

From Fragmentation to Wholeness

Many of us wonder why, despite many sincere efforts towards positive social transformation, nothing seems to change. This wonderful book both answers that question and provides a roadmap for real change. Avoiding woolly thinking and a retreat into the fuzzy ways in which the notion of “spirituality” is so often used, the book provides a rigorous, comprehensive and philosophically sound model that both profoundly challenges received notions and provides, as few texts do, answers and a guide to practice. This is a foundational and fundamental book that has the potential to upend the ways in which we think the world and act within it.

—**John Robert Clammer, Professor of Sociology,
O.P. Jindal Global University, Former Professor,
United Nations University (Tokyo)**

Author of *Cultural Rights and Justice: Sustainable Development, the Arts and the Body* (Palgrave MacMillan 2019)

The 2030 Agenda was launched with great hope, yet has since been overshadowed by pandemic, conflict, and global uncertainty. Many have given up on the SDGs, but not Gupta and Singh. Rather than seeking external saviours, they show that the path to transformation lies within ourselves. This is not a self-help book, but a profound journey linking inner perception with external reality. The authors remind us that holding a mirror to oneself is essential, for individuals, societies, and nations.

—**Mr. Roy Wadia, Regional Communications Chief,
World Health Organization Western Pacific Region**

We often think of ourselves as peace-loving, yet we inhabit a conflicted world. Gupta and Singh show why: the fragmentation of the world begins in us.

They argue that governance failures, including the shortcomings of the SDGs, will remain inevitable unless we transform how we perceive. Their book reveals how fear, identity, and memory distort perception, shaping the institutions we build and the conflicts we perpetuate.

This is not a guide to governance or reform. It is a profound examination of how inner disorder manifests as outer crises. Clear, challenging, and grounded in real-world examples, it offers fresh insights for readers interested in ecology, geopolitics, psychology, and personal transformation.

—**By Pascal Laureyn, freelance journalist**

From Fragmentation to Wholeness: Spirituality, Awareness and the Future Beyond the SDGs

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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About the Authors

Devesh Gupta is an educator, an author and a facilitator exploring the meeting point of consciousness, education and governance. He is the founder of Emerge, a space for re-examining learning, leadership and public policy from the root observing how fragmentation begins in the mind and how authentic action can arise from awareness rather than identity. His work examines how clarity of perception can give rise to ethical, intelligent and compassionate systems. Devesh serves as the Director of Education and Youth Initiatives at The Dais, an organisation working on youth engagement, education and systems change. He is also the Vice President of the Spirituality, Science, and Public Policy Network, a collaboration between Emerge and the Centre for Complexity Economics, Applied Spirituality and Public Policy (CEASP) at O.P. Jindal Global University, where he also teaches as a Visiting Faculty. Through Emerge and The Dais, he has facilitated programmes and dialogues with universities and public institutions including the University of Toronto, Queen's University of Charlotte, the University of Malaya, the University of South Africa (UNISA), Stanford University, the University of the South Pacific and the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and has worked with the Indian Army and Air Force on ethics and leadership. His work through these platforms spans conflict and post-crisis regions like Afghanistan, to living in the Himalayas along the India–Nepal border for sustainable development and community engagement, to working with children on the coasts of Fiji and with students in rural and urban schools across India. Educational partnerships include Mayo College, Ajmer Mayo College Girls' School, Ajmer, Welham Boys' School, Dehradun The Daly College, Indore and Teach For India, with engagements supported by the US Embassy, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and several state governments. Trained in international humanitarian and refugee law, he brings legal, psychological and philosophical insight into his work across education, leadership, peacebuilding and governance.

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Preface: Seeing the Book as a Mirror

This book does not offer solutions in the conventional sense. It does not present methods, strategies or frameworks for implementation. It begins with a simple observation: that despite widespread efforts towards reform, the world remains caught in patterns of division, conflict and delay. Governance systems, educational institutions and even movements for sustainability seem unable to bring about lasting transformation.

The central argument of this book is that the disorder we face is not merely external or structural. It is a reflection of the inner condition of the human mind. The fragmentation seen in institutions is an extension of the fragmentation within thought, identity and perception. Unless this is clearly understood, even the best-designed policies will remain superficial.

When we say that ‘unless this is clearly understood’, it requires us to speak about what we mean by understanding, not knowing. To understand means to observe the nature and structure of something, its origin, what it does, its movement and its danger. And in seeing the danger clearly, not intellectually, there is an ending. We change when we see the problem clearly, not through thought, but when awareness perceives the danger directly. That perception is understanding, and in that understanding, there is ending, change and transformation.

Hence, the book starts as a movement of observation. This might be called meditation in a spiritual sense. We start with what is, and that observation of the outer brings awareness to the inner. In observing and understanding the movement of the self in relationship – what it does, its roots and consequences – there may be an ending. And that ending brings one to choiceless action.

While this is described linearly, it must be lived through direct perception, insight and change at every step. This is not a book of intellectual assembly but a movement that requires a different sense of reading and listening. To read rightly is to observe without the past. That is the essence of true perception.

So to proceed, one must realise that what obstructs perception in the world – the self – can also obstruct the very act of reading. In Part II, when the movement of the self is revealed, there may be resistance, agreement or disagreement. But all these are movements of the past. If that is seen, if the book can act as a mirror while you read, you may observe your own self, your reactions and identifications. To see that is to go beyond it. Let awareness do what it does. The book is merely a tool. When there is awareness, the book and its chapters fall into their right place. If you read from an aware mind, the awareness will negate what’s false, and clear perception of false or truth is truth.

The book is structured as a movement. Part I (Chapters 1–3) begins with the outer world, the crises, systems and institutions we have created. This is not examined from a distance but as an invitation to observe how the world functions as a mirror. In understanding the world, we begin to understand ourselves in relationship.

Chapter 1 opens this inquiry by revealing how global disorder, from ecological collapse to institutional inertia, reflects the same fragmentation that operates within the individual. It is not merely a critique of external systems but an invitation to perceive the world as the projection of our inner state. Chapter 2 deepens this observation by showing how our core institutions – education, governance and health – are not neutral structures but embodiments of fear, control and psychological fragmentation. This chapter not only reveals that the global crisis is psychological in nature but also introduces the language and clarity of perception needed for the journey ahead. It acts as a shared foundation, so that when the reader encounters critiques of frameworks later, the insight is not theoretical but lived. Chapter 3 then extends this seeing to the SDGs and similar global frameworks. Even our most noble aspirations mirror the same movement of division, translating wholeness into targets, metrics and silos. Fragmentation hides in the language of unity.

Yet this is not where the inquiry ends; it is where it must turn inward. The crisis is not only structural. It is perceptual. Our responses are limited because they arise from the same identity and memory that created the problem. The outer and the inner are not two. To see this clearly is to prepare the ground for transformation.

Part II explores this inner movement, not thematically, but diagnostically and dissolutively. Each chapter focuses on a different facet of the self: fear, desire, time, knowledge, memory, relationship and identification. These are not truly separate, but we often experience them as such. What is revealed is their common root. Fear is desire in movement. Time is thought. Experience and image are both memory. Thought, desire, fear, time and identity are not different things. They are the self in movement. These chapters build progressively, emergently, yet, all show the movement of the self.

At first, this may appear repetitive. But the repetition is not of language. It is the repetition of life. Because the fragmented mind perceives these movements of fear, desire, thought, time as separate from each other, and also from its own self, we fail to see they are one movement: the illusion of separateness appearing as many. To see this, one must enter the mirror. The chapters do not merely describe the self. They allow us to observe its operation in real time. Each begins from ‘what is’: time, memory, knowledge, desire and reveals how these sustain fragmentation. In the seeing of ‘what is’, there is the ending of ‘what divides’.

To understand, then, is to end. Not through resistance, practice or delay but through clear perception of what is. Each chapter in Part II follows this arc: What is it? How is it sustained? What does it do? And is there freedom in seeing it wholly?

One may explore Advaita Vedanta or Mahayana Buddhism, study Freud, Heidegger or Foucault, engage with ontology, epistemology or systems theory.

Yet none of these, however profound, can end the self. As long as there is a knower who stands apart from the known, the self continues. Insight does not lie in accumulation. It arises when there is direct perception, and that perception is only possible when inquiry is not analysis, not comparison, not escape, but a total seeing of the self in action. This movement of seeing unfolds most clearly when one begins to observe their own fragmentation, not abstractly, but as it expresses itself through identity, time, image and becoming. That is the arc of Part II. If the earlier sections opened a door, it is here that the mirror is held up most directly. In that mirror, the self may be seen, not explained. And when it is seen, not as a theory but as fact, its movement ends. Then, intelligence acts, not the individual.

Part III turns from perception to action. Not action as decision or choice but as the natural flowering of intelligence. When the self ends, what remains is wholeness. From that wholeness, action arises. Such action has no centre, no reward, no ideology. It is love in motion where perception is action.

The intention behind this book is not to scale impact in the conventional sense. It does not seek followers, frameworks or movements. That would only repeat the very patterns it exposes. What matters is not reach but depth. The content of consciousness is shared. When there is total transformation in one human being, it changes the field for all. This change happens in physical time but arises from a different ground, beyond psychological time.

This is not the isolated breakthrough of a heroic individual but the emergence of a single intelligence: a whole mind beyond time, acting through any brain that is in communion and presence. Such a mind sees without division. It is not personal. It is not shaped by memory. It has no centre. In that centreless awareness, perception is no longer filtered through fear, desire or image. What acts is not the individual but intelligence itself which is wholeness, love and clarity.

The intention, then, is to create a mirror and a space for those who arrive here, to help them inquire, not to influence. A mind in inquiry often travels far and wide to find order, from gods to religions, from monasteries to psychedelics, from knowledge to control. But eventually, it must return to the seeing of itself. Until that happens, no method or movement can help.

This book intends to be that pointer: a friend, a companion, a quiet guide, so that the reader does not lose themselves in psychological time, repeating the cycle of effort, action and suffering. In a world on fire, urgency demands clarity. Right education and love can cut through conditioning. When one is ready to be aware, this journey need not be one of endless pain. Seeing clearly ends the delay.

That is the work this book invites: not the application of ideas but the ending of the 'me', so that what remains is a space through which awareness and love may act. You are not being led through this book. You are being invited to observe, and in that observation, to meet the whole of life.