

ENTANGLED MINDS AND THE VIRAL PANDEMIC

By *Tim Wyatt*

Covid-19 hasn't only concentrated our minds like nothing else we can recall. It's fundamentally and permanently changed human consciousness. Its effects have been unprecedented and its aftermath will be equally pronounced – and profound. It will bring economic hardship to hundreds of millions. We've already run out of clichés to describe the devastation and dislocation this pandemic has caused to every strand of human existence. Apart from possibly Antarctica, not a single nation on Earth has remained untouched.

It's brought revolutionary changes to the way we live, work, shop and interact. It's been a fascinating but macabre exercise in mass psychology.

Despite its power to destroy lives and livelihoods, this tiny crown-shaped virus has also evoked levels of co-operation and compassion which are increasingly rare in the modern world. Along with its grim death-toll it's also yielded other positive traits as people show greater degrees of tolerance, self-reliance and that most old-fashioned of virtues, altruism.

Many people have been forced to deal with the isolation they face. For others, the lock-down has meant more time for self-reflection.

The world's gone quiet. Many people have heard bird-song for the first time in decades. Blue skies were left unscarred by the vapour-trails of jets. Air pollution levels dropped dramatically in even the worst affected cities. Even the seismic noise of the planet itself quietened. No doubt Earth Mother breathed a sigh of relief that her boisterous and hyper-active children temporarily curbed their usually frenzied activities.

Covid-19 has done what wars and conflicts always do. Apart from bringing out the best and worst in people, it's also presented both opportunities and threats. Battles and crises are teachers and synthesizing agents as well as purgative and regenerative forces. They always leave their mark and continue to reverberate.

No one is unaware of the momentous outward effects of this crisis physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. But what are the deep esoteric causes of why this modern death-wave has been unleashed right now? Clearly, there will be cyclic reasons for this. It's almost exactly a century since the Spanish Flu pandemic which killed millions in the wake of World War I.

Even more crucially, like every other event, there will be inescapable karmic roots to this disease. This would appear to be a classic illustration of collective karma in action. The principal purpose of karma is to compensate and restore balance and harmony. It would be all too easy to crudely interpret this as a punishment visited on humanity for its apparent wickedness. Perhaps it's more of a warning. Or even a lesson. Even though it's impossible for us to dismantle and identify the precise karmic causes, we can and should learn from an event of such magnitude and significance. And that lesson is inter-connectedness.

Covid-19 has produced its own vast collective thought-form which will linger long after the virus itself has been eradicated. We're all affected by this thought-form. And not only that – we've all been the architects and builders of it, too. As much as we may regard ourselves as individuals, humanity has a collective mass mind. Each of us constantly contributes to this mental reservoir but much of our input is unconscious.

The Ageless Wisdom tradition states very clearly that 'thoughts are things'. What happens in our minds shapes the world. Although not as dense and tangible as a car or a table, their existence is real and these thoughts persist depending on the power we attach to them. Some thought-forms continue for millennia.

The virus has shown us just how inter-connected we are physically and the extent to which life on Earth is inter-linked. But it's also important to explore the mental dimension to this.

In the contemporary Western world of aggressive individualism, we labour under the fatal illusion that we have hermetically sealed minds, each one compartmentalised and separated from each another. We're convinced that every mind has its own unique thoughts, that each possesses its own customised perspective on life and that each operates in splendid isolation. This is a total travesty of the truth, although it remains the prevailing view.

Human minds are inextricably entangled. And not only that, the consciousness of human minds intermingles intricately with that of the other kingdoms of nature. The timeless truths enshrined in the Ageless Wisdom tradition insist that everything is conscious on its own level as well as intimately interconnected. Therefore, what we perceive as separation is an illusion.

There was global consciousness long before the internet because global consciousness is super-physical. It didn't take a digital revolution to create it. So, what precisely causes this intimate and universal interconnectedness?

It consists of this spiritual substance known as the astral or akasha, the Sanskrit word for aether or invisible transmission medium. The aether, along with its alter-ego the astral light, explains our inter-connectedness as well as psi phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance as well as out of the body experiences.

Nothing is exempt from it because it's the template for everything that was, is and ever will be. It's the transmission agent for every individual's karma in any one life as well as dreams, memories and clairvoyance along with body, mind and emotional fields. It explains why we have numinous feelings for those close to us even at a great distance.

Universal interconnectedness and ubiquitous consciousness are two of the key pillars of the Ageless Wisdom tradition.

Few people – least of all scientists – understand this or indeed the nature of the human mind itself. Science confines mind exclusively to the electro-chemical activity of the brain but has insurmountable difficulties in defining

what consciousness actually is. This is where the esoteric teachings prove so valuable, asserting that brain and mind are not synonymous.

The view of materialistic science is that form produces consciousness. Theosophy asserts the precise opposite – that consciousness is responsible for form. The esoteric teachings are in no doubt that mind doesn't need a brain in order to function. It exists beyond the physical hardware. It's something we tap into rather than contain within us.

Not all scientists subscribe to the tunnel-visioned view that reality exists solely on the physical plane. Nor do they all believe in a purposeless, random universe caused by chance cosmic collisions and 'natural selection'.

At the risk of ridicule and reputational degradation, a few brave individuals have attempted to find evidence for this wider, inter-connected consciousness which unites us all. Human consciousness isn't only intimately entwined with itself but the consciousness of other departments of nature seen and unseen.

This includes not only the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms but the three associated elemental kingdoms of nature spirits which build these kingdoms as well as the devic realms. Perhaps we're entering a phase where recognition of and co-operation with these invisible empires will be possible once again.

My own thinking has been heavily influenced by *Entangled Minds*, the title of a seminal book by Dr Dean Radin, who's chief scientist at the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS). Noetic, taken from the Greek words *noēsis/noētikos* means direct knowing, inner wisdom, implicit understanding – in short, intuition.

IONS was founded in 1973 by among others the astronaut Edgar Mitchell. As Mitchell gazed out of the capsule window when travelling back to Earth on Apollo 14 after his moonwalk in 1971, he had a profound spiritual experience. As he stared out into the vast cosmos, he experienced the intimate interconnectedness of everything he saw – the stars, the moon, the vastness of the universe and the Earth itself.

Immediately Mitchell realised he had to reconcile his scientific training with the wisdom of the ages and create a new framework to explain the unexplainable and transcend what he saw as an outdated materialist view of the world. He called this synthesis of science and spirituality, noetic sciences.

IONS describes its mission as follows: 'Our future demands that we explore our inner space with the same rigor and ingenuity as we explore our outer world.'

One of its most interesting ongoing experiments is the Global Consciousness Project launched in 1998, although its origins date back further. It's an international, multidisciplinary collaboration of scientists and engineers. The project involves the use of random number generators placed in locations around the world. There are now around seventy of these devices known as 'eggs' in operation. Based on 'quantum tunnelling' these produce completely unpredictable sequences of zeroes and ones.

However, when big events affect millions of people it appears to have a direct effect on these number generators. IONS claims the odds of this happening by chance are a trillion to one. It believes these experiments suggest there's evidence for an emerging noosphere or unifying field of consciousness – exactly the same as that described in the Ageless Wisdom teachings.

A prototype project was running in 1997 when Princess Diana died in a car crash in Paris. The random number generators then in use showed marked patterns of coherence and non-randomness before, during and after the event. This led to the formation of the greater project. The project has amassed huge amounts of data from hundreds of diverse events around the world from meditation festivals, sports events, terrorist outrages, eclipses, miscellaneous tragedies and the death of celebrities. Many show evidences of them affecting a wider collective consciousness.

The devices were affected by both small local and huge international events. However major world events such as the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York on 11th September, 2001 produced major fluctuations.

According to Dr Radin: 'The universe looks less like a big machine than a big thought.'

Radin has spent decades studying psi and related phenomena including a form of pre-cognition known as 'presentiment'. This is 'a vague sense or feeling of something about to occur but without any conscious awareness of a particular event.'

In 2004 Dr Radin conducted a series of tests in which participants were measured for electrical activity on their skin known as epidermal activity (EDA). The participants were shown a series of randomly selected photographs. Interestingly, these double-blind experiments revealed that EDA was higher before emotional photographs than calm ones, suggesting the participants were somehow aware of the images before even seeing them.

Cleve Backster (1924-2013), a one-time specialist in drug and hypnotism interrogation techniques for the Central Intelligence Agency, developed a keen interest in the use of polygraph or lie detector machines. When he experimented with these devices on plants, he made the astonishing discovery that not only do plants feel pain, they also have extra sensory perception (ESP).

In the 1960s when he attached electrodes from the instrument to plants' leaves, he discovered there was a change in 'electrical resistance' when the plant was harmed – and more critically – when the plant was threatened with harm. When Backster merely imagined burning a leaf, the plant showed an immediate stress response.

Many further experiments convinced him that plants demonstrated telepathic awareness and were able to perceive human thoughts emotions and intentions. He called this 'primary perception'. He conducted similar successful polygraph trials on yoghurt bacteria, eggs and human sperm.

His experiments with brine shrimp were especially revealing. He set up a series of experiments in which the shrimp were killed by immersion in hot water while three plants nearby were monitored by polygraph. To avoid the possibility of experimenters unconsciously affecting the results, Backster devised a system in which the shrimp were dumped at random times unknown to those in the lab. Control experiments were also conducted in which no shrimp were killed.

When the results were analysed there was a 'significant correlation' between the shrimps' deaths and the galvanic responses of the plants.

Predictably, Backster's ground-breaking if not somewhat controversial work enraged sceptics in the scientific establishment who criticised his experiments for their lack of repeatability. They have never liked this 'spooky action at a distance' as Albert Einstein described quantum physics.

The pioneering biologist Dr Rupert Sheldrake (born 1942) has actively disputed science's purely materialistic explanations of ourselves, the world and the wider cosmos. He's provided clear evidence of animal to human communication at a distance. His work, too, is written off as pseudo-science by the sceptics but has attracted wider attention from the more open-minded.

In his ground-breaking 1981 book *A New Science of Life* he proposed the radical new theory of morphic resonance operating through morphogenetic or morphic fields. This theory proposes that all self-organising systems from human societies to crystals inherit a collective memory which shapes both their form and behaviour. All human beings both tap into this collective memory and contribute to it.

Individual memory depends on morphic resonance rather than physical memory. Sheldrake's view is that the brain is more like a TV receiver than a video recorder. He wrote: 'memories stored in our brains' was 'only a theory' and 'despite decades of research, the phenomenon of memory remains mysterious.'

Morphic fields organise the bodies of animals and plants and co-ordinate mental activities in their brains. Crucially, it means that minds are extended out of bodies in both space and time. This idea has huge implications both for memory and biological inheritance.

So far-reaching and anti-materialist was Sheldrake's book that the senior editor of *Nature* magazine John Maddox suggested it should be burned. It wasn't. It was widely read. But he has been regularly savaged by individual mainstream, scientists. However, this hasn't deterred him from trying to construct a non-materialistic explanation for everyday phenomena. And throughout a long career Sheldrake has tested his theories about morphic fields in a number of intriguing ways.

In a ground-breaking research project in 1999 he set out to prove that there's a telepathic link between their pets and themselves, especially dogs and cats. He suggested that morphic fields were the reason for this. He examined more than a thousand cases of cats and dogs anticipating their

owners' return and demonstrated that the animals knew – even when normal time-patterns were broken – often waiting by a door or window.

He filmed numerous tests in which a dog called Jaytee was continuously observed when her owner was away. During these the dog spent far more time at the window when her owner was returning home than when she wasn't. In order to rule out the dog responding to car sounds or routines, Sheldrake performed twelve further tests in which her owner travelled home by taxi or unfamiliar vehicle at randomly selected times.

Gardeners and pet-owners especially are aware of how their emotions and thoughts affect the plants and animals they nurture. Many wild and domesticated animals are highly sensitive to human vibrations. There are some people who instantly repel dogs and cats – usually those who don't like them. Others can form an instant bond with animals they've just encountered.

As someone who's fascinated by cats and who's shared much of his life with these wonderfully quirky and unpredictable creatures, I have some rudimentary knowledge of feline behaviour and psychology. My present companion is a four-year old black cat called Electra, named after the Greek goddess of the sea clouds. Not only is she probably the most sensitive cat I've ever encountered, we share an almost telepathic rapport. Whenever she's sitting on my lap and an angry thought or negative emotion happens to flash through my mind, she instantly leaps off my knee and retreats to the other sofa.

She's very aware of the power of mind. And we should be, too.