

# Human experiments

LIFE ON PLANET  
EARTH HAS  
BEEN ONE LONG  
EXERCISE IN  
HUMAN EXPERI-  
MENTATION AS  
WE STRUGGLED  
TO FIND HAPPI-  
NESS AND  
HARMONY AS A  
RACE

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As readers know by now, I have been critical of a number of civilisational turns taken in recent times by mankind. Liberalisation and the accompanying consumerism is one such example.

Although I ought to have known better, it was hard not to be judgemental and critical of this move, especially as I could see where it was going to lead us.

Today, though, I have found a context in which I can fit this and all the other twists and turns of human history, and no longer mind them.

I think of them simply as human experiments sanctioned by God. It has not been easy, after all, to take embodiment and land on Planet Earth without the foggiest notion of what we are doing here. Cut off from source, separated from our spiritual essence, believing that the material body and the material life is all that is, and striving to survive in a world with no guarantees and constant change. What a difficult enterprise we were sent on! How could we not mess it up?

In the process of struggling to understand the human adventure what did we not do collectively and individually? Although there have been great achievements, enlightening revelations, ingenious inventions and sublime works of art and craft, for the most part we have drifted about in confusion, unseeing and unknowing. Our externally oriented senses caused us to look outside for happiness, security and everything else that we so desperately needed. No wonder then that our history is primarily a chronicle of conquest and control. Bloodshed, warfare, slavery, Auschwitz, Stalinism and the murder of millions of Russians, the Pol Pot experiment in Cambodia, the Vietnam War, communism and its subsequent downfall and now finally capitalism racing around the world like a forest fire, consuming and demolishing the earth's resources.

We had to do all these things to learn from them. To experience their consequences and recognise that they were not the way to happiness and harmony. Take communism, for instance, a human experiment with a noble end – to raise the poor and put them on par with the rich. Why did it not work? Because its creator, Karl Marx, did not under-

stand human nature. Change cannot happen from without; it can only happen from within. If my money is forcibly taken from me and given to someone else, it will not make me generous and noble. On the contrary, I will turn bitter and aggrieved. On the other hand, were I to voluntarily give away my excess to someone in need, I would feel good about myself and grow spiritually as well.

So we stumbled from experiment to experiment, vainly trying to find something that would give lasting peace and happiness. Globalisation and consumerism is one more human experiment looking for the same things. And had we been material beings living a material life, capitalism would have been paradise. Just imagine life as one vast shopping trip – buying, consuming, buying, consuming...

Unfortunately (or is it fortunately?) we are finally getting that this will not work either. We may have lots of stuff but it has not filled up the hole in our hearts that keeps pining – for what?

And all around us is the detritus of this lifestyle, stress, competition, disintegrating families, environmental collapse and so on. Every day we are getting more bad news – honey bees are dying and therefore there are no pollination agents for crops, I read somewhere. And the recession in the US is forcing families to get rid of pets. If that is not pathetic, I don't know what is.

So this human experiment is going the way of its predecessors. And maybe the time has come when we can finally get it right.

Personally I think we are ready for it. Ready to discover as a people that we are spiritual in essence, part of the Creator himself and therefore embodiments of holiness and interconnectedness.

The great prophets and realised sages of yore have set the stage for us and shown us the trail. We just need to follow their footsteps. Let me quote our former president, and renowned philosopher, S Radhakrishnan, "They are the new emergents, the beginnings of a new human species..., in whom a qualitatively new type is awakened. We have all to be reborn, reveal our potential sonship, share in all the fullness of divine nature.."

Such is our destiny. And you know what – this will be the final human experiment. ☺