

CIVILIZATIONAL TRANSITION AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: A SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

TRANSIÇÃO CIVILIZATÓRIA E INTELIGÊNCIA ESPIRITUAL: UMA ANÁLISE SISTÊMICA DOS DESAFIOS SOCIOESTRUTURAIS CONTEMPORÂNEOS

TRANSICIÓN CIVILIZATORIA E INTELIGENCIA ESPIRITUAL: UN ANÁLISIS SISTÉMICO DE LOS DESAFÍOS SOCIOESTRUCTURALES CONTEMPORÁNEOS



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ABSTRACT

The article proposes that humanity is undergoing a civilizational transition in which geopolitical and health crises act as catalysts for overcoming an anthropocentric and unequal model. It is argued that exacerbated individualism and predatory exploitation have reached their limits, revealing the collapse of structures that prioritize competition over cooperation. The solution lies in Spiritual Intelligence (SQ), a capacity that enables individuals to reframe suffering and act as agents of ethical transformation. From a systemic perspective, society is described as an interdependent organism; therefore, environmental balance and social justice are inseparable from inner reform. The text emphasizes the ethics of otherness and humility as pillars of a new paradigm, urging conduct guided by sustainability and compassion to ensure survival in the Anthropocene and collective moral evolution.

Keywords: Civilizational Transition. Spiritual Intelligence. Systemic Interdependence. Ethics of Otherness. Planetary Sustainability.

RESUMO

O artigo propõe que a humanidade atravessa uma transição civilizatória, onde crises geopolíticas e sanitárias atuam como catalisadores para a superação de um modelo antropocêntrico e desigual. Argumenta-se que o individualismo exacerbado e a exploração predatória atingiram seu limite, evidenciando a falência de estruturas que priorizam a competição em detrimento da cooperação. A solução reside na Inteligência Espiritual (QS), capacidade que permite ao indivíduo ressignificar a dor e agir como agente de mudança ética. Sob uma visão sistêmica, a sociedade é descrita como um organismo interdependente; logo, o equilíbrio ambiental e a justiça social são indissociáveis da reforma íntima. O texto enfatiza a ética da alteridade e a humildade como pilares para um novo paradigma, urgindo por uma conduta pautada na sustentabilidade e na compaixão para garantir a sobrevivência no Antropoceno e a evolução moral coletiva.

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Palavras-chave: Transição Civilizatória. Inteligência Espiritual. Interdependência Sistêmica. Ética da Alteridade. Sustentabilidade Planetária.

RESUMEN

El artículo propone que la humanidad atraviesa una transición civilizatoria en la que las crisis geopolíticas y sanitarias actúan como catalizadores para superar un modelo antropocéntrico y desigual. Se argumenta que el individualismo exacerbado y la explotación depredadora han alcanzado su límite, evidenciando el colapso de estructuras que priorizan la competencia en detrimento de la cooperación. La solución reside en la Inteligencia Espiritual (IE), capacidad que permite al individuo resignificar el dolor y actuar como agente de transformación ética. Desde una visión sistémica, la sociedad es descrita como un organismo interdependiente; por lo tanto, el equilibrio ambiental y la justicia social son inseparables de la reforma interior. El texto enfatiza la ética de la alteridad y la humildad como pilares de un nuevo paradigma, instando a una conducta guiada por la sostenibilidad y la compasión para garantizar la supervivencia en el Antropoceno y la evolución moral colectiva.

Palabras clave: Transición Civilizatoria. Inteligencia Espiritual. Interdependencia Sistémica. Ética de la Alteridad. Sostenibilidad Planetaria.

1 INTRODUCTION: THE CRISIS AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.

This reflection proposes an analysis of the lessons arising from socio-structural conflicts, understanding the current scenario as a period of civilizational transition. This historical interval is characterized by deep socio-structural antitheses, which have been intensely evidenced and catalyzed by the global geopolitical crisis.

It is observed, primarily, the persistence of an anthropocentric and hierarchical paradigm, in which the belief in human supremacy over the ecosystem is replicated in interpersonal relationships, manifesting itself in forms of domination based on gender, race, color and nationality. Such structural prejudices fuel latent conflicts that prevent the consolidation of a perennial global peace.

In the economic sphere, the indicators reveal a critical conjuncture: paradoxically to technological advances, we currently observe the emergence of hundreds of millions of new individuals in situations of extreme vulnerability. The geographical disparity accentuates this imbalance, evidencing a nutritional and developmental dichotomy between the Northern Hemisphere — marked by pathologies resulting from overconsumption — and the Southern Hemisphere, notably the African continent, which faces serious subsistence crises.

Data from Credit Suisse's *global wealth report* (2021) corroborate the magnitude of this inequality, indicating that only 1% of the world's population (the stratum of billionaires) holds about 46% of accumulated global wealth. This concentration of capital is reflected locally in the coexistence of opulence and pockets of abject poverty. Ultimately, the contemporary scenario exposes the failure of a model of exacerbated individualism, highlighting the urgency of a transition to thoughts and policies of a collective and integrating nature.

2 SYSTEMIC INTERDEPENDENCE: FROM INDIVIDUALISM TO THE SOCIAL ORGANISM

The universality of suffering imposed by the contemporary crisis requires a review of ethical conduct and the understanding of humanity as an integrated and interdependent system. From a sociological and systemic perspective, the individual must be understood as a constituent unit of a collective social organism, in which the commitment of one of its parts inevitably has repercussions on the system as a whole. This interconnection is not limited to interpersonal relationships, but extends in a visceral way to the ecosystem balance, involving fauna, flora, and the environment as indispensable variables for human survival.

However, an intrinsic duality is observed in human agency. The same subject capable of ecocentric and unethical behaviors — promoters of exclusion and inequality — holds the potential for the mobilization of virtues such as altruism, a sense of justice, and creativity in

favor of social progress. This dichotomy suggests that social pathologies are not merely exogenous; Often, human behavior itself acts as the vector for "illness" in relationships. Consequently, the resolution of global crises lies less in external interventions and more in the ethical reorientation of human behavior.

The severe social isolation resulting from the management of the pandemic, for example, acted as a forced psychosocial experiment, exposing the fragility of pre-existing relational structures. The statistical increase in the rates of marital dissolution, generational conflicts, and the alarming growth in suicide rates and mental disorders show a crisis of adaptation and psychological support.

Furthermore, the period revealed a transfer of pedagogical responsibility: the excessive dependence of school institutions for the mediation of the basic education of children became evident when families were compelled to live together uninterruptedly. In short, the pandemic scenario not only tested the biological resilience of the species, but also worked as a catalyst for reflection on the need for a more robust collective conscience and mental health based on the quality of human bonds.

3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF COLLECTIVE SCOURGES AND THE LAW OF PROGRESS

The understanding of war conflicts and other collective scourges requires an analysis that transcends instincts, entering the field of natural laws and human moral development. From this perspective, such events are configured as mechanisms of improvement, which impel the individual to exercise intelligence, resilience and otherness. The crisis acts, therefore, as a catalyst for virtues such as self-denial and love of neighbor, counteracting the tendencies of selfishness and vanity that often stagnate social progress.

The interpretation of these phenomena is based on the understanding of a law of cause and effect, of a universal and ethical nature. According to this principle, for every imbalance or abuse committed — whether through ignorance or deliberation — a proportional correction is manifested in the opposite direction. Such failures, although committed individually, often aggregate in collective dimensions, involving families, peoples and entire populations. Consequently, the ethical infractions of a society in relation to its environment and its fellow human beings require reparation supported by the same natural legislation that governs life.

The destructive scourges are, therefore, reflections of this corrective dynamic. As we have been taught in spiritual traditions, the perception of "evil" or "harm" is due to a strictly personal and immediate vision. From the perspective of the Law of Progress, such upheavals

are necessary instruments to accelerate the transition to a higher social order, allowing moral and organizational advances, which would take centuries, to be consolidated in a few years.

The contemporary scenario reflects the past actions of man in relation to the environment and relational structures. When projecting the post-pandemic period, it was observed that the notion of a "return to normality" was conceptually fragile, since the previous model of life proved to be dysfunctional. History, marked by events such as the Black Death and the Spanish Flu, reiterates that renewal is an evolutionary constant. In the face of the impact of the current crisis, the central issue shifts from mere biological survival to the need to open new ethical paths, fundamental for the construction of a new global reality.

4 SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PATH TO RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION

In the face of the deep humanitarian and political crisis that characterizes contemporaneity – manifested in warlike conflicts, geopolitical instabilities and collective tragedies – the need to identify ways to build a new global paradigm is imposed. The search for a transformed world requires a holistic understanding of the difficulties faced, based not only on technical solutions, but on a profound ethical and moral reform.

In this context, Danah Zohar's work on Spiritual Intelligence (QS) offers a relevant theoretical basis. QS is defined as the human ability to give meaning and value to actions, allowing the individual to transcend the condition of victim of circumstances to become an active agent of change. The transformation of the social structure depends intrinsically on the modification of the units that compose it: the individual. By reorienting personal values, the subject alters the family microenvironment and, consequently, the macrostructural relations in his community, acting as a vector of moral regeneration.

The recent health crisis and the imposed social isolation and the current belligerent litigation have served as catalysts for this reflection. The distancing from affections and the vulnerability of risk groups showed that collective challenges are opportunities for the exercise of resilience and the review of priorities. The civilizational ideal lies in the transition from a self-centered love to a conscious altruism, although it is observed that a majority of the global population has not yet awakened to this need for systemic cooperation.

Unlike the logic of classical natural selection, which favors competition and the survival of the fittest, the evolution of human relations in the twenty-first century points to cooperation as a requirement for sustainability. Achieving common global goals requires a synergy that eliminates predatory competition between nations and individuals. Viktor Frankl corroborates this thesis by stating that the perception of meaning in life is linked to mutual utility. Human

survival is essentially a process of interdependence: the modern individual is sustained by an invisible network of other people's labor, which provides everything from food subsistence to the technological apparatus.

Therefore, overcoming existential emptiness, which often leads to despair in moments of social conflict, depends on the discovery of a higher purpose. Self-discovery and epistemological humility are essential tools in this process. Recognizing oneself as an integral part of a complex system requires the acceptance of otherness and the multiplicity of perspectives. Just as visual perception phenomena admit different interpretations, social and moral realities demand the understanding that there are several legitimate points of view, with humility being the only path to peaceful coexistence and humanitarian integration.

5 THE ETHICS OF ALTERITY AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE NOW IN SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

The development of humility in all spheres of existence is a fundamental pillar for the health of human relationships and collective progress. From the perspective of Spiritual Intelligence, it is understood that knowledge is not a static or hierarchical structure; on the contrary, it is a dynamic system of exchange. In the social fabric, the contribution of each individual — regardless of his or her technical function or socioeconomic *status* — has intrinsic value. The exchange of experiences in community reveals that wisdom is omnipresent: both the holder of high academic degrees and the operational worker have knowledge that, when integrated, promotes the evolution of the group.

The main obstacle to this integration is the persistence of egocentric traits, such as pride and vanity. Such characteristics are counterposed by the principles of Christian ethics, which, interpreted as a treatise on humanistic psychology, points to humility as the basis of blessedness and balance. The historical figure of Christ exemplifies the reversal of traditional power paradigms: while the logic of the physical plane reveres authority based on command and subordination, spiritual ethics proposes that true greatness lies in the attitude of service. The transition from "I" to "we" requires the overcoming of manipulative behaviors, whether conscious or unconscious, in favor of a conduct based on social utility and cooperation.

With regard to temporal perception, the existential mistake of inhabiting anachronistic dimensions is observed: guilt associated with the past and anxiety projected into a hypothetical future. Spiritual Intelligence advocates valuing the present moment as the only viable space for action and transformation. The past must be re-signified as a process of learning through trial and error, devoid of punitive burdens, while the future is understood as a construction resulting

from immediate choices. This "conscious presence" allows the individual to take responsibility for building his own destiny.

Furthermore, the intrinsic connection between beings and the environment emphasizes individual responsibility over the collective psychosphere. According to the principles of Zohar, the emotional and ethical state of the individual directly affects the network of connections in which he is inserted. States of negativity or hope are not isolated; they spread and contaminate or elevate the work environment and the family nucleus.

The search for truth requires a critical and investigative posture in the face of the saturation of contemporary information. The passive acceptance of digital narratives without due intellectual questioning compromises the integrity of knowledge. Autonomous thinking, supported by research and diligent study, is the essential requirement for the awakening of consciousness and for the consolidation of a society based on real and verifiable values.

6 INTELLECTUAL ETHICS, EXISTENTIAL PURPOSE, AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF COMPASSION

The maintenance of ethical and intellectual principles must be dissociated from arrogance, behavior that proves to be particularly deleterious in the political environment. Erudition and eloquence, when used as instruments of superiority, often act as defense mechanisms to hide vulnerabilities and uncertainties intrinsic to the subject. From the perspective of Spiritual Intelligence, intellectual maturity is manifested in the celebration of diversity and in the acceptance of otherness without a priori value judgments. Diplomatic dialectics must prioritize the debate of ideas and ideals to the detriment of personal disqualification, recognizing the limitation of human judgment, which is invariably partial because it does not know the totality of the existential trajectory of the other.

The investigation of the purpose of life and the individual vocation is an imperative for overcoming mass behavior and social conformity. The relevance of an ideal is measured by the resilience and equanimity demonstrated by its proponents in the face of adversity. Historically, the introduction of disruptive paradigms has been accompanied by resistance and social stigma. Notable examples include Giordano Bruno, whose cosmological model challenged geocentrism; James Watt, whose steam technology was initially underestimated; and Horace Wells, who faced skepticism from the medical community by proposing the feasibility of anesthesia. Such trajectories demonstrate that scientific and social progress often requires personal sacrifice for the sake of an ulterior collective benefit.

In this sense, the experience of compassion — understood etymologically as the ability to internalize the pain of others — is established as the foundation of a new planetary consciousness. The practice of humility, exemplified by the self-perception of one's own finitude in the face of the magnitude of the cosmos, is essential to mitigate the anthropocentric vision that subordinates nature and animals to human interests.

The consolidation of this new paradigm requires a revolution in contemporary thought, transcending the political sphere and reaching the educational base. The insertion of philosophy in the curricula of elementary and secondary education presents itself as a fundamental pedagogical strategy for the development of individuals capable of valuing others and understanding the power of the mind in the construction of an integrated and ethical reality.

7 PLANETARY SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ETHICS OF HUMAN CONDUCT: AN EVOLUTIONARY SYNTHESIS

The understanding that human existence occurs in a global community system imposes the imperative need for environmental preservation. Since the Rio+20 conference, the global agenda has been guided by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to eradicate poverty and biospheric protection by 2030. In the current stage, called the Anthropocene, human activity has altered the geological and biological balance of the Earth in a century more drastically than in the last four millennia.

According to researcher Johan Rockström, humanity has already exceeded several of the nine Planetary Boundaries, including biodiversity loss and ocean acidification. In this context, the law of action and reaction manifests itself as a systemic correction to environmental abuses. An effective response to this scenario lies in changing consumption patterns, specifically in the transition to plant-based diets. The production of animal protein is responsible for the massive emission of methane and the disproportionate consumption of water and territorial resources. The adoption of vegetarianism is, therefore, presented as a strategy of double efficacy: it mitigates environmental degradation and acts in the prophylaxis of chronic non-communicable diseases.

The lessons we must draw from the current crisis need to transcend the economic sphere, challenging society to modernize interpersonal relationships and humanize the very spirit of collectivity. The centrality of the problem lies in human conduct; As Socratic thought postulates, the negative consequences we reap are the result of the causes we plant. Moral virtue, in this perspective, is understood as a consequence of habit. The individual and collective

character is consolidated through the repetition of just and courageous acts, making conduct the main determinant of human destiny.

Regarding the challenge of maintaining humility in a competitive and self-centered global environment, Spiritual Intelligence suggests that arrogance functions as a psychological compensation for inferiority complexes. Overcoming this state requires the recognition of otherness — seeing one's neighbor as a peer. Tools such as meditation and mindful consumption help develop compassion and reduce human reactivity.

The transition to a more just and compassionate world resembles historical processes of generational renewal: just as new generations inherit and transform cultural values, today's children grow up under a new environmental and social ethic. Although religion acts as a mediating social experience, the ultimate goal must be the modification of the individual moral core. The preservation of the environment for future generations requires more than superficial actions; It demands a deep awareness of the impact of daily habits. The conclusion of this study reiterates that human evolution is inseparable from the practice of love, the continuous search for knowledge, and the understanding that systemic justice governs all phenomena of life.

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