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# Interconnectedness

Reflecting Common Themes Across Religions

Who would imagine that a butterfly in one corner of the world can trigger a typhoon in another part? Or that a microorganism millions of years ago evolved into the human form? The world – and its myriad inhabitants – are interconnected by an extraordinary, and mostly invisible, web which spans across geography and even across time.

The evolutionary scientist Charles Darwin threw light on how life on earth was so intimately interconnected in his treatise *On the Origin of Species*. Modern astronomy suggests that we all originate from the same dust left by the big

famous quip, "We are all star stuff." Another great physicist, Stephen Hawking, observed that, "We are all now connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain."

Nature recently impressed some crucial lessons upon us about interconnectedness in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. We learned from this once-in-a-lifetime global event that we are interconnected, interdependent; the health of one depends upon the health of all. We can no longer afford to remain unconscious of this fact.

One of the most beautiful sentences I have found on the subject of interconnectedness was from my friend Garima Bahl, who wrote, "Divinity is found in the empathetic interconnectedness of our existence." This simple sentence captures the spiritual essence of all religions.

## Christianity

"In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."  
—The New Testament (Romans, 12:5), Christian text

## Islam

"People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another."  
—The Qur'an (49:13), Islamic text

## Judaism

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."  
—The Hebrew Bible (Proverbs, 27:17), Jewish text

## Baha'i

"The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."  
—Baha'u'llah, Baha'i prophet

## Hinduism

"Those who possess this wisdom have equal regard for all. They see the same Self in a spiritual aspirant and an outcaste, in an elephant, a cow, and a dog. Such people have mastered life. With even mind they rest in Brahman, who is perfect and is everywhere the same."  
—The Bhagavad Gita (5:18-19), Hindu text

## Buddhism

"The hand and other limbs are many and distinct, But all are one—the body to be kept and guarded. Likewise, different beings, in their joys and sorrows, Are, like me, all one in wanting happiness."  
—Shantideva, Buddhist monk

## Daoism

"Heaven and Earth and I were born at the same time, and all life and I are one."  
—Chuang Tzu, Daoist sage

## Confucianism

"Men are close to one another by nature. They diverge as a result of repeated practice."  
—The Analects of Confucius (17:2), Confucian text

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