Earth or elsewhere. What we recognize as life boils down to an awareness of existence in relation to everything else. Essentially, life, as we understand it, is the experience of "I exist" in contrast to "the other exists." This basic awareness could be seen as the true beginning of life. If we dive deeper into this idea of separation, it seems that the sense of touch was likely the first way life interacted with its environment. Since existence is never truly separate from its ongoing continuity, the sense of taste probably developed alongside it. This means the first real experience of being alive could have been the combination of these two

senses—touch and taste—working together.

Single-celled organisms, the simplest forms of life, only possess these two senses. Touch helps them detect other entities, while taste lets them figure out if something is good or bad for them. For most of life's history on Earth, these two senses were all that existed for survival. This is evident from the fact that these senses, along with the ones that developed later, are all variations of the skin. Therefore, it's no coincidence that our senses evolved from this initial sensory layer or the skin. In fact, the eye, ear, and nose are just more specialized forms of skin or extensions of that original sensory layer. The fact that touch and taste arise from the skin itself suggests that all life originally came from a single cell.

For about three billion years, life didn't really struggle for existence. It was only when more complex multi-celled organisms appeared that competition for survival began ("survival of the fittest"), leading to a predator-prey dynamic. With this new competition, additional senses evolved. While some life forms still rely on just the first two senses, they don't usually defend themselves against predators with the later-developed senses. Instead, they often use chemical defenses like bad tastes, foul odors, poisons, and even physical defenses like thorns. Most complex beings are both predators and prey, depending on their position on the tree of life. At times, some species find themselves at the top, enjoying

relative freedom without much fear. The three senses that developed later help these organisms detect prey or predators from a distance. While touch and taste provide immediate information about what's nearby, the newer senses—sight, hearing, and smell—allow for awareness across greater distances. Therefore, all five senses work together to help living beings notice changes in their surroundings or function as tools for measuring changes in the spatial dimension.

EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE IS MODERN

WE HAVE ALL JOKINGLY ASKED, "can an apple seed grow into a cherry blossom?" Of course not, not immediately. But it is possible for an apple seed to grow into a cherry tree, or even thousands of different types of trees, if given enough time. This is because all living things, including plants, are constantly evolving. Over millions of years, small changes can accumulate to produce large differences.

For example, a simple single-celled organism can evolve into a complex multicellular organism like a human being. The same idea applies to plants. Apple trees, for example, have changed over time to produce various kinds of apples, from sweet to sour. If we wait long enough, it's possible that an apple tree could eventually produce something like a cherry blossom.

It's essential to understand that evolution isn't like a ladder, with some life forms being better or worse than others. Instead, it's about small changes and mutations that build up over long periods. This process led from

simple single-celled organisms to more complex forms, eventually resulting in multicellular life. From that one original life form, a huge variety of living beings emerged, including bacteria, fungi, fish, crabs, snails, whales, plants, trees, humans, monkeys, deer, tigers, and millipedes. The questions and puzzles that people in the past struggled with often stemmed from not fully understanding this slow transformation that happens over millions of years. This journey shows a key truth: living beings can adapt and thrive in a wide range of environments. It doesn't mean that the life of an apple tree is inherently better, while that of a pumpkin is inferior, or that being in the form of a worm is incorrect, while being a butterfly is right. These kinds of rankings (or hierarchies) are just human ideas we impose on nature. The differences among living beings aren't indications of superiority or inferiority; they're simply different ways of being alive in the world.

From the perspective of life, humans are just one among millions of life forms. And like all other life forms, there are billions of ways to live; this ability of existence made it possible for all kinds of life forms to exist. To survive, living beings adapt to their environments or even change them in interesting ways. For example, consider beavers constructing dams. These industrious creatures modify their environment by building complex structures using logs and branches to create dams across streams and rivers. By creating these structures, they turn streams

and rivers into artificial ponds, which offer them protection and a reliable food source. This not only changes the landscape but also makes it a better place for beavers to live, helping them to thrive in their environment.

Humans are different from every other living thing, just like each of those living things is different from one another. But that doesn't mean we are the best or the most evolved. Every single organism, whether it's a plant, tree, bacterium, insect, fish, bear, or elephant, is just as much a product of evolution as we are. They're all modern living beings. We shouldn't think of ourselves as "modern" while labeling others as "primitive." In the great tree of life, each species is like the tip of its own branch, and no branch is more important than another. Every existing living being is a victor in their own way of existence. Just because one species is successful at one point in time doesn't mean it will always be. The traits or abilities that help a species survive in one environment can become a disadvantage in another. This can even lead to the extinction of species that once lived for millions of years.

Take cyanobacteria, for example, also known as blue-green algae. These tiny organisms were among the first to produce oxygen through photosynthesis, a process that played a crucial role in changing Earth's atmosphere about 2.4 billion years ago. While cyanobacteria were

successful in producing oxygen, that very oxygen became a problem for many of them. As the levels of oxygen in the atmosphere rose, it created stressful and toxic conditions for them. Many cyanobacteria couldn't adapt to these changes and faced extinction.

The same holds true for Woolly Mammoths. As the Ice Age came to an end around 10,000 years ago, the climate started to warm up quickly. The vast, cold grasslands where they thrived began to disappear, replaced by forests and wetlands. The adaptations that had helped them survive in the cold now made it harder for them to find food and shelter. Their large size, once an advantage, became a disadvantage in the new climate. Although hunting by humans contributed to their extinction, the main reason was the drastic climate change. When we think about life and its surroundings, it's helpful to remember that while life began in favorable conditions, it also has an amazing ability to change those conditions to better suit itself. As life evolved into countless forms, one species often became the environment for another. Once we understand life in this way, it becomes clear that the variety of life on Earth actually shapes the conditions each living being needs to survive. This blurs the lines between what we consider "life" and its "circumstances," showing that as life continues to evolve, these distinctions aren't as important as they might seem.

COOPERATION IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON

For many who have looked around and pondered life, the most visible feature of life appears to be the competitive survival struggles between complex life forms (for e.g.; animals fighting for food and territory). They regarded this as the most fundamental aspect of life. But in the world of basic single celled organisms, we discover that, instead of competition, 'cooperation' is life's most prominent factor. Without realizing this fact, human beings have viewed life only as a competition among different species.

However, if you look deeply and carefully into life, you will discover that it was largely cooperative, rather than competitive in nature. In fact, all multicellular life forms are the result of single-celled life forms cooperating with each other. If we look at it in another way, complex life forms can be viewed as 'vehicles' created to enhance the survival of single-celled life forms.

Consider the billions of gut microbes residing in our stomachs. When we get sick with something like

dysentery, it's tough to identify and get rid of the exact harmful germs because we don't have antibiotics that only target those bad microbes. Instead, we use broad-spectrum antibiotics that wipe out both the harmful ones and the helpful ones. That's why we often lose our appetite when we're ill; the beneficial bacteria in our stomachs play a key role in regulating our hunger. This highlights how much we depend on these tiny creatures, even for something as basic as feeling hungry. So, while it might seem like life is a struggle, it's actually more like a complicated team effort.

We often believe that our decisions about eating and satisfying our hunger are entirely our own, but we're unaware of the small creatures in our stomachs that are looking up and laughing at us for actually making us crave. These tiny beings rely on the food we eat to survive. When they need food, they send signals through chemicals that enter our bloodstream and reach our brain, creating feelings of hunger or cravings. So, when we eat to satisfy our hunger, we're also feeding these little organisms—making it nearly impossible for us to distinguish between our own hunger and theirs.

Now, consider the case of a rabid dog. This poor animal feels compelled to bite others, which ultimately leads to its own demise. The rabies virus in the dog's brain drives this aggressive biting behavior to spread itself to new hosts, using the dog's saliva as a way to infect others.

Each bite allows the virus to jump to another animal, ensuring its survival. While we often label this situation as a “brain disease,” the virus doesn’t care whose brain it inhabits; it just wants to spread. Although we tend to blame the dog for its behavior, both the dog and the animals it bites are really victims of the virus. The true villain here is the virus itself, which manipulates the dog to further its own existence.

Life on Earth can be compared to a giant tree. The trunk symbolizes the simplest life forms, like single-celled organisms, while the branches represent more complex creatures, including humans. Although branches can grow, shrink, or even die, the trunk largely remains unchanged. Even if several branches (or species) disappear, the trunk (which represents life) continues. So, when we mourn the extinction of certain species, we are merely spectators who fail to see the trunk and only see the trees for the forest.

Likewise, when people worry about the end of the world, they’re really worried about the end of their ‘little world’. They’re scared of losing the life they know. But life itself will go on, even if it looks different. Single-celled organisms have been here for billions of years and can survive in the harshest conditions that would be lethal to multicellular beings. They are the true survivors of this planet and will remain long after we are gone. Compared to them, humans are newcomers—a mere

blip in the grand scheme of life. We have only been around for a few hundred million years. If complex multicellular animals ever need to humble themselves, it should be in the presence of these simple single-celled organisms, the true foundation of life. When we compare the ability of single cellular organisms to sustain life anywhere in the universe with that of multicellular beings, we find the latter to be a big zero. In the extreme depths of the ocean or amid the fiery eruption of magma at the sea's bottom, where conditions are so harsh that they defy our usual criteria for life—such as the presence of oxygen or the ability to avoid death—single-celled organisms not only survive but thrive. Their resilience in environments where neither air nor water exists is truly remarkable. These microorganisms can endure the extreme temperatures of hydrothermal vents deep underwater, withstand the freezing cold of the Arctic, and even survive the vacuum of space.

In contrast, multicellular organisms, including humans, are very sensitive to even slight changes in their environment. For instance, if the Earth's temperature shifted by more than ten degrees, over 90% of complex species could face rapid extinction. Unlike resilient single-celled organisms, we and other complex life forms can only exist in a very narrow and often unstable range of conditions. Therefore, when we think about what “life” means, we should remember the incredible

resilience of single-celled organisms and their essential role in the broader picture of existence.

As mentioned, multicellular organisms arose when single-celled life forms began to work together. This collaboration continues even inside our cells. For instance, mitochondria, the energy factories of our cells, were once independent but now function together within cells. Cooperation isn't just a microscopic phenomenon; it also occurs on a larger scale in the animal kingdom. Take ants and fungi as a classic example of mutual benefit: ants cultivate fungus for food, while the fungus gets protection in return. Social insects like bees, ants, and termites take cooperation to the next level, with distinct roles for each member and a division of labor. These insects are biologically programmed for these roles, which are essential for their survival. They never ponder questions like "Who am I?" or "What are my responsibilities?" They are even willing to sacrifice their lives for the good of the colony. Unlike humans, they do not receive credit for their sacrifices, and no monuments are built in their honor 😊.

However, not all species have such clear roles, yet opportunities for cooperation still exist. For instance, wolves hunt together in packs, elephants help each other find food and water, and lions collaborate to hunt and care for their young. Humans, too, work together to build homes or raise children. This tendency to

cooperate is a natural trait of species that live in groups; it evolved as an innate necessity, not because some saints preached it as a virtue. It is an inherent trait we are born with. If you were to preach the benefits of teamwork to lions and wolves, they would likely agree. Tigers, on the other hand, would laugh at the idea; they pride themselves on being solitary hunters and defenders of their territory. A tiger might argue, "Why should I share my prey if I catch it myself? It's better to do everything by myself."

It was not long ago that the lion and tiger species were separated as two distinct species. They wouldn't mate in the wild, but if placed together in captivity, they could reproduce—though their offspring would be sterile. This particular trait shows that they have not yet totally separated as two different species, but are still in the process of being separated as two totally different species. This explains why lions and tigers have such different attitudes towards cooperation and individuality.

In a lion pride, the alpha male, usually the strongest, gets to eat first after a hunt, followed by the other members. This right to eat the hunt is determined by strict hierarchical differences based on age and strength rather than equality or fairness to those who participated in the hunt. Similarly, humans also went through periods where strict hierarchies were the norm. Many social

animals struggle with balancing individual desires against group needs. If any of these animals tried to create a fair and just society like humans have, they would face an identity crisis, asking questions like, "Who am I?" and a value crisis, questioning, "What are my duties?" would arise. They would need their own versions of prophets or holy texts, similar to the Bhagavad Gita, the Qur'an, or the Bible, which would inevitably confuse them all 😊.

BIRTH, DEATH AND SEX

The saying "Everything that is born will die" is a belief that many people have accepted for ages, supported by saints and philosophers. It's seen as a universal truth, something most don't question. However, when we examine the world of single-celled organisms, we find a different story. These tiny organisms do not experience death. Instead, they grow, mature, and reproduce by dividing into two. Death for these organisms only occurs if they are killed or consumed. Without the invention of antibiotics, single-celled organisms could continue to live indefinitely, avoiding the immutable law of death.

Even in more complex multicellular life, like a hibiscus plant, this deathless pattern can be seen. If you cut a piece from a hibiscus stem and plant it, it will grow into a new, healthy plant. Even if the original plant dies or is removed, the new one continues to live. This observation indeed challenges the beliefs of the wise and enlightened of old, who believed in the existence of a separate "life force" within us that ceases to exist when we die. According to them, this life force comes from

somewhere, resides in our bodies, and eventually departs, much like changing clothes or houses. But if such a force existed, it should also apply to the hibiscus plant. If the original plant dies, shouldn't its new offspring die too? Since that's not what happens, it's clear that no such force exists.

The process by which an organism replicates itself and then ceases to exist, rather than continuing to multiply, is referred to as "death." Death is a fundamental strategy that has allowed life to evolve into complex, multicellular organisms. In contrast to single-celled organisms like bacteria, which do not experience death because the parent cell continues to live on as two new cells after binary fission, multicellular organisms face the reality of death due to the wear and tear of their cells over time—a phenomenon known as aging.

However, it's important to note that not all complex animals die as a result of aging in the way we think of. For example, crocodiles do not exhibit noticeable signs of aging until they are very old. What's particularly intriguing about crocodiles is that they do not die from biological aging. Instead, they keep growing throughout their lives and typically die from accidents, diseases, or predators. This happens because they experience "negligible senescence," meaning their cells don't break down as quickly as other animal's do, allowing them to maintain their biological functions for longer.

Complex multicellular animals have developed an extraordinary method known as "sexual reproduction." This process involves the fusion of genetic material from two individuals of the same species, leading to the creation of new offspring with a blend of traits from both parents. This technique not only contributes to the diversity of traits within a species but also helps in the evolution and adaptation of life forms.

Sex and death are deeply connected and essential parts of life on Earth. Over time, living things have developed and improved these processes or to overcome them altogether, making them vital for the survival of different species. One interesting aspect of this relationship is that those who engage in the act of procreation need not be overly concerned about their own mortality. For their genetic legacy to end, their descendants must also refrain from producing offspring. This innate desire of a living being to transcend the limitations of death may explain why parents are deeply invested in their children's futures, often encouraging or even forcing them to marry and have children. This is also why grandparents are often so happy to see their grandchildren; it's as if they can see their own lives continuing through the next generation. Knowing that their family will carry on their genetic information can bring a sense of peace about their own mortality.

A fascinating parallel to the process of reproduction is the concept of cloning, which involves creating identical copies of organisms once they reach maturity. Cloning is often viewed with fear and is mistakenly perceived as a modern invention by our "frightening" scientists, but in reality, cloning has been part of nature for ages. Every cell in an organism has the ability to create life, which is the basis of cloning. The fear surrounding cloning is largely due to its perceived threat to the deeply cherished and enjoyable act of sexual reproduction. If not for this perceived threat, there would be little reason for concern.

For instance, identical twins—who result from a natural form of cloning—are usually met with curiosity rather than fear. But, it's important to understand that identical twins, though they start with the same genetic blueprint, are not truly identical as individuals. As they grow and develop over the next two decades, each twin becomes a distinct person with unique personalities and interests. These differences emerge as a result of various factors, including their personal experiences and the environments in which they are raised.

Therefore, despite their similar genetic makeup, identical twins can never truly become identical individuals. This understanding can help clear up the misconception that cloning could exactly replicate a

person's complex personality, such as that of Adolf Hitler. Such misunderstandings arise from the mistaken belief in the existence of a "soul" contained within our bodies—an entity that is born, lives, dies, and perhaps ascends to heaven or descends to hell. This belief in the soul is an ancient concept that originated from our limited understanding of the complex biological and psychological processes that shape who we are. Science has shown us that identity is shaped by far more than just genetics—it's influenced by many external factors, too.

However, the technique of sexual reproduction, which mixes and reshuffles genes, gives animals an evolutionary edge over cloning. While cloning can allow organisms to reproduce without a partner, it has its own downsides. For instance, if a female lizard were to arrive on an isolated island on a floating log, she wouldn't face the same challenges as the daughters of Lot from the biblical story. In that tale, the daughters faced the dire situation of not being able to find males, leading them to intoxicate their father in a bid to ensure their own pregnancies. In contrast, an asexual female lizard on the island wouldn't encounter such difficulties because she could simply clone herself to create offspring, all of whom would be females. Soon enough, the island would be filled with her identical daughters. But cloning has its risks. If a virus or bacteria infects one of the cloned lizards, the whole group could be in trouble.

Since they're all genetically identical, diseases can spread rapidly among them, putting the entire population at risk of extinction. This lack of genetic diversity means that there's no built-in protection against infections that would normally exist in a more varied group.

In contrast, animals that reproduce sexually benefit from a powerful survival strategy. When two individuals mate, their offspring get a mix of traits from both parents, which creates a diverse set of characteristics. This genetic variety helps the offspring fight off infections better because viruses often find it difficult to target such a varied population. Some offspring might naturally be resistant to certain diseases, and those survivors can pass their defenses down to their young. This ability to resist infections has been crucial for the success and survival of complex life forms throughout history.

So, sexual reproduction plays a vital role in the survival of multicellular life by providing genetic diversity and a range of defenses against diseases. Contrary to what many might think, sex isn't just about pleasure. Instead, the enjoyment that comes with it is a clever strategy developed by nature. This pleasure encourages complex organisms to seek out mates, ensuring their species continues. The motivation to engage in sexual activity not only drives reproduction but also helps create diverse and resilient life forms. By boosting genetic

diversity, sexual reproduction helps organisms adapt to new challenges and resist diseases, making it a key part of evolution.

WHO CREATED GOD?

For any thoughtful individual, one of the most fundamental questions is, "How was the world created?" But even the curiosity to ask this question has a reason behind it. The earliest evidence of human burials dates back to the Middle Paleolithic period, around 120,000 years ago. This suggests that early humans had some awareness of death. If they understood death, it's likely they also wondered what happened to the deceased—whether they simply ceased to exist or if they went somewhere else?

This capacity for asking such profound questions marked a significant turning point in human history. It showed that humans were not just animals who reacted to their environment, but that they were also capable of abstract thought. They could ponder the meaning of life and death and question the origins of the world around them.

As humans began crafting tools and other items (something as simple as constructing an ornament out of seashells), even though many other species (such as

ant's, bees, and others) had earlier begun to do so, they had never attained the same levels as what humans had done. This gave rise to the belief that if something is "made," there must be a "creator" or a "cause" behind it. That is how and why the historical question "Who created this world?" emerged. After many years of their hectic search, as no answer could be conclusively arrived at about the 'first cause', humans have developed this concept of an unknown or even unknowable creator. In the absence of an understanding that the 'universe just is', this was the most plausible conclusion they could reach. Therefore, in any developed society—where cultures are engaged in understanding the world through cause-and-effect relationships—we find a similar concept of a Creator.

However, if we examine the nature of this creator, we will see that we have created a God in human form, or with human emotions such as anger, vengeance, and jealousy—in other words, anthropomorphic gods. From this, we can understand that God did not create man in God's image; rather, we created God in man's image. Beyond the human need to find a creator in a 'beginningless universe', there is no real necessity for a creator to explain the natural laws of the universe. In a world without beginnings, the human desire for a starting point has led to the creation of a "Grand Beginner." However, this introduces an endless loop of questioning: Who created the creator? And who created

the creator's creator? Such questions only serve to stifle rather than satisfy the seeker's curiosity.

Looking closely at how gods are depicted in different cultures shows us a lot about the societies that created them. This is why different parts of the world have come up with various kinds of gods. When we look at how people think about gods in different cultures, it's clear that these divine figures reflect the characteristics of the people who worship them. For example, a tribe struggling for survival might develop gods known for making harsh and decisive judgments. The God from the Old Testament serves as a good example of this, often shown as vengeful and ready to punish those who disobey. This god represents the "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" mentality and is even depicted as destroying entire cities, like Sodom and Gomorrah, with what could be compared to "napalm bombs" when people disobey Him.

Throughout history, many gods were invented as instruments for tribal vengeance. Weaker tribes often believed their gods would intervene in conflicts, bringing death to their enemies through incarnations, causing diseases, sending magical weapons, or even creating accidents. By attributing violent acts to the will of these gods, people were relieved of personal responsibility for their violence and guilt, as the gods were seen as accountable for these actions. Thus, in

religious texts and epics, gods are frequently depicted performing acts that are considered immoral or 'ungodly.' As societies advanced and their notions of justice evolved, so too did the concept of god. For example, during the time of Jesus Christ, the idea of God shifted towards one centered around love and compassion. Today, some view God as synonymous with "scientific knowledge."

We've already discussed how ancient ideas like life-force, mind, and soul were developed to help us understand how the brain works. These concepts are so ingrained in our language and culture that we often treat them like they are real things, even though they aren't. It's crucial to recognize that these ideas serve as a foundation for our languages, but they don't represent physical realities.

For example, while we know that the mind is just a way to describe what the brain does, we still talk about the 'mind' as if it's a separate part of our body. Phrases like 'mindful,' 'mindless,' 'never mind,' and 'mind it' are commonly used in our daily conversations. However, we must remember that these terms are simply concepts and not things we can physically find. If we were to look inside the human body, we wouldn't actually locate the 'mind' or 'soul.' It's not that they're hard to find; it's just that they are abstract ideas rather than physical entities.

Essentially, the mind is the result of how the brain functions—in other words, the mind is what the brain does. There is no “you” controlling your body; you are your brain, and you are your body, and your brain is part of your body. There is no “you” separate from your body. “You” are not software running on brain hardware; “you” are the brain hardware. Similarly, the soul is a concept often used to refer to a person's spiritual or immaterial aspect, but there is no scientific evidence supporting its physical existence. If someone asks whether a soul or a god exists, we should explain that they exist in the same way that a mile or kilometer exists—only as conceptual ideas.

In today's world, these ideas are becoming increasingly less useful. When people pray to entities like souls or gods, they are essentially seeking help from something that does not exist. This is no different from asking for help from a milestone. Milestones are merely markers of distance along roads and do not possess any sentient qualities. Although many people share stories about receiving help from souls or gods, these are just stories and do not provide evidence of the existence of these concepts. Similarly, while there may be stories of milestones offering help, all we can do is laugh at such tales. Like the ongoing legend of Bigfoot, these stories will continue to circulate and entertain us.

THE CONTINENTAL DRIFT

A LOT OF WHAT ANIMALS DO MIGHT SEEM downright irrational at first glance, and understanding the reasons behind their behaviors can be even more challenging. Take loggerhead sea turtles, for example. These creatures, which live on the African continent, undertake a remarkable journey across the vast Atlantic Ocean to lay their eggs on beaches in the Americas. After nesting, they swim all the way back to Africa, covering nearly 2,000 miles each way. How can we make sense of this behavior? What drives them to embark on such a long and arduous journey? For a long time, scientists were puzzled by this behavior. It wasn't until we delved into the Earth's geological history that the answer began to emerge.

A long time ago, someone noticed that the shapes of the African and American continents seemed to fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. This observation led him to propose that these continents were once part of a single supercontinent, which he named Pangaea. He shared his theory with friends and fellow geologists, but they dismissed his idea with laughter, and considered it

nonsense. They believed that continents were fixed in place and couldn't move. It wasn't until about fifty years later that scientists started to accept the theory of continental drift, which was first introduced by Alfred Wegener in 1912. At the time, Wegener was not a geologist, which contributed to the skepticism and ridicule he faced from his peers. Unfortunately, Wegener continued to be mocked by geologists until his death.

Despite the initial rejection, the theory of continental drift gained renewed interest when scientists began to observe similarities between the flora and fauna of Africa and South America. These similarities provided evidence suggesting that the two continents were once connected. By the 1960s, new technologies, like seismography, allowed scientists to better understand what's happening inside the Earth. They found out that the Earth's interior is molten rock, and its outer layer is made up of tectonic plates that are in constant motion. These plates can collide, slide past one another, or move apart. When two plates collide, one may be pushed beneath the other, which can cause earthquakes. If the subducted plate is pushed deep enough, it can melt and contribute to volcanic eruptions. When plates collide head-on, they can both be pushed upwards, forming mountain ranges.

For instance, the Alps were created by the collision of the African and Eurasian plates. Similarly, the Himalayas were formed when the Indian plate drifted north from Africa and collided with the Eurasian plate around 50 million years ago. The Himalayas are still growing today, slowly getting taller at about the same rate that your fingernails grow—roughly 1 centimeter per year. Thanks to modern technology, we can now measure how fast mountains like these are growing, which helps us understand how the Earth's surface has changed over millions of years.

However, as soon as a mountain starts to rise, it starts to be eroded by four main forces: wind, rain, snow, and earthquakes. These natural forces work together over time to gradually break down the mountain, little by little, day after day. If the tectonic movements that push the mountain up stop, erosion will eventually cause it to shrink or even disappear. Geological evidence shows that Earth's continents have moved towards and away from each other three times in the past 4.5 billion years, since Earth's formation. The last supercontinent, Pangaea, began breaking apart around 130 million years ago, leading to the formation of the Atlantic Ocean.

Another interesting process involves magma, which is hot, molten rock that comes up from beneath the Earth's surface. When this magma cools and mixes with water at the ocean floor, it turns into solid rock. This

process is known as seafloor spreading, and it is making the Atlantic Ocean gradually wider over time. As the ocean expands, the continents of North America and Africa drift farther apart from each other. On the flip side, when two continents collide or push against each other, one of them can slide under the other in a process called subduction. The continent that gets pushed down eventually melts back into magma. This creates a big problem for scientists who study fossils. Fossils are the preserved remains of ancient plants and animals, and they help researchers learn about the history of life on Earth. Unfortunately, when a continent is subducted, all of its fossils are destroyed in the process, making it harder for scientists to piece together the past.

Continental drift is a slow and ongoing process that has been happening for millions of years. It has continuously reshaped the continents and influenced the distribution of life across the globe. For example, sea turtles that once lived on the coast of Africa are now found on the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean. About 110 million years ago, sea turtles on the African coast would swim across a river to lay their eggs on the other side. This journey was risky but necessary for finding safe places away from predators.

Over millions of years, as the continents drifted apart, this river widened and eventually became the Atlantic Ocean. At that time, the Atlantic was narrower, so the

turtles could still make the journey. As the Atlantic Ocean continued to widen, the turtles became separated from each other. This isolation prevented interbreeding, leading to the development of new species through a process known as speciation. Over time, the turtles on each side of the Atlantic adapted to their specific environments, evolving into distinct species.

The word "*Achala*" in Sanskrit means "immovable". Ancient Hindu texts, such as the Upanishads and Vedas, were said to have been revealed to sages meditating on these "immovable mountains." But we have already seen mountains aren't truly fixed in place; they can grow, flatten, or even disappear over time due to tectonic activities and weathering. And then we've got the Quran, which describes mountains as being cast upon the Earth by God to stabilize it. God placed mountains on the Earth like nails to hold it down, as if the planet might float away otherwise. Again, this belief is incorrect. Instead of contributing to the Earth's stability, the tectonic forces responsible for creating mountains can also cause earthquakes, leading to shifts in the Earth's crust. The actual stability of our planet comes from gravity, not from mountains. This means that the people who authored these texts did not have any understanding of the nature of mountains.

We all know that around three-fourths of the Earth is covered in water, with the remaining one-quarter being

land. If you were to measure from anywhere on the surface of the Earth down to its center, that distance is about 6,378 kilometers (or 3,963 miles). The deepest part of the ocean, known as the Mariana Trench, is only about 10.9 kilometers (6.8 miles) deep. That leaves a massive 6,368 kilometers (3,956 miles) of solid earth between the ocean floor and the Earth's core. This means that, when you really think about it, the Earth is fundamentally made up of land, with about 71% of its surface just covered by water. This water is merely a thin layer on top of a solid foundation. In ancient times, this relatively small layer of water was often referred to as the "Great Waters," leading them to believe that the world was mostly made up of seas and oceans, like in the myths about the primeval ocean or the early Babylonian maps.

From an individual perspective, the ocean is indeed vast, deep, and terrifying. Today, however, the ocean does not hold the same fearsome reputation it once did for our ancestors. We now explore its depths with submarines and enjoy leisurely voyages on cruise ships. The ocean has become a destination for holidays and adventure rather than a place of fear.

Likewise, a long time ago, people also believed that there were gigantic sea monsters lurking in the depths of the ocean. They thought these creatures were so massive they could dwarf even the largest animals we know today. But now, we now know that the largest animals

in the ocean are whales, which live closer to the surface of the water. This is because the deeper we go into the ocean, the animals we encounter get smaller because the pressure increases with depth, making it tough for large creatures to survive.

The beliefs held by ancient civilizations about mountains, oceans, and the creatures living in them were shaped by the limited knowledge they had back then. Thanks to modern science, we understand that these beliefs were false. However, they still offer us valuable insights into how people of the past perceived the world around them. These views were products of their time and place, reflecting the understanding they had based on the limited information available to them.

The saints of ancient times had a pastime of filling ignorance with various assumptions of different types, kinds, and hues. It is important to understand that they had limited options back then and were not trying to deceive anyone; they were simply trying to make sense of the world using the best information available to them. Thus, we should approach the study of ancient human history with a spirit of tolerance and understanding.

However, today, those who use science to clear away these old misconceptions face a dual challenge. First, they must educate others to recognize these assumptions

and stories as myths rooted in old worldviews. Second, they must offer scientific explanations for phenomena that were once considered inexplicable. Note that this is a long and ongoing effort, as people tend to hold onto traditional mythologies and feel nostalgic about outdated ways of life. Additionally, those who rely on ancient worldviews and belief systems for their livelihoods will vehemently oppose the spread of scientific knowledge. Therefore, caution and vigilance are necessary when sharing this information.

TERRITORIAL SENSE AND THE SENSE OF IDENTITY

IMAGINE YOU'RE ON A BUS. You're the first passenger to board, and naturally, you choose a window seat. The next person to get on also opts for a window seat but makes sure to sit as far away from you as possible, even if there are closer empty seats. Each subsequent passenger follows suit, picking a window seat that's the furthest from the others. Eventually, someone boards the bus to find all the window seats taken. If it's a row with three seats, this person chooses the aisle seat, leaving the middle seat empty. However, if it's a row with only two seats, they reluctantly sit beside another passenger.

Now, let's imagine a different scenario. The second person to board the bus decides to sit right next to you, despite the abundance of empty seats. This situation makes you feel uncomfortable, almost as if they've invaded your personal space. You might even feel irritated, though you might not express it openly. In your mind, you wonder why this person didn't choose a seat further away. Even if the seat next to you is booked

as reserved, you'd accept it reluctantly but still question why they couldn't wait until the bus started moving to sit down. We often perceive these actions as encroachments on our personal freedom and liberty. Such "infringements" can happen in various aspects of life. Our instinctual reaction to these perceived intrusions on our personal space and territory is known as the "territorial feeling." The bus scenario is a classic example of territoriality, the tendency of animals (including humans) to mark and defend their territory. On the bus, the seats represent our territory. When we board the bus and take a seat, we claim it as our own. We may not say anything, but we expect others to respect our space and not sit too close. When someone sits next to us despite other empty seats being available, it feels like our territory is being invaded. This can make us feel uncomfortable and even threatened.

Territoriality is a natural instinct that all living beings possess. It's a way of marking our space and asserting it as our own. That's why we often experience unease when someone chooses to sit next to us on a bus, even if there are other empty seats available. It serves as a fundamental indicator of life itself. Whether it be in the animal kingdom or human society, this instinctual urge to demarcate and safeguard our space resonates universally. We can observe this territorial behavior in various aspects of life, extending beyond bus rides.

This territorial feeling is not merely a personal preference; it is deeply rooted in our biology. Studies have shown that when people's personal space is invaded, their heart rate and blood pressure increase, and they produce more stress hormones. In some cases, territorial behavior can signify social dominance. For example, a dominant male lion marks his territory by urinating on trees or bushes, warning other lions to stay away.

Now, consider a different scenario on the bus: instead of a stranger, the second person to board is a close friend or relative. If they choose a window seat further away from us, we may feel irritated and left out. We might even begin to question if something is wrong, suspecting our friend is intentionally creating distance. To resolve these unsettling emotions, we may call out to our friend and ask them to sit next to us. This reaction stems from our innate territorial sense that cares more about people close to us in our groups than those further away.

The concept of territory plays a fundamental role in our lives, giving us a sense of ownership or possessive feeling over what we consider "ours." This sense of ownership extends to various aspects of life, including familial relationships ("our father," "our mother," "our brother," "our sister"), physical belongings ("our house" "our car"), social connections ("our family," "our village,"

"our tribe"), cultural affiliations ("our caste," "our religion"), socioeconomic status ("our class"), and political allegiances ("our party," "our country").

This sense of territory isn't unique to humans; it extends to all living creatures. It's a fundamental instinct that drives our behavior, leading to both cooperation and conflict. Contrary to what many believe, our interactions are not primarily shaped by factors like caste, creed, class, or nationality. Instead, they are influenced by a basic sense of belonging to an "in-group" versus an "out-group," distinguishing between "us" and "them." This territorial instinct is what manifests in various ways, including distinctions of caste, religion, class, nationality, language, age, gender, skin color, or even attire. These markers help define our perceived in-group and out-group, shaping the core of our social dynamics.

Consider a crowded bus scenario. As more people board, each trying to maintain their personal space, the growing crowd forces them closer together. As each individual's sense of territory is increasingly encroached upon, irritation and frustration rise. There comes a point when this tension reaches a threshold, leading to chaos. Someone will likely express frustration about why the bus hasn't departed yet, or a collective decision might be made to stop allowing more passengers on because the bus is full. At this moment, the passengers

inside the bus unite as a group, and those outside become the "them."

Imagine a group of friends on a bus, heading to a fun picnic. If everyone on the bus is a friend, squeezing together to make space for one another is often met with goodwill. We might even invite a friend to sit on our lap or share our seat. However, if those on the bus are strangers, we might feel annoyed and uncomfortable with the close proximity. A stranger might smell unpleasant or feel sticky, exacerbating our discomfort, unlike a friend who might have the same attributes. In all these scenarios, the sense of "us" versus "them" subtly influences our emotional state. Even a preacher who consistently preaches about loving one's neighbor as oneself might become irritated if someone steps on his toe in the crowded bus. Initially, he might politely request that they be careful and watch their step, but if the stomping continues, a stern gaze and a growl will follow. Should the toe-stomping occur a third time, all his patience and "teachings" will be gone.

When the bus begins its journey, something interesting happens. Passengers start to see themselves as part of a collective group—"we, the bus passengers"—despite being strangers and possessing diverse backgrounds encompassing caste, creed, class, politics, gender, age, and education, which would normally be grounds for conflict, they find themselves united under this shared

identity as bus passengers, even with people we don't know. In the event of a collision with another bus, the passengers would instinctively band together against the other bus's occupants, viewing them as the enemy. Our identities are constantly evolving, shaped by our experiences and interactions, branching out from our fundamental territorial instincts. New identities will continue to form over old identities. Some identities will become stronger, while others will become weaker or dormant.

Generally, it is often believed that society is created when individuals come together. However, the truth is that no one starts life as an isolated individual in a forest and later creates society. Instead, everyone is born as a dependent child, reliant on the care and nurturing of others. It takes at least 18 years of guidance and support for a child to become self-sufficient. Society encompasses various segments of people, ranging from the most helpless infants to the most vulnerable elderly individuals. From the moment we are born, we are part of a community or tribe that consists of these diverse sections. We are never isolated individuals from the start. This tribal sense of belonging, rooted in family, creed, and caste, persists throughout our lives.

ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE?

MIRACLES HAVE Long Been a subject of fascination and debate among people across the globe. From religious scriptures to personal anecdotes, countless stories recount seemingly extraordinary occurrences that defy scientific explanation. Many of these accounts hinge on eyewitness testimonies, individuals claiming to have personally observed an event defying natural laws. While these narratives can be seducing, they also raise questions about the reliability of eyewitness accounts themselves.

In any court of law, eyewitness testimony is often considered to be the most valuable form of evidence. After all, our sight is arguably our most crucial sense. Typically, when someone claims to have witnessed an event firsthand, it's often considered sufficient proof without additional supporting evidence. However, within a legal context, corroborative evidence carries equal importance to that of an eyewitness account. So, an individual simply stating "I saw it with my own eyes" doesn't guarantee validity and isn't enough; additional details, circumstantial evidence, are crucial for the

observation to carry legal weight. For example, if someone admits to a crime, simply saying "I did it" isn't enough to establish guilt or innocence. The court demands specific details: how the act was committed, the weapons used, the victim's identity, location, timing, and motive. Only when all pieces of evidence are presented and logically connected can a fair and just verdict be reached. Otherwise, an eyewitness's testimony alone does not hold independent validity. Now, let's look at a few different situations to understand how universal physical laws apply to various scenarios.

As the police arrived on the scene, their suspect wasted no time in finding a hiding place. Spotting a nearby pond, he jumped in, fully aware that he couldn't remain there for long without coming up for oxygen. But he had a cunning plan up his sleeve – a foot-long pipe he'd brought along. The pond was surrounded by thick water weeds, which helped hide the pipe and keep him out of sight. Pulling out the foot-long pipe, he slipped one end into his mouth and used the other to discreetly draw fresh air from above the water surface. It was a risky move, but it paid off. After a tense few moments, the police gave up their search and left the area, unaware of the suspect's clever tactic. Later, when he shared his story with his buddies that this tactic had saved him, they were amazed at his ingenuity. His mates, all part of a well-known criminal gang, were immediately taken

with the idea of using pipes to evade capture. They started buying all sorts of long, bendy plastic pipes they could carry with them, just in case they needed a quick escape. Some of the lads went for long pipes, some up to ten feet. However, they didn't know the danger that awaited them. Tragically, many who tried to hide in the depths ended up dead, floating to the surface on the third day.

But what could have caused this? The length of the pipes was the critical factor. You see, someone using a foot-long pipe to breathe underwater can indeed survive, but those using a ten-foot pipe cannot. This is because the carbon dioxide from their breath cannot be pushed out of the longer pipe. After a while, the oxygen in the pipe runs out, and the CO₂ concentration continues to build up with each breath. As a result, none of them escaped death, even though they managed to evade the police.

Now, imagine a basket turned upside down and standing tall. At first glance, it appears to be a sturdy structure, capable of holding whatever you place on top. However, you need to consider the materials used to construct it and how they work together. If the balance between strength, weight, and size exceeds a certain threshold, the basket will inevitably collapse under its own weight due to gravity. Up to that point, the basket's stability depends entirely on a delicate balance of these

three factors. It's akin to a mathematical equation where each variable plays a crucial role in determining the final outcome. Even a slight change in any of these factors can significantly affect whether the basket remains upright. But what happens if that balance is disrupted and the basket can no longer support itself? In that case, the only solution is to add a central pillar for support. This support functions like a beam, holding up the basket from within and providing the reinforcement needed to prevent a complete collapse.

These examples—the pond, the pipe, and the basket—demonstrate a fundamental truth: universal laws and limitations apply to all systems, from the smallest organisms to the largest structures. Take the need for oxygen, for instance. Every living cell requires oxygen to survive, and different organisms have various methods for obtaining it. Some small creatures can absorb oxygen directly through their skin, but this method has its limits. This limitation is why insects like beetles and butterflies can't grow beyond a certain size. Their cells rely on diffusion to obtain oxygen, and as an organism grows, the distance between the surface and the innermost cells increases, making diffusion less efficient, like the bloke in the pond.

This phenomenon is known as the surface area-to-volume ratio problem. As organisms get larger, their volume increases faster than their surface area. This

means that oxygen and nutrients must travel farther to reach the innermost cells. Therefore, no matter how fantastic the "claim" may sound, a dragonfly the size of a helicopter could not exist, because its size would surpass the capacity of oxygen delivered through skin respiration. This physical limitation also applies to non-biological structures as well, like domes.

Beetles and other similar insects have mostly taken on the shape of a dome. They have a tough outer layer and soft inner cells. The tough outer layer is called the exoskeleton. The insect that has this exoskeleton always relies on direct breathing methods. Therefore, only by defying the "laws of nature" can a beetle grow to the size of a jumbo jet. This feat can only be achieved if they can overcome the previous two limitations by having a more efficient circulatory system, with a network of pipes to deliver nutrients and oxygen, and a supporting structure (or pillar), like vertebrae, to maintain its shape. Only then would they be able to grow to the size of a jumbo jet.

So, if someone claims to have seen a giant, helicopter-sized insect flying around, take it with a grain of salt. Even if these insects could somehow overcome their size limitations, they still wouldn't be able to fly because their wings would lack the muscle power needed to lift such a massive body—imagine trying to fly a double-decker bus with paper wings. You cannot mix and

match features from different creatures and expect them to work; it simply won't create a functional giant, nor will it produce a properly functioning machine, as evidenced by the fact that even the biggest birds are surprisingly lightweight. This means that there never was a fire-spitting dragon flying across the vast expanse of the earth. Even if thousands of such stories are widely circulated around the world, we can be certain that they never happened. Stories of saints levitating or walking on water are also just that—stories. No human has ever flown or walked on water.

In the world of science, claims that defy basic physical laws don't hold water. While unexplained events do occur, they are not necessarily proof of miracles. So, next time you hear a fantastical story, remember to keep your feet on the ground and your head out of the clouds, because giant, flying beetles and water-walking saints are just that—flights of fancy.

INVENTION OF AGRICULTURE & THE FORMATION OF CITY STATES

AROUND 10,000 YEARS AGO, HUMANS MADE a groundbreaking advancement in the Mediterranean region, an area often referred to as the "Fertile Crescent." This is where agriculture was first developed. This innovation enabled them to produce surplus food, which led to a dramatic population increase. As a result, people no longer had to move with the seasons in search of food. Instead, they began to settle in permanent communities. Over time, these communities evolved into complex civilizations, each with its own distinct culture and identity. Many of these early civilizations were named after the regions they inhabited, such as the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, the Egyptians along the Nile, the Greeks in the Aegean, the Romans in Italy, and the Indians on the Indian subcontinent.

Agriculture stands out as one of humanity's greatest inventions. It enabled us to grow enough food to feed a growing population, which in turn led to the development of civilizations, especially in areas near rivers that provided water for farming. However, this

major advancement came with serious downsides. While agriculture helped people thrive and build societies, it also had a major negative impact on the environment. In fact, no other invention has harmed the environment as much as farming has.

Early farming methods, like slash-and-burn, caused widespread destruction of forests, leaving behind large areas of barren land. The clearing of these forests, along with the domestication of animals like cows, goats, and sheep, led to significant damage to the environment. Over the last 7,000 years, humans have identified and bred almost all animals that can be domesticated, which has led to a huge increase in the human population.

With animal domestication, the food supply expanded, but competition for resources intensified. Tribes began raiding each other, stealing food and livestock, which they saw as valuable assets. The constant threat of raids led to the creation of organized systems for defending territory, eventually resulting in the formation of organized armies. These armies were responsible for protecting their resources and also for attacking rival tribes to seize their wealth.

It was agriculture that initiated the division of labor in society, or the distribution of work among members of a tribe. Initially, these raids focused on stealing livestock and valuable goods. But as conflicts grew, tribes began

capturing members of rival groups, leading to the practice of slavery.

This development created a clear social divide between the captors and the enslaved, laying the groundwork for a new hierarchical society. The captors formed an upper class, while the enslaved became a lower class. As more tribes were conquered, another layer was added to this hierarchy: members of a third tribe, who looked different, held different beliefs, and spoke different languages than the other two. These differences caused the first two tribes to view them as the lowest of the low, placing them at the very bottom of the social ladder. This established a clear class system with the captors at the top, slaves of the second tribe in the middle, and the third tribe at the bottom. This is how social classes and forced divisions of labor began to emerge in human societies.

As tribes merged and their societies became more complex, they eventually evolved into small kingdoms. However, as members of different tribes began to interact more inside these states, they also tried to maintain their distinct identities in order to avoid being consumed by the identities and beliefs of other tribes or the amorphous masses they brought in, or those regarded as second- or third-class citizens. This was because people wanted to maintain their unique identities and did not want to be assimilated into a

larger, more homogenous society. Even though cities and princely states were places where people from different backgrounds could come together, they also became breeding grounds for discrimination and segregation. People tended to align with those similar to themselves, favoring their own tribes over others, which is why we still see different identities and social divisions today. The idea of 'territorial feeling,' which was discussed in earlier chapters, is the foundation of these identities.

As city-states emerged from various tribes, the frequency of clashes, disputes, and discrimination increased. The kings ruling these states realized they needed a way to unite the different groups and encourage them to work together. Each tribe worshiped its own gods, which created a sense of belonging among its members but also sparked fights between tribes. To tackle this issue, new religious ideas started to emerge, combining elements from different tribal gods to create a sense of identity that went beyond individual tribal identities.

The kings began to promote a new religion centered on a single, all-powerful god. They encouraged the idea that everyone was equal in the eyes of this god, no matter which tribe they belonged to. This belief helped foster a sense of community among the people of the city-states, allowing them to see themselves as part of a larger group

rather than just separate tribes. However, this process of religious integration was not always easy. Conflicts frequently broke out as different tribes tried to establish their own gods as the top deity.

Although these early belief systems weren't as structured as the "prophetic religions" we know today, they still had a hierarchy with one main god. For example, in Greek mythology, Zeus was the chief god; in Scandinavian mythology, it was Thor; and in Indian mythology, it was Indra. These myths often featured battles among gods for supremacy, similar to how a strong king might eventually rise to become an emperor. These new religions helped unite different tribes into city-states by providing a common belief system.

It's important to note that simply believing in gods isn't the same as having a formal religion. Every tribe had its own gods, but these beliefs weren't always organized into a structured religion. For an organized religion to form, you typically need a charismatic leader who introduces new rituals, ceremonies, and rules. This leader's teachings and stories are then passed down through generations, both orally and in writing. Without such a leader, these beliefs remain informal and do not become an organized religion.

Additionally, for a religion to take hold, it often needs support from a powerful ruler who sees the benefits of a

unifying belief system for effective governance. Two notable historical figures who helped establish religions are emperor Ashoka, who spread Buddhism throughout India, and Constantine, who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Neither Buddha nor Jesus had created any religion, all credit goes to these two individuals.

As kingdoms expanded, they often replaced smaller tribal or ethnic identities with a unified religious identity. Throughout history, different regions and cultures have developed their own forms of monotheistic religions—faiths centered around the worship of one God (for example, Zoroastrianism, Judaism or Islam). These religions often helped unite rival tribes into one nation. However, as these kingdoms grew into powerful empires, they found themselves ruling over people with various monotheistic beliefs. To keep peace and unity within the empire, emperors had to decide which religion would be considered the “true” one. This was the dilemma faced by the Mughal emperor Akbar in the 16th century. Despite being a devout Muslim, Akbar tried to invent a new religion called “Din-i-Ilahi,” to solve this problem. Akbar understood that an inclusive faith, one that could incorporate elements from various faiths and promote harmony among his diverse subjects, was essential for maintaining order in his empire. But, the idea died with his demise.

Historically, people's identities were tied to their tribe, ethnicity, or caste, especially within large kingdoms. But as monotheistic religions became more prominent, these distinctions started to fade, with a stronger focus on the belief in one God. In today's world, as societies become more politically conscious, there are efforts to replace old monarchies with democratic systems. In these democratic nations, the idea is that everyone is an equal citizen, no matter their caste, creed, or religion. This shift means that citizenship has begun to take the place of old identities based on social status or faith. Today, while the nation represents the broadest circle of identity, people still have smaller circles based on religion, ethnicity, or tribe within the nation.

Although striving for unity and equality is commendable, it's important to remember that our territorial instinct to categorize people as "us" versus "them" won't ever completely disappear. Each of us has many layers of identity, and when one identity becomes dominant—like patriotism—other identities may lie dormant. However, these dormant identities can resurface when we encounter people who are different from us. This is why, even after centuries of integration, there is still a divide between the Scottish and Irish communities in England. The inherent sense of identity that distinguishes "the other" can bring these dormant identities to the forefront. Differences of opinion and interest, from individuals to nations, can also awaken

these dormant identities.

Therefore, we should not be surprised or shocked when we see or hear these dormant identities re-emerge. They are a part of who we are, and they will always be there. Even in the midst of a deep and loving relationship between a couple, these identities can resurface unexpectedly. So, we should expect these eruptions to happen, both within ourselves and within our societies and countries. It is, however, critical to be aware of them and manage them in a way that fosters cooperation and understanding.

THE CHANGING PARAMETERS

IN AN EARLIER CHAPTER, we discussed that the universe doesn't have a true beginning. However, the concept of beginnings is essential for humans. We need starting points to make sense of everything. This way of thinking can lead to problems, which we'll explore in more detail now.

Let's use distance as an example. If we're in London, we can measure how far away Paris, Madrid, Moscow, and other cities are. The distance from London to Paris is 373 kilometers, to Madrid is 1,264 kilometers, to Moscow is 2,509 kilometers, to New Delhi is 6,707 kilometers, to New York is 5,567 kilometers, to Sydney is 10,560 kilometers, and to San Francisco is 8,611 kilometers. But what if someone in Stockholm starts measuring distances from their city? They'll get different numbers because they're starting from a different location.

There's nothing inherently special about London. We simply chose it as our starting point. Once we pick a starting spot, it becomes the main reference point in our

minds for all measurements. It doesn't matter if it's London, Stockholm, or anywhere else—wherever we begin becomes “the starting point” for us. In the same way, ancient civilizations that developed ways to measure and map the world early on had an advantage over those that came up with these systems later.

This is why cultures that created methods for measuring and tracking time had gained power over others. It's like the saying, “All roads lead to Rome.” Rome was the center of the known world for a long time, so its way of doing things became the standard. When one culture declines or is overtaken by another, its original dates or eras lose their significance or are adopted by the conquering culture. The Romans were powerful, so their systems became widespread. This happened again when Europeans colonized the world. They made the Christian calendar the most important one, even though there are many other calendars, such as the Chinese, Jain, Zoroastrian, Egyptian, Jewish and Mayan calendars.

Other calendars, like those associated with Buddha or Mohammed, didn't gain the same global status because their empires didn't expand as widely as the Europeans. The same thing happened with time zones. The British decided that Greenwich, England, would be the center of time, and that's how we got Greenwich Mean Time. The International Date Line through the Pacific is

oddly shaped to accommodate these divisions.

Despite the Earth's continuous existence, there is no specific "beginning" of Earth or a particular day, month, or year. The Earth simply rotates, and we can't pinpoint the exact moment when it was formed from dust and debris in space. Humans created these concepts to help us understand the world around us. We divide the Earth into countries and cities, but animals don't care about these lines. Cities like London, Delhi, Beijing, and New York are just arbitrary boundaries on a map or artificial borders created on the Earth's surface. We needed these divisions to communicate and function as a society.

Unfortunately, we still use the measurement systems and concepts created by our ancestors, even if they're outdated or incorrect. It's hard to change because they're so deeply ingrained in our language and daily lives. However, just as the Christian era replaced other calendar systems, we can hope that science will eventually provide us with better ways to replace outdated and unscientific concepts, similar to how GMT was replaced with UTC (based on atomic clocks), even though GMT is still commonly used.

THE IDENTITY OF MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

HUMANS HAVE MANY DIFFERENT LAYERS of identities at the same time. These identities come from the places we live, the languages we speak, the groups we belong to, like our religion, culture, or country. The feeling of "I" and "Mine" creates attachments to these groups, leading to a variety of identities within a single person.

We carry these multiple identities, each with its own set of values and beliefs, which can sometimes lead to inner conflicts and confusion about which values to follow in different situations. For example, someone might be a loyal American, a devoted Catholic, and a passionate supporter of environmental causes. These different parts of their identity can sometimes conflict with each other. Should they prioritize their religion's views on a certain issue, or their country's policies? This struggle—deciding what's right or wrong when the answer isn't clear—is the inspiration behind countless works of art, literature, and movies around the world. It reflects how people wrestle with balancing their different identities

in a complex world where not everything is black and white.

Historically, tribal identities evolved into caste-based identities. Religious identity then unified these distinct tribal or caste identities within a country. In modern times, political identity, such as citizenship, attempts to bring together various religious identities to form a secular nation. Today, however, environmental and ecological concerns are pushing us toward a sense of global citizenship, moving beyond national identities.

Every person consists of multiple layers of identity. Once formed, an identity never truly disappears; it becomes dormant and resurfaces when triggered by external factors. For example, during a war, people might prioritize their national identity over other aspects of themselves. However, these old identities never truly vanish; they can resurface when something triggers them. Think of it like a chameleon: it can change color to blend in with its surroundings, but it still has the ability to change back. Similarly, we can emphasize different aspects of our identity depending on the situation.

We often look up to people we consider "great" and put them on a pedestal. However, these individuals are just like us—they have flaws and contradictions. When we witness their imperfections, we may feel disappointed

and say, "All that glitters is not gold." Yet, the truth is that we all have these same imperfections, and we might not realize that our own "glitter" may not be gold either. It's easy to blame others for problems, but often, the same issues exist within ourselves. For example, someone might criticize another person for being racist, but they might hold unconscious biases themselves. When someone feels they are being targeted because of their race or caste, they measure this based on their sense of identity. But we don't apply the same measurement to conflicts within a family or between siblings. Think of two siblings fighting over a toy. This conflict is often seen as simple sibling rivalry, not as something related to bigger societal issues like race or religion. Similarly, a disagreement between a husband and wife might be labeled as a 'gender issue' rather than just a personal disagreement.

Different parts of our identity can also lead to conflict with others as well. We naturally tend to favor our own groups and feel a sense of belonging to them, which can create an "us versus them" mentality. This explains why conflicts happen between countries, religions, or even within families. For instance, the rivalry between soccer teams can be seen as a small-scale version of this. Fans passionately support their team, seeing them as superior to others. While this is a harmless rivalry, it mirrors the same "us versus them" thinking that forms the basis of more serious and harmful conflicts. Conflicts such as

those between the Irish and the English, the French and the Germans, or between Saudi Arabia and Iran stem from this sense of territorial identity and the "us versus them" mentality. This natural inclination towards territoriality breeds various identities within us, and often, without realizing it, we use these identities to blame others.

Our world is full of interconnected relationships and overlapping identities. We can belong to many different groups at once. These groups can cooperate or compete, depending on the situation. Our sense of belonging to a group can change quickly. For example, countries that are enemies might suddenly become allies based on shared interests. Despite disagreements, such as international spying, countries can still come together on issues like the Iran nuclear deal or in response to global threats. Similarly, NATO countries may unite against a common threat when the UN is unable to curb aggressive actions by nations like Syria.

It's interesting to see how the meaning of "us" changes depending on where we are and who we're with. At home, "us" might mean a couple or a family. In politics, it could refer to "us" conservatives or liberals. In England, "us" could mean the English; in Europe, Europeans; at the UN assembly, the heads of countries. In a forest, "us" could mean humans, and in the solar system, it might refer to all living beings on Earth. Thus,

"us" can take on many forms depending on the context and how we perceive others. Our sense of belonging is constantly changing.

We all have multiple identities and roles that shape who we are. We're children to our parents, citizens of a particular country, members of a religion, and part of many other groups. Each of these roles comes with its own beliefs and values, which can often clash with one another. This can create a complicated mess of conflicting ideas about what is right and wrong. For centuries, many people have tried to untangle this mess. Philosophers from around the world have explored the idea of living according to our "innate nature" to help us navigate through this web of values passed down through generations. For example, in Plato's philosophy, specifically his concept of the "Tripartite Soul" in *The Republic*, argues that each person has a natural inclination or dominant part of the soul that dictates their role in society. Those whose rational part dominates are naturally suited to be rulers or philosophers; those led by the spirited part might become warriors; and those driven by the appetitive part are inclined to roles involving physical needs and desires, such as producers or merchants. Similarly, all religious texts, including the Bible, Quran, and Gita, aim to define what is right and wrong based on the values of their respective times. However, despite these teachings, we often act without considering all perspectives or, at

times, blindly follow certain paths. However, in today's world, achieving justice requires mutual agreement in the creation of laws.

But, living up to all the values from past eras and identities is an impossible task for anyone. There are too many conflicting values and identities to juggle. Everyone faces moments of crisis when they must choose between these competing values. Our world is filled with diverse cultures and traditions, and what is considered right in one place might be wrong in another. It's like trying to follow the rules of multiple sports at once—it's simply too confusing! Some people manage this juggling act better than others. We call them 'saints'. They make others feel that they are doing justice to all values and identities. But even they struggle with inner conflict. To justify these ways of living and the contradictions they involve, complex philosophies were developed. This is why there are so many interpretations of religious texts, such as Bible commentaries, Quranic hadiths, and Gita explanations. The creation and discussion of these interpretations and contradictions have been longstanding breadwinning pursuits in places like Rome, Mecca, and India.

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

HUMANS HAVE SOME PRETTY UNIQUE traits when it comes to sexuality compared to other species. One of the most notable differences is that humans are sexually active all year round. While many animals have specific mating seasons, men can typically engage in sexual activity any time of day or night. Women also remain sexually active throughout the year, though their desire can fluctuate due to hormonal changes related to their menstrual cycle. This constant sexual availability has helped humans increase their population faster than other primates.

Another interesting difference is the way we mate. While most primates tend to penetrate from behind, humans often engage in face-to-face mating. The fact that human males sometimes show an interest in this rear-entry position might be a leftover trait from our evolutionary ancestors. If you look closely, the placement of the clitoris at the front of the body suggests that this change in mating position started a long time ago, possibly dating back to our early

ancestors in the Homo genus.

After separating from our closest relatives like gorillas and chimpanzees, humans developed several other distinct sexual features. In many primate species, females display a swollen and colorful vaginal area to attract males during their fertile period, known as estrus. But in human females, these changes don't occur because the vagina is hidden. Instead, breasts have become the main attraction for men, even though in most species, breasts serve only to feed their young. Other primates might be baffled to see human males going crazy over breasts, which have nothing to do with reproduction.

Beyond breasts, certain body features like hips and buttocks also catch men's attention. When a woman walks, the rhythmic sway of her hips and buttocks can subconsciously attract men. This preference likely ties back to evolutionary signals indicating fertility and health. Similarly, full, red lips are another feature that has evolved to be sexually appealing, possibly replacing the visible vaginal indicators of fertility seen in other species. Throughout history, women have enhanced their looks using clothing, accessories, and makeup—like wearing pads to accentuate their curves and using products like betel leaf (natural dye) to redden their lips. Today, modern lipstick continues this trend.

Now, when it comes to what women find attractive in men, several traits stand out: a deep voice, broad shoulders, defined muscles, a flat stomach, and facial hair are often viewed as indicators of masculinity and sexual appeal. That's part of the reason why having "six-pack" abs is so popular in today's society. In the animal kingdom, it's often the males who display their appeal through singing and dancing to attract females. These traits originated primarily in males. Take birds, for example: only the males sing, and they often flaunt vibrant feathers and impressive looks to attract females. Male peacocks go all out, performing elaborate dances and displaying their colorful plumage, while the females, or peahens, are much less colorful. You might wonder why these males put in so much effort for less flashy females.

The answer lies in the value and scarcity of the female egg; producing eggs takes much more energy compared to producing sperm, so males need to work hard to impress. Even among primates, it's typically the males that display flashy features like impressive horns, colorful fur, or long tails. Female primates have a limited number of eggs each year—sometimes only one or two, and at most around 20. This makes female eggs incredibly valuable, which is why females in many species don't need to be overly attractive (or "beauty queens") to be considered desirable. In humans, women are born with about 2 million eggs, but only around 400

to 500 of these will mature and be released throughout their lifetime; the rest will eventually fade away.

While women are born with a set number of eggs, men produce millions of sperm daily. Unlike eggs, which are present from birth, sperm starts being produced during puberty. To keep sperm healthy and active, two natural processes occur during adolescence: wet dreams and masturbation. Wet dreams happen when sperm builds up and is automatically released during sleep, often through sexual dreams. Masturbation serves a similar purpose, but it's a voluntary act. Unfortunately, these natural processes are often misunderstood by religious leaders, teachers, and parents. Their lack of understanding about these biological needs can make adolescence hell, as they often label these activities as sinful or wrong, creating unnecessary feelings of fear and guilt in young minds. Even chimpanzees, our closest relatives, masturbate as part of preparing for mating. Yet, instead of recognizing these behaviors as healthy signs of an active sexual life, many educators and even psychologists mistakenly view them as harmful. This is one of the most misunderstood aspects of human sexuality, often clouded by outdated beliefs (spiritual teachings) and psychological theories.

A key difference between men and women in terms of sexual desire is linked to how eggs and sperm are produced. Women release just one egg per month, with

their sexual desire peaking around ovulation. Men, on the other hand, are biologically wired to seek out eggs, which can make women appear less sexually active by comparison. Hormones also play a big role in shaping sexual urges—testosterone for men and estrogen for women. The levels of these hormones can vary widely among individuals. If you look at question-and-answer sections in popular psychology and health magazines, you'll often find a surprising amount of misinformation and misunderstanding about these topics.

Beyond biology, the roles of men and women have evolved dramatically throughout history. In many other species, the females hold a higher social status, while the position of males, who fight and die among themselves for the right to mate with the female, is only secondary. Similarly, in human reproduction, the millions of sperm in a single ejaculation are secondary to the single egg that gets fertilized, even though only one sperm cell is needed to fertilize the egg. Interestingly, every human embryo starts out developing as female, and only around the fourth month does the embryo become male if it has a Y chromosome. The SRY gene on the Y chromosome triggers the development of male characteristics, including the formation of testes. Without this gene, the embryo typically develops into a female.

Therefore, the continuity of a species largely depends on females, not males, contrary to the biblical (and

Quranic) idea that women were created from a man's rib. Instead, males contribute to genetic diversity by bringing in new genetic material through their experiences and interactions, which is essential for creating healthier offspring in resisting diseases. In this sense, males can be seen as a branch sprouting from the female trunk, not the other way around. Thus, it is clear that the male is simply an offshoot of the female, who is the central figure in the continuity of life. Historically, women had the freedom in choosing their mates, with men competing through games and battles to win their favor, especially before the development of agriculture. Before the advent of agriculture, women had the upper hand in selecting their partners. Women were revered as creators and life-givers, and many cultures worshipped mother goddesses. Fertility rituals often centered on women, and menstrual blood was even considered sacred, used in agricultural fertility rites. This reverence for women was deeply rooted in their ability to give birth. In those times, people didn't understand the role of men in reproduction because the connection between sexual intercourse and pregnancy wasn't immediately obvious, because fertilization is unseen, and the long time between conception and birth made it hard to connect the two. As a result, the ability to create life was seen as uniquely belonging to women.

At some point, likely with the rise of agrarian societies and the institution of marriage, men began to

understand their role in reproduction, possibly through noticing a child's resemblance to its father or by staying at home with their wives. This realization likely caused a shift in societal roles, leading to a decline in the status of women. The worship of mother goddesses and the sacredness of fertility rituals diminished, particularly in regions connected by trade. What was once revered as sacred became stigmatized as witchcraft and superstition, leading to the rise of male gods and the worship of the phallus and semen (e.g., the Hindu god Shiva and the Greek gods Priapus and Hermes). In many spiritual circles and monasteries, male semen was elevated to a holy status.

In traditional societies like India, semen came to be regarded as the ultimate source of creation (while ignoring the role of eggs)—a belief that became a religious tenet. Celibacy and the retention of semen became markers of spiritual pursuit, and women were often excluded from temples and spiritual centers. This led to a decline in women's social status and a shift in how marriage was arranged. The selection of a daughter's husband became the father's responsibility, and he would "give away" his daughter to the most suitable groom to produce legitimate offspring.

The earliest recorded evidence of marriage dates back to around 2350 B.C.E in Mesopotamia. Over the centuries, marriage became a widespread institution

among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. However, marriage back then was less about love or religion and more about ensuring that a man's children were biologically his. Through marriage, women became the property of their husbands. In ancient Greece, for example, during the betrothal ceremony, a father would hand over his daughter with the words, "I pledge my daughter for the purpose of producing legitimate offspring." As a result, agricultural societies became patriarchal, and women lost their right to choose their partners, a right that remains natural in most other species. However, some tribes still exist today where patriarchy did not take hold, and human history did not follow a single, linear path. As agriculture developed and people began to settle near their farms, new social structures emerged. The division of labor between men and women became more distinct, with women often "staying home" due to pregnancy. The availability of more food meant that not everyone needed to hunt or gather all the time, as was the case in earlier hunter-gatherer societies. However, this led to other changes—cooking and childcare, which were once collective activities, became women's duties. Women were also expected to care for the sick and elderly. Over time, this contributed to the perception that women were "naturally" suited to staying at home.

These changes unfolded over thousands of years, shaping the formation of countries and empires. Men's

physical strength, once used to compete for mating rights, was reinterpreted as power and authority to "protect" their families in these societies. In contrast to hunter-gatherer societies where men and women shared responsibilities, women in agricultural societies found themselves confined to the home. If we compare women's status in "developed" agricultural societies to that in tribal hunter-gatherer societies, women generally fared better in the latter. In fact, women had higher status in less developed, early tribal societies. As societies became more "developed," women's status declined, only beginning to rise again in modern democratic systems. While a return to female-centered societies is unlikely, the principles of equal justice and growing democratic awareness can help improve women's status in the future.

PARENTING

LIFE, FROM ITS EARLIEST DAYS as single-celled organisms to the development of complex multicellular beings, has undergone remarkable changes. One of the most important advancements was the development of reproduction through mating to produce offspring, the care of those offspring, and the eventual death of adults once their children were grown. This is quite different from how single-celled organisms operate. They reproduce by simply dividing, which allows them to continue existing without changing much.

Multicellular organisms took a different path. They evolved sexual reproduction, where two different cells combine their genetic information to create a new organism—carrying traits from both parents but is unique. This crucial step in evolution began even when life was still single-celled. Some of these single-celled organisms either absorbed others or started living together in a cooperative, symbiotic way, eventually forming more complex life forms.

As evolution progressed, a new, more refined distinction emerged: the development of male and female organisms. Early on, both sexes existed within a single organism, and many plants and trees still reproduce this way. However, in mobile species, the roles of male and female became more distinct and individualized. Yet, some species still retain flexibility. For example, in certain fish species that live in groups, if the dominant male dies or is removed, one of the females will quickly begin to change sex to become a male. This transformation can happen surprisingly fast and is known as sequential hermaphroditism. We need to recognize that the differences between male and females are like a rainbow. If one end represents being male and the other end represents being female, there is a whole spectrum in between. This means that our sense of identity, whether male or female, also works like a rainbow. You might find men who aren't "fully" masculine, and women who aren't "fully" feminine, and also cases where feminine traits are seen in men and masculine traits in women.

Often, when people don't understand this fluidity in gender identity, they cause problems in society. For example, some parents may argue with each other or with others over whether one is raising their son to act 'like a girl' or their daughter to behave 'like a boy,' and vice versa." This confusion about gender identity is tied to our territorial instincts mentioned before, and it's a

fundamental part of how we view ourselves and interact with others. Just like animals have instincts for survival, humans have deep-seated patterns of behavior, and gender identity is a part of that.

When we compare ourselves to the animal kingdom, we see that parenting is not universal. For turtles that travel 2,000 miles to lay their eggs and then return to live on their side of the world, butterflies that lay eggs under leaves which their offspring will eat once they become caterpillars, snakes that lay eggs and keep them warm until they hatch, and trees that attract animals to eat their fruit so the seeds can be scattered far from the parent plant—all of these creatures don't need parenting at all. Instead, they rely on passing down all the necessary information to their offspring through genetics alone.

This process is quite different from what we think of as parenting, which includes not just passing on genetic information but also sharing 'experiential knowledge' gained over a lifetime. This is what we refer to as parenting. In the earliest stages of this process, it was primarily the mothers who assumed the entire responsibility for raising the offspring, while fathers had little to no involvement. There's a reason for this: it stems from the different roles that males and females play in reproduction. Males evolved to mate with as many females as possible in a short time, almost like a

machine. Over time, they changed from this "impregnation machine" to long-term partners and eventually to caring fathers, depending on the species and the era.

The first species to develop the technique of incubating eggs faced a new challenge: they needed a partner for survival. As the incubation period lengthened, it became crucial to have a mate to help find food and protect the eggs from hungry predators. Those species without a partner often resorted to some drastic measures. Some would consume the contents of their own eggs to avoid starvation, while others, lacking assistance during birth, might even eat one or two of their own babies. This behavior is still seen in our pet dogs and cats, who, despite being well-fed, might eat their young. Many people find this behavior shocking and label these animals as "cruel mothers," but it's a survival instinct that dates back to their wild ancestors.

For females of many species, having a male mate was mainly a survival strategy. The male helped by gathering food during the incubation period and protecting the eggs from predators. Over time, some species even developed systems where the male and female took turns incubating the eggs. In other cases, the male took full responsibility for hatching and raising the offspring. Some species of males even figured out a way to carry the eggs inside their own bodies. However, this wasn't out

of love for their young; it was mainly to ensure that they alone fertilized the eggs with their own sperm.

In many species of fish, fertilization happens outside the female's body. The female lays eggs, and the male releases sperm over them. In such cases, any nearby male can fertilize the eggs. Seahorses have developed a different strategy: the female deposits her eggs directly into the male's belly, where he fertilizes them without any competition. Again, this behavior shouldn't be mistaken as a sign of deep care or love for the young. Monogamy—staying with one mate for life—is rare in the animal world. Most species find a mate for just one breeding season, and even then, the male's role is mostly to assist in bringing food and scaring off weak predators. Parenting became more involved as species, especially humans, evolved to have longer childhoods. As offspring began developing larger brains, their childhoods got longer, which was a new phenomenon. Parenting became not just about passing down genetic information, but also about brain development, which continued to grow outside the womb. The longer a child took to mature, the more complex its brain could become, giving it a better chance of survival. This is because the brain would grow through interaction with the world, creating a feedback loop of learning and survival. However, this prolonged childhood also put more pressure on mothers, who then needed more help from the male, especially in species where males would

usually disappear after mating☺. This challenge was especially intense for human females, since their children don't reach maturity until around the age of eighteen!

In the early stages of parenting evolution, women didn't need much help from men because childhood for offspring was short. Since children grew up quickly, there wasn't a need for a father's involvement. Think of a hen in your backyard—she raises her chicks without any assistance from the rooster. But as more complex living beings evolved, their children needed longer childhoods to fully develop their brains. This meant that women began to rely on men for help with parenting. This need gave rise to men playing a crucial role in raising children, and women developed ways to keep them involved.

The physical strength of men didn't evolve for family caregiving. Instead, it evolved for competing with other men to win the right to mate with as many women as possible. For a female, there's no doubt that her child is hers, but for men, there was no such guarantee—at least not until DNA testing came along. This led men to focus on two main goals in life: first, to impregnate as many women as they could, and second, to keep other men from doing the same with the women they were involved with. The aim was to ensure that their own genes would carry on to future generations, without

being mixed with those of other males.

For women, the goal was different. Since they knew their children were biologically theirs, their main focus was on nurturing them. Women also understood that men were driven to pass on their genes, so they behaved in ways that reassured their partners. This formed the foundation of the idea of ‘chastity’. Women’s actions were designed to give men confidence that the children they were raising were indeed theirs. In return, men made sure that no other man had sexual access to their partners. The implicit agreement became: “I will help raise our children, but you must not have relations with any other men.” When both men and women accepted these roles and responsibilities, parenting became a shared activity. This mutual understanding laid the foundation for the social value of “chastity”, which has shaped human relationships and societies throughout history.

Life is not a simple, one-dimensional process. As we’ve mentioned before, many different skills and traits, some of which complement and even contradict each other, have evolved to help organisms deal with various challenges over time. This has led to the existence of complex living beings. As a result, life for these beings is often a battleground of conflicting values and abilities. When it comes to humans, the complexity is even greater. Not only do we carry traits from our biological

evolution, but we also have values shaped by cultural and social development. This makes our lives a tangled web of influences that require special attention to understand. To untangle this, it's helpful to look at the evolutionary traits of humans as a guide to understanding the complexity of life.

In evolution, we see a transition from simple, deathless single-celled organisms to more complex forms of life, including multicellular beings. At some point, life forms invented sex, mating, and reproduction, which in turn introduced the concept of death. Instead of endlessly dividing to survive, these beings developed a new strategy: living through their offspring. Death became a way to make space for the next generation, bringing together the experiences of two individuals to create a new, independent life. Death, then, is simply part of the natural cycle. After being born, growing up, reproducing, and passing on our genes, we inevitably "exit the stage." The process of death isn't like how it's often portrayed in movies, where a character gasps for air, collapses, and becomes still☹. It's more like climbing a mountain: once we reach the peak, the descent begins. Every sign of aging—such as gray hair and wrinkles—is part of this natural decline, just as every step downward—is a step toward death. The process of death unfolds in stages, gradually over time, with different signs appearing along the way.

We have developed medicines and treatments to slow the aging process, but death is a natural outcome of being a complex living organism. It's as much a part of life as anything else, and understanding it helps us appreciate the evolution of life itself. However, we often misunderstand death as merely "disappearing" from life, leading to the wishful thinking that immortality might one day be possible. In doing so, we overlook the true purpose of death. It's not just an "end", but a strategy that complex organisms developed to continue life through reproduction. Early, simple organisms didn't experience death as we know it, but as life evolved, more complex beings incorporated death as part of their survival strategy. Instead of endlessly dividing and reproducing like simple organisms, complex beings reproduce and then die, allowing their offspring to carry on their genetic information.

Just as a beetle can never grow to the size of a helicopter because it would cease to be a beetle, human beings—and any complex living organisms—cannot avoid death without losing what makes them living creatures. To transcend death, we'd have to leave behind what it means to be a complex, living being.

ORIGIN OF MORAL CODES

THERE'S A LOT OF DEBATE ABOUT whether moral values are timeless and unchanging. Many of us instinctively feel that they should be, but it's important to recognize that these values are shaped by the fact that we are social creatures. Unlike animals that hatch from eggs and can survive without their parents, human infants are born completely helpless and require years of care to grow into capable adults. This reliance on each other for survival is what shapes our values—whether they relate to morality, justice, family, or community. These values only make sense within the context of a “group species” and cannot be regarded as eternal or universal truths.

Take social insects like ants, bees, and termites, for example. These are “group species” that show remarkable cooperation and division of labor. Each member of the colony has a specific role, and they work together toward common goals. However, unlike humans, they don't live in complex hierarchies. They rely on cooperation, where every individual performs its duty to benefit the colony. Humans, in contrast, often

live within complicated social hierarchies that can distort how we perceive reality. For instance, we call the egg-laying female in a bee colony the "queen," projecting human ideas of monarchy onto another species. But in reality, there's no concept of royalty in the bee world. If that female bee were unable to lay eggs, the rest of the colony would quickly discard her. Slogans like "Unity is strength," "Together we stand, divided we fall," and "We must all hang together or all hang separately" reflect the needs of a group species. They highlight the importance of working together in groups for survival and success. These expressions reflect our need for community and cooperation, but they are not timeless truths. Ultimately, our moral values are not permanent fixtures; they are shaped by our nature as social beings.

It is a common belief that 'sexual morality' is an exclusively human invention. We often think that animals don't have such values, which is why we say things like "don't act like an animal." However, if we look closely at the animal kingdom, we can find that many social species have their own rules about mating and reproduction—essentially what we might call "moral laws." Take wild dogs, for instance. In their packs, only the alpha female has the right to give birth. The other females are expected to help care for her puppies. If any other female tries to violate this rule, she faces serious consequences: she'll be kicked out of the pack without hesitation. If the male who mated with her

goes along, it could lead to the formation of a new pack. But if she ends up alone, her chances of survival are slim. Wolves have a similar system, but here, it's the males who get ousted. A lone male has little chance of survival. Even when they stick together, it's the alpha male and female who are primarily focused on passing on their own genes. This drive leads to behaviors like excommunication, where a male may fight other males for the right to mate with all the females. In many species, including elephants, deer, monkeys, and even humans, males often fight each other to win the right to mate with the females in the group. This competitive behavior helps determine who gets to pass on their genes. Human males have also fought for mates throughout history, and this is one reason why they have evolved to develop strong muscles.

Let's look at lions for another example. When a new male challenges and defeats the current leader of the pride, the first thing he often does is kill the existing cubs. The lionesses, recognizing the threat, will hide with their young, as they are no match for this powerful newcomer. Interestingly, you might expect the lion to be seen as cruel, but soon after, the lionesses will approach him and try to attract him to mate. This behavior might seem shocking, but it's driven by a hard truth: the new male has only a limited time—usually about three years—before being challenged by another, younger, stronger male. During that brief window, his

best chance of passing on his genes is to mate with as many females as possible. However, if he allows the females to nurse and raise their cubs, he won't have much time left to mate again and spread his genes.

Another factor is that females who are nursing their cubs are not fertile (known as estrus) and can't get pregnant. So, while it looks like he's acting cruelly, he's really just following his instinct to propagate his lineage. On the other hand, female lions must also think about their own survival and that of their future cubs. They may act in ways that seem submissive or even flirtatious towards the male, even if he has killed their previous cubs. This behavior helps them stay safe and increases their chances of having more offspring in the future. This pattern isn't just for lions. It's common across many species, including elephants, deer, and monkeys.

In human society, we see similar behaviors, where powerful men often seek to spread their genes widely, which is why kings throughout history have had multiple wives. The wealth and honors he accumulates, the fine arts he learns, and the perfumes he wears are all means to one end—attracting more mates and ensuring his legacy through offspring. Just as a rooster crows to attract hens, men of power and wealth are driven by a deep-seated instinct to spread their genes. To ensure their lineage continues, kings would go to extreme lengths. For instance, they sometimes had men castrated

to serve as palace guards or royal servants. These men could be tasked with various roles, such as protecting the king's harem or fulfilling other duties, but they wouldn't be able to father children. This was not merely an act of cruelty; rather, it stemmed from a natural desire to secure their genetics. After all, if the king was away on a long campaign, he couldn't guarantee that one of his many wives wouldn't end up having a child with a guard or servant. In the past, eunuchs—men who had been castrated—were often considered valuable servants. Because they couldn't have children, they posed less of a threat in terms of succession disputes or loyalty issues. However, their lives were not always easy. Many eunuchs faced harsh treatment and abuse, and their castration was frequently forced upon them.

Therefore, on a biological level, seeking wealth and power wasn't just about building empires or fulfilling a thirst for control; it was often about securing as many mates as possible. This isn't to say that every man who seeks power is motivated solely by this desire, but it's a common theme. A well-known example of this reproductive drive is Genghis Khan. He famously expanded his empire from Mongolia to Europe, not just for conquest, but to increase his number of partners. Today, his legacy is still evident—around one in every 200 men alive can trace their genetic lineage back to him, a testament to his remarkable reproductive success.

Some people see the actions of powerful men who cheat or engage in sexual misconduct as wrong or unethical. However, from a biological perspective, these men are simply acting on their natural instincts to reproduce and pass on their genes. It is important to understand that this behavior is not unique to a few individuals but rather is a universal trait among male members of the human species. Even though society today places a strong emphasis on values like equality, consent, and personal happiness, the basic urge to reproduce still plays a significant role in how we act and what motivates us. So, instead of labeling figures like Bill Clinton, Tiger Woods, Silvio Berlusconi, or Kevin Hart as simply "misguided" or "led astray," but rather as being true to their nature as men. While it's essential to hold people accountable for their actions and to ensure they don't harm others, we should also recognize that their behavior may not be as unusual as we think.

Before DNA testing was invented, men had no reliable way to confirm their paternity. This uncertainty led some communities in India to create a tradition where wealth is passed down only to a sister's children. This practice ensures that at least 25% of a man's genes are carried into the next generation. In societies where women had the freedom to choose their partners, men couldn't always trust that their wives were raising their biological children. Thus, this tradition was a way for them to make sure their resources contributed to the

continuation of their genes.

During those times, the idea of a father as a provider didn't hold much weight; property was often inherited through the mother's side, reflecting a matrilineal system. Social scientists of the past categorized these practices as part of economic systems, but in reality, they were strategies to ensure that their genes continued into future generations. Even if someone were to write extensively about economics, as Karl Marx did in "Das Kapital," the truth is that, ultimately, "the reality of the world is determined not by economics, but in the last instance by genetics".

Another interesting aspect of paternity is the universal empathy we feel towards babies, regardless of species. When a baby cries, it tends to stir a sense of urgency and concern among adults nearby. This empathy isn't limited to human beings; it's been observed that even predatory animals like lions and tigers can feel compassion for the offspring of their prey. Many complex animal species have developed brain functions that enable this empathetic response towards young ones. That is why the males in our species too feel empathetic towards children. However, what sets us apart is our ability to think and reason. This intelligence allows men to explore various ways to escape their responsibilities by trying to offload them onto others ☺. If men become more engaged in caring for their own

children or even those of others, it could lead to a decrease in the typical "macho attitude" that sometimes fosters violence. Research consistently shows that men who actively participate in caring for their children tend to be more peaceful and less violent overall. Therefore, by stepping up and being more involved in caregiving, men can help create a more harmonious environment for everyone.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT?

BASED ON FINDINGS FROM anthropology and genetic science, it is now almost certain that human beings originated in East Africa and migrated across the globe. By comparing genetic data from around the world and creating a genetic "tree," scientists have been able to trace the movement of early humans from Africa to other parts of the world.

You might remember the metaphor of a tree, which we've used before to represent the spread of life. Similarly, scientists have mapped out the different branches of the human genetic tree. Although there is still some debate about the exact timeline, the consensus among scientists is that Africa is the cradle of humanity. Even as new discoveries refine the timeframe or reveal more details about the routes and methods of migration, the overall picture of human movement remains largely unchanged.

Around 60,000 to 70,000 years ago, humans began their slow migration out of Africa. But it wasn't anything like

the rapid travel we're used to today. They moved at a pace of about 2 kilometers per year, sometimes up to 4 or 5 kilometers in their search for food and shelter. Some years, they didn't move at all. Gradually, they journeyed from Africa through the Mediterranean, then eastward through regions such as Afghanistan, India, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Bali, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, eventually reaching Australia around 40,000 years ago. Interestingly, humans primarily traveled along coastlines, where beaches provided abundant food, which also helped them develop the skills to cross bodies of water.

It's believed there were two major waves of migration out of Africa. The first wave ended around present-day Israel, while the second wave is responsible for the global spread of humanity. Genetic evidence, particularly from mitochondrial DNA, supports this. One group of humans made it to Australia 40,000 years ago, while another group traveled to what we now call Kazakhstan. From there, they split into two branches: one moved through northern India, China, Tibet, and eventually reached Japan, while the other made its way into Europe. After settling in Europe, some humans migrated further north through Russia, crossing the Bering Strait into Alaska during the Ice Age. From there, they traveled down the western side of North America, eventually reaching South America—the last stop on this long migratory journey. This journey across

continents was made possible by the climate conditions of the Ice Ages, which created pathways like the Bering Strait that are no longer accessible today.

The Ice Age was a period when the Earth's climate cooled significantly, and it actually brought some continents closer together. Within the Ice Age, there were even colder phases called glacial periods. During these times, glaciers spread from the poles toward the tropics, much like massive rivers of ice. As more water froze into ice, sea levels dropped, making the continents appear larger. But the continents didn't physically expand—it was simply that more land was exposed as the oceans receded.

Places like the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar, which are made up of many islands today, were once part of a larger landmass during the Ice Age. Even Australia, which is now an isolated continent, was connected to Papua New Guinea. The Bering Strait, which today separates Russia from Alaska by about 85 kilometers of water, was covered by a frozen bridge of ice. Sea levels fell by up to 400 feet below what we see today, revealing much more land and making the Earth look very different from how it does now. Back then, people and animals could travel between continents without needing ships or boats—simply walking or using makeshift rafts (using logs) could get them from one place to another. This helped early humans migrate

and spread across the globe.

As the ice began to melt and sea levels rose again, the newly connected lands became isolated once more. People who had settled on islands or distant continents were cut off from others, and they stayed that way for thousands of years. This isolation explains why human cultures became so different, and why we have so many languages around the world. Being separated by oceans meant that people had to rely on the resources available in their own regions, which led to unique ways of life. Meanwhile, those who remained on larger continents were able to interact more, developing cultures that had more in common with each other. This process of isolation is one of the key reasons why humanity is so diverse today.

The last Ice Age began about 110,000 years ago and ended around 12,000 years ago. However, technically, we're still in an ice age—we're just living in a warmer phase called the Holocene. During an ice age, the climate fluctuates between cold glaciation periods and warmer intervals. We exited the last glaciation around 12,500 to 10,000 years ago. This means that half of modern *Homo sapiens*' evolution took place during the Ice Age. It wasn't until after the Ice Age ended that agriculture was developed, especially near the Mediterranean region. While agriculture may have been an ecological challenge, it became the foundation of

human progress. But it's important to note that agriculture didn't spread evenly across the globe. It mainly spread to areas where people were connected by large landmasses, and the spread was influenced by the orientation of the continents. For instance, the East-West orientation of Eurasia allowed agriculture to travel more easily compared to continents with a North-South axis. Proximity to the equator and other geographical factors also played a role in whether agriculture could thrive.

Even today, there are regions where agriculture either never took root or was not developed independently. For agriculture to flourish in any area, the local plants, animals, and environment have to be suitable for domestication and cultivation. The natural availability of domesticable plants and animals heavily influenced the growth of agriculture. The richest variety of such species was found in the Mediterranean, particularly in an area known as the "Golden Crescent." This is why the earliest civilizations emerged there. In contrast, in places like Australia, there were no grains suitable for domestication. Though humans arrived in Australia 40,000 years ago, when Captain Cook encountered them, their development hadn't progressed much beyond what it was when they left Africa. Australia's isolation meant its plants, animals, and ecosystem were unique to the continent, with no domesticable species to provide milk or meat. As a result, the people there

remained relatively stagnant in their development.

This type of isolation and underdevelopment were the main features of islands and remote continents. These areas had limited resources and could only rely on what was locally available for survival and growth. In contrast, the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe flourished because of both their geographic location and the connections they shared. When technology emerged in one part of these continents, it often spread across all three, resulting in similar levels of development. However, if we closely examine development patterns, it becomes clear that communities living in fertile plains or near rivers advanced much faster in agriculture and other technologies. These regions had access to rich soils and water, which allowed people to farm and develop civilizations. On the other hand, people who moved into mountains became isolated. The difficult terrain separated them from others, and as a result, many mountain communities stayed at a more primitive stage of development, often labeled as ‘tribes.’

The availability of certain grains and animals in each region also played a crucial role in shaping the culture and progress of human societies. For example, the domestication of cattle, sheep, dogs, horses, poultry, and birds like hawks, as well as the cultivation of grains like rice, wheat, barley, and pulses, were key factors in

the development of societies. These resources provided food, labor, and materials necessary for civilization to thrive. For instance, rice cannot be grown in areas with heavy snowfall or extremely cold climates. So, a society that relies heavily on rice must either stay in a suitable region or migrate to a similar climate where rice can still be cultivated. This geographic limitation is particularly visible in regions that stretch from north to south, like the Americas and Africa. Even if people in these regions were in contact with one another, the climate and geography caused uneven development. Wheat, for example, is well-suited to northern India but cannot be easily cultivated in the warmer, southern part of the subcontinent. Similar patterns can be seen in Africa and the Americas, where different climates dictated what could be grown or raised.

This uneven distribution of resources, along with the direction in which continents lie, had a significant impact on the pace of human development. The type of plants and animals available to a region's population played a big part in determining how that society would progress. In addition to that, the availability of water was another major factor. Most early civilizations sprang up along riverbanks because rivers provided a reliable source of water for agriculture. Meanwhile, people living in mountain areas faced challenges like water shortages and soil erosion, which made farming difficult. As a result, they often remained as hunter-

gatherers for much longer than those in the plains. It was only when advanced societies in the lowlands developed tools made from iron that mountain communities began to make progress. Once they had access to iron tools, they could clear forests and start turning the land into fields suitable for agriculture, finally catching up in terms of development.

The people who settled in South America primarily grew corn and domesticated llamas and alpacas. Large animals that could have been useful for farming and meat production, like those in North America, had already been hunted to extinction. Similarly, the ancient civilization that flourished along the Nile River in Egypt expanded east and west but never managed to spread beyond the Sahara Desert into the southern regions of Africa. Although humans originated in southeastern Africa, the lack of key resources, such as large rivers, and a relatively dry climate limited the potential for agricultural development. These factors contributed to slower progress in certain areas of Africa compared to other parts of the world. A major factor behind this disparity is the absence of strong connections between "civilized societies." For new technologies or innovations to spread, there must be some form of contact—whether through trade, conflict, or exploration.

People often wonder how such vast differences in skin color, culture, religion, language, and development emerged among a species that originally migrated out of Africa. The reasons mentioned—geography, climate, and resource availability—are some of the key factors that created these differences.

It's important to move away from the belief that all global inequalities are solely the result of capitalist or imperialist conspiracies. While imperialism and exploitation played a role, they were not the root causes of uneven development. Often, the resources that attracted imperialists, such as gold or silver, were limited, and many of these areas were underdeveloped long before outside powers arrived. The focus on imperialism, especially in narratives shaped by Marxist theory, can sometimes act like blinders, making it hard to see the broader historical and environmental factors at play. Instead of only viewing history through the lens of exploitation and suppression, it's important to recognize the more complex interplay of geography, climate, and human connection.

THE UNEQUAL HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY

HUMAN BEINGS ARE A SPECIES with a natural tendency towards hierarchies. This tendency means we tend to behave in an authoritative way, using factors such as age, gender, strength, and knowledge to exert dominance over others. This ingrained hierarchy poses a significant challenge to building a truly equitable world.

We are conditioned to respect elders and submit to their authority, often feeling subordinate to them or fostering a sense of being "lesser" compared to those perceived as holding greater power in these aspects. The same dynamic plays out with regard to gender, strength, and knowledge. As a result, hierarchical behavior often feels natural to us even though it sits at odds with the concept of equality, a cornerstone of modern society. In practice, trying to implement equality within a hierarchical society can feel jarring, like a discordant note in a symphony.

"Equality" as a value only truly emerged after the French Revolution. Any attempt to implement it fully will undoubtedly create unease, both within individuals and society as a whole. Unfortunately, without

understanding this, people often use the value of equality as a yardstick to judge others, finding fault if they don't live up to it. Yet, despite the challenges, equality remains dear to most individuals. Ironically, the true interpretation of equality, as it often plays out in reality, is more akin to "no one above me, but anyone below me is acceptable."

Equality cannot simply exist on paper; it requires conscious effort and practice. To truly achieve it, we need a fundamental redesign – not just of our political systems, but of the very fabric of our lives, from the grand structures we inhabit to the everyday chairs we sit on. Consider the stark hierarchy embedded in these objects: the king's imposing throne, the Pope's elevated seat, and the stark absence of chairs in police stations. These seemingly mundane arrangements speak volumes about the uneven power dynamics that pervade our society; i.e., our built environment reflects an "unequal, ugly, hierarchical society." Once a sociobiologist, reading the Communist Manifesto's vision of an equitable Utopia, concluded, 'Karl Marx was right, socialism works.' However, he added, 'We had the wrong species,' meaning Marx's failure to understand the inherent hierarchy within humanity renders his dream of an equal society impractical and ultimately unattainable.

There are four methods we use to enforce authority over others. The most basic, employed by creatures across the spectrum, is 'physical power'. That is, whoever holds the muscle dictates terms. The strong subjugate the weak. Among humans, this starts with tribal chiefs and progresses to police, armies, and modern power structures. Law and justice are often dictated by the mightiest. Put another way, the victors write the history books, and the vanquished must follow the "just" laws imposed upon them. Imagine if Hitler had won World War II – Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt might well have been the ones facing war crimes trials.

Closely linked to physical power is the control of 'resources'. Whoever holds the reins over resources dictates how others live. Throughout human history, authority over resources became legalized through inheritance, creating a "just" right for those in power. This naturally translated to status, respect, and further power within society. Moving beyond these overt methods, a subtler one emerges: knowledge acquisition. Those with knowledge command respect and status. Though subtle, its authority surpasses the previous two. While it may not be as outwardly expressed as physical dominance or resource control, it can be even more powerful. Remember, just like with the previous methods, knowledge isn't self-made or acquired in isolation; rather, it is acquired from existing sources of various other individuals or from collective pools of

information. It becomes personal once acquired, allowing individuals to wield it as power over others, anytime, anywhere. Moreover, those subjected to this authority may even view it as a positive, a natural benevolence.

The subtlest and most potent method of all, however, is “fame”. While the first three methods can indeed lead to fame, fame can also exist entirely on its own. It precedes individuals, walking a step ahead, and works its magic even in their absence. Doors open, red carpets unfurl, and everyone bows before the famous, even before their arrival. Yet, those subjugated feel blessed in their presence. That’s why, alongside power, resources, and knowledge, everyone craves fame.

Now, individuals might possess one or all of those other strengths to achieve fame. Some, like singers, dancers, athletes, or inventors, rise through individual talent and hard work. Others, however, choose the path of “stealing” it by exploiting the aforementioned methods. This “stolen” fame, however, comes at a heavy price – robbing others of their rightful share. Take Alexander the Great, for example. He didn’t conquer alone, nor did he single-handedly ride his horse from Greece to India. Those thousands of brave soldiers who marched alongside him unknowingly contributed their share of fame to him. That’s how he became Alexander the “Great.” We still remember his horse’s name,

Bucephalus, but beyond a handful of Greek heroes, the countless nameless heroes who fought and sacrificed themselves remain forgotten. The rightful fame of all those who sacrificed their lives was unjustly accumulated and transferred to Alexander's grand narrative, solidifying his image as the "Great." Similarly, Gandhi, knowingly or unknowingly, amassed the legacy and selfless efforts of millions in India's independence movement, leading him to be hailed as the "father of the nation" and revered as "Mahatma" (meaning "Great Soul"). At least, we mustn't forget that the struggle for freedom began long before his birth.

Greatness often comes at the expense of others' unrecognized contributions. All "great" figures, be it Gates, Jobs, Carnegie, or Rockefeller, are, in a sense, "fame thieves." Just like fair distribution of resources would prevent the rise of capitalist giants, so too, if we shared fame equally amongst those who contribute to its creation, we wouldn't have the Napoleons, Churchills, or Roosevelts of history, nor the Buddhas, Jesuses, or Muhammad's either. Remember power, wealth, and fame are often built on the misery, tears, and stolen rights of others. Even knowledge isn't exempt. Individual contributions are often built upon a foundation of collective wisdom. These little bits and pieces of information individuals contribute get collected, acquired, and monopolized by a select few – known as the intellectuals, pundits, and patent and

copyright holders.

Take this very book as an example. Most of the knowledge within, barring a few original points, comes from various sources. The language itself is a product of countless people worldwide. Yet, none of them can claim ownership; they have no "copyright" over it. Similarly, doctors, engineers, and even "creative" artists are all products of their societies, acquiring and utilizing knowledge built up over generations. In essence, they're all "stealers" of someone else's knowledge, even when they claim it as their own and seek special privileges. Understanding this demands humility towards the societies that nurture us. Perhaps true greatness lies not in stealing the spotlight, but in acknowledging the collective effort that allows it to shine in the first place. After all, we can only offer a drop back to the vast ocean we receive from.

WHO CHANGES THE WORLD?

IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT, there is a popular belief, largely formed out of nationalistic propaganda, that the discoveries of modern scientists align closely, if not entirely, with the deep insights gained through meditation and contemplation by ancient sages. We have to remember that the philosophical framework supporting this very notion encouraged people to “control” and turn their senses “inward” rather than outward. In this view, our senses are like wild horses that need to be controlled.

Proponents of this inward-focused approach claimed that true understanding, or “truth” itself, could only be uncovered by shutting down all of your sensory input and detaching from the external world, or by severing the mind’s attachment to sensory experiences. But now, those who once vehemently argued that finding ‘truth’ requires shutting down the senses, claim that their ‘conceptual understanding’ or introspective insights perfectly align with modern scientific findings.

In other words, the very people who insisted truth lies only within oneself are now equating it with the "physical truths" painstakingly gathered by scientists using these very senses they once deemed unreliable, like runaway horses. This stance is insincere at best and hypocritical at worst. They fail to realize that by embracing scientific truths gathered from the very senses they previously distrusted, they undermine their own methods of seeking truth. It's like claiming there's a hidden oasis in the desert while pointing to a distant mirage as proof of its existence.

In the realm of spiritual books, you'll often find names of renowned scientists like Einstein, Schrödinger, Stephen Hawking, Heisenberg, and Max Planck sprinkled throughout. These names are frequently misappropriated or invoked in commentaries to give these books an air of credibility and a sense of "scientific validity." It's a desperate tactic, a clear attempt to sanctify and legitimize what are essentially outdated, "bullock cart theories" disguised as modern ideas. Consequently, these ancient "spiritual philosophies" end up garnering respect and are mistakenly perceived as repositories of "real knowledge."

To put it simply, think about how people used to measure things with units like the "el" or "em." While those measures served a purpose in their time, much like bullock carts were useful before the invention of cars,

they are outdated now. Bullock carts were practical in their era, but they have no place on today's roads. However, when evaluating the usefulness of these "spiritual philosophies" on a similar scale, it becomes clear that they have never been beneficial in any meaningful sense. Sure, they might have helped unify different castes and communities for rulers in the past (using shared myths), but if we examine whether these ideas have genuinely advanced humanity, the answer is a clear "No." They are remnants of a bygone era, part of a belief system that hasn't evolved or adapted to the times.

The misuse of scientific names in these books is not just intellectually dishonest, it's also potentially harmful. It creates confusion and blurs the lines between real science and wild speculation. This kind of misinformation takes advantage of our natural desire to understand the world, offering false comfort and empty promises disguised as "spiritual knowledge." We need to be on guard against these misleading tactics and learn to tell the difference between genuine scientific exploration and the opportunistic use of scientific terms for personal gain.

That said, it's not entirely fair to place all the blame on these authors. They've addressed some invented issues, like "past-life karmic debts," "astrological retribution," "ghost possessions," and "voodoo acts," all of which are

essentially products of their own imaginations. Nowadays, modern pseudo-scientists, namely psychologists and psychiatrists (both are half-science), sometimes adopt these ancient methods to treat their patients, all in an effort to boost their own income and status. However, if we look closely, we can see that these beliefs haven't truly benefited anyone, anywhere.

Spiritual leaders from both Eastern and Western traditions often claim that this world is an illusion. Even if it exists, they say, it's just a temporary stop for us mortals. Many of these spiritualists take a negative view of life and anything that enhances our quality of living. They tend to split the world into "spiritual" and "physical," seeing the physical realm as merely a "training ground" for achieving eternal spiritual existence after our brief time on Earth. Because of this split, anyone trying to improve their life is often labeled as chasing "materialistic pleasures" and considered spiritually bankrupt. It's ironic and tragic that we often elevate these individuals, who can be detrimental to humanity's progress, as saints and place them on pedestals.

We've already demonstrated that the concept of the "four or five elements" found in texts like the Vedas (as *Pancha Bhuta*) doesn't produce anything useful in practical terms. Yet, we still see spiritualists on TV discussing the "sciences" of ancient sages and asking,

“What have these scientists ever given us?” The irony is that everything they use— from their clothes to the microphones, cameras, and television sets through which they broadcast their nonsense—are all made possible by those very scientists. Even the mass production of religious texts like the Bible, Quran, and Gita wouldn’t be possible without the printing press, which is a result of scientific innovation. These texts, once passed down through oral tradition, can now reach a broader audience thanks to science.

But the essence of science goes far beyond the claims of any self-proclaimed sage. It isn’t reserved for a select few; rather, science is the accumulated knowledge of ordinary people that dates back to the very beginnings of humanity. Think about the first humans who figured out how to modify their environment to make it more livable. Consider the person who first gathered larger grains for better harvests or the one who realized that sharper stone edges could be used for cutting. Think about the individual who discovered that cotton or hair could be turned into clothing, or the inventor of the wheel who changed transportation, or those who identified herbs for treating stomach aches—all of these people were the primitive scientists of their time. Their small discoveries and techniques, passed down through generations, have blossomed into the vast and ever-evolving body of knowledge we now call science. This is ‘true knowledge—the real wealth of humanity’.

Let's take a moment to look around us, shall we? Check out the items in the room you're in. Can you find any evidence of contributions from great figures such as Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, or perhaps any locally revered personalities in the objects that surround you? Even with a thorough search, you are unlikely to find a single thing produced from their teachings or efforts. Sure, you might spot a Buddha statue being used as a paperweight, but honestly, any smooth rock could do the same job!

We often hear about how Buddha brought 'peace' to the world wherever he went. But hold on a second, what about all those Sri Lankan Buddhists who decided to turn Tamilians into minced meat? Where has the peace gone? Why didn't his philosophy work among them to prevent such violence? And Jesus, the poster child for loving thy neighbor! But hold up, who's gonna take responsibility for all those crusades fought in his name? Finally, Mohammad is praised far and wide as the apostle of "universal brotherhood". Yet, if his teachings can't even bridge the divide between Shias and Sunnis, how can we expect them to resolve other conflicts? These examples challenge the very ideals these figures are associated with. This isn't about discrediting them, but rather to point out that neither the individuals themselves nor their ideas are the real driving force behind global progress or the everyday items around us. Instead, they often claim credit for advancements made

by science while conveniently ignoring the true source of progress ☺.

When it comes to science, we need to separate individuals' scientific contributions from their personal beliefs. Historically, it was not always easy to distinguish believers from non-believers, as many prominent figures in both Eastern and Western science held religious convictions. Take Isaac Newton, for instance; his curiosity about the universe stemmed from wanting to understand "the laws by which God created the world." While we can question his beliefs, we should still appreciate his scientific accomplishments independently. However, it is also important to remember that countless individuals have lived and died throughout history while adhering to similar belief systems, and none of them have ever produced or contributed anything to societal progress. So it is not because of their religious convictions that geniuses are naturally born, but rather because of their unique genetic makeup and favorable social circumstances.

Newton's religious views did limit his scientific explorations. He focused so much on understanding God's creation that he didn't challenge the established biblical cosmology of his time. This led him to investigate and believe in areas like alchemy and the occult, which, while fascinating to him, were ultimately pseudosciences. Therefore, it's vital to keep scientific

contributions separate from personal beliefs.

Now, let's talk about Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medical system that heavily operates on the idea of Karma—the belief that our actions in one life affect our experiences in the next. This philosophy suggests that our current life, known as "*Prarabdha*," is largely predetermined. Any suffering we experience is thought to stem from our past actions, and trying to change that suffering is seen as just postponing what's inevitable. Therefore, if experiences are predetermined, curing disease or alleviating pain is considered only to postpone suffering to the next life. The focus, then, becomes accepting present circumstances to avoid creating further karmic burdens. In simpler terms, this way of thinking believes that curing diseases or even easing pain are not the ultimate solution.

While Ayurveda boasts a rich history of successful treatments, its foundations are deeply rooted in religious beliefs. Even though it was once the primary form of medical treatment, its methods are considered outdated now, much like ancient Chinese or Egyptian medicine. It remains inseparable from its worldview, which believes that the world was created by gods to test and prepare the soul for "salvation". This reliance on a belief system has hindered its ability to progress as a real medical science, leading many medical associations worldwide to classify it as pseudoscience. However,

there were times when Karma came in handy for Ayurvedic physicians as an escape plan. In the absence of medicine, a cure, or even a pain-alleviating substance, they could fall back on the philosophy of Karma, telling patients, “It is *prarabdha*,” meaning you must endure this suffering for your soul's sake ☺.

In a previous chapter, we explored a bus journey, and now we're delving into another one. It is often argued that, without religious philosophies, law and order cannot be maintained, but Imagine a crowded bus terminal with around 200 people impatiently waiting for a bus. If only one bus arrives, chaos is inevitable. Arguments erupt over who gets on first, and tempers flare. The situation requires either forceful intervention or persuasion to calm the desperate crowd. But what if four buses arrived instead? Suddenly, everyone can relax and peace reigns supreme. There's plenty of room for everyone, and with assigned seats, there's no need to fight over them. Order prevails, and potential conflicts are diffused.

Similarly, think of a train with many compartments, where each passenger gets a seat. In such situations, there's no need for spiritual or philosophical teachings on loving thy neighbor because the abundance of resources already ensures order and peace. The takeaway of this is that, there is no need for religious teachings, emotional control, or philosophies on loving your

neighbor to maintain order if there are enough resources. This is where science truly shines. By providing abundance to fulfill our basic needs, it fosters peaceful coexistence. Of course, minor skirmishes may arise, like someone accidentally falling asleep on another person's shoulder. In such instances, philosophies like "love thy neighbor" might be helpful. However, for the past 2,000 years, these very religious philosophies and worldviews, with their limited practical application, stagnated societies and hampered scientific progress. Their institutions perpetuated poverty and kept us in the dark ages. Whenever scientific inquiry emerged, it was deemed heretical or "the devil's work," and practitioners were ostracized as witches or devil worshipers, subjected to torture and even killed for their "unorthodox investigations." Science faced immense obstacles in improving our lives.

Historically, there's been a long-standing clash between religion and science. While science pushes for progress and makes life easier—much like those extra buses—anything new was often met with distrust. Scientists, in particular, were treated with suspicion and labeled as witches, and constantly faced persecution as alleged practitioners of dark magic. Scientific endeavors oftentimes were branded as "satanic," making it difficult for scientists to pursue their work freely. This mistrust not only complicated their lives but also significantly slowed down scientific advancement.

Therefore, the true contributions of these spiritual ideologies has been to perpetuate suffering and usher us in a dark age. Blind faith, regardless of the specific belief (ghosts, devils, gods), is at the heart of these philosophies. To claim that 'one belief (e.g., belief in God) is good while another (e.g., belief in ghosts) is bad' is a wrong distinction. God and the devil, in this sense, are two sides of the same coin. True understanding of our world comes from scientific knowledge, which is irreplaceable in its power and clarity. There exists a propaganda that there are many ways to understand life, and each, in its own way, can be beneficial to the quality of life. This is not only untrue but completely misleading. While different spiritual philosophies may offer comfort and meaning to their followers, they essentially serve the interests of their institutions rather than benefiting society as a whole. Ultimately, science offers the most reliable insights into our world through its commitment to evidence-based solutions, making it crucial for progress and human well-being.

Now, imagine if we took all the churches, temples, and mosques around the world and entrusted them to archaeologists. These sites could be transformed into tourist attractions, just like iconic ancient locations such as Machu Picchu, the Pyramids of Egypt, Stonehenge, Angkor Wat, and the sacred sites of Australia. If ancient gods and their worship places can become museums or

tourist spots, why not apply the same idea to contemporary places of worship? These sites could educate us about historical beliefs and lifestyles. Instead of pouring resources into maintaining places of worship, which often keep people tied to the past, we could convert them into historical museums. Continuing to maintain or build temples and churches only holds society back. There's no real purpose in running them, except for the benefit of religious leaders who live lavish lives while preying on the vulnerable.

Just as the arrival of four buses can instantly calm the situation by offering a solution to the restless crowd on the roadside, so too can increased resources act as a catalyst for peace in troubled regions worldwide through scientific progress. Instead of simply accepting suffering and poverty, or attributing our struggles to fate or divine intervention and surrender to a supposed all-powerful deity, we should be actively learning and understanding the world around us. This knowledge empowers us to transform our circumstances to better suit our needs and desires.

The key to improving our lives doesn't lie in following Buddha's eightfold path to escape suffering, or in the teachings of Jesus or Muhammad, who said that earthly life is temporary and true life is found in heaven. Nor does it come from saints and holy figures who claim this world is just an illusion and encourage us to ignore

material well-being. Instead, it's the "four buses" of science, progress, and resources that have the real potential to bring peace and prosperity to the world ☺.

In wealthier regions like Europe, America, and Australia, it's common to see churches being sold and converted into hotels or homes. But in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, this doesn't happen as often. Why? Because these continents are home to large populations of poor people, who are more likely to turn to religion and promises of miracles. Many priests and evangelists, who are no longer finding work in Europe, head to these poorer areas to carry out missionary work. If these religious leaders truly uphold their professed commitment to truth, they wouldn't be building new churches in these impoverished regions, especially since their own institutions are being sold and converted for other purposes in affluent Europe. Their singular objective in this morally questionable practice is to maintain their own lifestyle, which they achieve through manipulation and exploitation. This is why they vehemently oppose scientific progress and enlightenment initiatives worldwide. Therefore, those dedicated to advancing peace, prosperity, and knowledge must unequivocally denounce and discard outdated spiritual philosophies and their associated institutions.

In almost every society, there are groups of people who face oppression and exploitation on a systemic level. When new technologies or innovations come along, designed to boost growth and improve living conditions, they often end up empowering these oppressed groups. This can create a strong desire for change within society. When that desire reaches a tipping point, a leader typically emerges from among these groups. This leader becomes a symbol of the struggle for change, voicing the frustrations and hopes of their community. It's important to understand that 'these leaders don't create the movement; rather, the movement creates them'. They arise out of the pressing need for change within their society. Regardless of whether we judge them as good or bad, leaders emerge as products of the unique needs of their society. For example, during India's fight against British rule, Gandhi emerged as a leader from the midst of a long-standing struggle (which had been brewing long before he was even born), returning from Africa to lead the movement.

On the other hand, after Germany faced defeat and hardship following World War I, Adolf Hitler emerged, channeling the frustration and desire for change among the German population with his own vision for the future. Both leaders came to prominence due to the specific needs and situations faced by their societies at that time. It's important to understand that while

individual leaders may bring their own unique qualities to the movement, they are ultimately shaped by the demands of the people they represent. The movement itself determines the characteristics and direction of its leaders, not the other way around. So, we shouldn't mistake the leader's role in the movement or think that they are solely responsible for its creation.

When leaders, upon witnessing the fervor, dedication, and unwavering faith of their followers, fall under the delusion that the people's desire for freedom and defiance against oppression stem solely from their own leadership. However, the reality is that once the immediate needs of the people are met, the awakened population may not hesitate to cast aside these very leaders. Take Gandhi and Churchill, for example. Gandhi believed in breaking up the Congress party after India gained independence. He envisioned India as a collection of self-sufficient villages where people lived simply, using hand-spun cloth called *khadi*. He really practiced what he preached and embodied his vision. However, post-independence, we witnessed a gradual abandonment of these utopian ideals and Gandhi's marginalization in India's development trajectory.

Moreover, Gandhi's inflated sense of self-belief in his leadership and influence led him to naively believe, during the partition, that he could quell the hatred and violence erupting between Muslims and Hindus by

walking among the rioting crowds. Rather than heeding his leadership, this intervention tragically cost him his life, as the leader who sought to calm the situation was ultimately removed from the equation. Similarly, Churchill, the wartime leader, spearheaded British resistance against Hitler's invasion. He revitalized the spirit of the war-torn British Empire, rallying the demoralized masses through his powerful speeches and unwavering resolve. Even after the defeat of Germany, Churchill remained determined to continue the war, fixated on restoring the lost glory of the British Empire. But when the peace treaty was signed, the very people who had once rallied behind him voted him out of office, longing for stability and the chance to rebuild their lives.

In both cases, leaders who once held tremendous influence found themselves discarded once the immediate and specific need they addressed was no longer present. In reality, leaders are treated like tissues: once people use them for what they need, they toss them aside. Building statues for them is pointless, because they end up serving only as perches for birds to use as toilets ☺.

THE QUANTUM JUMP BROUGHT BY LANGUAGE

AS WE HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED, the universe has no true beginning—it simply *exists*. When we try to understand the universe, which is always changing, we tend to mark certain points as "beginnings" to help us measure and make sense of it. These markers, however, are human-made constructs. For us to communicate, having a concept of beginnings and boundaries or reference points are essential. Around 50,000 years ago, as shown by archaeological evidence, humans began shaping their environment in ways no other species had. We invented tools, weapons, and ways to interact with our world that made life more manageable. The development of language, clothing, and other tools played a critical role in human progress.

Language is a skill that evolved with our species, possibly due to a genetic mutation. Children have an innate ability to learn language, but this window only remains open until about age 10-12. If a child hasn't learned at least one language by then—like those rare cases of feral children raised by wolves—they'll never be able to fully

acquire a language later in life. This is because our brains grow and develop through continuous interactions with the world around us. It's like a feedback loop: the more we engage with our environment and communicate, the more our brains develop and learn.

Neuroscientists have discovered that different areas of the brain correspond to different functions, like sight, movement, and language. But these areas are not rigidly separated; they overlap and often work together. Multiple regions may join forces to carry out a task. This collaboration helps explain how our brain develops and functions. When we think about how the brain develops and manages our actions, an ancient idea comes to mind—the concept of the "soul," which was believed to control all aspects of a person's being. Although modern science doesn't locate this "soul" within the brain itself, it's interesting to note that by the time people reach their early 20s, typically between ages 18 and 25, the brain has fully matured. After this, we often feel as though we're no longer aging. This sense of being ageless is the reason behind the idea of an "unchanging soul." People tend to feel like they're staying the same, even though they notice others around them growing older.

This experience of an "ageless soul" isn't a separate entity; rather, it's a result of the brain's various parts working together in harmony. Just as a car is made up of

many components—like nuts, bolts, wheels, and an engine—yet we perceive it as a single vehicle, the same is true for our sense of self. The coordinated efforts of different brain regions give us the feeling of a unified "I," even though it doesn't exist independently of the brain's various functions. So, when we talk about the idea of a soul, it starts to fall apart. As we grow and change over the years, our sense of self shifts too. The person we were at 5 years old is not the same as the person we become at 15 or 25.

Human childhood is unusually long compared to other animals. Before we turn 18, our brains develop mainly through a feedback system where specific areas correspond to different activities. This process takes time, which is why it takes so long for a fully-formed sense of "self" or individuality to emerge. In contrast, creatures like baby turtles or snakes hatch with all the information they need to survive already hardwired into them. They don't require further learning to function. But in human babies, development is a combination of survival instincts (which are passed down genetically) and the knowledge and skills they gain through nurturing, care, and—most importantly—language. Even though we share 99% of our DNA with chimpanzees, the huge differences between humans and them are largely due to language. It's believed we may have gained the ability to speak through a genetic mutation. What's amazing is that this skill doesn't have

to be explicitly taught. By the time a human child is three years old, they have already picked up a language, with all its complex grammar, just by listening. If they're exposed to multiple languages during this time, they'll absorb them effortlessly, almost like a sponge soaking up water.

Learning a language primarily happens through listening, not writing. Many children struggle to pick up a foreign language in school because the focus is often on written exercises instead of listening to conversations. Think of it this way: just as a monkey doesn't need to be taught to climb a tree, children naturally learn to talk without formal instruction. However, when we try to teach them a new language by having them write without any listening practice, it's like forcing a monkey to climb with its arms tied—it's frustrating and counterproductive. In urban environments where people from different backgrounds and cultures coexist, kids often pick up several languages simply by hearing them spoken around them. This shows how vital listening is for language acquisition. Language should be taught by teachers who are fluent in their native tongue because that personal experience makes a huge difference. When children don't get this immersive experience, it becomes much harder for them to learn.

It's important to understand that language isn't just another school subject; it operates differently and is not just a matter of interest or disinterest. If someone claims a particular language is "difficult," it's funny to think that kids from communities where that language is spoken would also struggle—but they usually don't. If a child hasn't been exposed to any language by the age of ten or twelve, the parts of the brain responsible for speech won't develop. This has been seen in children raised by animals, where the necessary brain regions fail to form due to a lack of interactive listening. Just like puppies or kittens that are kept in the dark will go blind if their eyes aren't exposed to light during crucial development phases (only then will the process of vision be completed), children need exposure to language for their brains to form the necessary connections for speaking. If they don't listen to any language, their ability to speak can be lost, meaning that children who haven't heard a language by age twelve are unlikely to learn to speak it later on. Only those who have been exposed to at least one language by that critical age will develop the ability to speak.

Language is one of humanity's most remarkable gifts. Unlike any other species, we have the unique ability to communicate with complex words and ideas. Along with all the genetic information acquired through inheritance, language is the ability to share new information and memories. When we talk to children,

we're passing on our experiences and knowledge—a process known as nurture. Language greatly enhances this nurturing process, making it far more effective. However, it's important to remember that language didn't develop overnight. It took thousands of years, evolving slowly through a feedback system where people learned from one another. Through language, we can also share experiences from different times and places, helping us understand the world and the changes happening around us. The Ramayana, the Bible, and the Quran are ancient texts that have been passed down through oral traditions for generations. Even today, they continue to shape our thoughts and beliefs through the power of language. Essentially, language allows us to take our personal experiences and transform them into shared memories that can be communicated to others. This ability helps us prepare for future events, giving our species a significant advantage over others. When we gained the ability to reflect on our thoughts and feelings, we created a way to share our inner experiences through conversation. Language is unparalleled in its ability to help us understand each other's minds and to express our own thoughts.

Throughout history, languages have developed in specific regions, absorbing influences from one another while also shedding certain elements. Each language carries its own historical, emotional, and experiential weight, making it impossible to create a language that is

completely "clean" or free from this baggage. Just like culture, language is shaped by the unique experiences of individuals throughout history. Even as I write this book with the goal of presenting ideas clearly and scientifically, the language I use is still influenced by the past, filled with the biases and beliefs that have shaped it. This historical context is an inherent limitation of any language that we cannot escape; all our efforts in communication are shaped by these influences, affecting both their scope and effectiveness.

THE SUBJUGATION TOWARDS WHITE SKIN

WHILE HUMANS HAVE AS MANY AS 21 different senses, we tend to think of vision as the most important one. It's our primary way of experiencing and understanding the world around us. Throughout history, many cultures have associated the eye with divine revelation and intervention, often referring to these experiences as 'visions.' When we say phrases like "mind's eye" or "I can see it in your eyes," we highlight just how essential our eyes are to our lives.

The ideas of light and darkness have played a huge role in how we think and what we believe. We often use these concepts to categorize our values and make moral choices. Light is generally seen as representing goodness, purity, and enlightenment, while darkness often symbolizes evil, ignorance, and fear of the unknown. It's no surprise that people often pray to be "led from darkness to light," viewing light as a beacon of hope and salvation. Terms like 'dark forces' and 'forces of the night' are typically linked to negative traits or bad influences. This belief is echoed in Chinese philosophy

through the idea of dualism, where white represents yang—often associated with good—while black represents yin, associated with bad.

Our tendency to view the world through this lens can lead to unfair judgments, especially towards creatures that thrive in the dark. When night falls, many of us feel uneasy and start to see nocturnal animals as threatening, cruel or evil. But this fear often comes from an overemphasis on sight, which isn't the only way to perceive the world.

To understand light better, it's essential to know that it's a type of energy that travels as electromagnetic waves. What makes light unique for us is that our eyes can detect specific wavelengths. However, many animals can see in wavelengths beyond our perception, which helps them thrive in the dark.

In reality, predators that depend on their eyesight are usually less active at night. Many nocturnal animals rely on other senses, like hearing or smell, to find their way and hunt. They come out after sunset to forage, hunt, or mate, but they're not the evil creatures that movies and books sometimes portray (like bats, for example). In fact, many of them are harmless, yet we still tend to view them with fear and suspicion. It's good to remember that these animals pose little threat to us or to other wildlife. There's also a common myth that lions are

nocturnal, but that's not entirely accurate. Most big cats, including lions, are actually crepuscular, meaning they're most active during dawn and dusk. However, this doesn't mean they don't wake up at other times. In their natural habitats, the daytime heat can be extreme, making it hard to hunt without expending too much energy. So, they tend to rest during the hottest part of the day and prefer to be active when it's cooler, whether that's early morning or late evening.

Many nighttime animals are not dangerous and usually prefer to avoid humans. Bats and owls, for example, can be quite helpful as they control insect and rodent populations. Other nocturnal creatures like raccoons, possums, and foxes are generally non-aggressive and will steer clear of people unless they feel threatened or trapped. Often, these animals are more scared of us than we are of them! As humans, we frequently seek the light to guide us away from darkness. However, we should remember that we are not the only beings sharing this planet. Our fear and suspicion of the night often stem from our own biases and limitations. It's important to consider that humans have been responsible for some of the most horrific acts of cruelty, both towards one another and other species. Thus, it's somewhat ironic that we see ourselves as victims of darkness, even though we often create the real horrors in our world.

A century ago, devils, fairies, and demons were harsh realities of everyday life. When we ventured out at night, our only tool was a torch made of plant fibers. The light from this torch was our sole defense against the demons and ghosts that lurked in the darkness. Yet, the torch itself would burn out, fade, or sometimes go out entirely, making the situation even more tense. With the advent of torchlights and electric streetlights, the ghosts that once haunted people have disappeared and now reside only in some remote hilly regions where there are no lights at all. Apart from these hills, the only place these poor specters have to live today is in television dramas and films. The darkness is no longer a place of terror but rather a place of wonder and possibility.

Modern humans first appeared in the sunny regions of Africa, specifically in tropical areas where sunlight is more intense. To adapt to this bright environment, our skin developed a darker color due to an increased production of a substance called melanin. This melanin acts as a natural shield against the harmful UV rays of the sun, which is why our ancestors had darker skin. Over the last thirty thousand years, some of these tropical humans migrated to cooler temperate and even polar regions. As they moved further from the equator, they encountered less direct sunlight, which led to a decrease in melanin production. This resulted in lighter skin, which is better at absorbing Vitamin D from the sun—an important nutrient for maintaining strong

bones and overall health. When these lighter-skinned humans eventually made their way to North America through the Arctic, they began to tan again as they encountered more sunlight. This is why Christopher Columbus referred to Native Americans as 'Red Indians'—because their skin would sometimes take on a reddish hue.

Moreover, many humans who had darker skin gradually became more sexually attracted to those with slightly lighter skin among them or in their own tribes. Eventually, this preference developed into an obsession or fascination with whiteness. Thousands of years later, as climate changes occurred, white individuals started moving into areas populated by darker-skinned people. This mingling led to a natural sexual attraction towards lighter skin, which influenced social dynamics and relationships. Therefore, this attraction wasn't solely the result of white people later colonizing and ruling over Black populations.

Some researchers suggest that lighter skin might have been seen as attractive because it provides a clearer contrast with eye colors and helps express emotions more visibly. Ancient literary works from around the world are abundant with references to the classification of white people as gods (*Indras*) and black people as demons (*Asuras*). Even works by dark-skinned authors from less privileged backgrounds often focused on

white or lighter-skinned characters. Examples of such works include the Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

The association of light with good and dark with bad has deep roots in various cultures throughout history. This idea was further reinforced by agricultural developments in the Mediterranean, initially among relatively light-skinned individuals and later among those who were even lighter. The technological advancements that later emerged in Europe also helped solidify notions of white superiority. Although political liberation from 'white colonizers' may have occurred, the feeling of subjugation towards white skin doesn't disappear so easily, as it has become a basis for sexual attraction. This is why many darker-skinned individuals run behind whitening creams.

It's important to recognize that even the most passionate Black political activists, despite their pride in 'Black power' and their efforts to embrace their identity, often still feel a sense of inadequacy because their ideals may not easily resonate with the hearts of ordinary Black people. The reason is that the sexual attraction to lighter, or white skin, can run counter to these ideals.

Many ordinary black individuals struggle with this internal conflict. But if Black people go to an area where only White people live, they may notice that Blackness

can become associated with sexual attraction. It is very natural to be drawn to something that is different from what already exists or what you're used to. Those who attempt to lighten their skin color may never understand why Europeans seek to darken their skin through sun tanning. Unless we understand this sexual attraction that forms the basis of 'standing out from the common,' we will never fully comprehend the subtle dynamics between dark and light skin.

INVENTIONS ARE THE CAUSE OF HISTORICAL PROGRESS

WE HAVE AT LEAST TWO THOUSAND YEARS of knowledge in the history of the Arab world. For centuries, this vast desert was home to caravans, oases, and ancient trade routes. Merchants traveled across it on camelback, bringing goods like dates, pomegranates, and spices. The dry, dusty winds, the scorching heat of the desert sun, the chilly nights under starry skies, and the mud palaces of sheikhs and sultans all shaped daily life. Stories like those of Sinbad and *Arabian Nights* vividly depict this world, filled with tales of harems, damsels, and magical jinns. Even the lifestyle described in ancient texts like the Bible and the Qur'an remained largely unchanged until the mid-20th century, when British explorer Wilfred Thesiger wrote *Arabian Sands*. That was just over half a century ago.

But today, the Arabian Desert tells a very different story. To catch a glimpse of the world described in those old tales, you'd have to travel far into the remote tribal regions. Wells that were once dug for precious drinking water here—often yielding little more than foul-

smelling, unusable water—later became the source of wealth for millions of migrant workers, particularly from Southeast Asia. Throughout history, countless religious figures such as Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad, and Baha'u'llah all preached and did hundreds of things to change the above-drawn picture for the last thousands of years. Yet, these efforts did not bring any substantial change to the lives of most people living on the Arabian Peninsula. Life moved slowly and harshly in hostile conditions—water was scarce, food was limited, and survival was often difficult. Then, in 1885, everything changed when Karl Benz invented petrol-driven cars. Although the transformative impact of the gasoline-powered automobile on the deserts wouldn't be felt for another seventy years, it ultimately reshaped the region, turning the once foul-smelling water into impressive structures like the Burj Khalifa. Now, we no longer have to dream of going to heaven to experience the paradise mentioned in the Quran, nor do we need to continue living a life determined by fate. The oil boom turned this once empty desert into thriving modern cities like Dubai, filled with towering skyscrapers, luxurious malls, and cutting-edge technology.

However, even as modernity sweeps through, there remains a tension between progress and tradition. The unchanging force that stands as a barrier to these new realities are the Sharia laws rooted in the Quran and some of the conservative cultural practices of the

region's tribal communities.

The changes that displaced the two-thousand-year-old harsh reality were not brought about by saints or prophets, but by the handiwork of the inventor of the car, Karl Benz—a name often forgotten unless mentioned. It was technological breakthroughs—like the car—not divine intervention, that sparked this wave of social change. While these advances have brought modernity, they've also created social and economic inequalities, leading to unrest. When we search for the true "architects of change," we often focus on groups or individuals trying to promote or suppress this unrest. But in reality, these groups are themselves products of the very technologies. History teaches us that behind every major social shift, there's almost always a key invention. These inventions, not just ideas or movements, are the real forces behind progress.

Imagine a conflict between tribes fighting with nothing but clubs. In this scenario, a tribe with even slightly better weapons—say, a sharpened stick—would have a clear advantage. This principle has been true throughout history: whenever innovation thrived, those who created new tools and technologies saw remarkable growth, which eventually allowed them to dominate other societies. The sharing of these inventions to other societies and the knowledge that came with them are the real keys to human progress and development.

If you dive into the stories and legends of any ancient civilization, you'll notice a common theme: heroes are often equipped with powerful magical weapons bestowed upon them by gods and goddesses in response to prayers and offerings. Think of Achilles with his spear or Rama and Arjuna with their arrows. In many ways, these magical weapons represent the technological advancements of their time, albeit dressed up in supernatural tales. It's interesting to note that, despite being gifted by "powerful gods," these weapons were just bows, arrows, daggers, helmets, or armor. Why didn't the gods provide modern weapons like guns or missiles? It's hilarious to think that they could only sprinkle a bit of magic onto existing weaponry. It really shows how the storytellers were limited by the knowledge of their time. Their inability to envision anything beyond what already existed—except by imbuing it with magical properties—highlights how the concept of gods and magical weapons sprang from the creative imagination of those writers.

In the end, the success of a tribe in battle heavily relied on the weapons they had. Just like advancements in weaponry changed the way wars were fought, the use of domesticated animals was also crucial. Geography played a big part in which animals could be tamed. For example, Indian kings famously used elephants in combat, but when the Greek cavalry arrived on

horseback, those elephants quickly became ineffective and totally useless. A hundred skilled horsemen could easily outmaneuver and cause havoc among a thousand foot soldiers, thanks to their speed and agility. The results of battles were also influenced by factors like armor quality, the strength of steel swords, and the use of powerful artillery, all of which transformed the nature of warfare.

As technology progressed, the keys to success increasingly lay in having the most advanced and precise weapons. In earlier times, victory in battle relied heavily on the sheer number of soldiers a nation could field. However, this changed over the years, and the type of weapons an army wielded became the main determinant of success. For instance, battles that once relied on chariots drawn by donkeys eventually evolved into those using horses and later, motorized vehicles powered by gasoline. Each innovation offered a significant strategic advantage on the battlefield.

The introduction of firearms changed the game dramatically. Guns could easily defeat even the most skilled fighters, rendering years of training useless. Take the legendary Samurai warriors of Japan and the Kalari Gurus of India, for example; they were no match for European traders armed with basic firearms. They were all shot down like crows. These elite warriors, who had dedicated their lives to mastering combat and instilling

fear in the hearts of their enemies, saw all their efforts go to waste. A simple pull of the trigger by someone trained to handle a gun could take down these formidable opponents almost effortlessly. A few hundred armed men could sail across oceans and conquer vast lands, where millions of traditional warriors stood in formation but were powerless against the trader's straightforward firepower.

This ability to evolve from using simple logs to boats and eventually to ships allowed people to navigate treacherous seas and reach distant shores. There was nothing particularly extraordinary about these individuals; they simply had superior weapons and faster means of transportation. Communities that engaged in trade or warfare began to share knowledge and improve their technical skills collectively. It was this accumulation of technological knowledge that fundamentally changed the course of human history. This collective knowledge represents humanity's true 'wealth.' It wasn't any single group or culture that contributed to this; rather, it was the gradual accumulation of knowledge from various peoples and traditions that transformed the world. Factors like size, skin color, or gender didn't determine success; instead, it was the quality of weapons and technology that decided the outcomes of conflicts. In the end, whoever had the better weapon—in this case, the better gun—won the battles and established supremacy.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF?

THE PHRASE "love your neighbor as yourself" is one of the most well-known and universally accepted moral maxims. It resonates with everyone because it appears to be undeniably "true". But while the idea of loving our neighbors sounds simple, the reality is often much more complicated. Have you ever stopped to think about who Jesus' "neighbor" actually was? Can you find a single person as his neighbor from the Bible? The same goes for spiritual leaders like Gautama Buddha or Saint John—again, we won't find a clear answer. Maybe that's the whole point. So let us not be fooled by the simplicity of this moral dictum.

We all have our own homes and defined boundaries—whether it's a simple dwelling with a fence or a vast estate. Beyond those physical boundaries live our neighbors, each with their own addresses. However, living close to neighbors can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, they can provide a sense of community and support. On the other hand, these neighbors can be a significant source of endless frustration and anger,

with their cows wandering onto our property, devouring our vegetables, or their chickens digging up your freshly planted gardens. Or worse, think of that neighbor who shifts the fence line just a bit too far, or has a dog that barks all night, keeping you awake, or those folks who blast music at ear-splitting volumes, making us tempted to throw rocks at their roofs in the middle of the night. These are the neighbors that may come to mind with a sudden sense of shock when the discussion arises, because this is the fellow that we need to love as ourselves.

Loving our neighbors can be much easier said than done. You've tried many times to love your neighbor Raju, but that bastard won't let you. Yet you keep trying. "It was just an accident that our bull broke through his fence and devoured all his banana plants," you might say. "But remember when Raju cut down that tree near our fence? It fell on our cowshed. We told him to tie a rope before chopping it down, but he didn't listen. Isn't that worse than a few banana plants? How can I possibly adore that asshole? Who else would keep trying again and again? Others would have chopped off his leg by now. How do Buddha and Jesus manage to do all this loving stuff? How is that even possible? They seem to be doing great, but maybe it's just not meant for us mere mortals. Someone should have been born with that kind of patience and love. What a pity". You might lament.

So, how do we succeed in this business of loving our neighbors? It feels like a task meant only for great sages, right?. Think about figures like Buddha and Christ—how did they become symbols of unconditional love and compassion? That’s where we need to look at the essence of our first question: Who were their neighbors? How did they make a living, or who took care of them? The secret to their ability to love unconditionally lies in the fact that they never really had neighbors to begin with— an impossible feat for those involved in farming or trade, but attainable only by a select few. Armed with this secret key, the aforementioned saints held an absolute monopoly on the art of loving their neighbors unconditionally. No wandering ascetics or spiritual figures have any neighbors. Neither Buddha nor Christ had any neighbors. They may have had neighbors during their childhood at home. Siddhartha had neighbors, but Buddha had none; Jesus had neighbors, but Christ had none. By not having neighbors, they unlocked the secret to unconditional love.

Let me break this down for you in simpler terms. In many spiritual traditions, the idea of giving is seen as a core principle connected to unconditional love. However, let's look at two different examples of giving:

1. "I met a guru, and he handed me an apple from

a big basket full of apples.”

2. “When I told the guru about my job offer in London but mentioned I didn’t have enough money to travel, he quickly gave me a pouch full of cash.”

However, the question remains: where does the source of his unconditional love truly originate? If we examine these two acts of giving more closely, we could see that their acts of generosity don’t come from their own personal resources; instead, they’re gifts that others have given them, kind of like how people might bring presents to a king when they meet him. This means that the support and resources these spiritual leaders use to show unconditional love actually come from regular folks like you and me.

This brings us to two important practices these spiritual figures often employ: first, they live without neighbors, and second, they rely on what others have worked hard to produce. It is from these mysterious processes that the wellspring of unconditional love and generosity flows forth, which these revered figures bestow upon the world. By relying on the generosity of others, they are able to live a life of service and embody the ideals of love and compassion that they espouse. Now, let’s think about what might happen if someone—maybe even you—tries to show love to their neighbors using only what they’ve earned through their own hard work,

without understanding the secret behind the unconditional love of those sages.

Imagine this: you go to a heartfelt sermon at your local shrine, and you feel so moved that you decide to share the abundance from your mango trees with your neighbors. You start by giving a basket of ripe mangoes to the neighbor next door, then send the rest to others in your neighborhood. As word of your generosity spread, more and more people showed up, but unfortunately, all the mangoes were quickly taken, and some of the latecomers had to leave empty-handed. Needless to say, you were a bit annoyed and irritated by their behavior, but they all eventually went back home. The following week, your pumpkins ripen, and you remember those who didn't get mangoes and decide to share your pumpkins instead. However, even more people show up this time, and the pumpkins disappear just as quickly. Despite your best efforts, some folks still miss out. To make it right, you promise to give them your strawberries when they ripen next week. You somehow manage to keep this cycle going for two years, trying to share your harvest with everyone.

However, rumors start spreading that you're playing favoritism. Your neighbors accused you of giving the best produce to your closest friends while leaving others with overripe pumpkins and berries. They accused you of giving all the good mangoes to the "good-for-

nothing" follows. Despite your attempts to clarify your intentions, some neighbors remain unconvinced, even suggesting that you secretly favor certain people. This is the kind of reputation you get for working hard and sharing what you grow—mixed with misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

The point is that to truly live a life of unconditional love without limits, one must rely on the "surplus" produced by the labor of others. This is the true source of saintliness, regardless of one's creed, location, or background. It is not achieved through one's own efforts but by utilizing the labor and free resources of others. If one were to undertake the same activity solely on their own property with their own labor, it would not lead to fame but rather to infamy.

In a society that operates on a 'hierarchical' structure, the act of giving often puts the giver in a position of power over the receiver. This happens because we tend to assign value to certain things based on what we consider important, ranking them in a way that places some above others. However, it's important to understand that this top-bottom framework is actually a result of our physical body structure and is not a universal truth. In the grand scheme of the universe, there is no real "top" or "bottom." Take Earth, for example: we describe directions as "up" and "down" based on our position on its surface. When we're

standing on the ground, "down" is where our feet are, and "up" is where our head is, making us see the sun, moon, and stars as being "up there." However, if we were to travel to the moon and stand there, Earth would appear "above" us. This change in perspective is not because one place is inherently "higher" or "lower" but simply due to our position. In reality, there's no absolute hierarchy; it's all about our position in space. Yet, our society tends to value the head more than the feet, often viewing feet as dirty. This hierarchical thinking was supported by religious beliefs that became woven into social structures. It's worth noting that humans are part of the ape family, where social groups typically have hierarchies, often with a dominant male in charge.

When the idea of monotheism—believing in one God—started to take root in society, the existing social hierarchy found a way to justify itself through religion. As nations and kingdoms sought to unify after invasions or conquests, the notion that everyone was created by the same God became a way to promote solidarity. However, the reality remained that society had a clear hierarchy, which implied that God favored some people over others based on their social status. In other words, if everyone was created by the same God, it suggested that God must have a preference for a class-based system.

To rescue this unjust god from accusations of partiality and to address this dilemma, ancient Indian philosophers developed the caste system, which reflected these hierarchical values. They proposed that different parts of society were created from different parts of God's body. According to this view, the top tier of society—priests—came from God's face; the next tier, which included warriors and rulers, emerged from God's shoulders; traders and merchants were said to come from God's thighs; and the lowest tier, made up of laborers and those in menial jobs, came from God's feet. This explanation implied that God was not unjust; rather, God's very nature (or body) was hierarchical, leaving no other way for society to be structured. This reasoning helped people find solace in their social existence, even if they were relegated to the lower strata. They came to believe that their social position was predetermined by fate, which allowed them to find a sense of justice in their roles. This belief helped sustain exploitative social systems for thousands of years with minimal conflict. Unfortunately, this acceptance of a hierarchical society as "natural" is a significant issue stemming from this belief system.

As mentioned earlier, this hierarchy places the giver, or those in power, above the receiver. For example, simply saying 'I love you' is not enough; it must be supported by actions, like buying someone a cup of tea or giving them a hug. Words alone don't carry the same weight—

actions speak louder. Understanding this helps explain why expressions of love often hold greater significance, with the giver occupying the higher position. While being overly expressive can sometimes feel overwhelming, it's generally better than unexpressed love. Ultimately, those in the position of giving will gain social dominance over time, which further reinforces the existing social hierarchy.

When we give a gift, like a kilo of apples or a hundred dollars, to a 'God-man' or a person of great importance like a king, the inherent goodness in our gift does not make us famous or well-regarded. Our act of giving plays only a small role, and at most, it might bring us a little happiness. There is also no continuity in our giving. But, for saints, every little gift accumulates like a drop in the ocean. From that ocean, they give you the apple or the money for your travel. With each gift they receive and give away, their goodness and generosity accumulates, quickly creating social influence and power. If you visit this person again after ten years, you'll see how much their reputation and sense of authority have expanded, almost like a mountain rising in front of you, from all the gifts they have given away. This cumulative effect makes us feel smaller in comparison. We may even feel compelled to bow down and crawl on our hands and knees before them.

On the other hand, if we try to show the same love and generosity toward our neighbors, working with our own limited resources, our efforts might be met with doubt or even rejection instead of appreciation. This is because our small individual acts of kindness don't carry the same cumulative impact as the saint's. Meanwhile, the saint's continuous giving has made their influence soar, like a mountain towering over everyone else.

THE 'USELESS' OLD PEOPLE

WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT HUMAN society is organized like a ladder or pyramid, with different levels. These levels themselves contain even more hierarchies, based on factors such as age, social status, knowledge, physical strength, and even gender or ethnicity. When we walk into a room full of unfamiliar faces, our minds instinctively scan the crowd. We quickly try to determine where we fit into this social hierarchy. We might wonder if we're in a higher or lower position compared to others around us. We use clues like those 'discriminatory' coloured markers mentioned above to guess our place.

Sometimes, it's not easy to categorize someone, or a person might not fit neatly into our understanding of the social order. This uncertainty can make us feel a bit uneasy. When a person's identity doesn't match our expectations (mental framework), we might feel compelled to strike up a conversation or learn more about them—not necessarily because we want to become friends, but because understanding their position helps us feel more secure in our own. Once we

figure out where everyone stands, including ourselves, we tend to relax and feel more at ease within the group. This urge to categorize people and establish a social order is rooted in the hierarchical nature of human societies.

Respecting elders is something that comes naturally to many of us, and it's not just a human trait—it's common in many social animals, especially among complex mammals. Typically, these groups are led by females who care for the young until they mature. The group usually consists of one dominant male, whose primary role is to impregnate as many females as possible, while the rest of the group is made up of females and adolescent males. Although some male-centric humans may mistakenly refer to these groups as 'harems,' they are not led by males but by experienced older females. Examples include elephants, bonobos, hyenas, killer whales, baboons, and others.

There's a good reason why these elder members are respected: they hold valuable experience. They know where to find food and water, they understand potential dangers, and they know how to keep the group safe. Their knowledge is essential for the survival of the group. This wealth of experience was the real reason we showed respect to our elders; they were the ones who kept the group alive. That's why younger members naturally follow and respect them. Even though these

older animals may be physically weaker, their experiential knowledge makes them invaluable. Humans, being social mammals, developed similar traditions of respecting our elders. In early societies, the elders were seen as the keepers of knowledge, passing down wisdom through stories and oral traditions. But as society evolved, this respect has often faded, and elders were sometimes pushed aside. Why did this change happen?

In societies before the invention of writing, knowledge and experience was passed down orally. Elders were the ones who held and shared the wisdom of the group, making them natural leaders. However, the creation of written language changed everything. While speaking comes naturally to humans, reading and writing are learned skills. With written records, knowledge no longer needed to be passed down face-to-face; it could be stored and shared far more widely. This new tool—writing—allowed elders to document their knowledge. Ironically, this very act of preserving knowledge started the process of weakening their authority.

Written knowledge allowed anyone to access information, regardless of age or location. Instead of relying solely on elders for guidance, younger generations could now learn from a variety of sources—books, teachers, and written histories—no matter where they were or what time it was. This ability to learn from

a variety of sources (of past experience in spite of space and time) gave younger generations a new kind of power. Through formal education, young people could even surpass the knowledge of the elders in their own homes. In many ways, the rise of written language and widespread education shifted the balance, allowing younger people to become more informed and less dependent on the wisdom of their elders. This access to a wide range of knowledge ultimately diminished the role of elders as the primary keepers of wisdom in society.

As our societies have grown more complex, the development of widespread educational systems has further weakened the traditional hierarchical dominance of elders. This has led to a conflict: on one hand, there's a natural instinct to respect older people, but on the other hand, many of us find we don't rely on their guidance as much anymore, thanks to formal education. This inner struggle is something many of us grapple with today, making it hard to figure out how to connect with older generations in a world where information is so easily accessible. None of us are immune to it.

On top of that, we're also living in a time when even knowledge that's been recorded in books can quickly become outdated due to rapid technological advancements. Consider the stark difference between a

landline phone, a cellphone, and a smartphone. The older generation's expertise lies in using landlines – how to pick up the receiver, dial numbers – but none of that translates to using a cellphone. Landlines are stationary, while cellphones offer mobility. Operating these fundamentally different communication tools requires entirely different skillsets. A landline user's knowledge becomes useless in the face of a cellphone. What's more, the gap between basic cell phones and smartphones is even larger. While older phones were mainly for calls and texts, smartphones can do everything from managing a business to shopping, all from the palm of your hand. Such capabilities were unimaginable just two decades ago, and this shift happened in the blink of an eye. The older generation isn't even "that old"; their parents might still be around.

Even science teachers today face challenges due to this explosion of knowledge. The internet offers more information than all the knowledge combined from previous eras. This creates a confusing dynamic between younger and older people about how to communicate with one another. Many households are run by elders whose experiences and skills are no longer relevant. Children, who are naturally inclined to respect their elders, and those elders, who expect that respect, are unable to fulfill each other's expectations. As a result, we're seeing entire generations struggling to understand their roles in a rapidly changing world. All new societies

are populated by such confused generations.

FEAR IS ANTICIPATED KNOWLEDGE, GOD IS IGNORANCE INCARNATED

“FEELING SAFE” IS A WIDELY CELEBRATED value. Expressions such as “Find your shelter in God,” “Allah is your last refuge,” “reach his feet,” or “find refuge in Buddha” are used by most religions to create ‘helpless’ devotees all over the world. To them, the answer to all kinds of our helplessness and fear is to seek refuge in God. They present “fear” as something inherently negative, to be avoided at all costs. But is it? Let’s reexamine fear.

Fear, in its most basic form, is a survival instinct. It’s a pre-programmed awareness of potential dangers, often passed down genetically. A fearless child wouldn’t recognize the threat of a snakebite, and reckless adults might speed into oncoming traffic. Such actions often stem from a lack of healthy fear. Fear is knowledge – a premonition of suffering. When walking through the woods, a sudden sound might trigger a climb up a tree before investigating, a reaction that could save your life. People who are fearless can end up in dangerous situations and may never remain alive. That’s why most

animals that are alive today are descendants of those who were afraid and ran away from danger. Fear isn't a bad thing; it's a kind of knowledge that keeps us safe. Phobias, the inability to distinguish real threats from imagined ones, are the exceptions that require treatment. But promoting blind faith as a solution to fear reflects a deeper societal issue —it reveals our unwillingness to take responsibility.

Life is a journey of action – of measuring risks, making decisions, and taking ownership of our choices. Seeking refuge in an imagined deity only breeds passivity and discourages proactive problem-solving. It becomes an excuse to accept misfortune as "fate" rather than taking action. The vastness of the universe is what presents us with such irrational challenges. Our knowledge is limited, and the world is constantly changing, so it is impossible for us to have complete knowledge. Regardless of our efforts to understand it, there will always be more to learn. This inherent incompleteness is what allows belief systems to flourish, providing comfort in the face of the unknown. Faced with this uncertainty, we often find solace in the phrases "God only knows" or "God's will," surrendering to the unknown. This act of surrender is not a path to knowledge but rather an acceptance of ignorance. Thus, God is nothing more than a concept for everything we don't understand; in other words, God of the Gaps. It's a way to fill in the gaps with God. While seeking refuge

in ignorance may provide temporary solace, it does not solve any problems. It's a convenient excuse for inaction.

That said, we don't turn to divine help for every little thing, especially when there's a clear certainty involved. When we go grocery shopping, vote in an election, or book a flight, we take those actions confidently without asking for divine intervention. We also don't pray for miraculous solutions to things that are practically impossible, like regrowing a lost limb. Yet, when unexpected situations arise, like a flight delay, we might instinctively pray, looking for comfort from this supposed higher power. This is our dual nature: we acknowledge the limits of what we know, yet when confronted with uncertainty, we often seek comfort in the unknown.

I've mentioned before that humans need beginnings; they're essential for us. We define places like London or New York to understand our position in the world. However, as time passes, these locations evolve, just like we do. Imagine returning to London after many years away—you might hardly recognize it! Everything you once knew has changed, including the people. The familiar becomes less relevant as the world shifts around us. Similarly, the Universe is constantly changing and expanding, which means our understanding of it can never be fully complete. This ever-changing nature

drives our desire for an all-knowing, “unchanging God”—a solution to our human uncertainty. In a universe that has no clear beginning, we crave origins. In a world where everything is in motion, we seek something permanent. But just as beginnings are illusory, so too is the concept of an unchanging God. In a dynamic universe, there are no eternal truths or fixed values. We must continually learn, adapt, and confront uncertainty with courage, not blind faith.

RECOGNITION BY OTHERS IS A NECESSITY LIKE FOOD

HUMANS ARE NATURALLY social creatures, and while we take our current social structures for granted—ranging from small communities to massive cities—these setups are quite new in the grand scope of human history. For roughly 200,000 years, our ancestors lived in small, tightly-knit groups of 20-60 people. It's only in the last 10,000 years, and initially in limited parts of the world, that humans began forming villages and building more complex societies like the ones we live in today.

This raises an important question: Have we ever truly existed outside of a group? Historically, survival was tied directly to being part of a community. The idea of living alone was unimaginable, as being cast out from the tribe often meant death. Without the group's protection, resources, and support, it was nearly impossible to survive. Even today, we continue to organize ourselves into various groups, whether it's within families, friend circles, or in the middle of bustling cities. At our core, we've always needed others to survive and thrive.

For the vast majority of human history, the concept of society wasn't about millions of strangers but rather the 50 or so people in our immediate circle. These were the people who shaped our identity, gave us a sense of belonging, and provided the emotional and practical support we needed. This "inner circle" was like our social battery, energizing us and validating who we were. Those who managed to extend their influence beyond these small groups often became famous ("celebrities" or "great people"), recognized on a larger scale. However, such widespread fame is rare and reserved for only a few individuals, while most of us continue to find meaning and validation in our smaller, personal circles. Just like food is essential for our survival, recognition is a basic human need that we all crave.

In an earlier chapter, we talked about how wild dogs, when kicked out of their pack, struggle to hunt and survive on their own. Similarly, in the past, if someone was exiled from their tribe or community, their chances of surviving alone were slim. Without the group's protection and resources, many faced tragic ends. But with the rise of modern cities and towns, things began to change. Suddenly, people who had been cast out of their tribes or social groups found new opportunities. Cities provided a way for individuals to escape the rigid structures of tribe, caste, or religion. Places like hostels, hotels, public restrooms, and even job opportunities became refuges for those who had been

"excommunicated," giving them a chance at survival that was previously unimaginable. Before this, exile often meant becoming a slave in another society, as there were few other options for survival.

Even though we now live in larger, more complex societies, the need for recognition from "our chosen group" is still just as important. It's what gives us a sense of inner peace and belonging. Even people who claim they don't need approval from others usually still seek it in their own smaller, personal circles. This is also why people who challenge societal norms can still find strength—they have a smaller group that recognizes and supports them. This is how smaller political parties start and survive, even if they don't have widespread approval. Their smaller circles keep them going.

Those who seem to reject group recognition are often just looking for it on a bigger scale, finding more subtle ways to get it. Even those who seem to turn away from all forms of recognition are often playing a long game, quietly hoping for larger, more meaningful validation in the future. And for the rare few who truly reject all forms of recognition, it's important to understand what their hidden motivations might be. After all, a complete detachment from all social recognition is an anomaly, and those who truly reject it often risk getting labeled as "mad" or "crazy" people. Otherwise, it's safe to say that the desire for recognition is part of being human—it's a

core aspect of who we are.

We often hear stories of Zen masters, Sufis, and hermits who live in isolation, seemingly rejecting all forms of recognition. But even they long for someone to acknowledge their greatness. At some point, they hope to hear, “You are a great guru, my lord!” Even martyrs, who sacrifice themselves for a cause, expect to be remembered—whether by society after their death or in some heavenly realm. The pursuit of fame or greatness is essentially the pursuit of this kind of social recognition, whether in this life or the next. It highlights the fact that our need for recognition is as fundamental as the need for food. We may poke fun at people who are obsessed with fame, but deep down, we all share this desire for attention in some form. In a sense, we’re all seeking recognition, just in different ways. Those who master this art of gaining recognition in subtle ways often achieve their own version of greatness ☺.

Our ability for “inner dialogue”—what we call the mind—evolved primarily to understand the thoughts and intentions of others. But as a bonus, it also allowed us to observe and reflect on our own thoughts and feelings. Neuroscientists see this as an evolutionary advantage. This ability to look inward gave rise to self-awareness, and with that came self-recognition. Even when we feel rejected by others, we can find comfort in recognizing ourselves, in affirming our own value

through this inner dialogue. For example, if you face criticism from coworkers, you might take solace in knowing that you stayed true to your values, finding validation within yourself even if others disapprove. However, without recognition from others or from our own inner selves, we struggle to truly feel like we exist. If we lose even the ability to recognize ourselves, it can lead to a deep crisis, sometimes resulting in the ultimate act of self-destruction—suicide. Therefore, the need for recognition is as essential to human life as air, water, and food.

SOME MECHANISMS OF DOMINATION

WE'VE ALREADY LOOKED AT HOW PEOPLE use different strategies to influence others and maintain power. Here are four major types of power:

- **Physical Power:** From brute strength to the might of modern armies, physical power exerts control through sheer force.
- **Economic Power:** The wealthy wield this power by controlling resources and the fruits of production. They hold the purse strings and dictate the flow of wealth.
- **Intellectual Power:** Intellectuals accumulate knowledge, guarding it like a prized possession and roll it out in a controlled manner, maintaining their position as the gatekeepers of information.
- **Charismatic Power:** This subtle strategy, often referred to as "fame," allows individuals to command attention and open hearts and minds. Their very presence becomes a key that unlocks doors.

Now, let's shift gears and explore the practical applications, methods, and techniques used in these mechanisms of domination. We'll delve deeper into how these tools are wielded to exert influence and establish authority.

There are two groups who tend to avoid mingling freely with the public: the extremely wealthy and the incredibly influential – think politicians, celebrities, and even many religious leaders. Why? Because constant exposure invites trouble. So, they become masters of controlled appearance. Emerging only on specific occasions with a grand show of personal security and grandeur. This strategy of controlled visibility has long been used by kings. The key is “rarity”. These figures carefully select the stage for their appearances, ensuring everything is meticulously controlled like a theatrical production. Spiritual leaders often excel at this technique.

Powerful figures, be they politicians, celebrities, spiritual gurus, or the uber-wealthy, all rely on this principle of ‘limited availability’. Without this controlled distance, their power weakens. Kings historically understood this well. They knew they were ultimately human, just like everyone else— he eats, sleeps, and yes, farts. Yet, to maintain his power, he needs to appear different. So, by building high walls and creating grand palaces, they shrouded themselves in

secrecy. When someone visited, they'd be led into a huge, impressive hall, where the king sat on a golden throne, surrounded by loyal subjects. This carefully crafted spectacle creates an aura of awe, making the visitor feel insignificant in comparison. This strategy of controlled visibility is still used today. Movie stars may play superheroes on screen, but rarely do we see them in the grocery store. Religious leaders cultivate a sense of mystery, only appearing in grand, staged events. They understand that scarcity creates value. By making fewer appearances, they heighten the impact when they do show up. It's like a carefully scripted play, where every detail is designed to awe the audience. This "non-availability" gives them an edge – they become more powerful precisely because we don't see them all the time.

Even in today's world, the wealthy, spiritual leaders, and celebrities use ancient tactics to maintain their status. Think of grand churches, mosques, or temples; massive buildings with deities displayed only on special occasions in brightly lit sanctuaries. People wait in long lines just to catch a brief glimpse of the "divine." In a similar way, kings in ancient times would be carried through the streets in palanquins, just like religious idols are carried during festivals today. The language used to praise both gods and kings is strikingly similar, filled with grand titles and epithets. Look at politicians, televangelists, or gurus during important events—they

often don crowns, robes, or hold scepters, symbols borrowed from royal traditions. Even today's politicians, who are meant to represent the common person, often adopt these same grand symbols. By doing so, they project authority, and their followers respond with awe and submission.

Step into any grand government building, presidential "palace," or ministry headquarters, and you'll notice how these imposing structures are designed to make us feel small, even fearful. Leaders travel in motorcades with barricades and tinted windows, far removed from the public they're supposed to serve. A handshake, if offered at all, is treated as a privilege, often replaced by a distant wave. This grand display of power and pride serves one main purpose: to keep the public feeling subdued, humbled, or even humiliated.

Historically, monarchs needed such displays because their lives and positions were constantly at risk, with only a preordained heir to take their place. But why do presidents and ministers in democracies continue these practices? Why the heavy security? Aren't they supposed to be just like us? Remember, they are meant to serve the public, not rule over them. There is no concept of rulership in democracy. If they genuinely fear for their lives, they have the option to resign. Why maintain the pretense of royalty? In a democracy, leaders are replaceable; theoretically, anyone can run for

office, so targeting one person doesn't really make sense—since you can't eliminate everyone who could potentially take their place. Hence, assassination becomes a pointless endeavor because eliminating every potential leader is simply impossible.

Perhaps it's because, as social creatures, hierarchy is deeply ingrained in us. When we see these elaborate displays, we naturally think, "This is how it should be." The desire for power and privilege is wired into our brains. We often dream of wealth, luxury, and the idea of living above everyone else. Fairy tales around the world often start with "Once upon a time, there was a prince and a princess," and even our grandchildren are affectionately called "little prince" or "princesses." The world of commerce reflects this fascination, too—from 'king' and 'queen' sized beds in hotels to royal-themed names in casinos and businesses. Deep down, we all secretly desire to feel like royalty 😊.

But what about figures like Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, or Gandhi? They didn't rely on these kinds of barriers. They didn't hide behind walls or elaborate structures. In fact, Buddha famously gave up his royal life. So how did they maintain their aura of authority while staying close to the people? The answer lies in three important tools they wielded: fame, knowledge, and a remarkable ability to be "alone" even in a crowd. Unlike most, they didn't form deep

friendships or surround themselves with equals. They do not truly 'open up' to those around them. Stories about their greatness will circulate like legends, but they neither confirm nor deny them. If someone dares to ask for confirmation, they just offer a mysterious smile or a vague answer, which only fuels people's curiosity and opens the door to all sorts of interpretations and speculations by adding more and more layers of mystifications to the original statement.

Often, they'd gaze into the distance, seemingly oblivious to the crowd sitting in front of them, creating a sense of detachment that's more effective than any physical barriers or grand palaces. They only interact with others on their own terms, and no matter how hard you try, you can't get their attention. Their disciplined, ascetic lifestyles made them seem almost superhuman, towering like mountains among mere mortals. This one-sided interaction was how they kept people at a distance from them, all while remaining amongst them.

The so-called "great and good" often used this subtle, inexpensive tactic to keep others humble and obedient, even making them compelled to crawl before them. They don't need grand symbols of authority like swords, jewels, or palaces to maintain control; instead, they thrive on a kind of mystery that makes them seem unknowable or makes it hard for others to truly know them. This aura of "unknowability" allows them to rule

over people like kings, while they present themselves as humble figures. Those who are drawn to their greatness often feel small and insignificant in comparison, making it clear that there's an imbalance in this relationship. These leaders may show compassion and sympathy, but it's from a position of superiority—bestowed upon 'lesser beings'. We should be aware that none of these techniques can be employed without making others feel smaller, insignificant, and like mere nobodies. Concepts like equality and democracy are completely absent from their actions, and it's clear that you won't find modern values in their behavior or position.

Some loyal followers of these figures might argue that these leaders don't consciously act in undemocratic ways; it's just natural for them. However, that is far from reality. Take the example of Guru Narayana, a revered figure from Kerala (Southern, India) in the early 19th century, often compared to Gautama the Buddha. He fought against racial discrimination and pushed for modern education in India. When prominent leaders like Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore visited him, he made a point to stand up and greet them—a gesture he rarely extended to others. He neither entered meditation nor gazed blankly at the horizon while talking to them, as is usual for him. This means he could display respect to those he considered 'equals' where he rarely saw others as such.

These figures preach about love and ‘cooperation’ to their followers and the public at large. However, if you look at history, no ‘God men’ have ever truly cooperated with each other (with other God mens). Instead, they create “islands of power” where they reign unchallenged. Just as subjects wouldn’t dare question a king, followers of these figures often feel too intimidated to speak up. The cooperation they promote is something they expect from their followers, not something they practice themselves.

Even a passing glance at the vastness of the night sky and the universe can instill humility in anyone. No one, in their right mind, would ever dream of truly ‘knowing everything’, unlike these God men and women who frequently claim to know all. After dismissing the complexities of the universe by closing their eyes (for so-called meditation) and merging with their inner ignorance, they pretend to be ‘enlightened’ ☺. All such ‘enlightenments’ are simply expressions of arrogance disguised as humility.

THE EXAGGERATED EXISTENCE OF MYSTICS

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, STORIES of hermits and saints have captured our imagination. We often picture them living deep in lush forests or atop serene remote mountains, dedicating their lives to spiritual enlightenment through intense meditation and self-discipline. However, when we take a closer look, the idea of a saint living in total isolation is more of a romanticized myth than reality. In fact, the practical demands of survival—like food, shelter, and safety—make it almost impossible for anyone to live in total solitude.

Imagine a hermit meditating deep inside a forest. When he finishes and opens his eyes, hunger sets in. But how does he satisfy his basic needs in the middle of nowhere? Someone has to provide food and water, right? If he had to go out searching for his own sustenance, it would interrupt his meditations. So, how does he manage? In reality, any hermit who understands the practicalities of survival wouldn't live too far from a nearby village. Even if they appear to live in a forest or on a mountain, they

often stay close enough to civilization to rely on the kindness of villagers—often elderly women—who bring them food out of pity. Note that, many of these mystics claim to have their greatest “spiritual realizations” only after receiving a hearty meal. A well-known example is the Buddha himself, who is said to have achieved enlightenment after being given food by a woman named Sujatha. Clearly, even the Buddha wasn’t living in complete isolation.

In many cases, hermits aren’t alone at all. They frequently have disciples living with them, helping with day-to-day tasks like gathering firewood, growing crops, or cooking meals. With this assistance, they can maintain a relatively comfortable lifestyle while devoting themselves to spiritual practice. We also hear tales of hermits enduring harsh conditions in snow-covered caves in the Himalayas. People marvel at how they manage to survive in such extremes for months. But there’s no magic behind it. For the other six months, when there’s no snow, all they do is collect and store food that won’t spoil easily and will last through the harsh winter. So, these hermits aren’t suffering or starving as much as we might think. The truth is, they’re just living off the surplus of other people’s hard work. They’ve mastered tricks and techniques to deceive others into handing over their resources.

It's almost laughable how travel writers, when they visit the Himalayas, speak in awe of these mystics and hermits they see living in caves or forest hermitages. But here's the thing—these pilgrimages usually occur when the snow has melted and the climate's a bit more manageable. Before that, most of these so-called yogis or mystics, who live in the valleys, move up to the mountains and set up their little hermitages. They pretend to endure pain, lying on thorns or wooden boards with nails, just to fool people. These travel writers fall for it every time and what they see gets exaggerated in their stories, like they've witnessed some deep spiritual struggle or sacrifice. But in reality, it's just a well-crafted performance. A hilarious episode when you think about it!

THE ADORATION OF THE SACRED

HUMANS HAVE A DEEP, NATURAL URGE TO worship. This is something we see in every society, no matter where they are located in the world. While basic needs like hunger or reproduction are shared by all species, the desire to worship seems to be uniquely human. Anthropologists believe this instinct to worship may have appeared around 50,000 years ago. But why is this? Why do humans feel such an inherent need to worship?

The mind is essentially the result of how the billions of neurons in our brains work together. It developed in animals that lived in groups as an evolutionary tool for survival. Early on, life was split into two main roles: predator and prey. Prey animals needed to figure out the intentions of predators in order to stay alive, and predators had to be clever enough to outsmart their prey. This ability to "read" others' intentions is what we now recognize as the beginning of what we call the "mind."

As animals evolved to live in groups, this mental skill became more sophisticated. Within a group, individuals had to juggle their personal needs with the needs of the whole group. This tension between individual desires and group expectations led to the growth of an internal dialogue — what we now consider the mind. The mind exists in this balance: it's shaped by the group but also maintains its own independence. When humans developed language and culture, the mind became even more complex. Language allowed us to share thoughts and emotions with others, while culture gave us shared beliefs and values. These two factors made our minds more advanced and allowed for more individual thinking.

Much like our need for language, the human need to worship something sacred is fundamental. Just as language allows us to connect and communicate, worship creates a bond that unites people within groups. This is why we see worship in every culture, even before the rise of organized religions. In the past, some scholars believed religion was simply a tool used by those in power to control the masses. But this ignores the fact that humans naturally crave social cohesion.

When old belief systems are abandoned, new ones always arise. Worship is not just about monotheism or any one religion; it's a universal human need that has taken on many different forms throughout history.

Monotheism, for example, helped unite people under one god, fostering a sense of shared purpose and identity, which was key to building large empires. But no matter the form, the act of worship is something deeply human. It fulfills an innate need to connect with something greater and creates a sense of belonging within a larger community.

Even if atheists and skeptics manage to eliminate all forms of religious belief, the desire to revere something sacred will likely continue to thrive in society. This stems from our fundamental need for meaning and a sense of belonging. Just like we crave origins in a universe that have none, we also have an innate urge to believe in something greater than ourselves. This need often finds expression in the reverence for the sacred, even if it's not tied to traditional religious practices. When people realize that idols or symbols they once held dear are merely human creations, they might still struggle to discard them. Letting go can evoke feelings of guilt or a sense of loss. This is because the importance of these symbols lies not in the objects themselves but in the meaning and emotions that people attach to them. Take Buddha, for instance. He never promoted worshipping idols or deities, yet you'll find countless images of him in monasteries and ashrams around the world. Similarly, Islam, founded by Mohammad, arose partly as a response to the idol worship prevalent at the time. Today, the Quran serves a role similar to those

idols. For devout Muslims, disrespecting or destroying the Quran can provoke intense reactions, reflecting the passion and devotion that underpin this so-called "idol-less" religion.

Over time, the way people practice religion has changed significantly. Initially, many cultures focused on idol worship, but gradually, they began to honor sacred places—especially the sites where revered saints were cremated. These locations became sacred, serving as important centers for worship and personal reflection. What's fascinating is that even in belief systems that explicitly reject the notion of a deity—like communism, as articulated by Karl Marx—we observe a similar phenomenon. Take the red flag, for example. It has become a sacred symbol for communists, embodying unity and solidarity. Think about it: if the red flag were to be disrespected or destroyed, it would trigger intense reactions from its supporters, even though they understand its physical nature. This isn't just about communism; it applies to national flags and anthems too. They all satisfy that intrinsic human need for something to revere. As a result, acts of disrespect toward these symbols are often seen as incredibly serious and can lead to severe consequences, sometimes even death.

Now, let's talk about this in a different context. At a conference of philosophers and theorists, you might not

hear anyone explicitly professing love for the sacred, but it's definitely there. It shows up as a strong commitment to modern ideas like equality and democracy. These values are so fundamental that even a small threat to them can turn a calm gathering into a tense or even chaotic situation. Trying to erase this love for the sacred from any group is like swapping out one person for another—impossible! This sense of value isn't something we should shy away from or try to erase. In fact, it's crucial for our overall well-being. The best approach is to recognize and understand why these values are so important to us and how we can make use of this feeling for the greater good, such as promoting democracy and equality. Transplanting these values is a better solution.

In the early days of human society, we regarded this sacred value as something external, something that existed outside of ourselves. It began when people started worshipping stones and other objects as symbols to unite people. We've also seen how different cultures have developed unique forms of reverence and love for this sacred concept, influenced by their climate and geography.

For those who consider themselves "progressive," the challenge of moving away from this age-old idea of unity—embedded in stones and idols—to embrace modern values like nationality, equality, and democracy

is not an easy task. These values emerged to help resolve conflicts that arose when varied forms of sacred love tried to coexist. Eventually, they transformed into more abstract ideas, such as nationhood, liberty, equality, fraternity, and democracy.

Moreover, our society is still made up of different layers or groups. Any new attempts to bring everyone together must consider these differences. So rather than avoiding the idea of the sacred, we should refine it, making it more abstract and inclusive. We need to recognize that there are countless ways to express this unifying value, beyond the concept of God or idols. By doing so, we can help create a more cohesive society. This fresh, subtle ideology of social unity is expanding to include everyone and won't erase the smaller circles of values that already exist. Just as feelings of territoriality can change based on circumstances, our love for the sacred can also be dormant, recessive, or strong, depending on the situation. Even if certain expressions fade over time, it seems that this love for the sacred will persist in one form or another.

THE ROLE OF MICROBES IN COLONIAL EXPANSION

WE OFTEN IMAGE COLONIZATION as a grand adventure filled with exploration, discovery, and conquest. But the truth is much more complex and darker. Colonization was, in many ways, an escape for countless Europeans who were fleeing the crushing poverty, famine, and despair of 16th-century Europe. Imagine them as the “boat people” of their time, risking everything to leave behind a life of suffering. Novels by Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo give us vivid accounts of the harsh realities faced by Europeans in that era, depicting a world where hunger, disease, and exploitation were rampant. You only need to look at the conditions leading up to the French Revolution to see the desperation simmering beneath the surface of one of Europe’s so-called ‘colonial powers.’ That revolution itself was fueled by deep social and economic misery.

What gave these Europeans an edge as they fled to new lands wasn’t just bravery or numbers—it was their access to new technologies. Better farming methods led to a population explosion in Europe, which in turn created severe poverty and mass exodus, but also increased competition for resources. This competition sparked a surge of innovation. One key invention was the gun,

which gave Europeans a significant advantage over other parts of the world. Numbers, which once decided battles, became less important with superior technology. Now, a small, well-armed force with guns could defeat a much larger army. Imagine just a few hundred Europeans armed with guns conquering a massive continent with an army ten times their size! This scenario played out repeatedly across the world.

However, when different societies meet, it's not just culture, ideas, and technology that get exchanged. Millions of tiny microbes come along for the ride too, ready to jump ship and infect new human hosts. Unlike technology or trade goods, microbes are the real colonizers, spreading rapidly to new places. And this exchange isn't always balanced. When a hunter-gatherer tribe encounters a farming society, it's not just the advanced weapons that pose a threat. It's the invisible microbes, unknown even to the carriers, that become the deadliest weapon. Disease can devastate and conquer entire populations. Think about it: animals in the wild don't usually come into close contact with each other or with humans. Horses, pigs, dogs and chickens weren't part of a hunter-gatherer's world. But in farms, animals live in close proximity to humans. Farmers touch cows, pet dogs, feed chickens, clean bulls, and then hug their kids and kiss their wives. This close contact between humans and animals created a perfect environment for new deadly diseases to develop. Over

time, these diseases spread from animals to humans, creating epidemics that were unlike anything seen before in history.

We now understand how germs evolve and adapt to new environments, even developing resistance to medicines. By jumping between different animals and people, these microbes constantly change, becoming more powerful and spreading at breakneck speed. This is why many deadly diseases, like the various types of flu that emerge every year, often come from farms or agricultural communities. Once they emerge, trade and travel spread them across the globe. Imagine a community that has lived with these diseases for generations and developed some immunity. When they come into contact with a group that has never been exposed to these illnesses, something as simple as a handshake or a kiss could be deadly. A society with centuries of built-up immunity to diseases could unintentionally wipe out an isolated, less developed tribe without using a single weapon.

This kind of event probably happened a lot in history when different groups met for the first time. One well-documented example is when Columbus and his crew brought smallpox to the Americas. While we often remember the violent conquest of the Americas, it was smallpox that truly devastated the Native American population, contributing more to their defeat than any battle or conflict. However, the exchange of diseases

went both ways—Native Americans gave Europeans syphilis. Smallpox may have been deadlier, but syphilis caused a great deal of suffering in Europe too.

We often hear about the battles, not the germs. For most of history, these silent killers were largely ignored by historians until recently. Historians primarily focused on the narrative of 'colonial invasion.' The poverty and suffering in Africa today are not solely the result of colonialism or imperialism. Diseases like malaria and AIDS, along with desertification, are the true culprits behind many of Africa's struggles. Therefore, the story of colonization is more complex than simply powerful countries overtaking weaker ones. It's also a story of desperation, innovation, and the unseen world of microbes that can have a devastating impact.

THE REAL PICTURE OF COLONIALISM

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR in shaping human history has been the way different societies have met and interacted with one another through trade, war, and travel. This journey began when humans first emerged in East Africa and gradually spread across the world, with Antarctica being the only continent left untouched. As people settled on various continents and even some remote islands, they adapted to the different climates and landscapes they found.

In the beginning, human societies developed independently, each following its own path. However, as they began to engage in trade, engage in conflicts, and explore new lands, they started to share ideas and technologies with one another. This exchange led to rapid advancements, as societies learned from each other's knowledge and skills. Whenever different human groups communicated and connected, we saw remarkable changes in their cultures and technological advancements. Yet, there were also isolated populations, such as those living on faraway islands or in regions like Australia, which could only develop to a certain extent.

As we discussed earlier, these groups didn't have the same opportunities for growth. In contrast, the regions of Eurasia and northern Africa were particularly favorable for interaction. Their warm climates and fertile soils allowed for the rise of large, complex societies. These societies could produce a surplus of food, which freed people to specialize in various tasks, such as trading, manufacturing, and creating art.

A major turning point in this story was the invention of ships and other technologies. Starting in the Mediterranean, these innovations spread to places like China, India, Arabia, and eventually to Europe. The development of ships allowed humans to travel farther and wider than ever before, leading to the discovery of new lands and the establishment of contact between all known continents. This increased interaction among different societies set the stage for the rise of colonialism. Those who set out on boats in search of new opportunities or trade became known as "colonialists." It's worth noting that the Greeks, Chinese, and Arabs never became colonialists simply because they lacked advanced weaponry, specifically guns. In regions without strong political structures, there was little resistance to these later gun-carrying traders, as was the case in Australia. However, in places like India, where large empires existed, colonization unfolded in a much more complex manner. It involved political negotiations, battles, and conflicts that stretched over a

lengthy period—around 150 years—before European powers established direct control. As concerns grew about the situation in India, especially after a series of significant events, the British government decided it was time to intervene. In 1858, after a long period of being governed by the East India Company, the British passed the Government of India Act. This act transferred control of India from the company to the British Crown and set up a new government, led by a governor-general. This shift marked the emergence of modern colonization, where companies initially formed just for trade eventually took direct control over their colonies.

Before this colonization era, it was quite difficult to hold onto power in conquered territories for long periods while governing from afar. A prime example of this challenge is Alexander the Great, who conquered much of the known world over 2,300 years ago. Although he successfully took over many empires and kingdoms on his journey eastward, maintaining control over these lands proved tricky. When Alexander returned to his former territories, he found that he had to reconquer them because he had lost control during his absence. Establishing loyal administrations in these regions was tough, and the lack of technology made it even harder to sustain his empire. The development of new technologies—like ships, guns, and better systems for transportation and communication—enabled European countries to build vast and enduring colonial

empires across the oceans. These advancements allowed them to govern distant lands effectively. This is the only reason why ancient traders remained traders and did not evolve into colonialists: not because of any moral superiority or goodness on their part, but rather due to technological limitations.

When reading the works of anti-colonial historians, you might notice a common underlying presumption that the rulers of past kingdoms were inherently "good," and that's why they didn't try to conquer other countries or territories. These historians often depict them as "innocent victims" oppressed by ruthless white colonizers from faraway lands, who are labeled as "bad." However, this perspective is overly simplistic and overlooks the complex realities of geography and technology. The primary reason these kingdoms didn't expand their territories was not because they were morally superior, but because they simply lacked the technology to do so.

Most ancient kingdoms in Arabia and Asia were land-based, meaning they didn't have the ships or the expertise needed to build a fleet capable of transporting hundreds of warriors across oceans or navigating difficult mountainous regions to reach far-off lands. It's important to recognize that there's nothing inherently virtuous about any group of people that would stop them from seeking to conquer new lands. Humans are

fundamentally the same everywhere, and historical actions are influenced by various factors like technology, resources, and geopolitical situations. Take the Indian subcontinent, for example. Before British colonization, it was divided among over a thousand princely states, many of which were frequently at war with each other. They struggled to unite into a single nation, while the British managed to create a modern, unified state in India.

After colonization, the people of these former colonies benefited from the establishment of a unified administrative system left behind by the colonizers. While the discourse on colonization often focuses on its negative aspects, it's important not to overlook the positive contributions of human interactions, such as trade, technology exchange, sharing of plants and animals, and the introduction of modern administrative and legal systems, which significantly improved the lives of people in these regions. Even using the term 'migrants' to describe these colonialists carries a negative connotation, as if there were already some 'aboriginals or native people' who existed from "time immemorial" and somehow spontaneously originated from there, and these migrants encroached upon these 'peace-loving, quiet, and innocent' native people living there. In reality, terms like "aboriginal," "original," or "native" simply indicate who arrived first or how long ago they settled in a particular area. These labels do not imply any

inherent goodness or peacefulness; they merely serve as historical descriptors.

It's worth noting that, aside from some developments around 10,000 years ago near the Mediterranean, all those who migrated from Africa and spread across the world were initially "very poor" in terms of material wealth and resources. The past 9,000 years have been marked by the rise and fall of various civilizations in Eurasia, North Africa, and South America. Even the most advanced civilizations, such as those in Mesopotamia and Egypt, were relatively small and fragile. Only in recent millennia have we developed new technologies that support the sustained existence of cities and city-states, preventing their extinction.

These urban areas thrived due to human interactions, including war, trade, and travel. In fact, many indigenous populations made significant progress following the arrival of colonialists. While colonialists are often portrayed as exploitative, they also introduced numerous crops that greatly benefited local communities. Think about the potatoes, groundnuts, pineapples, breadfruit, cashew nuts, chilies, and tapioca that fill the plates of billions today; these are gifts from these so-called "cruel" colonialists. These contributions have played a significant role in alleviating hunger and poverty worldwide. It's hard to imagine modern markets without these foods. In a way, colonization

made the world 'richer' in its existence. This massive transfer of technology and knowledge was so significant that it contributed to some inequality and uneven development around the globe.

People often accuse colonialists of taking everything from indigenous tribes, but the truth is that there wasn't much wealth to steal in the first place. Think about it: how much can you really steal from a tribal person? Maybe some honey or an elephant tusk, but what else is there? When people say that colonialists stole everything, it's worth questioning what they could have actually taken. For example, if you consider a tiger, what can you take from it? Perhaps its skin and teeth, but those aren't particularly useful when compared to a human being. Even in what we call 'developed' areas, the only real wealth might have been the gold or silver that a tribal chief had stored away. That was the only 'wealth' they could've taken away. Before modern technologies came along, poverty was the norm for communities worldwide. It was often the colonialists who brought in advanced agricultural methods and industrial practices that created "real wealth", which they then exported back to their home countries. This wealth, in a way, was generated by the colonialists themselves, and the native people only theoretically owned it because they had lived there first. If the colonialists hadn't introduced new ways of creating wealth, there wouldn't have been much to take in the first place.

The infrastructure colonialists built—like agricultural estates, industrial complexes, roads, railways, bridges, ports, dams, and communication systems—became the true wealth of those countries when they were eventually handed over to local people. In places where colonialists didn't establish such infrastructure for their benefit, those areas often remained underdeveloped. Take many African countries, for example. They continue to struggle economically because the necessary infrastructure wasn't built, leaving the local population with little to build upon after colonization.

Historically, most people around the world lived at a subsistence level, which means they only produced enough to meet their basic needs. This is still evident among various tribes across the globe. You can enslave a tribal person, but you can't really steal anything from them. The main form of exploitation during colonial times was making indigenous people work in fields and factories as forced laborers. Yet, despite the injustices and exploitations that occurred, colonialists contributed significantly to formerly colonized nations by introducing modern education, civil justice systems, and improved travel and communication networks. In many ways, they transformed subjects living under oppressive rulers into modern citizens.

While it's crucial to acknowledge the injustices and exploitation that occurred during colonial times, it's equally important to recognize that the colonialists laid the groundwork for the world we live in today. Many of us enjoy a better quality of life now than ever before. Colonialism played a role in integrating the world, and without that movement, we might still be living at subsistence levels like our ancestors did for thousands of years. The divisions based on caste and religion were challenged by these colonial powers, and when they left, the subjects became citizens. The irony is that; all the discriminations, injustices, abuses, and exploitations done to us by "our own" people are seen as our culture and traditions, while all the modernization brought by others is seen as injustice and exploitation. It's quite funny, to say the least 😊.

PROGRESS IS NOT A ONE WAY TRAFFIC AFFAIR

IT'S A COMMON BELIEF that human societies are always moving forward, making continuous progress. However, the truth is that only in societies that interact with each other, be it through war, trade, or even slavery, do we see sustained progress. We need to remember that even advanced societies, like those with superior technology or agriculture, can regress when they migrate to new environments. The conditions they encounter in these new places ultimately determine their fate. Therefore, technological or agricultural advancements aren't guarantees of progress, and the advancements made in one society don't guarantee similar success elsewhere.

Consider the impact of epidemics like smallpox and the plague. These diseases can devastate populations, sometimes pushing societies back hundreds or even thousands of years. Likewise, societies that are invaded often experience destruction and chaos. History is filled with examples of civilizations that were completely wiped out due to these kinds of events, or a mix of them.

For most interconnected societies throughout history, progress has been more like a series of starts and stops—one step forward, two steps back—until about 500 years ago, when we began to see a more consistent pattern of upward movement.

You might wonder how "advanced" societies can actually go backward. A great example of this is Daniel Defoe's classic story, *Robinson Crusoe*, which many of us know from the film *Cast Away*. In the story, Crusoe is stranded on a deserted island, and all his "civilized" knowledge about technology and society suddenly becomes useless. He has to relearn even the simplest survival skills. This shows just how fragile progress can be; it really depends on the environment and the resources available.

Similarly, during the early migrations of humans, whether a society advanced or regressed was entirely determined by the conditions they faced in their new lands. Take the countless islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean as a prime example—each island has its own unique environment, leading to the development of diverse cultures and languages. The people on these islands might look different, speak different languages, and have distinct traditions, but they all share a common ancestry, having migrated from the same source. On a larger island, a community might experience cultural and technological advancements.

They could build large ships, sail to other islands, and perhaps even "conquer" or "enslave" their neighboring communities that are still living in what they consider a "primitive" state. In just a few hundred years, these localized conditions can lead to dramatic differences between communities, making them seem worlds apart from one another, even though they share the same roots.

Thanks to modern genetics, we now understand that the differences we see in caste, creed, culture, and language are largely superficial. People across the globe often engage in endless arguments about who is superior, who is more original, who is more attractive, who is smarter, and so on, while overlooking this fundamental truth. These questions are essentially illusions. The various "histories" written around the world that claim one group is superior or more original than another are some of the biggest barriers to recognizing our shared humanity. These false divisions and differences—if not entirely illusory—are what we often refer to as human history.

THE PERSON IN A HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY

1. "Bring me a fruit from the Nyagrodha tree," said the teacher. "Here it is, my Lord," replied the student. "Break it," instructed the teacher. "It is broken, my Lord," the student answered. "What do you see inside?" asked the teacher. "I see some very small seeds, my Lord," the student responded. "Now, can you break one of those seeds?" the teacher requested. "I have broken one, my Lord," the student said. "What do you see now?" asked the teacher. "Nothing, my Lord," the student replied.
2. The teacher then said, "My child, where you perceive nothing, there is actually a mighty Nyagrodha tree hidden, invisible to the eye."
3. The teacher continued, "Understand, my child, that this tiny, invisible particle is the essence of everything. It is the Truth, the Universal Soul. And you, Swetaketu, are a part of that Universal Soul." Swetaketu then asked, "Can you explain

again how, even though creation comes from this Truth, it doesn't always seem to last or remain true?" The teacher responded, "Certainly, my child."

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (one of the Indian Sanskrit texts), Aruni teaches Svetaketu a profound lesson. He shows him a tiny seed and explains that within it lies a vast banyan tree. The seed represents the origin of the entire universe, an invisible point from which everything emerged. This point contains all possibilities, and there is nothing beyond it. When Aruni says everything is enclosed within the seed, Jesus expresses a similar idea in the Gospel of Matthew:

"One day, Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. Large crowds gathered around him, so he got into a boat and sat down while the people stood on the shore. He told them many stories in parables, saying, 'A sower went out to sow. As he scattered the seeds, some fell on the path, and birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil. They sprouted quickly but withered under the sun because they had no roots. Some seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns choked them. But other seeds fell on good soil and produced a great harvest—some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. Whoever has ears, let them hear.'"

This parable emphasizes how crucial the environment is for a seed's growth and, by extension, how vital support and nurturing are for individuals to flourish. Just as a seed needs suitable conditions to grow, so too do individuals according to the gospels, need nurturing and support to reach their full potential. Similarly, there's a story about a woman who brought her five-year-old son to the philosopher Aristotle for education. When she mentioned his age, Aristotle famously responded, "You are five years late."

This debate over the importance of nature (genetics) versus nurture (environment) has been ongoing for centuries. Aristotle believed that a child's education should begin early, while philosopher Rousseau argued for a more hands-off approach, allowing children to develop naturally. Rousseau compares children to young plants, suggesting that just as we put a fence around saplings to protect them from being eaten by animals, we should guide children with 'minimal interference', allowing their natural abilities to flourish. Over time, our views on education have evolved. At first, people believed the seed—the child's natural potential—was the most important thing. Later, emphasis shifted to the importance of the environment, or "nurture," in shaping the child. Some argued that it's the skill of the teacher, like the sower, that determines success. The relative importance of these three elements; the seed (innate qualities), the environment (nurture),

and the role of the sower (parent or teacher) has influenced many different educational philosophies.

Life, divided into these three aspects, has led to many different views on raising children. The truth, however, lies somewhere in between these views. Both nature—our genetic makeup—and nurture—the environment in which we grow up—play vital roles in shaping who we are as individuals. If we take an evolutionary perspective, we see that circumstances and nurture are just as important as a child's natural potential. But dividing this single process into categories has led to confusion. These categories—seed, environment, and the role of the educator—are artificial divisions we created to better understand life. We have separated these aspects to better understand them, but in reality, they are part of the same process.

When Karl Marx says, “The materialist doctrine that men are products of their circumstances and upbringing, and thus changed men come from changed circumstances and upbringing”, ignores that men themselves change circumstances and that the educator needs educating, he shifts the focus entirely onto human society. Marx's statement shifts responsibility for life outcomes onto people and society, overshadowing the idea that genetics or internal qualities also play a role.

This way of thinking leads to an increased emphasis on external factors, making parents and teachers bear the blame for a child's success or failure while overlooking genetics or the intrinsic aspects of human nature. That is, with this view, the outcomes—whether success or failure of a child—are seen as the sole responsibility of those directly involved in the upbringing, such as parents, teachers, and the educational system. This belief places a heavy burden of accountability on these individuals. Parents, in particular, are often blamed and even punished for their children's mistakes. This mindset has led to a generation of parents burdened with feelings of guilt, shame, and helplessness.

Imagine a couple with five children, all raised under the same conditions—same class, wealth, religion, language, geography, and even gender. In a socialist system, where everyone is supposed to be equal, you might think these five children would turn out the same. But, as any parent knows, children born to the same parents can behave very differently and even fight among themselves. So, if siblings with the same upbringing and environment turn out so differently, how can we expect everyone in a society—where people differ in language, caste, culture, ethnicity, nationality, and gender—to behave in harmony or equality? The belief that, under a communist system, everyone will live together in perfect unity and equality is as unrealistic and idealized as the notion of a heavenly paradise. In essence, equal

circumstances can never lead to equal outcomes.

In an attempt to create equality in schools, we introduced uniforms with the idea that by eliminating visible differences, we could foster a sense of fairness and equal treatment among students. This practice is still common in cities around the world where most schools require uniforms. However, instead of achieving true equality, we've ended up with children who simply look forward to leaving school so they can wear more colorful or stylish clothes. The question we must now ask ourselves is: what is the real benefit of this widespread policy, other than boosting profits for the textile industry?

We also need to understand a key difference in how we think about families. While we might think of a couple with five children as one unit, each child actually has a unique relationship with their parents. Both parents and children constantly change and evolve as time passes. Just as a seed grows and adapts to its environment, so too do children and parents transform alongside life's challenges and circumstances. For example, imagine a couple who has their first child—they are new to parenting, learning how to balance work, responsibilities, and caring for a newborn. By the time they have a second child, they've already grown and adapted from their first experience. Their parenting style evolves, their priorities shift, and they're not the

same people they were when they had their first child. Each child is unique, and so are the parent's responses to them, evolving with time and circumstances. Nothing is permanent in this ever-changing universe. Life is a process of continuous mutual change, where both people and their surroundings influence each other.

If we fail to grasp this concept of mutual transformation and focus only on one part of the whole—whether it's the parent, child, or society—we end up with unrealistic expectations. These ideas remain wishful thinking, confined to belief systems that can't shape real social structures. While we can provide general guidelines for society, we must accept that each person is unique. Instead of trying to mold individuals to fit societal needs, we should focus on allowing people to grow and adapt in ways that suit both themselves and the world around them.

When we talk about what shapes a child's personality, we often consider several key factors: genetics, parenting, and social circumstances. Research suggests that genetics plays a significant role, accounting for about 50% of personality development. The environment and circumstances surrounding a child contribute around 20%, while parental nurturing contributes a smaller portion—about 10%. Interestingly, the child's peers during their formative years make up the remaining 20% of what shapes who

they become.

It's important to note that every individual has their own unique social circle. This isn't just an abstract idea of "society" as a whole; rather, when someone thinks of their society, they're usually picturing a close-knit group of about 50 to 60 people. These are individuals who directly influence their lives and whose opinions matter greatly to them. The makeup of this social circle, along with a person's status and future role within it, is shaped by interactions with those peers we mentioned earlier. Most of these important relationships begin in childhood, through interactions with classmates and neighbors during those critical formative years. And, within any social group, there tends to be a hierarchy.

For instance, a person who is genetically gifted or comes from a well-off family may find it easier to secure a top position in their peer group. If they achieve this prominent status, they are likely to strive to maintain it throughout their life, whether at work or in other competitive settings. On the other hand, those who start off lower in the hierarchy—whether they are second, third, or even lower—often carry that ranking with them into new environments, trying to navigate and find their place within any competitive circle they enter. The prevailing idea in the education system today is that anyone can be transformed into anything with the right training. People often believe that if we rotate roles and

responsibilities, we can make anyone capable of doing any job.

However, it's important to realize that a person's success in life is often determined by their status and position within their peer group. Only a small number of individuals, through self-reflection and hard work, can break away from the personality traits and attitudes formed during childhood. Most individuals tend to feel comfortable and secure in the roles they've established within their social circles over the years. It's important not to label these roles as strictly 'good' or 'bad'; instead, we should understand them as reflections of the needs of a society that tends to be hierarchical. Those who find their niche and fulfill these societal roles often achieve success in their own unique ways.

People who can adapt to and meet the needs of their society are generally more likely to succeed. Unfortunately, our educational system's tendency to promote uniformity and disregard individual differences has created a social environment where many people feel dissatisfied or out of place. Some argue that this is what fuels the caste system and the various social hierarchies seen in all cultures. However, previous discussions have clarified how these divisions were formed and how they differ from what we are talking about here. What we're discussing focuses on individual people rather than groups. While we're focusing on

individual experiences, it's important to remember that humans are social animals and therefore influenced by group dynamics. These group characteristics can vary slightly due to cultural, geographical, and historical factors. Thus, the individual traits we discuss should never be used to justify discrimination based on caste, creed, color, or race.

In a hierarchical society, individuals develop a particular consciousness that corresponds to their social standing. Those striving for social justice through equality must take this into account. If we fail to recognize these complexities, we risk creating individuals who not only harm themselves but also others, potentially driving them to the brink of despair or even suicide.

EVERYONE IS ALTRUISTIC

THE IDEAS OF SELFISHNESS and unselfishness are deeply rooted in our culture, influencing how we view ourselves and those around us. These concepts have origins in religious and spiritual beliefs, but they have evolved over time and remain relevant today. We often use them as a way to measure our own behaviors and those of people around us. Essentially, we tend to label actions as either selfish—those motivated by personal gain—or selfless, which we associate with actions that benefit society or the greater good.

However, this way of thinking is based on a mistaken belief: that individuals exist separately from the communities they belong to. In reality, we are all part of a larger social network, and our actions always affect those around us. Take, for example, a street vendor selling nuts on the corner. At first glance, he seems to be working for his own benefit, providing for his family, which is also what he might believe. But his business relies on customers who want to buy his nuts, which means he's also fulfilling a need for them. Similarly, a bus driver may appear to be working only for his own

benefit, but by driving people to their destinations, he is also providing a valuable service to others.

As we mentioned earlier, individuals don't create society; we are born into it and grow within its existing structures. We might think that by becoming doctors, engineers, fishermen, or pursuing any other job, we're just living for ourselves. But the truth is, it's impossible to live entirely for yourself without helping or supporting others in some way. Every interaction we have—whether we're buying or selling something, or providing or receiving services—affects those around us, whether we realize it or not. So, it's more accurate to say that all human societies are fundamentally selfless.

The way we interact and share experiences with others is essential to life itself. This means that everyone in society is, in a way, a social worker, whether they recognize it or not. Now, when people label themselves as social workers, selfless individuals, or religious leaders, they aren't necessarily doing anything extraordinary. They're just playing their part in a larger effort. While they might lead movements or take action for positive change that benefits everyone, what sets them apart is often just their ability to create an image of greatness. The only individuals who exhibit true selfishness are young children during their early development as they learn to become independent beings. However, these children represent society's future investment in social

development. When we reach adulthood and start working, we are essentially repaying the debt we owe to society for the investment made in our upbringing. This cycle of giving and receiving highlights the inherent selflessness of human societies. Thus, we can conclude that all human societies are, at their core, unselfish. The outdated notion that individuals live solely for their families, families for their communities, and communities for their countries has created a simplistic view of people with distinct boundaries. Since such isolated individuals don't truly exist, there's no need to worry about whether we are living selfishly or selflessly. In reality, we can only "feel" selfish while actually living a life that is fundamentally selfless.

That said, the concept of selfishness can be useful in specific contexts. The only time an action might be genuinely considered selfish is when it violates a mutual agreement. For instance, if someone leaves their job without notice, they not only harm their employer but also break the contract they agreed to upon being hired. This kind of action can be deemed selfish because it disregards the interests of the other party involved. In this situation, the person has established boundaries that exclude the interests of others. Beyond this irresponsible behavior—which can be classified as harmful—most actions cannot be accurately labeled as selfish.

THE 'SELFISH' POLITICIANS

IT'S BECOME A WIDESPREAD BELIEF these days that politicians are corrupt and act without any sense of justice. Historically, kings would rule based on their personal whims; for them, justice was simply whatever they decided it should be. In contrast, the idea of justice as fairness and equality for everyone is a relatively modern concept. This notion often clashes with our natural tendencies towards hierarchical structures, where some people hold more power than others.

We call ourselves “citizens” of a country, yet we rarely practice, uphold, or even fully understand this value of equality. We often get upset by the unequal actions of our elected officials, without realizing that the equality we hope for is still a long way from being achieved. We expect politicians—who are essentially our neighbors and friends—not to consider their families or personal interests when making decisions. But this raises the question: who, then, is responsible for looking after their children?. If they take actions to support their families, they are quickly labeled as corrupt.

We rarely consider such questions in our lives. Have we ever paused to think about the fate of the children of great figures like Gandhi, who chose to uphold integrity and avoid corruption? While Gandhi is revered as the “father of the nation,” he also stands as an example of a man who struggled with the responsibilities of fatherhood. So, whose father is he truly? When we categorize people as either selfish or selfless, we create unrealistic expectations of “great” individuals like Gandhi. These individuals can become burdens, not just to society, but also to their families. To avoid repeating this pattern, we need to take steps to prevent the emergence of such “great” figures in the future. Instead of idolizing them, we should focus on fostering a society where equality and justice are genuinely practiced by all—a more equitable outlook that does not elevate certain individuals to unrealistic heights while neglecting their responsibilities toward their own families. This way, we can create a more just world rather than perpetuating the same cycles of inequality and disappointment.

Let’s imagine a scenario to illustrate this point. Suppose you decide to be an “honest” politician and take on the role of mayor in your town. Your community has decided to relocate slum dwellers to the outskirts, and the project is expected to be completed in two years. To avoid corruption and ensure a faster execution, you opt to manage the project directly rather than hire

contractors, believing that this will help maintain quality.

As you dive into the project, you quickly hit your first obstacle: there's no available space within the town to relocate everyone from the slums to one spot. So, you make the decision to build apartments in various locations wherever there's room. Unfortunately, progress is slow because the workers you need aren't showing up as expected. To make matters worse, the state budget is announced, revealing a significant increase in the prices of raw materials for construction. This forces you to rethink your initial budget, leading to a lot of objections from your opponents, who are quick to raise suspicions of corruption. Six months into the project, you start to feel the pressure. With work scattered all over the town and moving at a snail's pace, you realize there's a good chance you won't meet the two-year deadline. After much thought, you decide to bring in contractors to handle construction at two or three sites instead.

By the end of the first year, you manage to complete a few homes in one location. Excited to help the slum dwellers, you plan to allocate these apartments to them. But then you face another challenge: everyone wants to move in at the same time! Suddenly, you're stuck in a tough spot, unsure how to decide who gets to live there first without seeming unfair to anyone. To avoid the

appearance of favoritism, you choose to hold off on allocating any homes until all the apartments are completed.

Finally, after two and a half years of hard work and some assistance from contractors, you finish the entire project. But when it comes time to assign the homes, you're met with complaints from the residents. Many of them want the same apartments, and there's a lot of disagreement about which homes are best. Some residents think the first homes you built are now "old," while others criticize the contractor-built homes for various reasons—some are too far from essential services like markets, while others are near less desirable locations like a slaughterhouse. Faced with a barrage of complaints and feeling overwhelmed, you find yourself at a loss for what to do next. Eventually, the governing body steps in and decides to allocate the houses without really listening to the residents' concerns. To make the process fair, you resort to drawing lots for the allocations, which then leaves many people feeling frustrated and disappointed.

On the day of the inauguration, the chief minister is invited to hand over the keys to the new apartments. As the recipients come forward, many take the opportunity to voice their grievances directly to him about the unfair and seemingly undemocratic way the housing was handled. In his speech, the chief minister adopts a

patronizing tone, advising you to avoid discrimination in politics. The following day, posters pop up around town demanding your resignation, accusing you of corruption and unfairness. It's a bitter pill to swallow for someone who aimed to act with integrity and fairness. Even if you were to resign, the stigma of this failure would follow you and affect your family for generations.

When we point fingers at politicians for corruption, nepotism, and dishonesty in a democratic system, we often overlook our own behavior as citizens. It's easy to criticize when we, ourselves, are not living up to the standards we expect from our leaders. Too often, we prioritize our personal interests over the common good. For example, we don't want to wait in long lines; instead, we want everything done quickly, no matter the cost. We might cut in line, leveraging our connections with friends in various offices, getting things done that we may not even deserve. We often sit at home or in coffee shops, grumbling about issues but rarely take the time to file a formal complaint. When it comes to addressing problems, many of us think, "Who has time for that?" Yet, we'll stand outside the courts for years, caught up in disputes with neighbors over property lines. Ironically, it's these same individuals who criticize politicians for being corrupt or irresponsible. We forget that these politicians are often our own family members—our brothers, sisters, or parents—meaning

we're essentially pointing the finger at ourselves.

What we really need is to become responsible citizens instead of mere complainants. We aren't just electing someone to "rule" over us; we're choosing leaders to govern our nation. We want experts and responsible individuals who can provide the services needed for a modern society. They're here to serve us, not to dictate to us. We should be asking for policies that promote justice and fairness, not just for people to hold power over us. The problem arises when we elect leaders and then, as citizens, fail to uphold our responsibilities. We expect all the benefits of democracy without putting in the effort to support it. This attitude of irresponsibility among citizens is a significant factor in the issues plaguing our democratic systems. Only those who are willing to take individual and collective responsibility can contribute to a fairer and more just democratic society.

In societies that have developed culturally, social work and political activism often began as efforts by the elite, who were typically well-off and sought to express their compassion and love for their communities. Historically, most of these prominent figures engaged in social work primarily for the sake of "fame" rather than out of a genuine desire to help. It's time for us to rethink and revamp social work, which has its origins in the leisurely pursuits of the rich and famous.

Traditionally, we often look to figures like the Buddha, who famously left his royal life behind, or ascetics who abandoned their family homes. Literary giants like Leo Tolstoy and Rabindranath Tagore also come to mind; they lived on extensive family estates and wealth while engaging in social issues. Unfortunately, these role models we have today are often people who rely on their family fortunes or donations from others to fund their social initiatives. There's a noticeable lack of modern political activism or democratic involvement in these efforts, which suggests that we need to create new models for engaging with social issues. We can't rely solely on the old paradigms of philanthropy or activism that were shaped by wealthy individuals. Instead, we should strive to build a new foundation for political involvement that encourages everyone, regardless of their background, to contribute to a more equitable society.

In Eastern traditions, especially in India, political power was historically held by kings. As a result, social workers often had to demonstrate that they were not interested in political power themselves. Many would renounce their social status and retreat to the forest, living as ascetics. This was not just a personal choice but a way to signal to the king that they had no intention of seeking political influence. It was only under this condition that they could engage in social work, which, ironically,

often ended up having political implications anyway.

Figures like Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders from that time were shaped by this tradition. They didn't embody democratic values as we understand them today. Instead, they used tactics like fasting or going silent to manipulate situations and make others feel guilty, ultimately achieving their goals. A well-known example is when Subhash Chandra Bose was democratically elected as the president of the Indian National Congress. Gandhi, however, maneuvered behind the scenes until Bose was replaced by Rajendra Prasad, showcasing a preference for control over democratic processes. It's essential to recognize that many of these so-called "compassionate" endeavors were funded by the resources generated by others.

Throughout history, we've seen how gurus and saints were "made" and set as examples for society. These figures became the standard by which people judged modern social workers and politicians. However, in a democracy, the lines between social workers and politicians blur because, theoretically, every citizen is a politician or plays a political role, whether they realize it or not. Political work is part of the service sector. Just as there are various professions within the service sector—such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, and teachers—politics is simply another form of service. Not everyone will become an active politician, just as not everyone

becomes a doctor or lawyer; it's simply a division of labor. To address issues like corruption and nepotism or favoritism, we need a system where all political workers, at various levels, are paid a salary according to their responsibilities, status, or rank. If such a system were in place, we could begin to tackle these issues, as people would be compensated fairly for their work in the political field.

One of the biggest misconceptions people have today is believing that politicians and social workers of the past were "great," while those in the field today are corrupt, fake, and dishonest. This view comes from a lack of understanding of the real issues at hand. The reality is that today's political activists, who are just like us, often pay a heavy price in the early stages of their careers. Instead of criticizing and looking down on them, we should protect and support them. If politicians become corrupt, we must remember that we, as citizens, play a leading role in this political drama.

Despite the current state of affairs, it is still our responsibility to ensure that we don't elect corrupt, incompetent, or destructive leaders. These politicians have to come back to us every few years, asking for our votes. Unlike kings, who inherited power and held it with certainty, today's politicians, no matter how wealthy or powerful, must face the public and seek approval to stay in power. This gives us, the voters,

significant control over who gets to lead.

We, as voters, are partly to blame for the rise of political dynasties in democracies. Our tendency to respect and submit to people with wealth, fame, or authority, or even their relatives, makes us act in ways that perpetuate this system. We often forget our principles and seek personal gain through our connections to these people, making us no different from the politicians we criticize. Deep down, we all know that we don't treat those in power as equals and that we behave differently around them. While we may hope for equality and true democracy, many of us secretly prefer that someone else takes the risks or does the difficult work. We admire those who challenge the system, even writing poems about their bravery and giving them awards, but we stay on the sidelines, waiting for our chance to benefit. And when recognition comes from the top, we accept it as if nothing is wrong. Sadly, this pattern of behavior shows little sign of changing.

That said, we must draw a line somewhere. We should never support or enable corrupt individuals, even if they appear to be efficient. Sometimes, in the name of quick results, they may violate democratic principles. It's better to achieve justice slowly than to rush and compromise our values. We must reject those who claim to be experts at getting things done but cut corners and cheat the system. In a true democracy, the saying should

be, “As the people are, so is the leader.”

On the other hand, for a democratic system to truly thrive, we must be cautious about allowing leaders to emerge who are more focused on their own fame than on their responsibilities. Take Gandhi, for example. While he played a pivotal role in India's independence, often prioritizing his public image over his personal life, one has to wonder: why did he continue to wear the simple handspun cloth known as Khadi and live an austere lifestyle even after the struggle for independence was over? It seems that, even then, he was more concerned with maintaining his beloved public image than addressing the practical needs of the nation.

Historically, Gandhi's methods, like spinning his own clothes and boycotting British-made textiles, were innovative forms of nonviolent protest that appealed to the conscience of those in power. They provided a model for a new way to fight for rights and dignity without resorting to violence. However, once independence was achieved, it raises the question of why he didn't shift away from that image. It's almost like he was “carrying the net on his head even after catching the fish,” as the wise Mulla Nasruddin might say—essentially holding onto a burden that no longer served its purpose. This fixation on maintaining a certain image can be a source of misery for many influential figures. If it's not misery, it may well point to a hidden

agenda—an attempt to hold onto a position of authority that exists outside the official government structure. After leading a significant movement, it's not particularly admirable or respectful to then step back and avoid taking on the responsibilities of governance.

Many so-called 'great people' tend to shy away from these responsibilities because they realize that stepping into a leadership role often means making tough decisions. Those decisions can never be completely neutral; they will always favor one side or another. In doing so, they risk tarnishing their carefully crafted image of impartiality. Ultimately, this reluctance to engage with real power isn't about rejecting authority; it's more about avoiding the heavy burden of responsibility. These leaders want to preserve their reputation as 'good people' without having to grapple with the difficult choices that come with governance. This kind of dodging of responsibility does not lead to genuine progress or respect; instead, it creates a disconnect between ideals and real-world actions.

Using the momentum gained from the independence movement to shape your own image and position yourself outside the political system, acting as a sort of external authority to get things done your way, is not something to be admired. It's clear that these desires for attention and recognition aren't about accumulating wealth or nepotism; instead, they are often about

boosting one's own fame. Those who behave this way do not truly represent democratic values and should not aspire to.

Just eighteen days before his assassination on January 30, 1948, Gandhi expressed a powerful sentiment: *“A pure fast, like a sense of duty, brings its own rewards. I don't undertake it for any specific outcome; I do it because I feel it's the right thing to do. I urge everyone to reflect on the purpose of their actions. I'd rather die in peace than be a helpless witness to the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam. Such destruction is inevitable if Pakistan does not ensure equality and security for everyone, regardless of their faith, and if India follows suit. Islam might fade away in both countries, but Hinduism and Sikhism don't exist outside of India. I respect those who disagree with me, no matter how stubborn their resistance might be. Let my fast serve to awaken people's conscience rather than dull it. If you think about the problems in our beloved India, you might feel hopeful that there is someone brave and pure enough to take a stand. If he's not truly committed, he becomes a burden on this earth. The sooner he departs and clears the air in India, the better it will be for him and everyone else.”*

We can feel the deep pain in Gandhi's words, but we must not let that emotion distract us from recognizing the underlying issues of irresponsibility and the desire to

avoid confronting difficult situations ☹️. A modern example of true leadership is Nelson Mandela. He fought tirelessly for South Africa's independence, and after achieving that, he stepped into the role of president with a deep sense of responsibility. Yet, even as president, he showed humility and foresight by stepping back from power for the younger generation, knowing his time was limited. Remarkably, at the age of 76, he fell in love and lived openly with his partner, demonstrating he had no obsession with preserving his image. Mandela embodies what it means to be a free and modern citizen.

On the other hand, there are those who misuse their positions under the guise of “experimenting with truth.” For instance, one might question the actions of leaders who, in their quest for personal validation, engage in behavior that exploits others, like lying naked among teenage girls to see if his penis will erect is delusional and irresponsible. Did this so-called “great soul” ever consider the stress, confusion, and discomfort these young girls experienced? It seems that the pursuit of his own elevated image took precedence over any concern for the well-being of others.

THE CORE OF SELF REALIZATION

MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT the indian sage ramana spent his days on the mountains of Thiruvannamalai, pondering the ultimate question, “Who am I?” They say that if someone discovers the answer to this question, they will become all-knowing. Those who truly realize their true self are said to blossom like a flower full of nectar, sharing the sweet fragrance of wisdom all around them. This attracts those in search of truth, much like bees and butterflies drawn to a blooming garden, immersing themselves in the beauty of self-knowledge.

According to ancient Indian philosophers, there are really only two fundamental questions in life: “Who am I?” and “Where did this world come from?” They believed that all other questions stem from these two. While we’ve already tackled the second question, these philosophers believed that our experience of the world is a result of consciousness expressed through four stages: wakefulness, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state, which is beyond understanding. They argued that consciousness exists in one of these stages.

The world we experience is a manifestation of what is real, and that reality is consciousness itself. We either see the world as a projection of our consciousness or as something layered on top of it.

However, if we introduce the idea of a creator, it raises a perplexing question: what need would a perfect being have to create the world? According to these philosophers, a god who is all-powerful, everywhere, and knows everything wouldn't have any needs. So, why would such a being create anything at all? To resolve this issue, they came up with the idea of creation as a sort of playful act. While this might satisfy philosophical inquiries, it can confuse serious seekers. After all, if a believer is praying to a god, it could imply that the creator treats its creation lightly or irresponsibly, which may explain why the world often feels chaotic.

Now, let's delve deeper into the nature of consciousness, which these philosophers believed is the foundation of everything that exists. Today, neuroscientists are examining this all-encompassing consciousness as well. We've looked at human consciousness and discovered that it develops through a feedback system from the moment we are conceived. Research shows that there is a specific area in the brain for every action we take. Studies on individuals with brain injuries, tumors, and cancers have revealed many many unique behaviors and experiences expressed by these patients. Over the past

two hundred years, our understanding of consciousness has gradually evolved into a more established field of science.

Traditionally, many believe that a soul enters our body at birth and leaves at death, waiting for Judgment Day. In Eastern philosophy, this concept is expanded to suggest that the soul undergoes many lives, and after understanding itself, it achieves eternal freedom and happiness. But how does this idea hold up against modern neuroscience? In the eyes of neuroscientists, what we think of as a single "soul" is more like the individual parts of a car—like nuts, bolts, and wheels—scattered everywhere rather than a "singular entity." The eternal "I" of Indian philosophy could vanish like smoke if we're hit on the head by a burglar. And even without this managing "I" functioning, everything else in the body continues to work. General anesthesia could also wipe out this consciousness; it is shut down, ended, gone. Anesthetized bodies become breathing lumps of meat. And yet they continue to live. The heart beats, respiration occurs, and most cells go happily about their business. We don't require consciousness to live. However, we do require awareness to make informed decisions about how to act appropriately. So, whatever affects the brain affects your consciousness. An accident might make you forget your own mother or the world around you, and sometimes you may even start seeing so-called God in everything☺. You might believe you're

Christ or feel like your "I" has merged with some eternal consciousness. That's not enlightenment, of course; that's just brain damage. These experiences are real to them, and remarkably, they are very similar to the spiritual experiences of great gurus, swamis, and saints.

These patients, standing there in front of doctors, describe experiences that sound a lot like the spiritual revelations of saints and prophets. The oneness of humanity, feeling divine, you name it. The only difference is that, without a spiritual spin, these patients don't become Jesus, Muhammad, or Buddha. No one's starting a religion around them. Their 'enlightenment' doesn't land them on a stage in front of adoring followers—it lands them in a psych ward or a hospital bed or gets 'cured' with a couple of pills.

Now imagine, instead of ending up in an asylum, they're put on a stage with the right lighting, smoke machines, and robes. We'd have thousands of 'saints' popping up left and right. But no, instead of divine enlightenment, they get a hospital bracelet and an invoice for their treatment. Neuroscientists with a couple of electrodes or a fancy magnetic helmet can pretty much recreate those spiritual experiences. No need to be the son of God, a prophet, or a guru. Just a bit of tech, and voilà—you're seeing angels, hearing gospels, feeling one with the universe. You'll be having revelations on demand, straight from a machine, no divine intervention

required. Soon enough, we'll have 'spiritual cafes' on every street corner, where you can grab a latte and a dose of divine insight, no guru necessary. It's gonna be a real problem for the spiritual market though. Gurus, mystics, and even the old go-to drugs and alcohol—they're all going to be out of business ☺.

Over billions of years, life has evolved from simple beginnings to the complex animals we see today. Throughout this process, there wasn't some mastermind designing everything. Instead, whatever worked best in the environment was naturally selected, leading to all the variety of life we see today. Now, one of the things that turned out to be useful in this process was something like a coordinator — that's what we call consciousness, or the 'I.' This 'I' isn't just one thing; it's made up of different parts working together. The more we study the brain, the more we see it as a network of centers that handle different tasks, coordinating them all. People often think of the soul as a separate, unchanging part of us, but that's not really accurate. This 'I' we experience is just one of many 'I's' inside us. It's not in charge of everything, like a king, but more like a narrator, explaining what's happening after the fact. It gives us a sense of meaning and helps make our experience of life feel richer, which probably helped our ancestors survive, so that's why it stuck around.

In Eastern philosophy, they talk about a stable, unchanging witness that watches life's events unfold. But if you think about it, life evolved without any need for a central monitor or witness at first. The 'I' came much later, that's why it feels like we're watching ourselves go through life sometimes. It's a natural byproduct of how consciousness developed, not some all-knowing, central entity.

Our brains are made up of two distinct halves, or hemispheres, and the bundle of nerve fibers connecting them is called the corpus callosum. This structure helps coordinate activities between the two sides. A few decades ago, doctors found that by severing the corpus callosum as a treatment for epilepsy, they could relieve patients of their debilitating seizures. While this procedure helped the patients feel more "normal," it also puzzled the surgeons, who were curious about the effects it had on their daily lives. To understand these effects, the doctors began observing the patients closely. Interestingly, even though the patients didn't notice any unusual behaviors, the doctors started to identify some peculiarities. Normally, the left side of the brain controls the right side of the body, and vice versa. However, when the corpus callosum is cut, the two halves of the brain can't communicate effectively. Remarkably, the patients continued with their daily lives without feeling anything was wrong.

Through their observations, the doctors discovered that the left side of the brain houses a sort of narrator that constantly explains our actions and justifies why we do what we do. This narrating process gives us the impression that we are fully aware and in control—the ‘illusion’ of an all knowing entity. Meanwhile, the right side of the brain also holds information, but without the corpus callosum, it can’t share that knowledge with the left. Despite this lack of communication, the narrator in the left brain finds ways to rationalize all of the right brain's actions, creating a kind of illusion of understanding. This finding was quite surprising because it suggested that our brains can create a sense of coherence and meaning in our lives, even when there are significant communication barriers between the two halves. The narrator helps keep us feeling “sane” and provides a sense of purpose. The studies also revealed that there is another, quieter coordinator in the right brain. Even when the corpus callosum is intact, we usually only hear from the more vocal left-side narrator. People who ponder the nature of their “self” might be shocked to learn that they have not just one, but two (or more) versions of “I” inside them. In reality, there’s a whole network of different selves within us, most of which are silent. This is why we can live peacefully with the loudest version of ourselves. These studies show how this internal narrator helps us feel continuity and meaning in our lives. However, we shouldn’t view this narrator as the sole manager or actor of our experiences;

it's just one part of a much more complex internal dialogue.

The MRI now has an advanced sibling called fMRI (Functional MRI), which allows scientists to observe the brain in action. When we think, feel, or move, different parts of our brain become active, or "fire." By studying these patterns of brain activity, neuroscientists can pinpoint which areas of the brain are involved in specific thoughts or actions. We're getting closer to being able to understand a person's likes, dislikes, decisions, and even confusion, simply by looking at brain activity. However, what really surprised scientists is the discovery that we become aware of our thoughts only after a delay of around 350 milliseconds to 6 seconds. This means that, even though our brain is already working on something, we don't realize it right away. In some experiments, the machine could predict what a person was thinking before the person themselves became conscious of it. This delayed awareness isn't shocking if you think about evolution. Many living beings, like trees, don't have a "self" or a conscious coordinator, yet they grow, reproduce, and survive just fine. The sense of "I" or self-awareness developed later in the evolutionary process to help coordinate more complex actions. But it's not central to everything our body does. We aren't conscious of how our heart pumps or how our organs function, and we don't need to be. The sense of "I" is more like a narrator

in the background, not the main actor in the story of our life. For centuries, philosophers thought this narrator was the key to existence. They referred to it as the "soul" or "atma," considering it the core of our being 😊. But now we know it's just a small part of a much bigger system.

This discovery about the gap between brain activity and awareness raises big questions for the legal and justice system. Right now, we hold people responsible for their actions, believing there's a conscious person inside making decisions. We even reduce punishments for children, the mentally ill, or people who act in extreme emotional states because they may not be fully in control. The foundation of our justice system is built on the belief that there's someone within each of us who is responsible for our actions. We punish this "person" with the hope that they will learn from their mistakes and re-enter society as reformed individuals. However, most prison guards wouldn't be surprised to see the same offenders return after spending years in prison, having gone through behavioral correction programs. Often, they end up committing the same offenses. But if neuroscience shows that there isn't a fully responsible "self" behind every action, how can we justify punishing or even executing someone for their crimes? It complicates our ideas of guilt, responsibility, and punishment, and could force us to rethink how we treat offenders in the future.

IS 'REALIZATION OF TRUTH' POSSIBLE?

WE NEED TO LET GO OF THE IDEA THAT we can fully understand everything about the universe, which is always changing and evolving. It's simply impossible to keep up with its constant transformation. As we talked about earlier, the very things we try to measure are always shifting, like trying to catch a moving target. Our efforts are limited by the universe's natural dynamism. Even space itself—what we're trying to measure—stretches and bends, defying our expectations of fixed truths.

It's a bit like how ancient philosophers and mystics believed they could know everything by grasping some ultimate "Truth" or "Single Answer." We shouldn't expect science to one day uncover all the universe's mysteries and make everything clear. This desire for complete understanding is a common human trait, something that seems to be built into us, but it's not a realistic goal.

Science doesn't promise us ultimate truths; instead, it makes our lives a little better than before. It's not a replacement for old philosophies. Each scientific discovery has its limits, and beyond those limits lie the

unknowns, which can lead us to feelings of fear or to fill with concepts like God. This uncertainty drives societies throughout history—past, present, and future—to search for some kind of spirituality, even if it's just a modern twist on older beliefs. No matter where in the universe a thinking mind exists, the urge to wonder and ponder about the mysteries of existence will likely always exist.

This sense of wonder, combined with our lack of understanding, often leads to blind faith, cults, and religious movements in every culture. These days, many of these beliefs are wrapped in scientific jargon, much like the ancient Greek tales of gods and goddesses who descended to interact with ordinary people and procreated with them—for example, Olympia's belief that Zeus, not Philip, was Alexander's father. In modern, developed societies like America, extraterrestrial aliens have taken on the role once held by those gods and goddesses. Cinemas and novels no longer feature old ghosts, leprechauns, dwarves, and fairies; instead, Hollywood produces modern versions such as Frankenstein monsters, extraterrestrial predators, and multi-dimensional realities. So, we shouldn't think of science as a magical solution that will solve all our problems or lift the veil on absolute truth. What science can do is help illuminate some areas of darkness, especially when it comes to deeply rooted superstitions, but it won't answer all our questions or provide us with

complete clarity.

Today, many cities in the U.S. and Europe are home to some of the most superstitious people. As a result, when spiritual gurus and mystics from the East arrive, they often become very popular. With a bit of showmanship and clever marketing, these gurus can attract huge crowds, sometimes even outshining famous celebrities like Madonna or Drake. A big part of their appeal comes from the fact that many of their followers are wealthy individuals with plenty of free time, making them easy targets for these charlatans.

But there's another side to this story. Countries like the U.S., England, and others in Europe have progressed largely due to their advancements in scientific knowledge. This knowledge not only enabled them to colonize much of the world but also implanted a mistaken belief in the minds of people in underdeveloped regions like South Asia and Southeast Asia that all white people are somehow "scientists" or experts in science. As a result, god-men and women from these poorer nations need only a handful of gullible white-skinned followers sitting beside them to gain instant credibility and become popular back home, as they are now seen as being accepted by "scientifically advanced" people from the West.

It's important to point out that these Western followers of Eastern spiritual gurus aren't turning to spirituality because they're tired of material wealth or seeking deeper meaning in life. More often than not, they come from poorer backgrounds in their own countries, seeking better living conditions in third-world nations where Western currencies have a strong exchange rate, enabling them to live comfortably and become instantly wealthy. They may also engage in service to the poor and needy as a leisure activity. Therefore, we should not interpret their lives as an escape from material pleasures seeking refuge in spiritual simplicity and fulfillment. Also, we must not forget that if people in these poorer countries are supposedly "spiritually elevated," why do individuals from countries like India, Nepal, Sri Lanka regularly migrate to "materially wealthy" nations in the Gulf, Europe, and America?.

Moreover, we must understand that the truly powerful and wealthy individuals in Western countries—those with real influence—rarely leave their home countries in search of anything. It is these kinds of Americans and Brits who truly support figures like the Bushes, Browns, and Blairs. These people aren't drawn to the spiritual charisma of godly figures, nor are they excited by all these so-called God-men and women who claim divine connections. The political leaders of these Western countries do not chase after these spiritual figures as their followers. The infamous case of Rajneesh, also

known as Osho, is the best example of this. His forced expulsion from the US, accusations of thallium poisoning, and eventual tragic death in India highlights the vast difference between Western political leaders and their relationship with spiritual figures.

Even if there are occasional connections between political leaders and spiritual figures, they often harbor hidden motives, such as gaining support from the communities these figures represent. So, when spiritual leaders representing third-world countries are invited to address the United Nations, it is not because the leaders of developed countries are mesmerized by their spiritual aura, but because they are recognized as the "true representatives" of the primitive poor masses living in third-world countries, much like tribal chiefs representing tribes.

The universe is constantly changing, and there's so much about it that we simply don't understand or will never understand. This mystery stirs our curiosity and can make us feel afraid, leading us to question where everything comes from. In response, we humans often create stories about beginnings, even in a universe that doesn't have a clear starting point. We tend to think in terms of causes and effects, which is why many of us imagine there's a God or a higher power that started everything. We find comfort in the idea that there's an all-knowing force out there, hoping that it can bring us

peace and a sense of control over our lives. The idea of the sacred unites people and fosters a sense of connection.

As social creatures, we naturally organize ourselves into groups with leaders and followers. These hierarchies shape our societies, making it easier for those in power to control the ignorant and obedient masses. Leaders then establish places of worship that shape the beliefs of the community. As faith becomes commercialized, markets and shops pop up around religious institutions, taking advantage of people's ignorance. Rituals and religious texts are then used to maintain this obedience and control. The forced, ritualized learning of mystical texts further solidifies ideological control over devotees' minds.

In today's world, the media and entertainment industries also exploit people's ignorance for profit. At the same time, advancements in technology and urban living can make individuals feel more isolated. This isolation drives the need for new ways to form friendships and connect with others to combat loneliness. The emergence of new-age spiritual cults and gurus exploits these vulnerabilities, employing psychological and spiritual tricks to manipulate the uninformed. All of this makes it difficult for science to shine a light on truth and create new knowledge in this complex world.

Many philosophers today are attempting to develop a philosophy based on or around science, aiming to integrate it with existing knowledge systems. But the truth is, science doesn't come with its own philosophy or a final goal. It's more like a collection of knowledge that builds up slowly over time and is shared among all living things. The main purpose of science is simply to help us understand the world around us and to use that understanding to make our lives better or to create more favorable conditions for living. There is no deeper meaning behind it. Therefore, if you come across a book titled '*Philosophy of Science*', it is likely the work of philosophers attempting to undermine and devalue the achievements and methods of science.

We don't always need to propagate science because any living thing inherently generates scientific knowledge through its very existence. Whether it's a plant or a penguin, every living creature learns from its environment and adapts to it, sharing that knowledge through their genes. For humans, this sharing happens not only through our genes but also through our culture. In essence, science is simply the knowledge of life itself— how it functions, and how it continues to thrive.

THE KEY TO ALL SUCCESS

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW THERE ARE thousands of temples, churches, and mosques all over the world, but only a handful of them become really famous, wealthy, or influential? The strange thing is that in all of these places, whether they're Christian, Muslim, or even Hindu temples, it's said that the same God resides in every one of them, at least in monotheistic religions. Yet, some places flourish while others don't. Ever wonder why?

Now think about it. In religions with one God, like Christianity or Islam, there's no question about power—there's only one. But in polytheistic systems, there are multiple gods, each with different powers. So, you might expect that temples dedicated to “stronger” gods could do better. But even temples devoted to the same god don't all thrive equally. Some become rich and famous while others don't. Same god, same rituals—different outcomes. How did places like the Amarnath temple, Kailash, Mecca, the Big Buddha, and Jerusalem become so famous and successful?

Similarly, why do some shopping malls or franchises flourish, even when they offer basically the same products and services as their competitors? Why do certain brands of the exact same medication outsell others? Or take something as simple as soaps or useless whitening creams—some brands just explode in popularity, even though they're not actually better than the alternatives. It happens with doctors too—how is it that some become renowned, even though they've studied the same anatomy and earned the same degrees and knowledge as others?

The key is three things—management, media, and marketing. These three work like a well-oiled machine. It's not because one temple has a more powerful god, or one mall has better products. It's how well they're managed, how well they're marketed, and how well they're presented to the world. These three things drive success in almost anything. Of course, expertise, talent, and quality play their role, but they're secondary. What really propels anything forward, whether it's a religious institution, a business, or a person's career, is how it's managed, how it's presented to the public, and how well it's marketed.

When people talk about a political party, a business, or even a temple lacking a strong leader, what they're really saying is that it's missing good management. Whether it's politics, religion, business, education, or, efficient

management and smart marketing are the real pillars of success. It's not that there's something inherently special or divine about these successful places or people. It's all about how they're managed and marketed, and that's something we can't afford to overlook if we want to understand why certain things thrive while others don't.

THE MOTIVE BEHIND ALL CHARITABLE ACTION

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE why the self-proclaimed god-men, women, and Christian-Muslim authorities worldwide collect money to construct '*useless*' temples, churches, and mosques. After all, it's the only profession they know, and it's how they make a living. Yet, it becomes confusing when they venture into establishing institutions like hospitals, universities, colleges, and schools. These institutions promote the very sciences that, according to their philosophy, lead people towards materialism, sow seeds of grief, and destroy future peace of mind. What logic and interest are behind starting such institutions, which act in total contradiction to their proclaimed philosophy, worldview, and existence?

The establishment of super-specialty hospitals, computer colleges, and universities by these godly men and women is often lauded as a great example of compassion flowing from their hearts for suffering humanity. The larger and more extensive these institutions are, the more they are viewed—or claimed—to achieve spiritual greatness. If institutions

like hospitals and schools are considered indicators of spiritual greatness, then political leaders, such as chief ministers or prime ministers, would automatically become spiritual giants due to the sheer number of public institutions under their governance—something these holy men and women can only dream of. Yet, while ministers collect taxes to fund and operate these institutions, the godly people gather resources using deceptive tactics and then establish these institutions in their own names to “claim” credit. In this regard, political leaders are far better human beings, as they don’t always have the luxury of establishing institutions in their names.

The main point here isn’t about the morality of certain individuals, but rather how they promote scientific knowledge while contradicting their own beliefs. Is this promotion rooted in the philosophy of “loving your enemy as yourself”? If they really want to spread scientific knowledge, why do they often criticize scientists and their work whenever the opportunity arises? If they truly believed in their philosophy, shouldn’t they be creating schools focused solely on spiritual teachings—like how to achieve heaven or hell, how to please angels, or how to perform miracles? Shouldn’t they be teaching kids to meditate under a banyan tree or in a mountain cave for forty days, fasting in pursuit of ‘enlightenment’? Why not instruct people on how to make God appear before them or how to tap

into divine powers to reveal secrets, like who stole a gold chain or who's causing trouble next door? If these individuals are truly divine, shouldn't they be setting up schools focused on gestures of love and kindness, like a "Hug & Kiss" college, a "Holy Ash" college, or a "Happy-Festival" college? Instead of doing any of this, why do they support ideas that directly contradict their own beliefs?

This is where the true nature of priests, imams, and other so-called holy figures becomes clear. They know that their beliefs hold little real value unless they are presented within their carefully controlled environments. Their understanding is useful only for deceiving others. By opening specialized hospitals and schools, they indirectly admit that science is the only true knowledge that benefits humanity. Otherwise, if people learned about their tactics, these figures wouldn't be able to keep their exclusive businesses running.

Throughout history, there hasn't been a saint without some sort of questionable medical knowledge—think of figures like Jesus or Buddha. They showcased their abilities by performing miraculous healings, like restoring sight to the blind, helping the lame walk, easing children's stomach pains, and relieving headaches—all with a touch of magic. This was how they earned respect, food, and basic necessities. Today's

priests follow the same pattern. They start useful institutions, like schools and hospitals, to draw people in, and then subtly introduce their religious beliefs. Places of worship—like churches, temples, and mosques—are often built alongside or inside these institutions, creating an illusion that they are offering something beyond what modern medicine and education can provide. They understand that their beliefs are ultimately pointless, so they leverage the authority of science to lend credibility to their teachings.

Far too often, the so-called compassion of religious leaders and institutions doesn't really reach the needy people around them. Instead, it goes where they can get the most credit or recognition for their actions. They like to say that their love and compassion are like water, flowing unconsciously, filling the needy crevices and puddles around them, like reaching the lowest point first. But if that were true, we wouldn't see so many wealthy temples, churches, mosques, and monasteries. Therefore, if any of these institutions possess immense wealth, we can reasonably conclude that, at least in those instances, the claim of unconscious aid to the neediest did not occur. This applies to all organizations, including political parties.

Moreover, we must understand that the flow of such compassion is not unconscious; it deliberately seeks out

vessels that can maximize status and fame. This selective distribution of aid becomes evident during natural disasters, where money and resources from religious institutions flow discriminately, aiming to amass status for the institution or individuals involved. As we discussed in a previous chapter, we can never remain rich if we 'love our neighbor as ourselves.' That is, if we continue to give everything freely to those in need around us, we may never even leave our own home, because there will always be numerous needy individuals on our doorsteps; such is the abundance of hardship around us.

So, when a tsunami strikes, an earthquake devastates, or floods engulf, the money and resources that flow from monasteries and religious institutions often do so with high precision, knowing exactly where to fill the vessel, all with the singular aim of boosting the status of the institution or individual involved. In fact, this flow even extends towards extremely wealthy and powerful nations when disaster strikes them. Such actions, justified as nondiscriminatory, are, in truth, discriminatory and cunning. And to claim it's anything but, to insist it treats everyone "equally", is the height of arrogance.

Religious figures and institutions continue to thrive largely because they're not held accountable to the public in the same way other service providers are. For

example, doctors can face lawsuits and other serious consequences if they fail to provide proper care. But religious organizations rarely face that kind of scrutiny. If we applied the same standards of accountability to religious leaders and their institutions, many of them would undoubtedly go bankrupt. This would especially be the case if people started to question what they got in return for their donations or prayers—whether it's lighting candles, giving money, or participating in rituals.

CREATION OF WEALTH IS THE ONLY SOLUTION

THE INDIAN PROVERB "Thinking there is no end, better think not" is a well-known saying that often resonates with people in the subcontinent. When people think about the vastness of the universe, they might come to the conclusion that there's no end to it. This can sometimes lead them to believe that thinking about such things is pointless. However, this proverb is closely related to the deep philosophical traditions of India. While it's true that there might be no end to the universe, the idea of "better not to think" is incorrect. What sets humans apart from other living beings is our ability to think and reflect. It's because of this ability that we've made significant advancements.

The proverb can be seen as promoting a belief in fate, which can hinder our curiosity and progress. Societies that have embraced a "cause and effect" approach to life have been the ones to invent and innovate, leading to a better quality of life. Those who believe in fate and think that "things that ought to happen will happen" are likely to remain behind.

We have already seen how the invention of agriculture in the Mediterranean region transformed our species from nomadic food gatherers to settled societies. For thousands of years, humans lived as hunter-gatherers, constantly moving in search of food. But when agriculture was developed, it allowed people to settle down and establish permanent homes. This shift meant that those who farmed became different from other groups of humans who still roamed in search of their meals. By domesticating animals and growing grains, these early farmers created a stable food supply. Their specific geographical location, often near rivers and fertile land, allowed them to thrive far beyond what those who still relied on hunting and gathering could imagine. The access to water and rich soil made life easier and more prosperous for them.

Over time, there were ongoing conflicts over the fertile land near river deltas, which became highly valuable. This led to a demand for better weapons for defense and conquest, pushing these societies to innovate and improve their tools. As farming flourished, the animals and crops became a form of wealth for the first time. As communities grew, they began to rally around strong leaders who could protect them and manage resources. These leaders eventually became known as kings. Once small kingdoms were established, the land came to be seen as belonging to the king. If anyone wanted to farm the land or make a living from it, they needed to ask for

permission from the king. This permission was formalized into what we now recognize as deeds or title documents in more developed societies.

These title documents created a system where the king received ongoing benefits from the farmers who worked the land. In essence, powerful leaders began to live off the surplus produced by those who toiled in the fields. This surplus, which was shared with the king, also funded public services that benefited everyone. Over time, this interaction and exchange among societies laid the groundwork for governance, leading some groups to grow significantly larger and more complex than those who continued as hunter-gatherers.

Now, let's consider animals living in a forest. They do not own the forest; they simply exist within it. Similarly, humans living in the forest don't feel a sense of ownership over it. However, once they begin to cultivate the land under the king's permission, they start to feel a sense of ownership. This feeling of ownership became even stronger with the later practice of buying, selling, and passing down land from one generation to the next. But in reality, the earth doesn't really belong to anyone; instead, we all belong to the earth. Just like any other living creature, we have the same rights to exist here. However, because humans have formed large groups and developed advanced tools and weapons, we've claimed land as our own, pushing aside other

species and weaker groups of humans. The story of how certain groups of people began to dominate fertile land, especially after agriculture was invented, is what we call history.

When civilizations grow rapidly due to increased food production and population, they often create ecological problems. While agriculture helped humans thrive in number, it also led to significant environmental damage. Eventually, as nature catches up with these societies, their progress may come to a standstill (For example, droughts). At that point, the only option for people living in those areas might be to leave and find new places to settle, abandoning their crumbling homes.

As the human population increased, it frequently resulted in environmental harm, leading to many cities being abandoned. When these cities fell into disuse, nature took over and reclaimed the land. Over time, numerous human societies sprang up across the globe. With new technologies, better weapons, and the domestication of animals, some cities thrived while others declined. This cycle of rise and fall is the essence of human civilization over thousands of years, particularly in regions where agriculture was practiced. History is largely about the ups and downs of civilizations, often influenced by connections made through war or trade. Only societies that engaged with others experienced significant development. In contrast,

groups that remained isolated, like those living on mountain tops or remote islands, often stayed as primitive tribes or were labeled as aborigines. However, there are no true "aborigines" or groups that originated in one place; we all belong to the same species and trace our roots back to Eastern Africa, from where we all migrated.

The land they lived on and the domesticated animals they owned were the "only real wealth" people had back then. The types of animals they owned varied depending on where they lived. For example, in India, cattle were highly valued, while in the deserts of Arabia, camels were more important. In places where horses were available, those became a symbol of wealth too. If you read ancient stories or listen to tales from your grandparents, you can get a sense of the kinds of people and animals mentioned. These stories often talk about grand palaces and epic battles involving thousands of people and animals. But if you look closely at the descriptions of their weapons and the things they stole from their enemies, it's clear these were just tribes, and the stories tend to exaggerate their significance, making them seem like mighty civilizations.

The grand buildings, like palaces or pyramids, were probably made from huge, rough stone blocks without any real elegance or sophistication. The so-called "great kings" likely ate the same simple foods—tubers, fish, and

meat—that ordinary people had; they didn't have anything special to eat. When you read the titles and praises describing these kings, it can make you laugh, as they claimed to be "lords of the entire world." In reality, they were more like overgrown rats trying to act like cobras. Most of the gold they collected was used to make thrones or to decorate door knobs rather than for any true luxury.

The point here is that the kind of wealth we think of today didn't exist back in ancient times, even when so-called "great emperors" like Ashoka, Alexander the Great, or Caesar ruled. They lived lives that were just as poor as their subjects, even though they resided in enormous, impressive palaces. Tragically, they often died young—between thirty and forty years old—because of common diseases. Despite their power, these great kings never enjoyed the simple pleasures of life that we often take for granted today.

We've already talked about how different societies have developed in unique ways due to their geographic conditions. About 500 years ago, large kingdoms began to emerge, but these kingdoms were essentially large cities, each with populations that could house anywhere from 100,000 to 200,000 people. However, as these cities grew rapidly, they faced ecological problems due to the strain of their populations. Unfortunately, without the technology to support such growth, many

of these cities eventually declined and disappeared. Archaeological digs have uncovered numerous cultures that went extinct during this time.

Fertile land often attracted people looking to settle down and develop agriculture, which would lead to rapid population growth. But this quick expansion often led to its own downfall. Many old tales warn us that “prosperity can invite disaster”. For instance, in India, there’s a proverb that suggests the ‘longer a reign lasts, the more likely it is for the land to become barren’. This cycle of growth followed by decline led to a prevailing belief in a negative outlook on life, where fate seemed cruel and unpredictable. Note that, all the negative philosophies and beliefs in fate arose from this recurring destruction caused by ‘development.’

However, while past developments loomed like the sword of Damocles over cities and civilizations until about five hundred years ago, that is no longer the case today. The problems that plagued ancient cities, like water scarcity, were tackled with new inventions. The creation of pipes and motor pumps made it easier to access water. Improved roads and vehicles helped people travel and transport goods more efficiently. The steam engine revolutionized transportation, allowing for quicker travel even in challenging conditions. Innovations such as railways and electric power transformed the future of growing cities.

Communication also evolved significantly. Technologies like the telephone, telegraph, and radio replaced slower methods of sending messages, such as carrier pigeons and runners. The idea that a once-thriving city must eventually become a desolate place has been proven wrong by the rise of vibrant, bustling cities all around the globe today.

For a long time, we thought of wealth as land, crops, and livestock. But today, wealth has taken on new forms, some of which are even invisible. The ways to earn money have become so varied that they've surprised politicians who once believed that making wealth equal meant nationalizing private property. We're living in a time when education is accessible to everyone, and advancements in technology have created countless opportunities for people in society to generate wealth. Politics used to focus primarily on agricultural development, but now, the average person is living better than any kings did just 300 years ago. A century ago, there were about 1.65 billion people, with more than 90% living in severe poverty. Today, that number has soared to over 8 billion, and less than 8% of them experience such extreme poverty. This transformation has been made possible by revolutionary technologies that have boosted wealth production.

In the past, having easy access to energy, food, and clean water was a dream for the wealthy. Just a hundred years

ago, no royal family would have enjoyed the modern conveniences we have today. People often talk about “golden ages” without realizing the advancements we’ve made. We no longer need magic or mysticism to connect with someone who has moved away; we can easily reach out to them using a smartphone or email. It’s important to recognize that we’ve never had as much wealth available for others to steal, despite what some politicians and social scientists claim.

Even those living in forests, who might think the entire jungle belongs to them, cannot turn that land into wealth without modern technology. This means they will likely remain poor unless they gain access to those tools. Before technology advanced, the wealth of royal families was mostly limited to a bit of gold, silver, or precious gems. If we focus on increasing wealth production, we could potentially eliminate poverty worldwide within the next 15 to 20 years. Instead of making progress, however, we often blame fate and continue to struggle with poverty.

The core of most philosophical traditions was sculpted by the dark experiences of stark poverty of the past. This experience of poverty has shaped the idea of “high thinking and simple living,” suggesting that a meaningful life can be achieved without material wealth. Throughout history, people have developed various worldviews as a way to cope with the ongoing

challenge of poverty that humanity has faced. In fact, the values we often hold dear—like simplicity and a life of minimal possessions—are often just ways to adapt to a reality where many people live in poverty. When most of society is struggling financially, accumulating wealth can seem wrong or even shameful. People who do have money might feel the need to hide their wealth to avoid jealousy or resentment from others, leading them to pretend they are poor.

These values, which we project onto activists and leaders in the social and political spheres, come from a past marked by hardship. Unfortunately, we often cling to these outdated notions of poverty, thinking of them as timeless or noble. While being frugal has its merits, it's important to reassess these values based on our current circumstances. What might seem like wasteful spending could actually be necessary for today's needs, yet it may be viewed negatively through the lens of an overly romanticized view of poverty. This leads to confusion where being stingy is seen as being wise. Moreover, this mindset can trap us into accumulating wealth without actually using it to improve our lives. As a result, those in positions of power may feel pressured to project an image of poverty while actually being financially secure, creating a facade that doesn't reflect reality.

It's essential for us to break free from these outdated ideas rooted in poverty. They can lead us to reject

modern technology and advancements, mistakenly viewing them as mere symbols of wealth. This rejection can create a culture where people take pride in not using conveniences like cars, cell phones, or washing machines, which only keeps them at the lower end of the economic scale. It's disheartening to see political groups and organizations that uphold these ideals of poverty, encouraging citizens to remain in a state of struggle and to turn away from the benefits of modern advancements. We need to recognize the value of embracing progress and technology, using our resources wisely rather than shunning them out of a misguided sense of virtue.

A LITTLE CRITIQUE OF MARXIST POSITIONS

MARXISM SUGGESTS THAT human societies evolve through different historical stages. Each new stage starts within the framework of the previous one, leading to conflicts that ultimately allow the new stage to emerge. However, Marxism further argues that these societal changes don't happen naturally, like how water changes to steam or ice with temperature changes. Instead, real change requires the leadership of the working class (called the proletariat) to fight for their interests and unity among all groups that are struggling.

Marxism sees revolutions as sudden and major shifts that dramatically change the way society functions. Every stage of society has its own way of producing goods, which includes the tools and methods used (known as the means of production) and the people involved in this process (the forces of production). The leaders of a revolution will hold certain beliefs (an ideology) that justify their actions and existence. Even if the original conditions that gave rise to an ideology change or disappear, that ideology can persist as values

respected in society. These lasting values can sometimes work against progress, which is why Marxism highlights the need to challenge outdated ideologies and promote unity among the working class.

Karl Marx classified human history into stages, such as primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and finally communism, with socialism acting as a transitional phase. He created this framework to help us understand how societies develop over time. However, people often mistake these stages for the actual realities of the world, rather than concepts once used to aid our understanding. Just as ancient ideas about God, the soul, and the mind were used for centuries to explain the world, Marx's stages of history can also be seen as another outdated effort to make sense of social issues. These concepts, like those found in religion, tend to be vague and open to interpretation. Terms used in Marxist theory, such as bourgeoisie (the middle class), petty-bourgeoisie (lower middle class), renegades, revisionists, and left deviants, function in a similar way to religious terms like sin, Satan, and evil—they are often used (as derogatory) to create divisions and label certain groups negatively. This use of Marxist terminology can obstruct meaningful discussions and often casts certain people in a bad light.

One significant flaw in Marx's theory is his notion of "primitive communism," which he described as a time

when human societies were entirely equal and lacked class division—a period that we now recognize lasted around 200,000 years. However, research from anthropology and archaeology shows that even in small tribal societies, there were often social hierarchies, different roles, and various levels of wealth and power.

Marx also broke down the last 10,000 years—starting from when agriculture was developed—into further stages of development. It's important to note that he based his divisions mainly on the history of European countries and didn't fully consider the rest of the world. Only after he had established his theoretical framework did he learn more about economic systems in Asia, leading him to introduce the idea of the "Asiatic mode of production" as an addition. This somewhat forced inclusion of the Asiatic mode is, at best, an awkward afterthought that highlights the limitations of a Eurocentric view on history. It's funny to think of Marx's attachment to his theoretical constructs as a "deformity," but it serves as a reminder that these were merely tools to help us understand complex social dynamics, not 'absolute truths'.

When we look at humanity as a whole today, it's clear that within a single country, people are living at many different stages of development or existing side by side. For instance, a single nation might have everything from isolated tribes to bustling modern cities.

This means we can find communities living in what Karl Marx called "primitive communism," right alongside those that are much more developed. This variety shows that the idea of a single, universal path of progress through history doesn't quite hold up. While Marx's theories make sense from an evolutionary standpoint, no country perfectly fits his ideas. What Marxism lacks, despite claiming to be 'scientific socialism', is a solid foundation in history and empirical science. It often relies more on wishful thinking than factual analysis. For example, it is scientifically impossible to divide human societies into eras such as feudalism, slavery, or early communism. Therefore, marxism mainly rejects rigorous scientific analysis in favor of idealized visions. This idealism is perhaps why Marxism has resonated with so many people. Just as we can't simply label isolated tribes as outdated versions of society, we should recognize that these communities have survived on their own without much outside influence or technological exchange. They have developed in their own unique ways over time, reflecting their specific environments and circumstances.

Think of the night sky: we see stars in all different stages of life, from newborn stars to dying ones and even black holes. Humanity is similar—a vast 'galaxy' of societies at various stages of development shaped by climate, geography, and history. We create labels and categories to make sense of this complexity, but over time, we

often mistake these categories for absolute truths about how societies function. This misunderstanding has sparked debates about what is real and what is just a concept. Terms like "primitive communism" can be helpful for understanding history, but they are limited by the context in which they were created. Marxism, like a bullock cart, served its purpose in its time. However, just as new technology replaced the bullock cart with more efficient transportation, we should recognize the limitations of Marxist concepts. They were once useful for understanding history, but their relevance diminishes in the face of our evolving understanding of the world. As our understanding evolves, so too should our frameworks for comprehending history and society. Many of us dream of a world without government, a utopia often imagined under communism as the "withering away of the state". However, this is just a dream and not something we can realistically achieve.

It's important to understand that our system of governance is something we've developed over a long period, as a hierarchical species, to ensure some level of justice among us, despite their imperfections. If we were to eliminate government altogether, it could lead to chaos similar to what we see in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, where human civilization began. Take Somalia, for example; without a strong central government, the country has descended into disorder. Warlords from various unknown tribes exert control through violence,

effectively turning the nation into a battleground. In the past, people might have thought pirates only existed in myths and old Sinbad tales, but in Somalia today, piracy is a real issue because of the absence of effective governance. This illustrates that, despite its flaws, a strong government is necessary to maintain some semblance of order.

Instead of dreaming about a world without government, we should focus on making our existing government better—more transparent, less corrupt, and less bogged down by bureaucracy, especially by using modern technology. This is a continuous effort. What we truly need is a strong government that operates openly while allowing for as much local decision-making as possible (essentially decentralization). It's unrealistic to hope that one day, the state will vanish and everyone will live in perfect harmony. As long as we continue to exist in a hierarchical society, this ideal remains out of reach.

Karl Marx believed that class conflict began with the introduction of private property in human societies. He described the time before slavery as “primitive communism,” where early tribes worked together and shared resources without private ownership. However, in reality, human societies have always had some form of hierarchy. Within tribes, there were leaders like chiefs and elders, and the stronger members often dominated

the weaker ones. The chief, driven by personal interests, would decide how resources were shared and who had access to important things, like fertile partners. As tribes expanded and combined into larger communities, this pattern of hierarchy continued, evolving into towns, kingdoms, and eventually empires.

Before cities and nations existed, tribes often battled for access to resources like food and land. The stronger tribes would conquer the weaker ones, leading to the formation of the first cities and civilizations. These early cities often emerged through force, with conquered tribes being subjugated and turned into laborers or slaves. As time went on, the rulers of these new societies sought ways to integrate and control the people they had conquered. They introduced ideologies, religions, and rituals to legitimize their power and authority. While calling a system that forcibly brought together other tribes and made them work for you "slavery" is accurate, the production of surplus from this forced labor and the subsequent formation and growth of private property—seen as the main sources of all future conflicts in society—became the most significant stumbling blocks to understanding the workings and functioning of later human history. In fact, this concept of private property only helped to strengthen and intensify what we referred to as 'territorial sense' in an earlier chapter.

Additionally, Karl Marx made a crucial error. He believed humans were entirely different from animals, overlooking the natural instincts we share with them. Like other animals, we have a strong territorial instinct. By focusing on what makes humans unique, Marx, much like religious thinkers, denied our animal nature. Both Marx and religious thinkers wrongly claimed that humans were above the animal kingdom. Marx, in particular, went to great lengths to "prove" that humans were a distinct species, separate from other creatures.

When we look back at the early days of socialist states, we see that communist parties encountered a lot of confusion among the people. Many individuals were uncertain, stubborn, and didn't really understand what was going on. Meanwhile, the communists themselves were bewildered as they encountered the Russian, Chinese, American, and Indian working classes, instead of a united global working class. In these situations, the communists acted similarly to religious groups trying to rid people of sin. Just as Christians and Muslims have historically attempted to cleanse those they considered sinners or influenced by evil, Stalin in Russia and Mao Zedong in China tried to reform or eliminate individuals, groups, and communities they viewed as unfit for their vision of society. They sent dissenters to correctional facilities, exiled them to distant regions or harsh labor camps (known as gulags), and, in extreme cases, even executed them. This was similar to how

Christians fought in the Crusades and carried out inquisitions in the name of promoting Christ's unconditional love, or how followers of Muhammad participated in Jihad to save non-believers.

Communists believed that the old 'territorial consciousness' were leftover remnants of outdated feudal systems, so they wanted to completely eliminate those influences and start anew. However, we need to understand that the different identities and beliefs we form throughout our lives don't disappear; they simply become dormant. If we fail to understand this aspect of human nature, attempts to create a perfect society—like those seen in idealistic communities or utopian projects aimed at achieving equality and justice—often lead to significant violence and oppression.

Take, for example, the communist leaders who were determined to create a fair and equal world. When regular people resisted or protested against their plans, the leaders saw these actions as obstacles that had to be removed. They viewed opposing viewpoints as outdated or detrimental to their vision and responded with force. This mindset came from their belief that society progresses through specific stages, which led them to overlook the complex realities of existing societies, whether they were tribal or modern urban. Because they didn't fully understand the diverse needs and desires of different groups within society, they imposed their own

vision for change without considering the variety of perspectives and experiences that already existed.

The Communists believed they could quickly bring together different communities—something that normally took thousands of years in traditional city-states—by creating special programs. However, if you tell a community that is just starting to acquire wealth or shift towards agriculture that having private property is wrong or they should not have it, it's tough for them to accept or work with that idea. This problem became clear in the former Soviet Union after the socialist revolution, where people at different levels of development struggled to adapt to the new rules. The effort to eliminate private wealth was seen as a denial of their rights and fair share, which led to pushback against the socialist reforms.

To tackle this, socialist governments came up with the idea of "reservations" to make less developed groups compete with more advanced ones on equal footing. However, these reservations were seen as obstacles to "true socialism" by the more developed sections of society, while the less developed groups viewed them as essential for achieving equality. This disagreement led to conflicts and resistance, causing socialist governments to enforce strict laws and create oppressive systems like Gulags and concentration camps to silence dissent and maintain control.

In essence, private property is how people today express their sense of ownership and connection to their territory. Karl Marx looked closely at how private property developed and argued that the strong attachment people feel toward it stems from a basic territorial instinct. While he was right in his analysis, he missed the point that this deep attachment to private property is part of a broader instinct that all living beings share, not just humans. He believed that this connection was a result of private property itself, which arose after the era of slavery. He thought that getting rid of private property in favor of public ownership would solve the issues linked to it.

Marx proposed that under socialism, all private property should become public or national property. He believed that the urge to own personal possessions was a relatively new phenomenon, suggesting that in earlier societies, people felt a strong connection to shared property. However, when everything became converted to and labeled as public property, individuals lost the sense of having something they could truly call their own. This clashed with their natural instincts to claim territory and feel a sense of ownership. As a result, a new problem emerged: when property is considered public, people often don't feel any personal responsibility or care for it. In socialist countries, this created a situation where people had no emotional connection to things like factories, schools, or government-run businesses.

For instance, think about how employees and customers treat state-owned businesses, such as factories or public services like airlines, hotels, and trains. They usually don't feel any personal attachment to these places. When asked about them, people often just say they're "public property," implying they belong to everyone. During events like strikes or riots, when groups of people start vandalizing a train station or bus stop, you'll often find that neither the employees nor the passengers object to the damage, even though they refer to it as "our property." Instead, they tend to just watch passively. If this property really was theirs, wouldn't they fight back against the destruction? Similarly, in times of crisis, like during floods or wars, people grab their personal belongings and leave, but they rarely show the same level of concern for public property. If people felt these places were truly "theirs," they might have resisted such damages.

Under socialism, people often felt disconnected or lacked loyalty to their surroundings, which diminished their motivation to work. To address this lack of motivation, a "quota system" was implemented. This meant that individuals were required to meet certain production targets, similar to how, in the old princely states, people had to pay taxes regardless of the challenges they faced, like bad weather or natural disasters. To further combat this energy drain and detachment, workers were sometimes offered incentives

based on their collections or performance, particularly in the service sectors.

However, the way Marxism managed the economy often led to odd situations. For instance, factories that were consistently losing money couldn't just be shut down. Instead, they were kept running to provide jobs, even if it were financially unsustainable. This meant the government had to keep pouring money into these failing businesses, which ended up draining public resources. As a result, schools and hospitals became more about providing jobs for teachers and income sources for doctors instead of serving their main purposes of educating children and providing healthcare.

Marxism, in its quest to protect employees, ended up creating many inefficient and unproductive institutions. Factories that are losing money should be closed, and worker's unions should focus on securing fair compensation for those affected, rather than pushing to keep unprofitable factories open at the public's expense. Moreover, when new factories are built, they can disrupt local communities and family life. To address these problems, a compensation system should be established to support people when a factory opens or closes, helping to smooth the transition for those affected.

People have always criticized socialist countries more naturally than the criticisms mentioned earlier. Essentially, no one has ever considered these socialist countries ideal places to live. For example, no one attempted to escape to the former Soviet Union, despite propaganda claiming it was a prosperous and peaceful place. If it had been as wonderful as they claimed, people would have risked everything to get there by any means—whether by train, ship, or truck. But that never happened. Similarly, suffering people in America never considered fleeing to socialist Cuba. Instead, it's often those living in these supposedly fair and equal socialist countries who dream of moving to capitalist nations, which they see as more prosperous, even if they are less equal. To prevent people from leaving, socialist governments have resorted to extreme measures like building walls (like the Berlin Wall) or ordering guards to shoot on sight. What other options do they have to deal with this issue?

While socialism may not have achieved success, some Marxist ideas—like the theory of 'surplus value'—have helped us understand the economy better. We should remember that, a thousand years ago, any so-called "capitalists" who gathered workers to produce goods could not create the wealth we generate today. Even powerful rulers or capitalists, like the Egyptian Pharaohs, could only use labor to construct massive but ultimately useless pyramids. Such pointless products

were only possible through the combined efforts of capitalists and workers struggling against the harsh realities of their environment. Today, with the help of scientific knowledge, tools, and technology, we produce far more wealth. The gradual development of these factors is the primary reason for the increased production of wealth we observe now. Therefore, surplus value isn't just the result of worker's labor alone; rather, wealth is created through the combined efforts of management, labor, technology, tools, and capital working together.

The idea that all surplus value in a product comes solely from workers' labor, as Marxist theory claims, is, to say the least, sheer idiocy. As technology continues to improve, machines are increasingly taking over jobs once done by humans. In the future, it's possible that machines could completely replace human labor. This shift suggests that the working class, as Marx described in his *Communist Manifesto*, is on the path to extinction. For this reason, Marxists now oppose all advancements in mechanization and technological progress, as these developments challenge their outdated theories and threaten to make their ideas irrelevant.

Just like some religions that resist scientific progress, this new "Marxist materialist religion" also opposes scientific development. Marxists have been effective in

spreading their views, leading many to believe that wealth is only a product of exploitation. Because of this view, anyone who has acquired or created wealth is often labeled as an “exploiter” and looked down upon with moral outrage. As a result, creating wealth has become a secretive activity, which is truly unfortunate!. When wealth is created, it’s usually credited to the hard work of employees. But, if a factory goes into debt, it’s blamed on the capitalist’s ‘mismanagement or ‘inability’. We can see that many government-run organizations are struggling financially due to mismanagement and inefficiency. Marxists frequently criticize the concept of “surplus value,” which refers to the extra value produced by workers over what they are paid, but they overlook that many workers in public sectors receive salaries without actually contributing much, which lowers the overall performance of these institutions.

Let’s think about this scenario: imagine a capitalist and a hundred workers laboring tirelessly on the Himalayan mountains for fifty years—they wouldn’t be able to grow a single coconut. Why doesn’t all that hard work translate into wealth? Why can’t the capitalists “exploit” this labor to get rich? This situation shows that it’s not just about the relationship between capitalists and workers; other factors play a crucial role too. For instance, the ability to grow coconuts depends on several things: the specific traits of the coconut tree, the

climate in the Himalayas, and even the role of bees and other insects in pollinating the trees. It's clear that the relationship between capitalists and workers isn't the only thing that determines whether a product can be successfully produced. So, coconuts won't magically appear just because a lot of people are working hard; there are many factors involved as well.

Marxism oversimplifies the complicated nature of life. It is perhaps the most simplistic and human-centric theory ever. This simplification has caused a lot of violence in the past and continues to do so today. While claiming to push for progress, Marxism has fueled hatred between different groups in society. Similar to how crusaders and jihadists have fought violently in the name of love or brotherhood, Marxism promises equality but often seeks to eliminate those it labels as 'class enemies.'

Marxists frequently argue that religion held back scientific progress, particularly during the Middle Ages, often referencing the story of Galileo. This narrative, along with that of Giordano Bruno, has been told countless times by left-leaning artists and politicians. However, they rarely mention the plight of numerous scientists under Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union, who were either imprisoned, exiled to labor camps, or forced to flee the country. They were pressured to twist natural laws to fit the ideas of "dialectical materialism," which is

a key concept in Marxist theory. This oppression didn't stop with scientists; it also affected poets, artists, writers, and anyone who advocated for freedom. All these individuals found themselves locked up in what was ironically termed the 'freest space' ever created by humans. Just like any religion, Marxism acted in a very authoritarian way, stifling creativity and freedom of thought.

The Cultural Revolution initiated by Mao Zedong, under the guise of promoting democracy and eliminating corruption, inflicted immense damage on Chinese society. Despite Mao's death, he was spared punishment for his excesses only to prevent further divisions within the Communist Party. This cover-up, however, may lead to significant repercussions for the party in the future. A similar situation was observed in Libya under Colonel Gaddafi. Despite providing for the citizens and maintaining high living standards, Gaddafi's authoritarian rule ultimately led to his downfall. No matter how much progress the Chinese government makes, its authoritarian style of governance poses a constant threat to its future stability, like a Damoclean sword hanging over its head.

Cuba and China stand as the last remaining examples of communist experiments aimed at creating a "better future." With Fidel Castro's death, there is hope that the

long period of suffering in Cuba might come to an end. Worldwide, socialist experiments, despite initial public enthusiasm, have generally resulted in misery, suffering, and restrictions. At first, these failures were blamed on "capitalism and imperialism," a strategy that worked for a while. However, revelations from leaders like Khrushchev and Gorbachev exposed the inner workings and falsehoods perpetuated by the communist system in the name of democracy, development, and equality. This new understanding allowed most people—aside from a few blind supporters and those benefiting from the communist party—to see the truth. Just as some religious leaders depend on their places of worship, those who rely on Marxism for their livelihood continue to cling to this outdated ideology.

It's important to recognize that concepts like "dialectical materialism" and "historical materialism" are really just belief systems within Marxism. These ideas, which Marx borrowed and turned upside from Hegel's philosophy, are just another way humans try to make sense of things, similar to how we measure distance in miles or kilometers. They're based on old ideas about how the world operates, much like how people once viewed time and space in a fixed way according to Newtonian physics. Marxists treat these dialectical ideas as if they are fundamental truths of nature, much like Hindu gurus talk about eternal truths. Some even try to apply these theories to the natural world. Engels' effort to explain

the dialectics of nature is laughable, and Mao's attempts to find dialectics between the earth and the moon go to even greater extremes. What can we say about this? Even ignorance should have its limits!

THE EXTREMIST POSITIONS AND THE TRIBAL QUESTION

Throughout history, societies have developed unevenly, and according to Marxism, this is because one class has exploited others. As discussed in earlier chapters, we have already explored why this happened. Marxists argue that to create an equal society, class conflicts must rise to a revolutionary level, leading to the overthrow of the ruling class, which would eventually result in a classless society. Even people who don't fully embrace Marxist ideology have, for a long time, adopted these ideas due to Marxist campaigns that have spanned centuries. However, after witnessing the outcomes of Marxist experiments, particularly in the Soviet Union and over 60 other countries, we are now in a position to reassess this theory. Even a quick review shows that there are fundamental flaws in Marxism's approach.

Marxism views the state as a tool used by the ruling class to oppress and exploit the lower classes. Marx believed that once the working class, or proletariat, took control of the state, they could use it for their own benefit during the transition to socialism. In theory, as socialism

matured, the state apparatus would gradually "wither away," leading to a classless, communist society. But instead of bringing about a communist utopia, the socialist experiments we've seen have mostly collapsed, and none of the socialist countries became true communist societies. The idea that the state would fade away needs to be re-examined. While it's clear that people everywhere must continue to fight for rights and against discrimination, the notion championed by Mao—that these goals can only be achieved through violent revolution ("the barrel of the gun")—must also be discarded.

China, for instance, is often called a communist country, but it has not solved its problems by sticking to Marxism-Leninism or Maoism. Instead, China has embraced modern technology and welcomed capitalist enterprises into its economy, using Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to boost prosperity and improve living conditions for millions. Rather than the state disappearing as Marx predicted, socialist countries tend to build more powerful and authoritarian states. In fact, if we look at countries where the state has become weak or collapsed—like Somalia, Iraq, or Afghanistan—the result has been chaos. A weak state leads to instability, not the stateless harmony Marx envisioned. So, the theories of Marx, Lenin, and Mao regarding the role of the state need to be rewritten and adapted to the realities of the modern world.

Many different groups within communist ideology tend to agree on one thing: the reason attempts to create Marxist societies have failed is either because the theories were misunderstood or those leading the change were corrupt, authoritarian, or insincere. These groups often argue that the 'material conditions' weren't properly understood, or that the strategies, or 'lines,' used to bring about communist change were wrong. This kind of debate is similar to certain factions of Christianity, like Pentecostalism, where people search for the "correct" interpretation. In the same way that new branches of Christianity or Islam emerge claiming to follow the "true" path, new communist parties form around the world, each believing they are the most authentic followers of Marxism. There are now countless "pure" communist groups, and even individuals, who see themselves as the unblemished keepers of Marx's ideas. You could almost imagine putting these "perfect" communists in a museum for future generations to admire.

Although communists don't call themselves "believers" in the religious sense, many have a deep, almost unshakable belief in Marx's theories as absolute truth. This shows that Marxism, despite its opposition to religion, can operate like a belief system. Just as belief systems like Buddhism have splintered into many sects over time, communism has followed a similar path.

Each new group believes in the original teachings and sees its founder as infallible, never acknowledging the possibility that their "prophet" could have made mistakes.

The tribal regions of India are now clashing with state authorities, and these conflicts are being driven by Maoist groups. Over time, this struggle is escalating into a violent confrontation with government forces. In 2006, Maoists took control in neighboring Nepal after ousting the king. But what did that achieve? Were they able to create the new system of governance they had fought for? No, they failed. They couldn't even unite the different, often conflicting, groups within the population. Marxism and Maoism are ideologies that are effective only in resisting or fighting against state power. They tend to stir up divisions, fuel existing tensions, and intensify local conflicts, making it nearly impossible to foster social unity. History has shown time and again—through various experiments around the world over the past century—that these ideologies are a failure when it comes to governance. Even in countries where they faced little to no political opposition, Marxist regimes were given free rein to implement their ideas but still failed miserably. As a result, Marxism has been almost entirely wiped out, with its influence reduced to a mere 2% of the countries where it once held power. Yet, some continue to cling to Marxist or Maoist rhetoric, which is a self-destructive

path.

We all understand the importance of protesting and fighting to protect human dignity and freedom. However, it's equally important to recognize that the methods of these struggles must evolve. There are numerous ways to stand up against oppressive systems around the world. Though these methods differ from traditional Marxist approaches, they have produced positive, meaningful results. None of these movements operate within a Marxist framework, yet they manage to achieve freedom and prosperity for their societies. Now, considering the Maoist efforts to defend the tribal communities in India's forests against government forces—do we really believe that these groups can protect the tribes? History tells us that this will only lead to more violent confrontations, likely ending in the destruction of these tribes. We only need to look at the example of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), who fought for a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka. Despite being heavily armed with modern weapons, they were ultimately defeated.

From the time of Che Guevara's campaigns in the Latin American jungles, countless lives have been lost in the name of political freedom. We should remember those lives, not to glorify them as martyrs, but to remind ourselves that this kind of resistance leads not to freedom, but to destruction. If we learn anything from

history, it's that we should avoid repeating these tragic mistakes.

Throughout history, many tribes that lived in forests or mountains around the world remained isolated as larger societies formed kingdoms and empires. These tribes are essentially the groups that stayed apart during the process of societal integration. Today, we're in an era where these isolated groups are being brought into the "mainstream" world. There are no longer any people who live completely outside of national borders, as every forest is now classified as a "protected" or "reserved" area. Whether they realize it or not, everyone living in these regions is now part of a nation, making them, by default, citizens of that country. Just fifty years ago, this wasn't the case. Some people lived in forests without being subjects or citizens of any nation. But we've passed that stage in history. Now, there's no one in the world who exists outside the boundaries of a country; everyone alive today is considered a citizen of some nation.

However, there's a unique challenge: in large countries like India, many citizens are unaware that they are part of a bigger entity called a nation. Many tribal communities continue to live according to their own traditions, remaining loyal only to their local chieftains. Human rights organizations often criticize these nations for not giving these tribes equal status as other citizens. This criticism is both valid and misleading at the same

time. Citizenship rights are typically meant for people who recognize themselves as belonging to a particular nation. Many of these tribes, however, are still in the process of being integrated into the national framework. They are "transition citizens"—not yet fully aware of what it means to have rights and responsibilities as citizens of a nation. Expecting them to fulfill the duties of regular citizens is unreasonable because they are not yet fully conscious of this role. These tribes need time to either become subjects of a country or full citizens of a nation. This presents a dilemma for modern governance: while activists advocate for the rights of these individuals, it's important to acknowledge that these "citizens" are not yet ready to fully embrace the responsibilities of citizenship.

The formation of modern society was shaped by various aggressive and often violent efforts to bring together different tribes and cultures. If we look at history, we would find that these confrontations were often more brutal and heartbreaking than current clashes with state authorities. After countless battles, struggles, and forced unification, what we now see as the "mainstream" in many nations emerged—often built on the exploitation of marginalized groups. However, in today's world, with our understanding of human rights, such forceful integration is no longer acceptable. Human rights activists can quickly recognize and oppose any such attempts by modern states to force groups into

integration. This means that the methods used in the past to merge different tribes into modern society are no longer feasible. This presents a major challenge in how we can achieve integration today.

So, what are the options for integrating tribal groups into modern society under current conditions? Can we allow these groups to carve out their own path, separate from the mainstream? Is it realistic to believe that they can exist in isolation in today's world? History shows us that leaving tribes to live apart from the rest of society often leads to the creation of reservation areas, as seen in the U.S. and Australia. These areas can further marginalize them, ultimately leading to their decline or extinction. Therefore, as human rights advocates, we must support efforts to integrate these groups into the broader society. We can't just preserve them as they are, because that risks their eventual disappearance.

Survival, as seen in evolution, depends on the ability to adapt. If these groups are displaced or relocated for any reason, activists should focus on securing fair compensation and easing the tensions caused by such moves. We shouldn't act as though these tribes inherently have more moral rights than other people in society. Instead, if natural resources like iron, nickel, aluminum, or clay are discovered in areas where these tribes live, human rights defenders should work to ensure that the tribes are fairly compensated and have

ownership over these resources. This wealth should be used to create long-term investments in the well-being of the tribal communities. What we need are contracts and agreements that are rooted in justice and fairness, to secure the future of these groups.

We also need to understand that many of the metals and minerals we rely on are formed deep within the Earth, usually as a result of mountain formation. So it's unrealistic to suggest that the government should simply find and mine these resources in areas where indigenous tribes don't live—those resources often aren't found elsewhere. If a country can't access its own natural resources, it will be forced to buy them from other nations at higher prices. This puts the country at a disadvantage compared to others in terms of development, all because it prioritizes the rights of indigenous people who may not even be aware of the larger issues at play. It's not realistic to expect governments or the majority of a country's population to sacrifice economic progress to protect a small, isolated group of people.

Even if some countries, pressured by human rights activists, make the decision to protect these tribes, other more powerful nations may eventually step in, exploit the resources, and take control. This would make all the efforts to protect the tribes meaningless, and the fight to defend their rights would ultimately fail. In the long

run, the best solution for modern societies is to relocate these tribes and compensate them for their land. It's not practical to argue that they should stay in these areas, because that idea often doesn't even come from the tribes themselves—it's more of a political stance influenced by certain ideologies. If we continue to insist on this, it could lead to the complete destruction of these tribes, especially those who take up arms and enter into conflict with governments.

We see this happening all over the world—in Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Caucasus region, the Amazon, and much of Africa. Indigenous groups are frequently in conflict with the governments of their countries. These tribes are loyal to their leaders, or chieftains, and often don't understand or accept the responsibilities and rights that come with being part of a modern nation. Since they haven't been part of any organized system—like a monarchy or a modern state—negotiating treaties or contracts with them isn't feasible. This lack of understanding only leads to more conflict, which can result in the complete destruction of these tribes.

The best approach is to relocate these communities with fair compensation, doing so in a way that minimally violates their rights. Otherwise, they will face total destruction, as they have no means to mine or benefit from the minerals themselves. Mining requires advanced technology and skills, which these tribes don't

have. They should follow the example of the Gulf countries, where tribes partnered with modern societies to extract petroleum and shared in the profits. If we adopt the stance that "these minerals belong to the tribe, and no one should touch them," the minerals will remain unused, benefiting neither the tribe nor anyone else. Activists and human rights advocates need to understand this reality. It's not about denying tribal rights, but about finding practical solutions that prevent their extinction while allowing progress.

The isolation and marginalization of certain groups isn't something they've done to themselves, and it's not right to blame others for making them the way they are either. However, believing that the "mainstream" society is solely responsible for their current situation is flawed. This thinking actually blocks these groups from being able to integrate into mainstream society now. We should also recognize that modern society isn't a single, unified entity. Not too long ago, all of us were part of tribes in our own ways, without the human rights protections we have today to ease tensions during societal integration. So, there's no reason for any modern tribe to claim moral superiority, and instead of further isolating them, we should work toward integrating these groups peacefully, easing the challenges involved in that process. The last thing we want is to push them to take up arms against powerful governments and end up getting destroyed.

It's important to understand that ideologies that promote territorial division have never benefited society. These ideas only push marginalized groups or tribes into violent conflict with modern, heavily-armed nations. In reality, they stand no chance in such confrontations, and encouraging them to fight is ultimately a crime against humanity. Right now, human rights advocates are the only reason these small, armed groups survive, as modern governments are restrained from using force against their own citizens. But this isn't a fair fight—these groups only exist because democratic governments are restricted from using their full military might.

However, it's also crucial to note that these tribes are only able to take up arms because of the freedoms allowed in a democracy. But how long will this situation last? Eventually, powerful governments may start to portray these tribes as dangerous enemies because they've resorted to violence, and this could justify wiping them out entirely. This tragic outcome is the true danger of ideologies like Maoism, which claim to defend these marginalized groups but may ultimately lead them to their own destruction.

We need to keep in mind that when tribal communities pick up basic guns to defend themselves, these weapons aren't their own inventions. Those guns are made by big

corporations that they're actually fighting against. This conflict isn't purely tribal; it's about the broader politics at play. When these tribes pick up arms to fight against their governments, we should carefully examine how they acquired these weapons and who made and distributed them. If we think that these communities need arms for self-defense, then we must accept that modern technology plays a crucial role in that. But the problem is that this "development" often means exploitation and oppression. So, if that's the case, how can tribes fight back against the government? They claim they don't need 'modern technology' for their well-being, yet they end up using it in their fight.

What people should truly be advocating for is a fair distribution of the wealth that is created, not just focusing on technology or development itself. We need to have discussions about how resources are shared rather than labeling all modern technologies as harmful. Whenever there's uneven development (or inequality) anywhere in the world, it can lead to conflict and the need for protection. Gandhi's approach to defending rights and freedoms is still one of the best examples we have. Instead of fighting tooth and nail for territory or survival, using empathy and compassion to connect with others who are suffering is the most effective way to resist. Gandhi was one of the greatest social innovators ever, and his model is what we should follow and build upon.

In any protest or resistance, we have to choose sides. We should always stand up for those who are in a weaker position. This isn't just about whether we need to protest or defend; it's about how we choose to do it. Recognizing that we all belong to the same species can help us fight for equality and justice. This understanding can inspire us and energize our struggles. When defending the rights of tribes, working towards fair compensation and easy relocation for them is the best approach. Advocates for human rights should focus their efforts within this framework. We can also consider the areas where these tribes live and where valuable minerals are located, using those resources to benefit the tribes. This could create ongoing income for the community as a whole. While there may be even better solutions than these, they should always be pursued through nonviolent protests rather than armed conflict.

We need to understand that there's no such thing as 'natural justice' or true equality in the world. Because of this, we need to seek out, create, and achieve what we can call justice, all while ensuring that every individual in society has the chance to live. Making martyrs only serves as a way for the living to celebrate the dead. The most basic need we have is to live, and we shouldn't have to sacrifice our lives for that. The values that lead to martyrdom and dying for "honor" are outdated tribal

beliefs, rooted in long-standing family feuds.

We've established laws and courts to stand against these old tribal disputes. Governments were created to mediate conflicts between fighting groups, so we shouldn't just see government as a tool for controlling others. Instead, we need to adjust our emotional needs to fit with the modern concept of governance. This adaptation is essential for the growth of any civilized society. However, we must also acknowledge that this is a very challenging realization, but it's a challenge we have to face.

THE DIFFERENCE IN CITY AND VILLAGE AT A GLANCE

WE OFTEN HEAR TRAGIC STORIES about people who lose their lives from blood loss after an accident because no one stops to help. Poets and writers often blame the coldness or lack of compassion in modern city dwellers, contrasting it with the loving and supportive communities of rural villages. But is there really a difference between the kindness of city folks and villagers? Let's take a closer look at how human society functions in these two environments.

We often forget that village communities are small, tightly-knit groups where everyone knows each other well and has a lot of free time at their disposal. When villagers say "see you tomorrow morning," it can mean any time between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. City life, on the other hand, is much more fast-paced and vastly different. The people at a bus stop could be from anywhere in the world. Missing the 8 a.m. bus could mean not making it to the office on time, or it could be a coworker anxiously waiting to clock in, a student rushing to school before the bell rings, a healthcare

worker needing to attend to patients in the emergency ward, or even some good Samaritans from the village seeking remedies for farm-related issues at a government office. They all are busy and in a hurry, with no time to spare, which means that among the thirty or forty people at the bus stop, chances are none of them know each other.

Now imagine an accident happening in a village near a bridge where ten people are sitting around, chatting. Since everyone knows each other, they'll quickly band together to help. This immediate reaction among acquaintances is the essence of "village goodness." In the city, however, the crowd consists of strangers whose delayed arrival at their destinations can cause immense suffering, distress, and even chaos, forming the basis for the "heartless city" perception. Even if someone dares to help an accident victim, calling for others to assist might not spur them into action despite their inner willingness to help. These individuals are part of a group where time is extremely precious. Even those who recently moved from the so-called 'goodness-filled' village to the city might find themselves similarly hesitant to help. Complaining about how cold or uncaring society seems, or writing emotional poetry about it from the comfort of your home, doesn't solve anything.

There are big differences between city life and village life that we need to understand more deeply. In villages,

getting to know your neighbors has both upsides and downsides. On the positive side, you're never really alone, as there's a strong sense of community. However, on the other hand, there is a constant threat of excommunication if you don't fit in or follow the village rules. Even though villages may be divided by caste or tribe, they still act as a tight-knit group. This unity means that excommunication is a severe consequence, hanging over everyone like the sword of Damocles. In villages, secrets don't stay hidden for long, and any behavior seen as unacceptable quickly becomes public, possibly leading to expulsion or restrictions on what you can do.

This lack of privacy can make it hard for people to develop strong, individual identities. Wealthy individuals might avoid being excluded by isolating themselves in big, fortified homes, but that only leads to another form of social isolation. Typically, people who are more independent thinkers don't do well in village life, which doesn't leave much room for free thinking or personal privacy.

On the other hand, life in cities is very different. Cities give people the freedom to be independent and to keep their lives private, especially in hidden areas like alleyways or less populated streets of the urban landscape. If someone is cut off from their social circle, or if they simply prefer to be alone, they can still find a

place to belong in the city. For villagers who are exiled, starting over in another village is often not an option. Even if they manage to move to a distant village, news of their past tends to arrive before they do, making it hard to be accepted. Villages are typically built on rigid hierarchies based on religion, caste, or family ties, which makes it difficult for someone to integrate into a new village. Village economies also tend to be very local, depending on what can be produced nearby, which limits job opportunities for exiled individuals. Their only option might be to live as a slave.

In contrast to small villages, cities have expanded rapidly, offering refuge to those who flee the the limiting and judgmental atmosphere of rural villages and providing them with opportunities to start anew. This anonymity and diversity in cities allow for the accommodation of all sorts of individuals, including the independent, the unconventional, and those with criminal tendencies. Cities are more accepting and less judgmental than villages, which often rely on strong social hierarchies and gossip to maintain control. As a result, individuals are less likely to be recognized by their past and present reputations, whether good or bad. People can change their names, adopt new identities, and live anonymously among strangers. This anonymity enables them to lead double lives, committing crimes such as theft, fraud, or even violence without fear of exposure. While cities foster creativity, innovation, and

independent thinking, they also offer refuge to dangerous individuals whose actions can pose serious risks to society. This issue is a common challenge faced by developed societies worldwide and represents a significant dilemma for every city on Earth.

Life has an incredible ability to adapt and transform its circumstances to meet its needs. Over time, human cultural knowledge has exponentially increased this capacity. Thanks to our accumulated knowledge, our species has developed the ability to survive and raise most of the children born to us. When some people look at nature, especially those who strongly advocate for environmental purity (those 'eco-extremists'), they may say that there are no sick animals in a forest because everything is in harmony with nature. However, that's not entirely true. In reality, animals that are sick or even just slightly weak often become prey for other animals. This is why we don't see many diseased animals in the wild—only the strongest survive. The forest is actually a very tough and competitive place where survival is anything but easy.

As humans shifted from a nomadic lifestyle to farming and building cities, we made life easier by reducing the constant struggle for survival. The invention of medicine helped even more, with vaccines protecting us from dangerous diseases, allowing more people to live longer. Because of these advancements, we've been able

to extend our lifespan over time. However, living longer comes with its own challenges. As people age, we're seeing more cases of diseases like cancer, diabetes, dementia, and arthritis. Similarly, as we've lowered infant death rates, there's been an increase in genetic and childhood diseases. These issues, which have arisen from our "successes", are the basis for the numerous 'compassionate services' we have today, leading to the production of too many saints around the world ☺.

Many people blame pollution for the increase in diseases, and while it does make health problems worse, it usually amplifies existing conditions rather than causing new ones. Another growing concern is the rise of deviant individuals and groups in cities. Unlike villages, where a lack of privacy, personal boundaries (including intrusion into personal lives), and community surveillance prevent the development of such groups, large cities, with their millions of inhabitants, provide enough space for deviants to remain invisible, allowing them to survive and develop exponentially. This is a serious issue for which humanity will have to pay a heavy price in the near future.

It is estimated that about 1 in 100 people have deviant tendencies. With a global population of seven billion, this number is substantial. We have always wondered whether such types of personalities really exist. Due to the predominant theory that circumstances shape

character in individuals, people historically believed that changing circumstances would eliminate all deviant traits, assuming that all babies are born inherently “good.” This belief has significantly contributed to this debated position. In traditional societies, stories and folklore often depicted figures like Satan or human-animal hybrids as cruel and heartless. Nowadays, scientists refer to similar individuals as sociopaths or psychopaths—people who actually take pleasure in hurting others. Unfortunately, these kinds of personalities are more common in today’s complex urban environments.

Villages would typically ostracize or excommunicate such individuals because their harmful behavior would quickly become known throughout the community. This openness is a positive aspect of village life. In contrast, cities provide a haven for such individuals and psychopaths to operate unchecked, as they are often intelligent and difficult to identify, define, or isolate. Moreover, with the rise of the internet, those who lead double lives or hide their true selves in big cities can now connect with others like them across the globe, forming networks that can have far-reaching effects.

We must recognize that this imminent danger is pervasive in the bustling cities. Even those who are not fully psychopathic but possess some deviant traits can join forces with these more dangerous individuals. This

makes the presence of deviant groups more significant than we might imagine. Leaders of the criminal underworld, political extremists, and radical religious groups often consist of individuals with these unsettling traits. All the underworld dons are essentially a grouping of these deviant characters or individuals. These groups often compete against each other for power and influence, with the most extreme members often becoming prominent figures within these organizations. Various political organizations, territorial groups, and religious extremist factions provide a platform for these individuals to survive, grow, and thrive. The most extreme personalities within these groups often become their most vocal heroes and martyrs. The recognition of such individuals by existing governments is often viewed by 'democratic' and 'progressive' factions as a political strategy to suppress dissent or activism. Therefore, identifying these personalities in politics is frequently dismissed as a reductionist approach to understanding complex social issues.

We also have to accept that every organization is bound to have people with deviant traits. Among these individuals, there's a distinct group that stands out: those who, despite often being fearful and relatively weak, have a remarkable talent for analyzing situations, discussing ideas, and developing theories. They are adept at uncovering hidden secrets in various aspects of life and can spot conspiracies in the tiniest details.

Usually, these individuals are the thinkers or intellectuals within their organizations.

These intellectuals often create their own small groups within the larger organization, almost like cults. They become influential figures within these smaller groups and are difficult to expel, even when exposed. As long as they remain within the organization, it is unlikely that true unity can be achieved. In situations where political compromises and adjustments are crucial, their presence can hinder such efforts. They are prone to creating conflicts and conspiracies, sometimes without even realizing it, due to their inherent suspicion and distrust. Their minds are filled with conspiracies and hatred, leading them to find ulterior motives in other's actions and statements. They interpret religious, political, or theoretical positions through their suspicious lens, often stirring disputes among members.

The presence of these individuals leads to extreme theoretical positions that lack practical solutions, resulting in more divisions and factions both within and outside organizations. Every city may have numerous "fringe groups," often created and led by such deviant personalities. These individuals are the driving force behind extremist and terrorist groups across various movements—religious, political, ethnic, and linguistic. For those dedicated to promoting peace, democracy, and a better future, it is essential to understand that

organizations will always have some of these deviant personalities. While working to protect privacy, freedom, democratic rights, and equality, we must account for these individuals when developing laws, regulations, and controls. They thrive on creating and perpetuating misery and will not uphold the responsibilities that come with rights.

Now, regarding capital punishment in a modern democracy, we should definitely avoid it, because, in a democracy, punishment means creating the conditions for a person to re-evaluate and recreate themselves. Therefore, the purpose of punishment in a democracy is to create conditions for a person to reflect, reform, and recreate themselves in order to reintegrate into society. Punishment shouldn't be about instilling fear but about enabling personal growth and change. We cannot uphold a justice system that uses punishment as a means to instill fear or control others. In a democracy, the last person is as important as the first person. However, when we avoid capital punishment, we must also recognize that some individuals may never be fit to re-enter society. These individuals, despite all undergoing corrective measures, may continue to repeat their crimes, and in such cases, lifelong detention may be necessary to protect society from their repeated offenses.

SOME THOUGHTS ON ALCOHOL

PLANTS AND TREES HAVE DEVELOPED chemical defenses over millions of years to protect themselves from predators like animals and insects. Early on, when plants first appeared on land, they didn't face many threats other than the wind, which could uproot them. Since there weren't many predators, plants didn't need to evolve the ability to move or flee. But as land animals and insects emerged, plants faced a new challenge—they couldn't escape from these predators because they were rooted in place. Instead of running away, plants developed chemical compounds to defend themselves, which is essentially how the foundation of all modern medicines and drugs was formed. Apart from thorns, plants mainly rely on these chemicals for protection. These chemicals can be found in their leaves, bark, and stems, and they can do anything from killing or injuring predators to repelling them with unpleasant smells or causing allergic reactions.

It is these same chemicals that humans later discovered and turned into medicines. Plants also evolved to use animals and insects for their own survival, developing

colorful flowers with pleasant scents and nectar to attract creatures like butterflies and bees. These animals help pollinate the plants, ensuring the spread of their seeds. Likewise, fruits with appealing smells and tastes attract birds and other animals, who then spread the seeds when they eat the fruit and leave the seeds behind in new locations.

This co-evolution between plants, animals, and insects is the story of survival on Earth, a process that has been going on for billions of years. Over time, certain plants and fungi also evolved chemicals that could cause dizziness, hallucinations, or muscle weakness in animals that ate them. These effects disoriented animals and helped the plants avoid being eaten. One example is a specific tree in Africa (Marula tree) whose fruit intoxicates all animals that eat it, leading them to compete for the fruit and helping the tree spread its seeds. Eventually, humans realized that the same chemicals plants used as poisons could be used as medicine. By adjusting the dosage or mixing different chemicals together, humans turned these natural defenses into treatments for various ailments. This is also how intoxicating substances like alcohol and drugs were developed—from plants' original chemical warfare against their predators.

Throughout history, tribes across the world have consumed intoxicating substances, like certain drinks or

plants, in a ceremonial and ritualized way. Many spiritual experiences were believed to be unlocked using these substances during such ceremonies. By consuming these "magical potions," participants thought they could access deeper parts of their consciousness or reach spiritual ecstasies (entering trance state) by the end of the ritual.

If you look into ancient texts or epics, you'll find many references to the use of these ritualistic substances, which are often claimed to lead to powerful spiritual experiences. One well-known example is the "Soma drink" mentioned in the Vedas, ancient Indian scriptures, which may have been made from the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom. This drink was believed to contain a special essence or energy, which, when consumed, would grant the drinker the unique powers of the plant or animal it came from (drinking their intoxicated urine). This belief—that every living being contains a "subtle energy"—formed the foundation of early inquiries into nature. Over time, this pursuit of hidden energies in plants and animals evolved into the development of modern medicines and drugs, even laying the groundwork for the science of chemistry.

In ancient societies, these substances held a high status. Using them in rituals was considered the pinnacle of spiritual experience, as they were seen as gateways to otherworldly realms. For example, cannabis (referred to

as "Ganja") in India was often associated with spiritual and divine experiences, earning it the nickname "*Swami*," meaning master or lord. However, modern societies worldwide are struggling with the excessive use of drugs and alcohol. What once had a ceremonial and sacred role has now led to problems. In traditional hierarchical societies, where people were divided into different social classes—such as tribes, farmers, traders, and bureaucrats—creating a common standard for responsible consumption has proven challenging. This issue extends beyond alcohol and drugs, touching on the broader difficulties of finding balance in any social system.

The key challenge now is how to manage and regulate the use of these substances, both preserving their traditional roles and addressing the harms of overuse. Responsible consumption is difficult to achieve, but understanding the roots of these practices may help us find ways to address this issue. Now, let's explore how we might approach solving this problem.

First, we need to agree on two things. One, it's unproductive to argue that alcohol is harmful to personal and public health and should therefore be banned. While this is true to some extent, an outright ban isn't the solution. Two, it's equally unhelpful to claim that no control is needed and that the free market will naturally regulate alcohol and drug consumption

like any other product. While modern medicine suggests that moderate alcohol consumption might lower the risk of some cancers and heart disease, this doesn't address the widespread harm caused by excessive drinking and drug use. The truth is that alcohol and drugs can lead to addiction, and that's why some level of control is necessary. So, instead of extreme positions like prohibition or complete freedom, we need to find practical ways to manage the risks associated with these substances.

When we think about the difference between prohibition and control, the best example from history is the Prohibition of alcohol in the United States. From 1919 to 1932, alcohol was banned in the U.S. for 13 years, but the country is still dealing with the negative effects of that decision. Prohibition, in any country with a large number of consumers, tends to create a highly criminalized society. For many in the poor sections of society, it becomes an easy way to make fast money through illegal means, since they wouldn't have those opportunities otherwise. They turn to shortcuts to gain wealth, and with that comes a willingness to live dangerously and resist laws they see as oppressive. This combination of factors leads to widespread crime. This is exactly what happened in America during Prohibition. The term "Mafia" (originated in Sicily used in the U.S) became widely known during this time. Many of the groups involved were immigrants from

Sicily, still holding on to tribal values. These groups formed the foundation of what we now call the Mafia. They only answered to their leaders, operated like a tight-knit gang, and had no regard for the values of mainstream society. Without feeling guilty or conflicted about their actions, they committed crimes freely and frequently.

In any complex society, there are always underlying tensions like these, but they tend to come to the surface during times of prohibition or similar situations. During Prohibition, the use of guns for personal protection became common, adding to the overall rise in crime. In a modern, peaceful society, there's usually no need for people to carry guns, but the emergence of well-organized criminal gangs made it seem necessary for many to arm themselves. As a result, violence increased. On top of that, the process of making alcohol is fairly simple. People began making it at home or in their kitchen, turning almost every corner of the country into a hotspot for illegal alcohol production. Women, who typically only drank on occasion, began to drink regularly. This everyday exposure to alcohol also contributed to changes in social habits, pushing more people into the criminal world.

Criminals who understood that international law only allows a country to enforce its rules within three miles of its coastline took advantage of this loophole. They set

up large ships, fully equipped with casinos and bars, and anchored them just outside this limit. People would travel to these ships in small boats for a night of drinking and gambling, knowing that they were outside the reach of the law. This led to a surge of visitors, and what was intended as a way to protect society from alcohol became a huge problem. Eventually, the law banning alcohol was scrapped because it had the opposite effect—it didn't eliminate alcohol but instead contributed to an increase in crime and widespread alcohol use over 13 years.

This situation serves as a historical lesson in our discussion on alcohol and alcoholism. The reality is that alcohol will always be a part of modern society. What we can do is focus on regulating its availability and minimizing its harmful effects. One of the biggest challenges to effective regulation is the moral stance that drinking alcohol is a crime. When we ban alcohol in homes or treat drinking as taboo, it leads to a lack of control over how much people consume, since there's no one with authority to intervene. Developed societies have addressed this by allowing alcohol consumption in homes, where family members can set limits. In a home setting, people can observe one another, step in if someone is drinking too much, and have conversations to address the reasons behind excessive drinking. Alcohol is appealing because it relieves stress and enhances mood, but it also has the potential to lead to

addiction. By allowing people to drink in a setting where others can monitor and support them, we can reduce the chances of alcohol abuse.

In societies where drinking is accepted in moderation, both at home and in public, there isn't a moral stigma attached to it. People are more likely to drink responsibly and avoid binge drinking, which typically only happens on special occasions. However, in societies that condemn alcohol use, people are more likely to become alcoholics because they're driven to drink in secret or without moderation. This is why outright prohibition doesn't work to solve the problem of alcoholism—it only leads to more abuse. The key is promoting controlled and responsible drinking.

It's also important to recognize that about 10% of people who drink will struggle with alcoholism. These individuals need to be discouraged from drinking, much like people with diabetes should avoid sugar. This is a shared social responsibility, involving not only the person struggling with alcohol but also their family and community. Those who are mentally unstable or vulnerable should especially avoid alcohol, as it can worsen their condition. We also need to acknowledge that rising rates of mental health issues are often linked to alcohol use, which is a major downside of drinking. Whatever the case maybe, there is something inherently appealing about alcohol, despite the risks and efforts to

control it. Similar to how coffee brings people together, alcohol has a unique way of easing tensions and softening people's territorial instincts. It reduces the inner urge to view others as outsiders, making it a social tool that has persisted for centuries. Even after major business deals or peace talks between nations, alcohol is often served to bring people together. This is why it's important to teach young people how to drink responsibly, and this education should ideally start at home.

Outright prohibition isn't the answer. What we need is control—whether it comes from within individuals or from external guidelines. In many developed countries, you have to be an adult to buy alcohol, and it's common for friends or shop owners to tell someone they've had enough to drink. If we approach alcohol use without a moralistic stance, we might actually be able to create a system of social control, where people feel more comfortable intervening when necessary. Those who sell, use, or even just witness alcohol consumption, they often feel a sense of guilt or shame because of moral expectations. This guilt can prevent anyone from stepping in to help when they see someone in a tough situation. If we want to create a supportive environment, we need to communicate openly and without judgment, so that people feel comfortable reaching out for help or intervening when it's needed.

Hallucinogens, often viewed as more dangerous than alcohol, are actually quite similar in their effects. The distinction between the two is largely the result of propaganda from the alcohol and tobacco industries. In the 1960s, during the counterculture or hippie movement, young people, especially in the U.S., rejected the established work culture and turned to hallucinogens instead of the socially accepted alcohol. These "hippies" sought freedom from social control and authority, and in response, the government and those in power demonized all drugs except alcohol and nicotine. Despite the fact that some drugs are no more harmful than alcohol, they've been portrayed as the worst things imaginable. In truth, the dangers of alcohol and certain drugs are often comparable. Many so-called "scientific" reasons for demonizing drugs aren't true. Take marijuana, for example. It's often portrayed as dangerous or addictive, but it actually doesn't cause addiction like some other substances do. In fact, nicotine—found in cigarettes and beedis—is one of the most addictive substances available, yet it's widely accepted and sold without much fuss.

The negative view of marijuana is not based on science; it's largely driven by powerful interests in the alcohol and tobacco industries. These industries have spent a lot of money promoting their products, often using celebrities to make smoking and drinking seem glamorous and "noble," while unfairly labeling

marijuana as "bad." This has helped them profit from increased sales of cigarettes and alcohol. The ignorant yet well-meaning social reformers have bought into this misleading propaganda, inadvertently supporting the alcohol and tobacco industries in their fight against marijuana. The truth is, marijuana can be a great stress reliever and can even help people who are trying to quit drinking or smoking.

That said, we shouldn't be locking up those who grow or use marijuana. However, this doesn't mean we should allow marijuana to be used completely without any restrictions. While it may not be addictive, it can still lead to problems. So, like with any substance that can alter your state of mind, we need to have rules and limits on marijuana use to ensure it's safe for everyone.

KILLING AND VEGETARIANISM

“I CAN’T STAND SEEING ANIMALS get killed, so I’ve made the choice to become a vegetarian. By doing this, I hope to avoid supporting some of the cruelty that happens in the meat industry”. This kind of statement is often made by people who see themselves as kind and caring. When many folks witness the slaughter of animals, they feel a strong sense of compassion and often decide to stop eating meat, thinking that this choice will help them avoid contributing to animal suffering. It’s a thoughtful decision that comes from a so-called “pure heart”. But it raises an important question: Does this choice really prevent cruelty, or is it just shifting the problem somewhere else?

It’s a common misconception that vegetarians are entirely free from causing harm. Plants, often overlooked in these discussions, are living organisms too. When we harvest crops, we’re essentially ending the lives of these plants. Every time we eat something like spinach, rice, or wheat, we’re taking a life. As humans, who are at the top of the food chain, it’s inevitable that we will have to end some forms of life to survive.

Whether it's a lamb, a cow, or even a plant like corn or rice, we end up causing the death of various living beings. The main difference is that we tend to empathize more with some creatures than others. For example, many people can easily relate to the suffering of a cow being slaughtered, but we don't think about the life of a carrot in the same way.

At its core, taking the life of a plant is not that different from taking the life of an animal; both actions result in the end of a living organism. Plants like rice, wheat, and peas don't just exist for us to eat—they have their own life cycles and reproduce like any other living thing. In nature, the only things that have specifically evolved to be eaten by other beings are the sweet nectar found in flowers and the fruits of plants. If someone genuinely wants to live without causing any death or pain, they would only eat these two things. But, let's be real—that's not practical or realistic for most people.

Moreover, consuming dairy products also raises ethical questions. When we drink milk, for instance, we're essentially taking food away from calves. To produce milk, cows are often artificially impregnated, and then their calves are separated from them shortly after birth. So, while some might think that drinking milk is a better option than eating meat, it also comes with its own ethical issues. In this way, becoming a vegetarian just shifts the responsibility from one type of killing to

another, or, as the saying goes, it's like shifting your weight from one leg to the other.

When we chop spinach, cook rice, or slice onions, we don't hear them scream; similarly, fish don't cry out when they're caught. It's only animals that make noise and visibly struggle that make us feel their pain. The harsh reality is that killing, no matter how it's done—whether by gunshot, electric chair, hanging, lynching, or stoning—is always a cruel act. When we buy meat from a butcher, we might not think about the suffering involved in its production. Instead, we may view the butcher as the cruel one, shifting the responsibility onto them in order to feel more compassionate and comfort ourselves.

The question then becomes, how can we minimize cruelty in the process of killing? The only way to reduce the cruelty of killing might be to use anesthesia. Just as anesthesia alleviates pain for a person undergoing surgery, it could help minimize suffering for the animal and those witnessing the killing. In the past, before anesthesia was invented, surgeons were considered 'cruel' despite their intent to save lives. Therefore, using anesthesia could be the only truly humane way to kill an animal, as it significantly reduces the pain they experience. Without it, we can't escape the inherent cruelty in the act of killing.

It's important to understand that humans aren't the only beings on Earth that depend on others for food. In fact, most living creatures, especially those at the top of the food chain, survive by eating other organisms. The only exceptions are plants, which grow by using sunlight and minerals and don't need to kill anything to live. Every other living thing, from tiny bacteria to large predators, must consume something to stay alive. Even viruses and bacteria depend on harming other organisms to survive. Diseases like cholera, smallpox, and tuberculosis are examples of how bacteria and viruses multiply by taking advantage of living beings, often in ways that are unpleasant for us to see.

The vegetarian extremists argue that humans are naturally meant to be vegetarians, pointing to our teeth and digestive systems as evidence. Let's take a closer look at this idea. Vegetarians often claim that our teeth aren't built for tearing meat and that our intestines resemble those of plant-eating animals more than those of meat-eating ones.

Well, it's true that we don't have the sharp teeth that lions or tigers do. However, gorillas and chimpanzees—animals that are primarily vegetarian—have been seen hunting and eating small animals. For example, these great apes hunt small monkeys for protein at least once a month. This behavior shows that even species that mostly eat plants sometimes need to hunt to get

important nutrients. It indicates that even animals closely related to us don't strictly stick to plant-based diets. Humans are similar in this way. We are opportunistic eaters, meaning we will consume whatever food is available to us. Our hunting methods are not based on 'brute strength' but on techniques and tools that don't require 'sharp teeth'. Plus, our use of fire for cooking over millions of years has made it easier for us to chew and digest protein, which means we don't necessarily need a long digestive tract or a diet made up only of plants. So, simply looking at our teeth and intestines doesn't fully determine what we should eat.

Hunter-gatherer tribes, who live in various climates and environments worldwide, eat whatever they can find. This adaptability is what allows our species to thrive in a range of settings, from the hot Sahara Desert to the icy Arctic. It's this flexibility that helps groups like the Inuit and Eskimo peoples survive in their challenging, frozen homes. If these tribes were forced to adopt a vegetarian diet, they could face serious health issues and potentially even die within a week. It is fortunate that figures like Buddha, who advocated for vegetarianism, were not born into such tribes, as this could have resulted in disastrous outcomes and potentially ended their lineage.

The idea of vegetarianism has only gained significant importance in developed societies over the last 3,000

years. This shift mainly came about because of advancements in farming, which allowed people to cultivate a wide range of crops like cereals and pulses. These provided enough food without relying on hunting animals. However, it's important to realize that not everyone in the world has access to these kinds of farming practices. In many regions where people live off the land in simpler ways, the idea of giving up meat is almost impossible. It's like asking a fish to live without water. For people in tribal or less developed societies, philosophies like those of Buddhists or Jains, who promote non-violence and vegetarianism, wouldn't make sense. These ways of life are more suited to farming or livestock-raising communities, where the choice to not eat meat is possible. In contrast, for those living in tougher environments, vegetarianism isn't an option—it's a "luxury" they simply can't afford.

Historically, humans often sacrificed animals to the gods and ate their meat as part of religious rituals. Our evolution has also shaped us to eat meat, just like we need vegetables and grains. Eating meat wasn't always just about taste. While spices and salt enhanced the taste, they also provided important nutrients. Before early humans invented weapons, their diets mostly consisted of plants, fungi, insects, and small animals, much like chimpanzees and gorillas today. Many tribes still follow these eating patterns. It wasn't until tools like spears, bows, and arrows were developed that humans could

hunt bigger animals. We also shouldn't forget that it was the consumption of cooked meat that contributed to the growth of the human brain to its current size. Meat is rich in essential nutrients, particularly protein and fatty acids, which are crucial for brain development and function. This increased availability of nutrients and energy from meat consumption is what facilitated the development of larger and more complex brains.

In harsh environments like deserts, mountains, or the Arctic, eating meat is crucial for survival. But in societies where farming is common, being vegetarian has become a personal choice based on beliefs, health concerns, or even a desire to appear 'morally superior'. In places like India, vegetarianism is deeply rooted in tradition and can be seen as a way for certain groups to claim higher status, especially within the caste system. Vegetarianism didn't start as a health trend—it was originally used to create distinctions between 'pure' and 'impure' groups in society.

Another important point of consideration is the ecological impact of producing vegetarian versus non-vegetarian food. Producing a kilogram of meat or fish harms the environment a lot more than producing the same amount of vegetarian food. However, even though vegetarian food is better for the planet, meat and fish usually have more nutrients. If an adult decides to switch from eating meat to a vegetarian diet, they might

see some health benefits, but the nutritional value of meat and fish tends to be higher.

We often feel bad about killing animals for food, and this feeling is a key part of how we behave. But it turns out, this sense of empathy isn't just something humans have. Scientists found that our ancestors had special brain cells called "mirror neurons," which help us feel for other living beings. In fact, these mirror neurons were first discovered in monkeys. This means that empathy isn't something unique to us. But, our level of empathy can change depending on the situation. For instance, when we chop a potato or boil rice, we don't feel bad even though we're technically causing those plants to die. However, it is harder to kill a mosquito than to cut a potato, harder still to kill a lamb compared to a rat, and even more difficult to kill a monkey than a lamb. The hardest situation of all would be to hurt another human being, especially someone we love, like our mother. This hierarchy of empathy explains the varying levels of emotional response we have towards different forms of life, ranging from the minimal reaction to plants to the profound distress associated with harming humans.

It is these Mirror neurons that enable us to identify with the pain and happiness of others. They are fundamental to the development of the human mind and help us understand the emotions and intentions of others. This

ability to empathize is the basis for our sense of justice and injustice in acts like killing, and it pushes some people to adopt vegetarianism. Humans have a larger cluster of mirror neurons than any other species. This helps us comprehend other's motives and live within large social groups. These neurons are not primarily meant for feeling sorrow over dying animals but for understanding the emotions and intentions of fellow humans, which is essential for social success. To thrive in social environments, we must grasp what others feel and think, not through logical analysis but through emotional empathy, by recreating other's experiences within ourselves. This emotional connection is what causes us to feel pain when we see animals suffer. It's a side effect of our evolution.

The intensity of this empathy can vary widely from person to person, with saints often experiencing extreme empathy that sometimes even manifests as physical signs on their bodies when another person or animal suffers. This heightened sensitivity is often seen as a sign of sainthood, but if we strip away the philosophical or spiritual interpretations, it can be scientifically understood as extreme "emotional identification" or "dissociative identity disorder"—characteristic of highly sensitive persons (HSP) or fragile individuals. There are documented cases of people exhibiting stigmata—experiencing sensations of pain in areas that correspond to Christ's wounds during the crucifixion—without

any visible marks. In some instances, these sensations are accompanied by self-inflicted injuries.

Moreover, there is a connection between extreme empathy and conditions like allergies and epilepsy. If we look into the childhood histories of many saints, we often find references to traits like feeble-mindedness, allergies, epilepsy, and even hysteria. These are all manifestations of hypersensitivity and heightened emotional awareness. This heightened sensitivity is the primary difference between saints and ordinary people.

WEALTH AND POPULATION EXPLOSION

Survival, at its core, is a competition among different species trying to thrive in various climates and environments. The main goal for these species is to have as many offspring as possible, knowing that only a small fraction will actually survive. This approach, focusing on quantity rather than quality, is especially evident in plants, which often produce countless seeds or spores. Many small creatures, like insects, also follow this strategy. However, it's crucial to understand that everything in nature operates based on the principles of conserving energy and using it efficiently. This is like the economic foundation of life itself.

When faced with tough conditions, species instinctively try to have more offspring, hoping that at least a few will survive. This behavior can also be seen in humans, particularly in poorer communities where families often have more children. At first, this seems counterintuitive, especially since resources are limited and the daily struggle for food is intense. But from an evolutionary standpoint, it makes perfect sense: when survival is

uncertain, having more children increases the chances that at least a few will make it through.

However, humans are more complex than just instinct-driven beings. We have developed ways to adapt and manage the energy costs of having many children. As economic conditions improve and societies become wealthier, families tend to have fewer children. We can see this trend in developed countries, where higher wealth and better education lead to smaller family sizes, often without the need for policies to limit births or forced contraception measures.

The important takeaway here is to recognize the strong link between population growth and social and economic factors. Countries experiencing rapid population growth can effectively manage it by focusing on wealth creation, improving education, and, most importantly, empowering women. For instance, places like Iran and Bangladesh show that religious dogma wasn't the sole culprit affecting birth rates; when women receive better education and job opportunities, birth rates will drop significantly. As women become more educated and financially independent, they gain more control over their lives and choices, which naturally leads to smaller family sizes. When women feel respected and valued, they can make informed decisions about how many children to have. Additionally, tribal culture, laws, rituals, and ceremonies will also loosen

their control if women have more access to education and resources.

Thus, governments aiming to manage population growth should focus on boosting the economy, improving education, and empowering women. While making contraception available is important, it should be viewed as just one small piece of the puzzle. By addressing the root causes of population growth, we can harness human evolution's power to achieve sustainable population growth without resorting to aggressive campaigns or forced measures.

THE DISTANCE FROM SUBJECT TO CITIZEN

DEMOCRACY IS A SYSTEM WHERE POWER, which was once concentrated solely in the hands of a king, is now divided among the people through the act of voting. In a democracy, everyone gets a vote, allowing them to have a say in how their country is run. This is different from a monarchy, where one person—the monarch—has all the power. Sure, we often hear stories of a so-called “golden age” under kings, where subjects supposedly lived carefree lives. But when we look closer, particularly through the lens of modern values like freedom, liberty, equality, and prosperity, we realize that such narratives are misleading. Life under a monarchy was often harsh and unjust, favoring the monarch above all else.

The reality is that subjects had no voice. They were at the mercy of the king’s whims, often subjected to unfair laws and heavy burdens. In stark contrast, the values we cherish today—freedom, liberty, equality—are fundamentally incompatible with a monarchy. These values can only thrive in a democracy, where the power

truly belongs to the people. The distinction between a subject and a citizen is critical. Subjects are mere followers, expected to obey the king without question. They possess few rights and their duties revolve around serving the king. Citizens, on the other hand, are empowered individuals. They have the right to vote, to engage in governance, and to hold their leaders accountable. Alongside their rights, citizens embrace responsibilities—such as obeying the law, paying taxes, and serving their communities.

In today's democratic societies, many citizens are only interested in enjoying their rights while neglecting their responsibilities. They might cast their votes in elections, but beyond that, they often disengage from the political processes that shape their lives. This situation is similar to how people in the past would try to please their kings. They may have obeyed the king's commands, but they weren't truly involved in the decisions that affected them. Only by viewing life through the eyes of this "irresponsible citizen" can we understand the subject's so-called happiness while living in the supposedly golden ages. These subjects were destined to lead lives as mere "wives," "followers," "devotees," or "disciples," a life far removed from that of a modern citizen. Today, these individuals—though they have rights—remain like those subjects, satisfied with minimal engagement. They might not be unhappy, but they aren't reaching their full potential as active participants in our democracy.

One of the core challenges to democracy is citizen formation. Citizens aren't just people living in a democratic society; they are individuals who actively engage in political processes and are aware of one's rights, responsibilities, and duties. Yet, the formation of such ideal citizens is still a work in progress. These two processes—the development of a democratic governing system and the cultivation of engaged citizens—need to be in constant dialogue. We need a framework that nurtures civic consciousness while ensuring citizens are informed and active. Only then can we aspire to create a more just and equitable society.

However, even with these mechanisms in place, we can only achieve a "slightly better equality." This limitation stems from the inherent hierarchical nature of humanity, which complicates our efforts toward a truly egalitarian society. Furthermore, ideologies that treat 'territorial feelings' and 'differences' as "natural", viewing uneven development as mere 'class suppression', exacerbate this problem. These ideologies fuel natural envy, jealousy, and hatred among us.

We must remember, no individual identity is ever completely lost. The fires of hatred and jealousy, ignited by these religious or non-religious ideologies, can never be entirely extinguished. Therefore, the formation of citizens must take place amid all these complexities: religion, ideology, territorial consciousness, ecological

disasters, and the survival struggles of other living beings. A difficult process indeed, but it's a necessary one if we are to hope for a better future.

THE CONDEMNED INSTITUTIONS

FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, anyone who's seriously involved in social activism and committed to making society better knows the importance of organizations and institutions. Even the most passionate, well-meaning person can't create real change alone—they need allies. They need collaboration. And when people collaborate, organizations naturally form. It's just part of the process.

But here's where it gets interesting—and frankly, a little disappointing. Once these organizations are created, they start pursuing their goals. But, over time, something weird happens. Whether the movement succeeds or fails, these organizations often outlive their original purpose. They develop a kind of autonomy, often developing a life of their own. And instead of just achieving what they were supposed to, they start doing things just to keep themselves going, even if those things go against the original mission. It's like they've forgotten what they were created for in the first place.

Think about it like this—take the relationship between a parent and a child. A parent has a clear purpose: to raise the child, guide them, and help them grow up. But what happens when the child is grown? The parent's role, in theory, ends. But does the parent just stop existing? No, they look for new meaning, new purpose. And sometimes, they start meddling, trying to control the children's lives—things that no longer concern them, making their involvement more harmful than helpful.

That's what these organizations do. When their original goals are achieved, or even when they fail, they still cling to it. They create "useless and meaningless activities" just to stay relevant, even if those activities are totally pointless. Just as overprotective parents can encroach upon their grown up children's lives, they fill their calendars with protests just to protest, ceremonies with no real substance, speeches and rituals that don't mean anything anymore. It's all just noise to justify their existence. We see this all the time. In the political arena, in social movements, everywhere. Understanding this dynamic can offer a deeper perspective on the "real aims" behind many of the protests, demonstrations, speeches, and ceremonies that dominate our social landscape today.

THE STORY OF NUCLEAR FAMILY

WE'VE ALREADY TALKED ABOUT HOW the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of modern education completely changed life in agricultural societies. These changes didn't just bring factories and a rise in the service industry; they also gave birth to the concept of the nuclear family.

Before the Industrial Revolution, families were usually extended, meaning multiple generations—grandparents, parents, children—lived together. This setup made sense because everyone was needed to help out on the farm. But as factories began to replace farming as the main source of work, people started moving to cities where the factories were located. This shift led to the breakdown of extended families, as it became harder for everyone to live together in urban areas. Instead, the nuclear family, made up of just parents and their children (typically two), became more common. These smaller families were more mobile, making it easier for them to take advantage of new opportunities, like better jobs and education.

When factories first started popping up in Europe, the working conditions were terrible. Workers, both men and women, were paid so little that they could barely survive on their wages. Desperate for jobs, people flocked to factories, even though these jobs didn't consider their family needs. Factory owners took advantage of this desperation, exploiting workers who relied on these low-paying jobs to support their households.

Living conditions for these laborers were miserable. They lived in cramped, filthy ghettos and slums around the industrial areas. Work consumed their lives, leaving them with barely enough to survive. Eventually, workers realized they had to band together to fight for better treatment, leading to the formation of trade unions. They began protesting for higher wages first, and then for better living conditions. Over time, they pressured factory owners to create better housing near the factories, called "quarters," which provided somewhat improved living conditions for the workers and their families.

In the early days of factories, workers would often bring their "entire families" with them to live near the workplace. This extended family included parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The factories provided housing for the workers and their families, which was initially the result of union

demands. Factory owners realized that workers were more comfortable and productive with their families nearby. However, they soon figured out that they couldn't afford to support such large families or pay enough wages to cover everyone. To save money, factory owners began limiting the number of family members a worker could bring. Instead of paying to support a large family of more than 15 members, they started giving one "family wage," which was meant to cover the needs of the entire family. This approach still influences wages today, where workers are often paid with the idea that their earnings will support more than just themselves.

During this time, factory owners began deciding who counted as "family." They determined that only the father, mother, children, and sometimes younger siblings were considered immediate family. Over time, the idea of family shrank further, giving rise to the modern nuclear family concept. To enforce these limits, factory owners provided housing or "quarters" for workers. These factory quarters were advertised as having "all the amenities" and "good wages," which attracted many workers before they fully understood the conditions.

When workers arrived, they found that the quarters only had three bedrooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms, far too small for extended families. At first,

workers tried to squeeze everyone in, but eventually, they realized they couldn't bring as many people. So, they started bringing only their closest family members. Over time, the size of these quarters was reduced even further, from three bedrooms to two, making it impossible for anyone other than immediate family members to live there. These limitations forced workers to adapt and bring fewer family members, leading to the smaller family units we recognize today.

Wherever industrial societies were formed, whether in the East or West, the nuclear family arose 'naturally' as a byproduct of these arrangements. Therefore, this shift wasn't a conscious choice made by modern couples but rather something that happened as factory owners and industries grew. They needed workers who could focus solely on their jobs, and a smaller family unit made that easier. Over time, the nuclear family became common across both the service and manufacturing sectors. Factories and governments even provided housing for these families, reinforcing this new family structure. The education system also encouraged this shift by promoting values like individualism and self-reliance, which led more people to prefer living separately from their extended families. All these factors combined made the nuclear family the dominant family type in the 20th century.

Today, the nuclear family remains the most widespread household structure in the world. Even houses built outside of government or factory influence follow this model. These homes are typically designed with just enough space for a small family, often featuring one to three bedrooms. This is how the nuclear family, as we know it today, came to be.

THE NEGLECTED PARENTS

THE RISE OF MODERN INDUSTRIES in the 18th and 19th centuries changed people's lives drastically, especially for those who had been living in farming and herding communities for thousands of years. Before industrialization, wealth was measured by how much land you owned or cultivated and how many animals you raised. In these agricultural societies, children usually lived with their parents and learned to do the same work. There weren't huge differences between generations, except for the roles of men and women. While sons generally stayed in their parent's homes, daughters typically moved into their husband's household after marriage. However, all children grew up learning the same skills and work as their parents.

For most of human history, farming communities lived in a way that didn't change much from one generation to the next. But when big industries came along, they completely changed the way these families lived, causing major disruptions. Not only did the ways people made money change dramatically, but the entire structure of these communities was also altered. What we now call

"modern education" was created during the industrial revolution in 18th and 19th century Europe, not to "enlighten" people's understanding of the world, but to create "factory workers" with the skills needed for the growing number of industries. Education, in this sense, became a tool to create an obedient workforce.

As a result, people who went through this education system were often forced to leave their homes to find work in factories or offices. They moved away from their communities, settling in places where industries were located. Meanwhile, the parents are left behind, eagerly awaiting the return of their children, who live near the factories and offices where they work. This is the common story in all industrialized or developing societies, no matter where they are in the world. Parents need to understand that by educating their children, they are inevitably preparing them to leave home to find jobs near factories and offices. And in most cases, these children won't return home because their livelihoods are now tied to these jobs, leaving them little choice to live elsewhere.

Many parents feel the pain of seeing their children leave when they grow up. However, it's important to realize that this isn't a sign that their children don't love them or have abandoned them. Instead, it's the result of the situation they're in. Their children's lives are now centered around their work, with companies controlling

much of their time and energy. Without understanding this, parents frequently believe that the children they "brought up" have abandoned them. So, it's not a rejection of family, but rather the outcome of the modern system that pulls people away from their homes and into the industrial workforce.

Children are frequently 'shocked' when they receive a call saying, 'Your mother is sick; please come home immediately.' This news hits them hard because, at that moment, they can't help but think about all the unfinished tasks waiting for them at work and the challenge of finding someone to take over their responsibilities before they can rush home. They also have to deal with the fact that they have limited vacation days, so their mother's recovery has to happen within that time frame. When they finally arrive home and stand beside their father's deathbed, their minds race with thoughts of unfinished work and files piling up back at the office. The fear of losing their job if they stay away too long only adds to their anxiety. On top of all this, they start to worry about the chaos in their own homes—'who will take care of the kids, ensure they go to school, and provide proper meals?'

In these painful moments, parents face the heartbreaking reality of seeing their children's impatience as they stand around the deathbed, their faces silently asking, "Why isn't my father dying

sooner?" so they can get back to their work. Meanwhile, there are parents who may exaggerate their illnesses just to get their children to visit, even if it's only for a brief moment. Children, on the other hand, lie about busyness and heavy work schedules at the office, hiding behind these excuses to avoid disruptions in their own family lives. Both scenarios are the byproducts of this new industrialized way of life. The existence of heartless children and resentful parents is not exclusive to this era alone; they have existed long before our time. The old saying from the Indian subcontinent, 'The enemies of the past life are the sons of this life,' is not a modern invention.

We need to keep in mind that industrial societies first emerged in the Western world. It makes sense that different cultures and ways of life have developed based on where we get our food. When we talk about culture, it's important to recognize that the divide between "Western" and "Eastern" cultures isn't based on solid scientific evidence. Instead, we should look at societies according to how they produce their goods—whether they are industrial, agricultural, or hunting-gathering communities.

It's not accurate to say that Western culture is taking over Eastern or traditional tribal cultures. Labeling cultures in this way is too simplistic and doesn't truly reflect how cultures have evolved. We need to move

away from outdated ideas that reinforce stereotypes, like calling certain cultures "savage," "primitive," or "barbarian," or strictly defining them as "Western" or "Eastern." By doing this, we can develop a deeper and more complex understanding of the various ways human societies have grown and changed over time.

THE ORIGIN OF SEX WORK

IN A PREVIOUS CHAPTER, WE DISCUSSED how kingdoms were formed by forcefully uniting different tribes, often resulting in many people being brought in as slaves. This brutal amalgamation often resulted in the creation of a complex hierarchical social structure, where the rules surrounding sexual relationships changed significantly. Enslaved women found themselves in a difficult position because they couldn't say no to the sexual demands of men from higher social classes.

In nature, many male animals wait for females to give consent before mating, and this was also true for human males in the past. However, when men discovered they could use force to engage in non-consensual sexual intercourse with enslaved women, it marked a significant change in male-female relationships in early societies. In these societies, upper-class women often didn't mind if their husbands or partners had sex with slave women; they saw it as a practical way to create more slaves. Since the children born from these relationships were also slaves, the men didn't have to

worry about the costs of raising them. Their only concern was the jealousy they felt towards the enslaved women their partners were involved with, and even that jealousy was predominantly directed at the slave women through acts of violence. This meant that men faced little to no accountability for their actions.

Before this change, men typically used their physical strength to protect their partners from other men or to compete for mates. But now, using that strength to overpower and engage in sexual intercourse with another woman, particularly a slave, carried significant historical implications and represented a crucial departure from previous norms. This marked the emergence of "rape" as a historical reality.

Additionally, women from the enslaved class were forced and trained to dance and sing in royal courts and in front of men from the upper class, becoming, for the first time in history, "objects to be enjoyed". This objectification and loss of authority of women gradually extended beyond the world of slave women and infiltrated the bedrooms of ordinary women across society, permeating all domains of human culture. Otherwise, throughout most species, the selection process for a partner has historically been controlled by females, with males required to present themselves for consideration. However, the aforementioned historical process shifted the course of human society,

transforming mate selection into a male-centric affair. This shift had deep and lasting effects, diminishing the agency and power that women had traditionally held.

In response to these troubling dynamics, saints, religious figures, and social reformers emerged, striving to establish social justice and reduce the conflicts that arose between men over women. They championed the idea of "one woman for one man," a principle found in various religious texts. This idea emphasized the importance of raising children in a stable environment, which meant that men should limit their relationships to one partner. The goal was to help control men's natural urges to have multiple sexual relationships. However, the values and moral standards inherent in these principles drove many men to seek covert ways to fulfill their desires, resulting in a division of their personalities. As a result, men's lives became marked by this internal conflict, living double lives where they felt the pressure to conform to societal norms while still pursuing their instincts in private.

Additionally, another part of this story involves the rise of large, isolated groups of men, such as armies and trading groups. As societies grew and changed, armies started to recruit physically strong men to protect and expand their territories. Because of this, the term "army" became synonymous with groups of men working together. Similarly, as trade increased with distant

places, men became the primary traders and sailors. Alongside these developments, there was a significant cultural shift regarding women. In many early societies, women were honored and viewed as goddesses, but over time, this reverence shifted towards the worship of male gods. This change led to the creation of religious groups that were predominantly male.

As a result, human society faced a crisis. Men, who once competed for women's attention, now had to learn how to live and work together in large groups without women present. This situation created a major problem for leaders managing organizations, armies, countries, trading groups, and religious communities. Men have a natural instinct to seek satisfaction and assert control, and without women around, this instinct became a challenge. One can only imagine the tension and conflicts that arose from this forced closeness among groups of men. As a consequence of this, it was common to witness acts of rape following an army raid. For the perpetrators, this act fulfilled their instinctual need for women while also satisfying their urge to dominate other men. By depositing their sperm in the wombs of their enemy's female partners, they could assert their superiority over rival males—a twofold victory over their adversaries.

While these events unfolded on one front, leaders of religious groups started promoting the idea of celibacy

to help their male followers control their sexual urges and practice self-discipline. Thus, the conservation of male semen became glorified as a means of pursuing spiritual enlightenment within male monastic groups. This veneration of male semen can be observed wherever such monastic male groups were established. While celibacy was not fully adopted in Christianity because it lacked an ideological explanation for such a personal discipline, it was encouraged for priests. Therefore, it is not surprising that there have been numerous cases of pedophilia among Catholic priests. In the Islamic world, celibacy was never a part of the religious tradition, thus placing no restrictions on sexuality. However, in other monastic religious sects like Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism subjected male monks to a lifetime of suffering due to the mistaken idea of celibacy, even prohibiting masturbation as a means of finding inner peace.

Meanwhile, emperors seeking to assimilate foreign nations into their expanding empires realized that uncontrolled sexual violence was not a sustainable solution to satisfy male desires. Historically, such behavior was often justified through tribal raids or military conquests. Because they were in search of and promoting ideologies that could unite others as their own—such as enforcing or introducing monotheistic religions or belief systems centered around a single deity to unite regions, which made violent tactics less

appealing. However, they still needed a way to help men express their suppressed desires in a more controlled manner, leading to the establishment of various types of brothels as outlets for entertainment and release.

These spiritual centers, often run by women, became male-centric establishments where women were referred to as "god's women" or "city brides," catering to the desires of men. Wherever military camps and trading posts were set up, brothels would emerge nearby, often with the support of emperors. This provided men with places to relieve their sexual steam. As trading centers grew into towns and cities, specific areas were designated for brothels, allowing both trading and religious groups to manage their sexual needs discreetly. The prices for services varied based on what was offered and who the customers were, but they were generally affordable for soldiers and traders. One interesting example of this can be found in an ancient Indian text called Koutilya's *Arthashastra* (public treatise). This text outlines measures to protect "public women," often referring to courtesans or women in brothels, and even suggests taxing those who visited them. As cities around the world grew and developed, similar systems emerged everywhere, but each place had its own unique cultural spin on brothel culture.

In many ancient societies, the presence of a "city bride" (known as *Nagar Vadhu* or royal courtesan) was a

symbol of prestige and social status. They were invited to the inauguration of institutions and auspicious ceremonies. These women attracted wealth and attention due to their status and skills. They were not just there to entertain; they often mastered various arts, such as dancing, singing, and even the art of seduction, to win the hearts of men. Because of their talents and the roles they played in society, these women enjoyed a higher social standing than many might expect.

A notable example of this acceptance can be seen in the story of Buddha and Amrapali, a royal courtesan. Buddha was invited to her palace, where he dined and rested without any stigma attached to her status. This indicates that, at that time, courtesans were respected members of society. Similarly, in the *Ramayana*, an ancient Indian epic, numerous city brides were invited to celebrate Lord Rama's coronation, suggesting that their presence was valued and welcomed in significant events. This shows that even Valmiki (likely many different authors), who penned the *Ramayana*, recognized their importance and had no disdain for them. They were accepted and respected in society. Looking at historical records from around the world. You'll find many instances where women from the public entertainment industry played active roles in governance. Theodora, for instance—the wife of the Roman Emperor Justinian I—was a former prostitute, yet she was deeply involved in the administrative affairs

of the empire.

However, the status of these women began to decline over time due to various factors. A major influence was the rise of Christian teachings, which labeled sex outside of marriage as sinful. Additionally, the promotion of a monogamous lifestyle—encouraged as a way to ensure the care and upbringing of children—further diminished the status of these women. Initially, monogamy was mainly practiced by kings who wanted to pass on their kingdoms to their legitimate heirs, even while keeping concubines for pleasure. As more people started to gain wealth, the value of monogamy began to spread among the general public. It became a widely accepted social norm, largely driven by the desire for genetic continuity and stability in family structures. This shift laid the groundwork for what we now think of as modern morality, which often looks down on the lifestyles and practices of women involved in sex work.

During the time of British and European colonization, Christian values (especially during Victorian era) and laws spread widely, leading to the outlawing of sex work and making monogamy the standard relationship model. Pleasure-seeking places, like brothels, were labeled immoral and shut down by law. Today, society still struggles with how to handle the basic human desire for sex in a way that respects both individual freedom and justice. This is because sex work is often seen as a

form of exploitation, and it can be difficult to reconcile this with the idea that people should be free to do what they want with their bodies, as long as they are not engaging in self-harm or physically harming others. So, it's important to discuss how sex work should be understood in modern society, where people are considered free to make their own decisions. In a society where people have the status of "free citizens," it is important to ensure that all people have the same rights and opportunities. This includes the right to work, the right to safety, and the right to be treated with respect. Sex workers are just as much "free citizens" as anyone else, and they deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect.

During Mao's rule in China, he claimed to have eradicated all forms of sex work, presenting this as a victory against 'bourgeois anarchy'. For him, prostitution was a capitalist remnant that didn't fit into a socialist society. But this eradication was rooted in a denial of human social and biological needs, not an understanding of them. Religious perspectives also complicate things. Many religious frameworks focus on the soul as the true essence of a person, reducing the body to a temporary vessel. This idea naturally leads to a greater emphasis on the afterlife rather than on addressing the realities of our present lives. If the soul is eternal and the body transient, then human desires, like the urge for sex, are seen as distractions from a higher

spiritual journey. And that belief contributes to the stigmatization of sex and sex work in the present.

In a socialist framework, however, the social identity or existence of a person is considered more important than the soul. Socialism, after all, is built on the belief that people are fundamentally social beings, and that our identities are shaped by our relationships with others. This means who we are is not solely defined by our individual thoughts and feelings but also by the way we interact with the world around us. This difference in perspective has significant implications. For example, in a religious framework, there's often a focus on personal salvation—on the soul. In contrast, a socialist framework encourages focusing on collective well-being and improving the lives of others. This idea that “social identity” holds greater value than the soul formed the basis for more than 50 years of communist interventions in the USSR bloc.

The Soviet government, for instance, believed that by changing people's social identities, they could create a society where everyone was equal, regardless of class or background. One way they attempted to reshape these identities was by banning sex work, viewing it as a form of exploitation that degraded women. The underlying belief was that, unlike the soul, social identity is tangible and can be transformed. The state assumed that by eliminating sex work, women would be liberated from

the objectification and exploitation that came with it, allowing them to be seen as equals—citizens with the same rights and opportunities as men. However, history presents an interesting contradiction. Despite these decades of socialist interventions to reshape identities, when the Soviet Union dissolved, we saw an influx of young women from Eastern European countries, many of whom had grown up under socialism, entering the global sex market. This raises a complex question: what led these women, despite their 'nurtured socialist identities,' to engage in sex work on such a wide scale after the fall of communism? One might wonder if it's due to the vulnerability of rural, innocent girls who were exploited in cities, lured by promises of opportunity. But is that the whole story? Could there be deeper socio-economic factors at play—ones that transcend the socialist ideals they were raised under? While we talk about exploitation, it's important not to confuse human trafficking with the sex trade. Human trafficking has roots going back to the era of slavery, when people were captured and transported for labor and other forms of exploitation, with very little connection to sex work. And it's not limited to just one form—people can be trafficked for forced labor in factories, domestic servitude, sweatshops, or even forced marriages. Trafficking can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, or nationality, and is often driven by poverty and desperation.

In places where poverty is widespread, people are more vulnerable to traffickers who prey on their hopes for a better life. Once trafficked, these individuals are often abused, manipulated, and exploited. Human trafficking is a global issue. For example, the practice of using crying children to frighten camels during races in the Middle East, a trade that has roots in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. "Boat people" from Vietnam who risk their lives to reach Australia, or people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria who suffocate to death while being smuggled in trucks to Europe, are also examples of human trafficking. Likewise, Somali migrants attempting to reach Mediterranean countries on unsafe boats, often resulting in capsizing and death, are victims of trafficking as well. Therefore, we shouldn't equate human trafficking solely with the sex trade. The argument isn't that there is no trafficking within sex work; rather, like any other industry, there is human trafficking involved. It's a much broader problem, and we need to recognize that.

We've already talked about what "sex" really is and why men often seek it out. It's important to understand why most people in the sex work industry, whether they're men or women, primarily serve male clients. This isn't just about societal power dynamics; there are biological reasons at play. From an evolutionary standpoint, men have a stronger sex drive than women on average and are generally attracted to a broader range of potential

partners. This behavior is rooted in the biological drive to reproduce. For males, the ultimate goal is to impregnate as many women as possible to ensure the survival of their genetic material. In contrast, women's reproductive success is often more reliant on the quality of their offspring, not just the quantity.

Moreover, the notion that sex is purely for pleasure—a concept often pushed by religious leaders, social activists, and politicians—stems from a fundamental misunderstanding of our biology. The pleasure associated with sex is actually a crucial mechanism for natural selection, promoting the survival of our species. Think of it like flowers that produce sweet nectar to attract insects. The insects, drawn in by the nectar, help the flowers reproduce without even realizing it. They're simply enjoying the reward of the nectar. Similarly, the pleasure we derive from sex serves as a reward, motivating us to reproduce. While we may not consciously recognize this connection, our genes are very much aware of it. Over time, the traits that lead to pleasurable experiences in sex are more likely to be passed down through generations. As humans, we've taken this idea of 'pleasure' and woven it into our culture. This includes refining our tastes in food, clothing, and homes. Alongside these cultural advancements, exploring different types of sexual pleasure has also become a significant part of our cultural evolution.

The idea that women become sex workers just because they're poor is a big misunderstanding. While poverty is indeed a reason for many, it's not the only factor. Women in sex work know that many men are ready to pay high prices for sexual pleasure and will seek it out no matter what. This realization leads them to the sensible conclusion that they can earn a good living by charging high rates, which can help them support themselves and their families.

There are other reasons as well. Some women see that no other job can provide the same level of income for relatively little effort, the ability to exert control over powerful men, and the opportunity to live a luxurious life free from responsibilities, similar to that of extremely wealthy individuals. These perspectives represent the actual motivations of women involved in the sex trade. Ignoring these factors makes it difficult to fully understand why individuals from upper-class backgrounds also turn to sex work, even in the absence of poverty. It is precisely this mistaken assumption that forms the foundation of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, which wrongly asserts that "no noble woman" would ever participate in this profession. The exchange of sexual services is an interdependent aspect of both men's and women's lives. Therefore, in today's society, we should advocate for the decriminalization and legalization of sex work, freeing it from outdated

moral constraints.

However, this argument does not excuse the exploitation of women and children who are forced into sex work against their will. Such situations should be condemned and actively fought against, just as we've worked to abolish slavery and combat child labor worldwide. Any form of sex work that involves coercion must be eliminated. Just as we have regulations in other professions—such as setting minimum ages for employment, establishing minimum wages, and ensuring social security—we should also focus on improving the conditions of sex work to make it safer and more humane. If we do not address the forced and harmful conditions in sex work, we risk making society more dangerous and criminalized. Trying to suppress adult sexual desires with more restrictions will only lead to more stories of violence and abuse. The only ones who might benefit from such a harsh reality are poets and filmmakers, who will find inspiration for their art in the suffering of others.

WHAT IS MORALITY?

IT WAS ONLY AFTER ADAM AND EVE ATE the forbidden fruit that they gained the ability to tell right from wrong and understand good versus bad, as well as what is honorable and what is shameful. Before that, they lived in a simple, innocent state like children. Although Eve encouraged Adam to eat the fruit and gain this so-called "knowledge," she ended up being labeled a sinner for disobeying God, which resulted in her being cursed.

From a male perspective, it was Eve who seduced Adam into sin, making her responsible for their downfall and the loss of paradise. This view paints women—who are naturally inclined to create desire in men—as having a negative influence. This negative portrayal of women who evoke sexual attraction has led to the stereotype of the “vamp” or temptresses in later literature, where women are often seen as dangerous or immoral. In the Christian male viewpoint, any woman who stirs sexual feelings is regarded as 'bad,' and this perception has spread widely wherever Christianity has influenced cultures. This is how sex, which is fundamental to life

and a natural part of existence for all living beings, became stigmatized and looked down upon.

As Christianity spread from Europe to other parts of the world, it also reshaped how women were seen, especially in tribal cultures where they held significant roles in fertility rituals and family life. Over time, these women lost their status, found themselves marginalized and were labeled as "sinners." The ideological underpinnings that human life should strive for 'self-realization' or 'God-realization'—a prerogative often reserved for men—have been entrenched in our collective psyche since the days of pagan religions in the Middle East and beyond.

This belief, which positions the male as the central figure in the pursuit of self or divine truth, has contributed to viewing women in their lives as mere instruments, tests, or obstacles to their spiritual journeys. Family life, then, becomes a trap for men, hindering their quest for freedom and self-discovery. This idea had already taken root in agricultural societies across Eurasia, and when combined with the Christian notion of sin, it created a powerful ideology that fosters disdain for women—a 'women-hating religious-cultural ideology' that lingers to this day.

To better understand the role of sex in human life, we must first recognize that it's a biological technique

developed by complex animals for reproduction and connection. However, many societies have mistakenly viewed life as a quest for meaning, with the ultimate goal of reaching "truth." This misunderstanding, often promoted by men, led to the concept of sin, which cast sex — one of life's most fundamental and intimate experiences — into the category of immoral or "debauched" behavior.

This notion has been reinforced over time by intellectuals and religious figures, who built upon humanity's natural tendencies toward competition, jealousy, and prejudice. As a result, the idea that sex is sinful has spread like a disease throughout societies. Laws and moral codes have been established to supposedly "save" people from the mistake of engaging in sex. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to have healthy conversations about sexual self-regulation. Instead, there's a societal obsession with controlling children's behavior — how to regulate the internet, cell phones, movies, and even social interactions between boys and girls. The public discussion centers around preventing people from "going astray," as if everyone just inherently "knows" that sex is wrong.

Sex is a fundamental part of life, not a sin or mistake. It's an expression of love and one of the most meaningful experiences humans can have. If we're concerned about overpopulation or the spread of sexually

transmitted diseases, the solution is: teach young people how to use contraception effectively. There's no need to suppress or ban sexual activity altogether.

So, what is morality? Any consensual relationship is morally acceptable. On the other hand, non-consensual acts, like rape, are morally wrong. Consent is the key principle that determines whether something is morally right or wrong. However, we need to be careful because emotions like jealousy, envy, and prejudice, which are natural to humans, can lead to competition and even violence. To avoid unnecessary conflicts, it's wise to self-regulate and not engage in sexual activities in public or where others might feel provoked. Even when there isn't a lack of sexual opportunities, jealousy can still arise. So, this kind of precaution is important for maintaining peace. Regardless of education or laws, we are still driven by basic instincts, and this is a practical way to manage those emotions.

Now, when it comes to consent, the key factor is age. It's not just about sexual consent; no one can make any kind of contract between an adult and a child. Children lack the maturity to make informed decisions. We don't allow children to drive, vote, or open bank accounts because adulthood comes with responsibilities that children can't handle. This is because an adult's age, social status, and power can unfairly influence a child. Even if a child agrees, any deal between an adult and a

child cannot be considered valid due to this imbalance of power.

Stories of child abuse and sexual interactions between adults and children are often discussed in the media as if they are a recent issue. But if we look back at history—whether it's ancient texts or cultural references like the Kama Sutra—there are many instances where such behavior was described. So, we shouldn't see this as purely a modern problem. In fact, these immoral acts were more widespread in past generations. Today, however, we hear more about them because of the constant media coverage. Every case, from all over the world, is put in front of us through headlines, giving the impression that these crimes are increasing. In reality, they are actually happening less often now than before. Thanks to greater awareness and stronger laws, more people are reporting these crimes, and the media brings them to the public's attention. This makes it seem like these offenses are on the rise, but that's not true. It's not that our values are eroding; instead, what's happening is that issues that were once hidden or ignored are now being recognized and brought to light. Even though such issues are being revealed, it's important to remember that any sexual act involving a child and adult can never be justified under mutual consent. Because of the power dynamics, these actions must be strictly regulated with laws.

However, children and teens of the same age, or close in age, can have different relationship dynamics. The key point is that it's crucial to ensure that girls don't become pregnant before they reach adulthood. This isn't about labeling it as a crime; it's about protecting their health. Children, especially if they are close in age, have a natural curiosity about their bodies and may explore their sexuality together. As adults, we shouldn't interfere with this natural exploration. Instead, we can help by providing education on safe practices and contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

If we continue to adopt a violent approach toward sexuality and suppress all sexual behavior, we risk creating an environment where people feel shamed or criminalized for their natural instincts. This can lead to increased incidents of sexual violence and crime. When people see others enjoying what they are denied, feelings of jealousy can arise, which can escalate into violence under the guise of moral outrage. Many issues around sexual morality stem from jealousy, so we should strive to reduce this "conflict over sexual sins."

It's crucial not to interpret this viewpoint as a threat to family structures. Human societies have historically featured various family arrangements, such as one man with multiple women or one woman with multiple men. Family isn't just about sexual relationships; it's

more about ensuring a good quality of life for everyone involved. That's why courts that deal with divorce cases often provide financial support (alimony) to protect women. However, no court demands that a man must have a specific number of sexual encounters each month to satisfy a woman. Instead, we emphasize the need for responsibility and understanding when it comes to sexual relationships. Poor handling of these relationships can lead to jealousy, prejudice, hate, and competition, all of which can spark violence in society. This is the only reason for caution; it's not about labeling any behavior as wrong or criminal.

Just like we don't force people to share their political views publicly, we need to respect privacy when it comes to sexual matters. This is why we have secret ballots in elections; it helps prevent hate and bias, which can disrupt society. Encouraging consensual sexual activity to be kept private is also about ensuring families remain stable for the well-being of children and the emotional health of adults. It's a responsibility that everyone in society should share. A secret ballot allows people to express their opinions freely, even if they belong to a group that may hold different views.

As human beings, we all need different ways to express our emotions and find relief in order to maintain harmony in society. However, we often pressure people to control and suppress their natural feelings, which can

lead to stress and tension. This stress has to be released somehow, usually in private, to help keep society functioning well. It's important to remember that ideas of right and wrong are created by social systems to help everything run smoothly. As the saying goes, the rules are meant to serve people, not the other way around.

We shouldn't live our lives sacrificing our happiness or that of others just to chase some abstract goal or meaning. Doing so can make us lose sight of the beauty, joy, and pleasures life has to offer. We need to acknowledge that, as a living species, we have natural instincts, and while we might try to control them to get along with others, we shouldn't pretend those instincts don't exist or that they can be completely erased. It's not right to be shocked or horrified when we encounter behaviors that society has deemed "off-limits." We also shouldn't assume that certain troublesome individuals are the sole cause of these behaviors resurfacing. Ostracizing people or sacrificing some for what is deemed the "greater good" is cruel and unjust.

Families were formed to help us live better lives, which is why things like social status, authority, lineage, and wealth often take precedence in relationships. As a result, the people involved sometimes become less important. In modern times, we tend to prioritize individuals and their interests more than ever, which makes the traditional family structure outdated and regressive. Movies and TV shows often depict a struggle

between these old values that bind families together and the desire for personal freedom and self-expression. They frequently portray that both aspects are important and should be valued. However, we often overlook the fact that when we focus too much on fixing one issue, we might neglect others. For instance, while we may strive to extend life, this can lead to an increase in age-related diseases. In modern family dynamics, shaped by individual choices, it's difficult to merge these conflicting values. The saying "love is blind" captures this struggle well. It's easy to forget that in traditional family settings, emotional needs were often not given much priority.

Now, let's take a closer look at different aspects of life and how our current moral standards apply to them. We've already discussed the idea of "love your neighbor as yourself" and realized that achieving social justice fairly isn't easy. Actions meant to promote fairness often lead to inequalities. Let's revisit our bus analogy from earlier chapters. We saw how passengers can be friendly when they book their tickets ahead of time, eliminating the need for a big effort to show kindness to each other. Problems like someone leaning on you can be solved simply by making the seats wider. But if everyone wants to sit in the front for a smoother ride or by the window to enjoy the view, it becomes clear that this isn't possible. Trying to design a bus where everyone can have a good view might result in a shape that isn't

aerodynamic. Looking at life in this way reveals many hidden inequalities that exist, even if we don't notice them right away.

For instance, consider a father trying to divide his land fairly among his children. He'll quickly find that there are many differences that can't be ignored, such as some properties being close to the road or the town, or even having a river running through them. These properties come with their own set of advantages and disadvantages. The only way he can truly divide the land fairly is by selling it and sharing the money. However, this would mean the kids lose access to valuable land that can't be easily bought back. No parent can treat their children completely equally; they will naturally have preferences. Similarly, children may have their own preferences for one parent over the other. If we can't act fairly with those closest to us, how can we expect to do so with others? So, instead of hoping for perfect fairness, we should focus on respectful and agreeable behaviors. For instance, just like we follow traffic rules by driving on the left side of the road, we need to find ways to cooperate with each other.

If we use unrealistic standards to judge others, we can always find faults and conclude that everyone has bad qualities. This is similar to how Greek philosopher Diogenes famously walked around with a lamp in broad daylight, looking for honest people. In reality, achieving

happiness often involves hurting others, even if just a little. So, even if we strive to treat our neighbors as ourselves, it's not truly achievable. People often focus on their own happiness, and while trying to make others happy, they may inadvertently cause their own suffering. The dream of everyone living in a perfectly fair and just world is unrealistic because our human nature won't allow it. We shouldn't expect people to behave perfectly; such expectations are merely wishful thinking.

Instead, we can work towards fulfilling mutually agreed-upon contracts, whether as individuals or as groups. We should comply with social laws and regulations, recognize that we don't exist in isolation, and acknowledge our shared humanity. Understanding that all humans are part of the same species and that all life forms share the planet can help us create a sense of "possible justice" or manage our behavior better to promote fairness. Modern governing systems need to play an active role in ensuring these agreements are respected, punishing those who break them, and rewarding those who uphold them. We must acknowledge that privacy and individual freedom have limits; they aren't absolute. There are boundaries to what we can keep private. A transparent government that allows for public engagement and interaction can help prevent the centralization of power. We can also look forward to new technologies that might support

this decentralization of power in the future.

If we only see the government as a group of oppressors or purely as a system of control by those in power, we won't be able to create a more transparent and accessible system. Viewing government through a Marxist lens can incite conflict and resentment rather than solutions. This approach leads to both sides losing because it emphasizes hatred rather than cooperation.

We tend to think of the government as a way for the ruling class to maintain control, even when our experiences may suggest otherwise. Despite progress and innovations, we still push the narrative that every new technology will only lead to more authoritarian control, which, while it might seem true, ignores the fact that new technologies can actually offer more freedoms. History has shown that governments formed after a power struggle often become more oppressive. When people have taken power in the name of the people, those governments have often ended up being just as oppressive. This happens because when one group believes they have the "right" to rule, they stop seeking true justice, democracy, and equality, and that power becomes dangerous. If we could shift away from this distorted view of the world, we might be able to live with a bit more peace. It's almost laughable to think about how many philosophies and ideologies have been created to improve the world, yet they often end up

complicating our lives further, especially when they clash with nature and its limits. What a foolish and tragic situation we've brought upon ourselves!"

IS THERE PROGRESS?

DID HUMANS EVOLVE FROM MONKEYS? No, they didn't. Did we as a species have some kind of internal progress, like leveling up over time? No, that's not the case either. Wait, what? Isn't that what we've been taught in school, with those diagrams showing humans evolving from monkeys? Yes, that's actually a mistake. For many years, we've been learning this misunderstanding in the name of science, and it needs to be corrected.

So, are you saying there's no such thing as progress? That's right—there's no real “progress” in the way people usually think. Things don't get better, they just *change*. But isn't the world around us improving? Yes, what we see around us *can* be called progress. In the past, we fought with our hands and used sticks and stones. Later, we made swords and spears, and now we use guns and missiles. That's definitely progress in terms of technology. We also used to travel in carts pulled by horses, but now we have cars and buses. That's also progress. We've become better at controlling our environment, and we've gained more knowledge about

how the world works.

But as living beings, humans haven't fundamentally changed. We remain the same species. In fact, no living creature "progresses" in the way we often think. Life adapts to its environment, and these adaptations—good or bad—are passed onto the next generation. What works sticks around; what doesn't, doesn't. That's evolution, not progress. The real difference between us and our ancestors is our ability to think in terms of cause and effect, to see how things are connected. We probably got this ability from a genetic mutation around 50,000 to 70,000 years ago. This is the key difference that sets us apart. It allows us to learn from our experiences and pass that knowledge on to future generations through teaching and parenting. Other animals don't have this ability to the same extent. Sure, they can inherit behaviors through genetics, but they can't easily imitate and learn new actions like humans can. Our ability to copy and repeat things is what created our culture. Ironically, what we sometimes dismiss as "uncreative" repetition is the foundation of human progress.

The terms "progress" and "progressive" have been misunderstood for a long time. During the Industrial Revolution, when technology was advancing rapidly, no one questioned whether progress was happening. People stopped believing that everything good was just

a result of God's will, but they still had no idea how humans came to be. They believed humans were special, separate from animals. But the more we learned, the more we realized that we have a lot in common with other species. We reproduce, hunt for food, and die just like animals. Still, our ability to plan ahead and build complex things like weapons made it hard for us to accept that we might be just like other creatures. It didn't feel like common sense.

Then along came Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species*, which provided an alternative explanation for human existence—one based on science, not God's creation. Darwin didn't actually use the word "evolution" the way we do now. He talked about "descent with modification." But it was Thomas Huxley, a supporter of Darwin, who popularized the term "evolution." And the idea of evolution caught on quickly with 19th-century people who liked the idea of being "progressive." This new way of thinking reinforced the belief that humans were special. Instead of being created by God in his image, people started to see humans as the peak of evolution. But this idea is misleading. No species is "evolving" to become a "better" or more advanced form of life. Evolution doesn't work that way. Species simply develop traits to help them survive in changing environments. Evolution is about adapting, not improving.

For example, life evolved from single-celled organisms to more complex forms. But some viruses have managed to survive without the usual building blocks of life, like DNA, which is essential for most species to reproduce. Viruses figured out a way to exist without it. Life is constantly finding creative ways to survive. But we shouldn't think of evolution as a journey toward something "better" or "higher." It's simply about the variety of ways life can exist, depending on the circumstances.

Humans didn't evolve from monkeys in the way we often imagine, like some primates losing their hair and standing upright. Instead, we belong to the species *Homo sapiens*, which is part of the primate family. Modern humans a.k.a Homo Sapiens gradually evolved and originated in the Rift Valley in East Africa around 200,000 years ago, branching out from a common ancestor that lived around 6 million years ago, which was neither a human nor a Chimpanzee. We did not evolve from monkeys or chimps, they're our cousins. These archaic humans then slowly migrated out of Africa between 60,000–70,000 years ago, spreading to various regions across the globe.

Our species (homo) has been around for about two million years, and over time, there have been many different groups of humans with unique skills and ways of living. One such group was the Neanderthals, who

were different from us (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) and went extinct around 30,000 years ago. DNA evidence even shows that we interbred with Neanderthals. Another group we know of are the Denisovans. Among all these human-like groups (Hominids), only *Homo sapiens sapiens* survived, and we've been around for about 200,000 years. But keep in mind that while *Homo sapiens* existed, at one point there were six or more different human species coexisting simultaneously in various parts of the world until around 30,000 to 40,000 years ago.

When two species are closely related, they share a common ancestor. This means that at some point in history, both species evolved from the same creature. The same is true for humans and other primates—we all share a common ancestor. This idea applies to all living things on Earth. Every time a new species branches off, it's due to the existence of a common ancestor. If we trace life back far enough, we find that all life forms, including humans, are connected to single-celled organisms that existed billions of years ago. These ancient life forms still exist today and have adapted to survive in various conditions.

It's important to understand that single-celled organisms aren't "lesser" forms of life, nor are they struggling or living a lower-quality life. They are well-suited to their environment and continue to thrive. The

idea that complex organisms like humans represent an "improved" form of life is misleading. In fact, many single-celled organisms are capable of surviving in extreme environments where more complex life forms could not. Evolution doesn't mean that life forms always get "better" over time. There's no "top" of the evolutionary ladder, and humans are not the ultimate result of evolution. Other species may evolve in the future, or we may go extinct, just as many other species have done.

Many people, including so-called "knowledgeable" individuals, believe that humans are evolving mentally and that we can achieve a higher state of being through practices like meditation, breathing exercises, or self-denial. These beliefs, however, are based on a misunderstanding of life and evolution. Millions of people have spent their lives following these practices, but they do not represent progress in any meaningful sense. Still, there are thousands who genuinely believe that we can improve our mental state through practices like penance, meditation, alternating breathing techniques, observing inner thoughts, listening to the silence between thoughts, or even trying not to think at all. Others might fast, live like wanderers, chant mantras endlessly, or even engage in self-punishment and cause suffering to others, all in the hope of achieving some sort of mental or spiritual progress. This is such a tragic misunderstanding of life and its natural processes. The

so-called "wise men," "saints," and "divine figures" have led countless people down a path of useless and misguided rituals, causing them to waste their lives on practices that are ultimately pointless. What a shame!

What does progress, however, is technology—our tools and inventions improve over time. Evolution, on the other hand, doesn't work the same way. Life forms don't evolve with the purpose of getting better; they simply adapt to their environment. Changes like skin color, eye shape, or height happen over time as humans adapt to different conditions or through random mutations that are favored by natural selection. In the case of humans, we have something that sets us apart: culture. Over time, humans have developed knowledge and passed it down through generations using storytelling and writing. This gave the illusion that we, as a species, are progressing, but it's actually the accumulation of knowledge and culture that improves, not our biology. If this knowledge isn't passed down, humans can remain in more "primitive" states. For example, if a group of modern people were stranded on a remote island without access to technology, they would likely revert to a simpler way of life over time. Each new generation is born as a blank slate. Any skills or knowledge we gain are through learning and practice, not something we're born with. Over many generations, humans may develop tendencies to acquire certain abilities more easily, but this would need to be tested to

know for sure. Reading, understanding, empathizing, and experiencing a sense of emotional release (catharsis) with the characters in classic world literature is possible because, as human beings, we are fundamentally the same everywhere. Our ability to empathize with these characters seems to go beyond the limits of space and time. We connect deeply with characters from ancient epics like the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Odyssey*, *Iliad*, and Greek dramas that are over 2,500 years old. This connection isn't because the literature itself transcends time, but because we, as humans, have remained the same. Our emotions, struggles, and joys resonate across cultures and eras, allowing us to appreciate and relate to these characters despite any cultural differences.

However, if there is a break in the ongoing process of reading and engaging with these works, meaning if accumulated knowledge and recorded experiences are not preserved, they can be lost. For example, the advancements made in ancient Greece couldn't be carried forward for centuries because the continuity of their knowledge was interrupted. It was only when these forgotten writings and ideas were rediscovered that Europe experienced a cultural revival. Similarly, in India, the knowledge from ancient civilizations like Indus, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro was lost because we couldn't read their language or use their cultural heritage for future development. All of this highlights the importance of continuity in human progress—

whether cultural or technological. Without the ongoing transmission of knowledge and experience, development stalls. Continuity is the essential element for human advancement.

The belief that we have an "animal" inside us just waiting to come out is based on a misunderstanding of what it means to be human. Often, spiritual thinkers criticize humans for behaving like animals, as if we haven't evolved. But what they're really pointing out is that we, as a species, continue to act in ways that aren't as "advanced" as they expect. In simple terms, we're not making progress in our mindset.

This is why you still see modern-day pirates in Somalia, why Christians who are taught to love their neighbors fought in the Crusades, why Protestants and Catholics went to war over religion, and why Sunni and Shia Muslims, supposedly brothers in faith, have been killing each other. It's also why Hindus, who pray for world peace, continue to oppress each other through the caste system. And communists, who talk about equality and justice, have killed millions in the name of their cause. Even after centuries of spiritual practices and deep meditation, the Hindu god Shiva was aroused and ejaculated just by looking at his future wife, and a wise sage like Viswamithra was seduced by a heavenly nymph, Menaka. In the same way, religious leaders can fake personal change, and their followers will blindly

worship them.

In so-called developed countries facing economic hardship, you'll see leaders who rise to power by spreading hate against minority groups, gaining popularity and support. History shows us that even die-hard communists who stood with Rosa Luxemburg abandoned their beliefs to join Hitler's Nazi party. We don't need complex theories like the "mass psychology of fascism" to understand this – people are driven by their underlying instincts. In countries with stable economies, it might seem like everyone is living peacefully and cooperating. But don't be fooled. If the economy takes a hit, or even wobbles a little, all the deep-seated prejudices and hidden identities within people, whether they're poor or rich, will come out. The so-called "class-conscious proletariat" will turn on each other with rage, and the wealthy ruling class will fight among themselves. This shows that without the security of money, laws, and governance, human's territorial instincts will kick in.

Right now, with the last global economic recession, we saw explosive growth in divisions along the lines of caste, religion, race, ethnicity, class, language, color, and gender, even in so-called progressive societies. We don't have to look far to understand why Australia, for example, saw a spike in racial violence against Indians. Indian students took low-paying jobs, competing with

unskilled Australian workers, causing resentment and transforming these "easygoing" Australians into racially aggressive ones. A few years ago, when the economy was good, none of this racial tension was visible. But both the Australians and the Indians were always aware that they were different from each other.

We can't assume that people in these societies have somehow evolved beyond territorial instincts just because they seem civilized. Even American soldiers, educated and raised in modern society, committed horrible war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some went so far as to urinate on dead bodies to humiliate their enemies and boost their own morale, even filming the acts to share with others. The abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison during the U.S. invasion of Iraq is a well documented example of this behavior. It shows that, no matter how much education or preaching we receive, it seems we can't escape our primal instincts. We remain part of the animal kingdom, struggling to rise above it. All genetic traits are naturally passed on to the next generation, but the knowledge we accumulate in society is not. If we don't pass on this knowledge through parenting and education during childhood, we would remain no different than animals. It's through education that we pass on technological knowledge, scientific progress, and the laws that maintain social order. We must enforce these laws with proper institutions, otherwise just talking about right and

wrong won't make people naturally "good." History shows that in times of crisis, people's instincts and primal behaviors resurface, despite living in stable environments.

Despite the various religions that have emerged to make people more "humane" over the last 3,000 years, a saint named Narayana from South India expressed his frustration a century ago by saying, "No matter what religion you follow, just be a good human." This statement implies that your beliefs, practices, and rituals don't really matter as much as becoming a better person. But, a believer in religion would likely never make such a statement.

Just like spiritualists, materialists have made a similar error. Karl Marx strongly claimed that humans are unique and "very special" compared to other living creatures, presenting us as the pinnacle of evolution. In doing so, he made the same mistake as the spiritualists. The reality is that the world isn't divided into "material" and "spiritual"; there is just one world. We categorize this world into different parts to better understand it, but in truth, we are just one species among millions living on Earth. By enforcing laws and regulations, we can create more peaceful societies.

We also need to have institutions and systems in place that ensure these laws are applied effectively; otherwise,

simply telling people what's right and wrong won't make them good people. However, if we think that our efforts alone can completely eliminate social inequalities or that we can create conditions where all class conflicts will vanish—where everyone harmonizes like music—those ideas are more like poetic dreams than practical realities. We need to recognize that the Marxist vision of communism is fundamentally flawed; if only 10% of “scientific socialism” is based on real science, then 90% is simply wishful thinking.

Similarly, Gandhi's idea of “Ram Raj” (the country of Ram)—where independent, self-reliant villages (“*Gram Swaraj*”) create freedom and security—was also a fantasy. Such ideas don't hold much value in the modern world. These dreams are more intellectual exercises than practical solutions; they come from someone who was out of touch with reality, like a person who lost their job after India gained independence. Just imagine: these were the dreams of a person who “learned lessons” from the independence movements.

It's a reminder that we often fail to learn from our past. Only in a peaceful world—created by organizations like the United Nations or a central government that maintains harmony among states within a country—can someone afford to dream like this. The idea that society can function without a governing state, or that

everything will be peaceful through local autonomy, is as unrealistic as a mirage in the desert—whether they're presented as spiritual or material aspirations.

We shouldn't hold onto or believe in any fantasy about a government simply disappearing. Even if we manage to improve our governing systems with modern technology, greater transparency, less corruption, and fairer wealth distribution, that would be a significant achievement. It's essential to recognize that striving for a just and functioning society is a vital part of our existence.

The only noticeable genetic change we've seen in humans happened about 7,000 years ago when we began to domesticate animals. It was only after we started keeping these animals that we began to drink their milk. Interestingly, after childhood—around age three—our intestines stop producing the enzyme needed to digest a specific protein found in milk called casein. However, people in Europe and East Africa who started drinking milk around 4,000 years ago have been found to still have this enzyme in their bodies. This shows how slowly our genetics can change, especially considering how many lives have passed during that time! With advancements in genetics, particularly through genetic engineering, we now have the ability to potentially choose certain traits, like eye color, skin color, or even features of our organs such as lungs,

hearts, and kidneys. These scientific breakthroughs could lead to possibilities we can hardly imagine right now. But we have to recognize that these changes are unpredictable.

To make significant changes in ourselves, we would need to shift our entire way of being. It's a bit like how a caterpillar has to undergo a major transformation to become a butterfly or, in this case, grow to the size of an airplane. Similarly, if we want to gain abilities beyond our current capabilities, we might need to move beyond our current human experience.

While genetic engineering may help speed up the slow process of genetic evolution, it won't automatically make us "better" humans. We still have all the same thoughts and emotions that 'make us human'. The relative peace and freedom we experience today are largely due to the growth of big cities, advancements in technology, and improvements in law and justice systems. However, this doesn't mean we've fundamentally changed as people. We're still the same human beings we've always been; we're not necessarily evolving into "better" humans.

EQUALITY — THE MODERN VALUE

Equality is one of the most important values in today's society. It has influenced all kinds of hierarchical social structures, institutions, and relationships, causing them to clash with one another. In many ancient cultures, this idea of equality was expressed through social justice. When different tribes, religions, and ethnic groups came together in cities, the value of equality began to emerge. However, the understanding of what an equitable society looks like has developed over about the last 300 years, primarily in Europe. This value, which embodies social justice at the heart of modern social change, has evolved through subtle discussions and possibilities explored by humanity, especially after the French Revolution.

Even in ancient philosophical works, like Plato's *Republic*, which was written 2,500 years ago, the topic of social equality was debated. Socrates claimed that all citizens should be considered equal, but he overlooked the slaves who worked quietly in the background. To him, these individuals didn't count as part of the citizenry. This blind spot wasn't unique to Socrates;

many revered figures in history failed to acknowledge the importance of equal justice. For example, in India, the philosopher Sankara preached about the oneness of all individuals with the universe but excluded people with darker skin from this idea of oneness. His followers had to come up with stories to justify his exclusion, claiming he had been ‘tested’ by God in the form of a marginalized person. It’s clear that even the great Indian thinkers and philosophers didn’t focus on the values of equality and justice in their philosophies. In their quest for unity or oneness, they often tried to erase the differences they saw around them.

The idea of “oneness” does not naturally lead to the notion of “equal justice for all.” To develop the concept of equality, we first need to accept others as they are or those who are different from ourselves. Equality isn’t something that naturally exists; it’s a value that societies have created over time to bring together diverse groups of people under a common identity. Just like societies have conceptualized the idea of a “great creator God” based on their experiences and creations, the value of equal justice emerged from the necessity of different human tribes and societies coming together to unite under one nation. This idea of social justice continues to evolve, becoming deeper, more inclusive, and more abstract through the daily practices of political and social systems worldwide. Each society is refining its understanding of what equal justice means, adapting it

to their unique circumstances and experiences.

We're living in a time where extremely different cultures are coming together due to globalization. On one hand, you have primitive tribes that still rely on hunting and gathering, and on the other, you have advanced societies that have built space stations. This blending of cultures can lead to feelings of stress, confusion, conflicts, and even wars, as people grapple with the idea of equality. However, it's important to recognize that this idea of equality isn't going away.

There's a long-standing notion that we once lived in a perfect world, often referred to as Eden, where there was abundance and justice. Over time, we became scattered and divided, much like the story of the Tower of Babel, where God separated people by language. This idea paints a nostalgic picture of a simpler, fairer time that we seem to have lost as we moved into modern societies, resulting in inequality and injustice. Perhaps this is a reflection of our earlier hunter-gatherer societies.

Now, the concept of equality serves as a standard by which we measure the injustices we face in our daily lives and interactions. But we need to acknowledge that humans are naturally hierarchical beings, meaning we often organize ourselves in ranks or classes. Even though we are all part of the same species, our evolutionary journeys have taken us to different places and stages of

development. We've only come together as a global community through war, trade, and travel, realizing that we are all children of the same planet.

Moreover, recent discoveries have shown that all living things, including humans, plants, and animals, originated from a single living cell. This realization has shifted our perspective on equality. So, this value or concept of equality is something that has yet to be formed or realized and should not be used to judge each other negatively. Instead, we should focus on cooperation and understanding to make this ideal of equality a reality in our daily lives.

In many developed countries, we've made progress toward equality by giving every adult one vote, but it's important to note that this isn't the case everywhere. In many societies where tribal values remain strong, not everyone has the right to vote, or this shift has yet to occur. Even in societies where everyone has the right to vote, many people overlook the rights of their partners—especially women who belong to the same tribe, caste, or family and speak the same language. Just as Socrates didn't see slaves as full citizens, many men historically failed to see their wives or partners as equals.

We are currently working towards making gender equality a real and lasting change by exposing and addressing the hidden power imbalances and

discrimination that exist. However, this journey towards equality between men and women may bring about more conflict, tension, and misunderstandings. The struggle for equality can lead to disputes in various aspects of life. Those who can navigate these challenges and embrace the idea of equality may find a sense of peace in their own lives.

Many people think that in the past, marriages were free of conflict and tension, but the truth is quite different. In traditional marriages, the husband had all the power, and the wife existed only as an extension of him. To avoid the stress of treating women as equals, men developed certain strategies. They would marry women who were younger (by 5 to 10 years), smaller in height and weight, and often from families with lower social or economic status. They would also isolate the women by moving them away from their families, keeping them uneducated, and preventing them from earning money or owning property. This male-dominated system was the secret to maintaining "peace" in the family, as the woman had little independence or agency.

However, this doesn't mean there's less conflict in modern relationships where men and women choose their partners freely. In fact, the tension can be even greater. While love may encourage couples to submit or compromise, the awareness of social justice and equality makes it harder for such compromises to last. This new

awareness of equal rights has made individuals more independent, but also more isolated. For men to live harmoniously with modern women—who are educated, self-sufficient, and value equality—they must relearn how to respect and treat women as equals. This is the only way to reduce conflict between men and women in modern relationships.

If we fail to adapt, no number of counseling centers or family courts will stop the rising rate of divorces. We can't go back to the old ways, so the only path forward is for individuals to transform themselves. Along with social movements and legal reforms, personal growth and adaptation are necessary. Instead of blaming each other, we should help one another with kindness and understanding to navigate this social challenge. Achieving true equality is a long and ongoing process because it is not a natural state that already exists. Even after making all these efforts, we must accept that complete equality may never be fully achieved, as it goes against some of our natural instincts. But progress is still possible and necessary.

Marxist-feminist concepts such as feudalism, capitalism, and patriarchy, instead of shedding light on human evolution, often obscure many key aspects of it. These ideas need to be re-evaluated based on fundamental human instincts, keeping only what supports the growth of democratic values and discarding what

doesn't. When we look at individual lives—how people are raised in families, educated in schools, practice religion, engage in politics, or seek justice in courts and legislative bodies—it becomes clear that true equality is almost nonexistent in these environments.

In simple terms, humanity has not yet created any real space where people can genuinely learn or experience the values of equality and justice. The communist party did make an effort by calling its members 'comrades,' aiming for a society where everyone is equal. However, in practice, even within the party, power imbalances formed. Some comrades became more powerful than others, creating a hierarchy of 'important,' 'extra equal,' and 'more equal' comrades. It's easy to mock this uneven 'equality,' but it's not due to a lack of effort; it's a reflection of the deep-rooted hierarchical nature of human society. Karl Marx believed that humans had evolved beyond the basic instincts of animals, but this misconception led to a failure to understand or create truly equal systems, even within the communist party itself. The party's vision of social equality couldn't be achieved with Marxist concepts alone.

This explains why the communist party, like other political systems, ended up forming a rigid hierarchy (like a Pyramid) with different levels of authority—from the local branch to the politburo and general secretary—mirroring other structures of power like the Indian

National Congress, where a 'high command' and local committee culture dominate. Despite the talk of "democratic centralism," the true experience of equality vanishes at the top levels of power. When legislative assemblies replaced monarchies, the Speaker of the Assembly effectively took the king's place. Every political party in the world operates in a hierarchical manner.

This hierarchical structure isn't unique to politics. It exists in all aspects of life: within families, religions (where God, the pope, priests, imams, caliphs etc., hold power), schools (from janitors to principals), government (from village officials to top administrators), courts (from clerks to chief justices), police forces (from constables to commissioners), and even in the military. True equality is rarely found in any of these systems. Hierarchies, whether subtle or overt, dominate here, preventing genuine equality from being realized. Hierarchies suck for people who are subordinated, exploited, expected to take orders and to embrace their own subordination as the way things are supposed to be.

Social justice, or the idea that everyone should be treated equally and have equal access to resources, isn't something that comes naturally to us as humans. It's something we've developed as part of our society over time. The concepts of fairness, like having one partner

for life or equally sharing resources, emerged from this awareness. This sense of social justice, which started in more developed societies, is gradually spreading to more traditional, hierarchical ones. However, all of us, regardless of where we live, are caught in an ongoing internal and external struggle (our interactions with others). On one hand, our biological instincts and emotions pull us in one direction, often toward selfishness and competition. On the other hand, the ideal of equality—though almost impossible to fully achieve—calls us toward something better, much like the sirens (half-woman and half-bird entity) in Greek mythology, creating a tension within us.

We often demand that others act fairly and equally, convinced that we're already doing so ourselves. But when people point out our own biases or hierarchies, we tend to justify our actions. We defend ourselves by citing our age, knowledge, experience, or skills. While we often refuse to forgive others for their mistakes, we readily forgive ourselves for our own shortcomings. In truth, it's almost impossible for anyone to be perfectly fair or just all the time. If we can recognize our natural tendencies and limitations, we might learn to treat each other with more respect and understanding.

It's important to acknowledge that absolute equality has never existed before, and it won't appear overnight simply because we wish for it. Achieving a more just

society will only happen through conscious, collective effort, where we support each other rather than blame or judge. We need to be constantly mindful and vigilant to work toward fairness, but that vigilance should be used to improve ourselves and our communities, not as a weapon to judge or punish others.

ECOLOGY

WE MIGHT HAVE TO FACE SOME SERIOUS consequences due to the rapid growth of the human population, whether it's because of the sheer number of people or the rising standards of living. Recently, most of the world has started to realize this issue. If we look back at history, especially in what were once considered "developed" societies, we can find hints of this awareness among individuals and small groups. You can see it in the poetry of the time or in the sacred spaces of ancient Indian communities. However, truly acting responsibly towards our environment and dreaming up big projects is a more recent development.

For example, we came together to help close the hole in the ozone layer, but that situation is still delicate, and the hole could reopen if we're not careful. This is a serious issue. If we don't act together, we could miss out on solutions that are urgently needed. Instead of blaming one another, judging, or getting angry, we need to unite as a species and take responsibility for our actions. Unfortunately, this is a bit of a fantasy. Our different identities—like gender, ethnicity, religion, language,

and nationality—often prevent us from coming together. Plus, because of unequal development, different groups of people don't approach these issues with the same level of responsibility. Amid all the noise about who should be held accountable and who should pay, we often overlook that time is running out for finding solutions. From an evolutionary perspective, any species that grows too fast will eventually face a crisis. Historically, the only way for species to deal with such a crisis has been extinction.

What sets us apart as humans is our ability to reflect on our experiences, which helps us imagine and plan for our future. This reflection allows us to analyze what has happened and understand the consequences, giving us a glimpse into what could happen next. This skill is deeply ingrained in us. Millions of years ago, our animal ancestors developed “mirror neurons,” (say primitive mind) which helped them understand other's intentions. Over time, this ability grew significantly in humans. Then, within the last 50,000 to 70,000 years, a mutation gave us the unique ability to reflect on our own experiences. Combining this ability to understand others with our capacity for self-reflection and the development of language has given humanity a tremendous advantage.

In the previous chapters, we talked about how unique and complicated humans are and how we've developed

over time. This complexity is due to three main abilities we have that set us apart. Because of these traits, philosophers, saints, and thinkers in the past believed we were different from animals, thinking of us as a “special creation.” This belief made us forget our true roots and our deep connection with other living beings. Today, we are exploring the mysteries of nature through advanced sciences like quantum physics, nanotechnology, and genetic engineering. These fields represent a whole new level of understanding that humans have never had before. Even though we might never fully grasp the entire universe, we are at a pivotal moment in human history where we have the opportunity to make significant advancements, or what some call a “quantum leap.” At the same time, we are facing both the positive and negative consequences of our innovations. Our traditional ways of living, the rapidly growing population, the fast pace of new technologies, and our sense of ownership over land are all clashing and creating serious challenges for our survival. This is where a new focus on environmental awareness can bring us together as a species.

To solve the environmental issues caused by human activity, we need to think beyond our national borders. These problems have pushed us into a new level of unity, where we must see the Earth as one whole. The reality that we don't have another planet to escape to has compelled humanity to find common solutions to the

environmental crises we're facing. Throughout history, many spiritual leaders have said we are all children of one God or that we share a common existence, but we've struggled to truly recognize our shared humanity until now.

The current environmental crisis is forcing us to understand this oneness, but it's important to realize that this is just a potential outcome. If we don't stay open to the idea of coming together for a shared purpose, we risk following the same path as other species that have gone extinct. Our hopes and dreams for a better future can only take us so far if we don't actively work towards unity and collaboration.

THIS IS THE BEST OF ALL TIMES

EVEN THOUGH THE EARTH AND ITS natural resources have always been here, it wasn't until the rise of technology that we began to use and treat these resources as "property." We've already talked about this idea of wealth before. Despite the fact that the human population has grown to massive numbers, we're actually living better lives than ever. Violence, like feuds and raids between tribes, has decreased over time with the rise of city-states, countries, and nations, even if it doesn't always feel that way. We've already seen how conflicts between small groups lessened when countries were formed. However, while internal violence within a country has dropped, countries have tended to push that violence outward, toward their borders. This pattern continues today.

Now, every inch of the Earth is claimed by someone or some country—whether it's a forest, a mountain, or a snowy wilderness. As a species, we are now grappling with the fact that we all share this one planet. For example, in India, with its 29 states, there's no internal fighting between the states. Similarly, countries today

are beginning to come together in ways that were unimaginable before. Consider the European Union: just a few decades ago, Europe experienced two devastating world wars, but today, you can travel across 26 countries with a single visa or passport and use the same currency. Such cooperation between nations was impossible in the past, but it now points the way forward for humanity.

If a government acts oppressively towards its people, there are now international bodies that can hold it accountable. The idea of "human rights" comes from our understanding that all humans are one species and that every individual deserves certain rights. Never before in human history have people been able to unite around the concept of human rights like they do today. Millions of people now speak out for human rights, and organizations like the World Bank, the International Court of Justice, the United Nations, and others exist to protect individuals who are trapped in nations that deny the unity of the human species.

These global institutions should not be seen as "imperialistic" due to old ideologies or ideas about territory. No country can succeed alone anymore. The idea of self-sufficiency is an outdated myth. Similarly, no country can rule another country by force. While one nation may defeat another in battle, it can't maintain control without the cooperation of the people,

and this level of subjugation is no longer possible in today's world. Citizens across nations are now more aware of equality and mutual respect. The old methods of domination and submission are fading, though remnants of these tendencies still exist in human nature.

In countries that have been oppressed, the ongoing violence, like bombings, shows that forced control isn't sustainable. This will continue for a while, but it's important to realize that such unrest highlights uneven development. The world is becoming more connected through trade, technology, banking, knowledge exchange, migrating for education, tourism, and global organizations working to solve shared problems like environmental issues. The internet and advancements in genetics are also helping us come together as a global society, much like how human migration once spread us across the world in ancient times, but now we are coming together again. The European Union is an example of how nations are finding ways to unite and cooperate.

In the past, it wasn't uncommon for husbands to think, 'Why should anyone care if I hit my wife?' or for wives to accept it by saying, 'What's wrong if my husband hits me?'. But these attitudes are now declining. Many countries are passing laws against domestic violence and abuse, reflecting a shift in societal values. We live in a time where children are no longer seen as property or

labor for their parents but are instead valued as citizens of nations and the world. In the past, people had children to add “another working hand” to the family, but now, thanks to laws and social changes, we’re moving away from child labor and attitudes that exploit children.

We are living in a time where governments need to come up with reasons or justifications when they bomb or shoot their own people, or even people from other countries. In the past, leaders could rule with their power alone, but now they have to govern based on equality, rights, and social justice. Just fifty years ago, it was nearly impossible for two nations at war to even discuss reducing weapons or easing border conflicts. Even during war, countries today must be cautious about not harming civilians or innocent people.

Similarly, police forces have to be careful when handling protesters, making sure they don’t harm innocent bystanders. If they do, the government often has to compensate the victims and punish the officers responsible. This is a big shift from just eighty years ago when bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki without hesitation. Today, we live in a time where rights, justice, and equality are priorities in almost every aspect of life.

Violence isn't necessarily increasing; instead, we're just seeing it differently. We now have higher standards for justice and equality, which expose violence that was once hidden or even considered acceptable. The rise in police reports and court cases isn't because the world has become more violent, but because people are more aware of injustices they wouldn't have tolerated before. For example, a woman saying, "I won't let my husband hit me," is a sign of this growing awareness, and it's the main reason for the increase in complaints about violence.

However, we shouldn't think that this means we are constantly progressing towards a perfect future. Our journey toward justice has involved many steps forward and backward. In different parts of the world, we will still face new crises like the ones in Bosnia, Somalia, Nigeria, Timor, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Libya, Syria, and Iraq. These conflicts need to be addressed locally, but it's also important to remember that we are living in one of the most justice-driven periods in human history. We must also realize that this progress is the result of accumulated knowledge and cultural changes, rather than some sudden internal transformation. The fight for justice and equality is ongoing, and setbacks are inevitable, but the overall trend is toward a more just world.

A hundred years ago, the average life expectancy was just 35 years, but today, even the least developed countries have an average age of 40 years. Globally, the average lifespan is around 73, and in developed countries, it's over 80. Whether you look at birth rates, death rates, or any other measure of quality of life, we are living better now than ever before. Instead of getting caught up in nostalgia for the past or using old beliefs and ideologies to block progress, we need to focus on moving forward. We now understand that many of our long-held beliefs and ideologies were shaped by our need for survival and control. We should be living with this new knowledge, using it to judge ourselves and others in the present. Today is truly the best time in human history to be alive.

Humanity isn't "progressing" in a biological sense—we're continuing as a species. But we need to keep a sense of justice alive in our cultures. To do that, we must support institutions like the United Nations, governments, courts, and law enforcement. Just as we've worked to reduce the number of atomic bombs, the only thing we really need to downsize is the military. Strengthening national borders isn't the answer; instead, we should focus on dialogue, diplomacy, and peace talks—much like what the European Union has achieved. We need to aim for global unity, with one administration overseeing our collective future. This isn't just wishful thinking—it's a real possibility, and something we can strive for. Although many religions,

ideologies, and political movements talk about uniting humanity, the vision presented here offers a practical way forward, much like the European Union has already demonstrated. This is the worldview we promote in this book.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF LIFE

IN A FAR-OFF CORNER OF THE ever-changing and expanding universe, there's a sun located in one of the many arms of a galaxy. Orbiting around this sun is Earth, a planet that has been around for about 4.5 billion years and spins on its own axis. Amidst this vast universe, we find ourselves experiencing a phenomenon we call life. So far, we haven't discovered any signs of life on the other planets in our solar system or their moons. Even if there is life out there, it hasn't made the journey to find us. In this endless universe, it's important to remember that amid all our struggles, complaints, hopelessness, and moments of doubt—when we think, “Nothing seems to work,” or “What kind of life is this?”—we are here, alive, in this world. With that in mind, we should remind ourselves of one key truth: our lives are precious. We need to avoid negative thoughts, words, or feelings toward life itself. Instead, we should embrace and celebrate the gift of existence.

Life, from the moment it began on this planet covered by a delicate and fragile atmosphere, has had to battle against countless challenges that threaten its very

survival every single second. Beyond this thin layer of air, life, as we know it, cannot exist. Therefore, we must protect our lives fiercely, like shielding a flame from the wind or preserving a beautiful bubble from bursting, or like a dew drop sparkling in the morning sun that we don't want to let fall. We need to cherish this life intensely and intimately. Since life first emerged, it has taken countless and incredibly diverse forms across Earth, thriving in every environment—land, water, air, day, and night—all with one single purpose: to live. Let's remember that we are part of this grand journey called life. If anything in the universe is sacred or valuable, it's life itself. We should love our lives deeply. The universe has no other way to understand itself apart from life, and it does so in many different forms. Life gives meaning to the universe; there's no need for any additional purpose. Simply being alive is a complete and fulfilling experience in itself.

Unfortunately, many spiritual leaders, philosophers, and prophets didn't teach us to embrace and appreciate life. Instead, they often encouraged us to escape from it, promoting ideas like '*moksha*' (liberation) '*kaivalya*' (absolute freedom), '*paramananda*' (supreme bliss), heaven, and paradise—all concepts designed to help us evade this precious existence. They may have missed the significance of life because they didn't understand it deeply and fully, and the ongoing poverty and suffering around them likely influenced their perspectives as well.

So, we must forgive their misunderstandings and move past their flawed teachings. We don't need to cling to their ideologies that encourage a disdain for life, even if they seem grand or noble. Many philosophies, religions, and systems that claim to value humanity often end up trapping us like prisoners, labeling others as criminals. Instead of getting caught up in these limiting beliefs, let's focus on embracing life in all its richness and beauty.

All of those ideologies that arose under the banner of materialism were devoid of a true understanding of the world or were based on misunderstandings. They attempted to change the world without realizing that the world is always changing. As a result, these ideas often devolve into wishful thinking, requiring constant struggles and a "fight" to achieve their idea of progress. Unfortunately, this struggle has led to a lot of hatred, conflict, and division. The seeds of hatred that have been sown by these ideologies are now deeply rooted and can't easily be undone.

As human beings, we already have an instinct to claim territory, and these ideologies act like vending machines, fueling our hidden feelings of anger and resentment. But it's important for us to forgive and let go of these ideologies and the people behind them. There's no other way forward because we have no one else but each other.

Life is a shared experience, and all living beings are branches of the same "tree of life." Throughout history, humans, known as *Homo sapiens*, have spread across the planet. Now, we are starting to recognize our commonality. When we label each other as black, white, Asian, ugly, local, foreign, cultured, uncultured, barbarians, citizens or by other traits like height or appearance, we create division and foster hatred. These labels tap into our natural tendency to protect our own territory, often without us realizing it. But we need to remember that we are all part of the same species.

Modern Humans have only been on Earth for about 200,000 years, yet we've populated every continent. Just 10,000 years ago, we were only in the thousands, and a century ago, our population was around 2 billion. Today, we've grown to more than 8 billion. The growth in our numbers, especially after we started farming, is a story we've shared many times. We are thriving as a species thanks to advancements in technology every day. The romanticized memories of a glorious past are just illusions; they don't help us navigate our lives today.

Right now, we've never had a better time in terms of population, health, comfort, or knowledge. Despite our differences in appearance, preferences, and lifestyles, it's our shared genetic makeup that assures us we belong to one species. We shouldn't just see ourselves as children

of God, members of a specific tribe, or citizens of a particular country. We are united as one species, as shown by the findings of evolutionary science. This is the new revelation, the new gospel that shows us where we come from, our way of life, and our future. This knowledge is new and vital for all of us.

Never before in history have we had such certainty about our identity. With this clarity, we can better manage our natural territorial instinct, even if we can't completely eliminate it. On this newfound understanding, we should confront the differences, borders, ignorance, fears, and divisions that exist in our lives. As a species, we've never had this level of opportunity before. Just like we need to protect life itself, we must cherish and remember the knowledge that we all belong to one species.

We are the Universe, and as human beings, we have a unique understanding of its mysteries. This means we carry a heavy responsibility. Think of it like being in a giant science lab where our actions can change the universe around us. Because of this, we need to be careful and thoughtful in everything we do. For over 3.8 billion years, tiny microbes have lived on Earth, learning how to survive and adapt. We have gained even deeper knowledge about genetics, which gives us incredible insights into life itself. We are now at the heart of this ongoing story of life, a story shaped by countless

successes and failures over billions of years. This vast knowledge is available to us, and we must treat it with respect.

With that in mind, we should manage our instincts, like the urge to claim territory and the emotional ups and downs that can arise. We need to recognize that unity and diversity are two sides of the same coin, and we must navigate life carefully, finding a balance between the two. This sense of responsibility extends to how we care for our environment. We have to pay attention to the future and think critically about our actions. Despite the challenges we face, we hold on to the hope that we can make a positive difference, for humans to know.

CONCLUSION

I hope by now you understand what I meant when I said earlier that this book is like a signpost. To be honest, though, it does make things easier to understand. All you really need to do is remember the basics of what we learned in science classes back in school and college. Often, we think we only learn these things to pass exams, which is why we fail to truly understand life. We also tend to believe that school learning is just a means to get a job and make a living, so once we leave school, we forget most of what we were taught.

Instead of building on the knowledge from our education, many of us end up forming our understanding of life from stories told by grandmothers or from the negativity and prejudices we hear in society. But if we really take to heart what we learned in school, we can gain a much deeper understanding of life. Nowadays, without spending much money, we have access to the internet, which offers countless scientific resources where we can expand our knowledge about life. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this and use these tools wisely. If this book has sparked some

curiosity in you to learn more, then I feel my purpose has been achieved.

This book is intentionally left open-ended, with gaps in it, because I want to encourage discussion. It's not something I can "finish" alone—it requires input from readers like you. Knowledge is not created in isolation; it comes from shared discussion and collaboration. So, I encourage you to share your questions, thoughts, and feedback with me. Since I don't have a mailing address, you can reach me via e-mail, instagram, facebook or phone number listed at the end of the book. You can also contact the publishers. If you do this, we could revisit and revise this book with your input in a few years, perhaps four or five. Of course, this will depend on whether I'm still alive to do so.

I'm well aware that this book will likely create enemies for me, especially among those who have been involved in my past social and political activities. My former comrades, especially those who still follow Marxist or other ideological approaches to "change" or "improve" society like I once did, will probably find themselves uncomfortable or at odds with what I've written. But my intention is not to hurt, mock, or make life difficult for anyone. I'm simply sharing what I've come to understand in my life as quickly as possible, and that's the only motive behind this book. At one point, I even considered publishing this book anonymously, but

since that would have caused legal issues for the publisher, I decided against it. The main reason I wanted to remain anonymous was to avoid our tendency to focus on the author rather than the content. Another reason was that people might think I'm scared to deal with the backlash.

This book is for those who genuinely seek the truth—not those who profit from their ideologies, chase after honors or positions, or spread hatred. If you're one of those sincere seekers, this book is for you. I truly hope it proves valuable to you.

Even though we know that true equality and justice may never fully exist and that creating a perfect world is just a fantasy, I've always stood with people who peacefully fight for "realistic justice." I still do. What I've learned doesn't stand in the way of that struggle. In fact, we can pursue these battles with a deeper understanding of the realities around us. I believe we have to be biased in favor of the weak when fighting for justice and the creation of a better society. This is part of who I am.

Before life existed in the universe, there was no concept of value or justice. But once life—especially human life—emerged, so did this sense of justice, and that's what I stand for. I support the weak because it's not only "human justice" but also the right thing to do from a moral and political standpoint. This sense of justice

CONCLUSION

doesn't need any ideological explanation or justification. It's simply what feels right.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Maitreya Maitreyan, an Indian author and activist from Kerala, is a renowned rationalist and freethinker who has dedicated his life to helping others, fostering joy, nurturing love, and educating those around him. Regarded as a pioneering anarchist feminist movement in Kerala during the 1980s, his approach to daily life and social issues is deeply unique and thought-provoking.

Since childhood, Maitreyan was drawn to science magazines and books, both at home and in university libraries. However, he always felt that something was missing in the larger puzzle of life. This quest for understanding led him to a traditional Hindu philosophical school, where he spent several years before concluding that the world was far more than what

religious philosophies could explain. Disillusioned, he left the organization in search of his own path. Later, he joined the communist party (Marxist), but once again found himself disheartened by the limitations of the ideology, its outdated theories, and its violent past. In 2005, he stepped away from social activism and immersed himself in the study of science, evolution, history and other fields. This period marked a significant turning point in his life, deepening his insight into the world and the human condition.

Maitreyan's exceptional ability to observe the smallest details of life and his pursuit of knowledge have allowed him to develop a modern scientific worldview, from which he critiques religion, political ideologies, and global or local issues. He is an inspiration to thousands in Kerala, renowned for his commitment to living by the principles he espouses. His unique perspective on complex matters and his unconventional approach to addressing social issues set him apart.

This book represents the culmination of his knowledge and life experience, offering readers a fresh, insightful take on the world around us.

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