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Research Paper



Synchronicity- Some Perspectives and its Comparison with PSI

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ABSTRACT

Synchronicity is a meaningful acausal coincidence of two or more events having infinitely small probability of occurrence. The idea of Synchronicity was first put forward by Carl Jung and since then this topic has been of interest to many thinkers and still it is being discussed and debated. If you type synchronicity on the internet, you will find a flood of articles on the subject. This paper is slightly different as it looks at it in a structured way by exploring different facets of Synchronicities starting with its definition and meaning, dissecting its components to reach deeper into its meaning, and exploring how to recognize incidences of synchronicity. Being a Parapsychologist, my interest is in psi; psi experiences are also rare and spontaneous and because of rarity and spontaneity, these also appear to be coincident happenings. The paper will also look into their similarity and differences when compared with synchronicities

Keywords: Synchronicity, Coincidences, Meaningful Coincidences, Acausal Coincidences

Just imagine that while walking on a road, you are thinking about changing your job and the wind makes a part of a newspaper get entangled between your legs. When you pick it up and look at it, it shows you an advertisement for a vacancy suiting your profile. This is synchronicity—a meaningful coincidence without a cause for its happening.

In our lives, many meaningful coincidences spring up before us without any apparent reason or cause.

Imagine this one-- On one hot summer afternoon, while walking to your home, you get a sensation of coldness on your face and rains drench you while the sun is shining!!

Or this--While walking in a forest, you feel threatened by a thought about a snake and you see a peacock appear from nowhere and start spreading its wings as if overjoyed compelling it to dance and you realize the peacock has a connection with the snake as it eats them!!

One more example--While engrossed in working on a problem in a factory, you remember your able subordinate (good at solving such problems) who is on tour and precisely at that moment the door of your cabin opens and your subordinate enters. He had cut short his trip as his wife suddenly got admitted to the hospital and is now out of danger!!

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One such example is elucidated by Tanya Carroll Richardson¹⁻⁻⁻ if you notice that you're feeling unsure about whether or not you should go ahead and invest in a trip to Hawaii, and right then you happen to glance ahead of you in traffic and you notice a Hawaii license plate or a license plate frame that says *Aloha Spirit*, go ahead and receive that message from the Universe: Hawaii, here you come."

Some examples by Ella Palfreyman²:

- Seeing an animal, person or other significant objects in your waking life that you have just dreamed of.
- Receiving an offer of help before you asked for it.
- Chance meetings with people who change your mind/ offer an opportunity/ or introduce you to someone else who is significant.
- Finding something (that was lost) just when you need it.
- Obstacles that appear to prevent you from doing something, which you later realize could have harmed or impacted your life in some way.
- Repeated sightings of a special symbol, colour, name or animal.

Many of the above incidents are taken from literature, I give below an incident which was personally experienced by me:

I remember an incident while we (me and wife) were on a trip to Dubai to celebrate our marriage anniversary. We had planned our itinerary in such a way that on the date of our wedding anniversary, we were on an evening cruise in a double-decker boat which took us sailing on the water. There were more than fifty tourists on the cruise and we were enjoying the evening. There was music, ballet and also dinner was served. We were pleasantly surprised when suddenly a song started playing which conveyed a wish for a happy wedding anniversary! None of the organizers knew that it was our wedding anniversary day!! What a meaningful acausal coincidence!!!

Maybe it was not synchronicity, because it could be possible that there might be some couple with the same date of marriage could be on board and they could have informed them about their anniversary and hence this may be the cause for the birthday music. But could it still not be synchronicity that we who had the same marriage date boarded the same cruise?

While onto this paper, synchronicity seems to hover around me! It so happened that today I and wife went to a restaurant for lunch. Having placed the order, I was seeing what's app messages on my phone when I noticed a message from my sister wishing happy birthday to my sister-in-law. I showed this message to my wife who said that it is wrong, her birthday is next month on the same date. While we were discussing this, there started loud music in the restaurant cheering someone for a birthday. We found that at our next table, a family was celebrating the birthday of one of its members. We were surprised by the coincidence—a meaningful acausal coincidence having an infinitely small probability of occurrence— is it synchronicity?

Above happenings always point to two independent incidents which happen without any apparent cause interlinking them but the happenings of these have an important meaning for people witnessing these incidents. These baffle us and we are left wondering about the acausal meaningful coincidences!!

The above examples make it clear that there can be apparently acausal independent events (one objective and the other subjective) which occur in a way that provides an important meaning to a person. The phenomenon is termed Synchronicity.

Synchronicity fascinated me when I started exploring psi after doing my advanced certificate course in Parapsychology. Both phenomena psi and synchronicity appear to come out as coincidences where the events happen spontaneously and have a surprise element in them. I was fascinated by such occurrences and decided to explore these.

This paper looks at different facets of Synchronicities starting with its definition and meaning, dissecting its components to reach deeper into its meaning, and exploring how to recognize incidences of synchronicity. I will also explore whether synchronicity can be made to occur at our will i.e. can we tame it and invoke it with some effort? The other part of the paper is close to my heart. Being a Parapsychologist, my interest is in psi; psi experiences are also rare and spontaneous and because of rarity and spontaneity, these also appear to be coincidences which baffle us. I shall look into their similarities and differences when compared with synchronicities......

Let us begin with understanding the meaning of Synchronicity

Meaning of Synchronicity

Synchronicity is broadly defined as the occurrence of meaningful coincidences that seem to have no cause; that is, the coincidences are acausal.

J. Piirto³ gives an account of how the concept of synchronicity got developed and how it plays a role in mindfulness.

"The concept of synchronicity began with Carl Jung in the first part of the twentieth century. He theorized that certain unique or synchronistic events had meaningful connections based on perception and apprehension. Jung wrote, "I found where 'coincidences' which were connected so meaningfully that their 'chance' concurrence would represent a degree of improbability that would have to be expressed by an astronomical figure." While Jung started the research into the idea of synchronicity for the first time, it was not until the 1970s that studies surfaced about interpersonal synchronicity with the interaction of mothers and their infants. Since then, synchronicity has also been analyzed in other types of relationships. These studies have revealed that interpersonal synchronicity is an optimal experience. Studies have also shown that synchronicity and social interaction alter the neural system of the brain. In addition, research has indicated that mindfulness influences synchronicity and actually improves the relationship between two people."

Carl Jung defined synchronicity as an "acausal connecting (togetherness) principle," "meaningful coincidence", "acausal parallelism" or "meaningful coincidence of two or more events where something other than the probability of chance is involved."---Carl G. Jung (1960), Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle, Princeton University Press, 2012, p. 44. (https://artsofthought.com/2020/05/30/carl-jung-synchronicity/)

As per Collins dictionary -Synchronicity is an apparently *meaningful* coincidence in time of two or more similar or identical events that are *causally unrelated*.

As per Macmillan Dictionary- Synchronicity is a situation in which two or more things happen at the same time and seem to be connected even if they are not.

John Palmer⁴ relates the experience of Carl Jung who coined the term Synchronicity to bring out its meaning:

A famous example of a synchronistic event occurred during a therapy session by Carl Jung with one of his patients:

The example concerns a young woman patient who, in spite of efforts made on both sides, proved to be psychologically inaccessible. Jung says that the difficulty lay in the fact that she always knew better about everything... After several fruitless attempts to sweeten her rationalism with a somewhat more human understanding, I had to confine myself to the hope that something unexpected and irrational would turn up... I was sitting opposite her one day, with my back to the window, listening to her flow of rhetoric. She had had an impressive dream the night before, in which someone had given her a golden scarab a costly piece of jewellery. While she was still telling me about this dream, I heard something behind me gently tapping on the window. I turned around and saw that it was a fairly large flying insect that was knocking against the window pane... I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarabaeid beetle... whose gold-green colour most nearly resembles that of a golden scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words, "Here is your scarab." This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance. The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results. (Jung, 1951/1969, pp. 525-526)

The incident is a classic example of Synchronicity.

Since the time Carl Jung floated the concept of Synchronicity, many thinkers have posited different meanings to the concept and some of them are presented below.

Tanya Carroll Richardson¹ adds to the meaning of synchronicity by bringing out the differences between ordinary coincidence and Synchronicity:

What about when you're not sure if something is a synchronicity or a mere coincidence? Consider the example of pulling up to a packed grocery-store parking lot just as someone in the front row is leaving, helping you score a prime spot. You might park, high-five your passenger, and tell them, "I've always been lucky!" It's a fun moment that lifts your mood.

This is very different from if you set out for the grocery store feeling low and wanting reassurance that your guides are watching over you as you navigate life challenges. You pull up to a packed parking lot and have a car leave the front row. And you notice that not only is this an amazing spot, but the car that left was a red VW bug—the same car your mom always drove. You consider it a sign that your mom is winking at you from above. The moment is followed by chills or goosebumps, a message from your own intuition that the event is indeed a true synchronicity.

The above example expands the meaning of synchronicity and brings in divine intervention as a coincidence.

Kerr, Laura K.⁵ posits the meaning of Synchronicity as follows:

Synchronicity (German: *Synchronizität*) is a concept first introduced by analytical psychologist Carl G. Jung "to describe circumstances that appear meaningfully related yet lack a causal connection."

Frith Luton⁶ posits the following meaning: **Synchronicity** – A phenomenon where an event in the outside world coincides meaningfully with a psychological state of mind.

Synchronicity ... consists of two factors:

- An unconscious image comes into consciousness either directly (i.e., literally) or indirectly (symbolized or suggested) in the form of a dream, idea, or premonition.
- An objective situation coincides with this content. The one is as puzzling as the other. ["Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," ibid., par. 858.]

This brings the idea of events being objective and subjective and is told differently as she goes on to quote Daryl Sharp—Synchronicity is a phenomenon where an event from the outside world coincides meaningfully with a psychological state of mind.

Lastly, Merriam-Webster dictionary defines Synchronicity as follows:

The coincidental occurrence of events and especially psychic events (such as similar thoughts in widely separated persons or a mental image of an unexpected event before it happens) that seem related but are not explained by conventional mechanisms of causality—used especially in the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung.

All above indicate Synchronicity to be a meaningful coincidence which is acausal except the last one by Merriam Webster which tends to bring in telepathy and precognition within the purview of Synchronicity. This is a point of debate whether telepathy, precognition or for that matter even any of psi experiences can be categorized as events of synchronicity. The attempt of Merriam webster to arrive at this interpretation may have been caused due to striking similarities between these. This is debatable.

While Synchronicity is meaningful and causal, is psi causal? We shall explore this later in the paper.

Firstly, let us summarize the meaning of synchronicity as put forth by different people and arrive at a meaning which has the essence of all the thoughts of different thinkers. By assimilating the thoughts of different thinkers as stated in the above paragraphs we come to the following understanding of Synchronicity:

"Synchronicity is the occurrence of coincidences in time which are connected so meaningfully that their 'chance occurrence' is improbable and there seems to be no cause for their simultaneous occurrence i.e., the coincidences are acausal. The coincidences consist of an event outside the world and the other emanates from the psychological state of mind. In other words, Synchronicity is an acausal phenomenon where an event from the outside world coincides meaningfully with a psychological state of mind. Synchronicity ... consists of two factors: a) An unconscious image comes into consciousness either directly (i.e., literally) or indirectly (symbolized or suggested) in the form of a dream, idea, or premonition. b) An objective situation coincides with this content. The one is as puzzling as the other."

To understand the concept more deeply, we shall dissect its components and explore deeper to get at the precise meaning of Synchronicity.

Synchronicity terms explanation

The meaning of synchronicity will become clearer when we explore the components used in its above explanation.

Coincidences in time

The term "coincidence" describes a seemingly related series of events that occur without apparent cause and in time means that these happen at the same time i.e., the events happen simultaneously.

If we want to understand Synchronicity, we must understand the word, "Coincidence". It is not a coincidence in the ordinary sense. The coincidences are common and we experience them often in our lives. Though it's often not possible to test how likely a particular coincidence is, certain coincidences—like meeting someone with the same birthday—have a measurable probability. But if the coincidences do not have a measurable probability of occurrence and have very minimal probability it tends to become Synchronicity.

Synchronicities are much more than ordinary coincidences. The difference between ordinary coincidence and synchronicity is well brought out through examples Tanya Caroll Richardson¹ that was discussed earlier, I repeat it here as it is very apt to bring clarity in the meaning of coincidences which make them become synchronicity.

"What about when you're not sure if something is a synchronicity or a mere coincidence? Consider the example of pulling up to a packed grocery-store parking lot just as someone in the front row is leaving, helping you score a prime spot. You might park, high-five your passenger, and tell them, "I've always been lucky!" It's a fun moment that lifts your mood.

This is very different from if you set out for the grocery store feeling low and wanting reassurance that your guides are watching over you as you navigate life challenges. You pull up to a packed parking lot and have a car leave the front row. And you notice that not only is this an amazing spot, but the car that left was a red VW bug—the same car your mom always drove. You consider it a sign that your mom is winking at you from above. The moment is followed by chills or goosebumps, a message from your intuition that the event is indeed a true synchronicity.

The example makes amply clear the significance of some queer aspects which makes a coincidence to make it Synchronicity.

The next aspect which we shall dissect is meaningfulness in the definition of Synchronicity:

Meaningfulness in synchronicity

The concept of synchronicity is defined as "meaningful coincidences". We have seen in the examples that the experiencer can grasp a startling meaning as soon as synchronicity happens. The meaning of coincidences is evident and the experiencer gets baffled by the meaning that dawns on him/her. The meaning manifests to the experiencer in a flash of seconds after the coincidence happens. Experiencer, not for a moment thinks that what he is understanding may not be real!

But is the meaning really real? Is it not hallucinatory? Is it, not a virtual reality created by the brain because the experiencer wants it that way?

As per the staff of Psychology today⁸, many scientists hold the idea of meaningfulness as projected in synchronicity is unscientific. Many argue that factors such as confirmation bias offer a more compelling explanation: People seek out information to support their ideas and ignore information that challenges them.

Confirmation bias makes us seek out and prefer information that supports our pre-existing beliefs. *Confirmation bias* is the tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and recall information in a way that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values. As a result, we tend to ignore any information that contradicts those beliefs. Confirmation bias is often unintentional but can still lead to poor decision-making. Many scientists believe that 'Meaningfulness' in synchronicity stems from confirmation bias which makes the experiencer draw a meaning where none exists.

Why does this confirmation bias manifest? The reason is that the human brain is designed to make patterns out of complex random events. For example, when you look at clouds, your brain tends to create a known shape in the cloud—you see a bear or find a herd of elephants strolling by. If you spill water on the floor and gaze at it, soon you will find a known shape emerging out of the flowing water. All these shapes which the mind creates are imaginary. In psychology, this characteristic of the brain is termed *Pareidolia*.

Pareidolia is a topic not known to the common man. It is a weird topic which reveals how the brain can fool us. We might have been deceived by looking at clouds and observing a face staring at us or could figure out an image from the water spilt on the floor. (Naresh Kumar⁹)

Pareidolia is the tendency to perceive a specific, often meaningful image in a random or ambiguous visual pattern. The scientific explanation is the human ability to see shapes or make pictures out of randomness. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pareidolia)

The human brain is designed to identify and even create patterns where none exist. While this tendency can be useful, it may lead someone to over-interpret a random occurrence or perceive a pattern where none exists. Individuals vary in their tendency to recognize patterns; those who ascribe greater significance to patterns may be more likely to notice them.

As per a school of thought, when coincidences happen, these patterns emerging from our brains create conformation bias and people start imagining meanings in the coincidences. For that matter, the coincidences could be just mere chance coincidences and devoid of meanings but Pareidolia forces the brain to create patterns by throwing up meanings out of subconscious memories and beliefs.

The scientific community strongly believes that the meanings of synchronicities are imaginary and are resulting out of Pareidolia hence they term Synchronicity as Pseudoscience.

The views may shock the synchronicity experiencer who had genuinely grasped a meaning in coincidences. While synchronicity may get termed as pseudoscience due to many scientists believing that the meanings drawn are not real but are imaginary and their manifestation may be due to 'Confirmation bias' and 'Pareidolia'; there is a flip side to it where some philosophers tend to attach a deeper meaning to the meanings in synchronicity and their spiritual claim is that the meanings may point to some divine message which may guide the destiny of the experiencer. To many, it is the universe talking to the synchronicity experiencer through these coincidences.

Som Dutt¹⁰ posits the following views which emphasize Carl Jung's philosophy that synchronicity does have a deeper meaning which could be used to guide our lives:

"Carl Jung's philosophy will provide you with great insight. In Jung's eyes, the apparent meaningfulness of life is a result of synchronicity. He also believed that these meaningful coincidences do not exist by accident but are a reflection of our own personal journey in life. He believed that synchronistic events were a way of reinforcing an individual's path — further validating the "law of karma" or the idea that all events are connected and that one action can have a ripple effect throughout all aspects of life.

So, when something amazing or noteworthy happens seemingly out of the blue, it could be a sign that you're right on track to finding your true purpose in life.

Carl Jung believed that meaningful coincidences were actually unexplainable by cause and effect but instead had a spiritual or deeper meaning.

Jung's theory suggested that our connection to the collective unconscious could be the explanation. He argued that when two events happen at the same time, it could be because of a psychic connection between them and our experience of perceiving it as meaningful is due to a form of "intersubjectivity" — meaning we share the same understanding of what has happened and interpret it in a similar way.

Using these ideas, Jung concluded that these kinds of coincidences weren't random — they were actually signs from the unconscious self that held special meaning for us. In other words, our subconscious was trying to communicate with us through this unexpected form of synchronicity — an amazing thing to ponder!

Carl Jung's theory of synchronicity offers a powerful tool for understanding life decisions. He proposed that meaningful coincidences in our lives can act as signposts, guiding us to make decisions that are in line with our true selves.

His theory suggests that we can use these coincidences to gain insight into the collective unconscious and our place in the world. He argued that when we pay attention to the meaningful coincidences that occur in our lives, we can use these signs to make decisions that are in alignment with our innermost desires.

The spiritual meaning in synchronicity is seen by the editors of Goop¹¹:

Nothing happens by accident when your soul gets involved. It is the most intentional presence in your life whether you recognize its existence or not. Your soul is omniscient and ever-present. It informs your decision-making through the thoughts and images it provides. It is the essence that fuels your intuition. When you are certain of something it is your soul's voice that resounds from the depths of psyche. When a mysterious coincidence occurs, it is often the design of your soul's whimsical nature. Yes, the soul has a sense of humor and often speaks to us through metaphors, symbols, riddles, and clues. These hints require our full investigation in order to uncover their meaning.

The editors link spiritual meaning to Synchronicity.

Synchronistic experiences leave us with a curious sense that we should pay attention to. They happen when our inner worlds of thought and feeling connect with the outer world of people, places and things. If we think about something and then it appears there is a mystery involved that is both arcane and fascinating. Perhaps our soul is extending its collaborative spirit so that we may become aware of something that requires attention. Perhaps it is simply a coincidence. This depends wholly on what you are willing to believe. To claim certainty regarding such an esoteric concept would assert that we are wiser than the greatest minds of modern psychology. Many conflicting theories claim to define the nature of synchronicity. Scientists perform delicately balanced experiments in an attempt to capture its elusive meaning. Astrologers look to the stars for answers and create vast equations to define their erratic movements. Psychologists argue with physicians and claim jurisdiction over steins of darkened beer. Bible-toting evangelists assert God's will as the chanting mystics dance around the fire.

Roderick Main¹² outlines four layers of meaning to synchronicity using the example described in this paper regarding Jung hearing a dream from one of his patients I repeat the dream here once again so that one can better understand the four layers of meaning using the dream as a reference to context.

the example concerns a young woman patient who, in spite of efforts made on both sides, proved to be psychologically inaccessible. The difficulty lay in the fact that she always knew better about everything...After several fruitless attempts to sweeten her rationalism with a somewhat more human understanding, I had to confine myself to the hope that something unexpected and irrational would turn up...I was sitting opposite her one day, with my back to the window, listening to her flow of rhetoric. She had had an impressive dream the night before, in which someone had given her a golden scarab a costly piece of jewellery. While she was still telling me about this dream, I heard something behind me gently tapping on the window. I turned around and saw that it was a fairly large flying insect that was knocking against the window pane...I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarabaeid beetle...whose gold-green colour most nearly resembles that of a golden scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words, "Here is your scarab." This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance. The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results. (Jung, 1951/1969, pp. 525-526)

This example is used by Main to explain four layers of meaning of Synchronicity: Jung himself did not present a systematic account of how he understood meaning in synchronicity. However, Robert Aziz (1990), in his close examination of the concept of synchronicity in relation to Jung's psychology of religion, was able to identify 'four interrelated layers of meaning' implied in Jung's discussions of synchronistic experiences (pp. 64–66, 75–84).

The first of these levels is simply the fact of two or more events paralleling one another. The paralleling is by virtue of a shared content or meaning, such as, in Jung's famous example, his patient's dream and the appearance of the insect at his consulting room window involving the same or very similar content of a

scarab or scarabaeid beetle. This understanding of meaning is expressed many times in Jung's (1952b) principal essay on synchronicity.

The second level of meaning consists of the emotional charge or 'numinosity' attending synchronistic events. Jung (1952b) notes the 'important role' that 'the emotional factor' plays in synchronicities (par. 846), which indeed are sometimes experienced as being 'dependent on affects' (par. 860). This emotional charge is a source of non-rational or pre-reflective meaning, suggested in Jung's example by the way in which, when the synchronicity occurred, his patient's 'rationalistic attitude' was sufficiently disturbed to enable her 'natural being' to 'burst through the armour of her animus possession' (par. 845). This level of meaning complements and destabilizes the first level, evoking beneath the rationally graspable paralleling of content between the psychic and physical events a dimension of deep emotionality, otherness, and ambiguity.

The third level of meaning is the significance of synchronistic events interpreted subjectively, from the point of view of the experiencers' personal developmental needs and goals, unconscious as well as conscious—in Jungian terms, their individuation. Although Jung, rather surprisingly for a psychotherapist, does not write much about this level of meaning in synchronicities, it is suggested by his comment regarding 'how much these inner experiences [viz. synchronicities] meant to my patients' (1952b, par. 816). More specifically, in his famous example, it is expressed by the way in which, following the synchronistic event and presumably also Jung's and the patient's attempts to understand it and relate it to the patient's situation, 'the [patient's] process of transformation could, at last, begin to move' (par. 845) and 'The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results (1951b, par. 982).

The fourth and last of the levels of meaning is the significance of the synchronicity objectively, that is, as the expression of archetypal meaning which is transcendental to human consciousness. From the symbolism of his example, Jung (1952b) infers that the objective, transcendental meaning involved was that of the archetype of rebirth, since 'The scarab is a classic example of a rebirth symbol' (par. 845). The greatest number of explicit references to meaning in Jung's essay concerns this objective or archetypal level. He refers to meaning that can 'exist outside the psyche' (par. 915), 'outside man' (par. 942), and is 'self-subsistent' (par. 944), 'transcendental' (par. 915), and *a priori* in relation to human consciousness' (par. 942)".

Thus, we can see totally conflicting views being attached to the meaning of coincidences in synchronicity. On one side a section of scientists believes that there is no real meaning to coincidences, it is only what you want to see or what makes you feel good and you see that even though it is only hallucination created by confirmation bias.

On the other side, there is a school of thought which sees spiritual meaning in the coincidences and they feel that it is the universe which is guiding your life through the coincidences. How else, the person walking on the street could get a newspaper get entangled in his legs which has an advertisement in the "situations vacant column" to fetch him the job which changed his

destiny. There are people who see the dark side of everything and there are people who see the bright side in the same thing. I have put both perspectives to the readers and leave it to their wisdom to extract the meaning for meaningfulness in synchronicities.

As for me I am totally convinced that the meaning arrived at in Synchronicity cannot be always triggered by confirmation bias, the narration of Roderick Main is a strong view that compels me to make this statement. I believe that there are real meanings attached to coincidences which constitute synchronicity and many a time the meanings emanate spiritually from the universe to provide us with the needed guidance at a critical juncture of our lives.

So much so for the meaningfulness and now let us move on to another component, *chance occurrence*, in the definition of synchronicity.

Coincidences with the chance occurrence

There are coincidences which happen only due to chance and others whose probability of occurrence can be calculated. I wish the readers to recall the example of a coincidence of having two people having the same birthday. Such a coincidence has a measurable probability and it varies on the size of a group of people in which you have two people having identical birthdays. It has been shown by Alessandro Baazi¹³ that

The probabilities of two people sharing their birthday are calculated statistically and it is found that:

- For a sample of 23 people, the probability is 50.7%
- For a sample of 30 people, the probability is 70.6%
- For a sample of **40** people, the probability is **89.1%**
- For **50** people, the probability is **97.0%**
- For a sample of **75** people, the probability is **99.97%**

Thus, the coincidence that two people share the same birthday is very probable if you choose at random a group of 75 people and the probability is at the chance level if you choose at random 23 people.

This type of coincidence having a measurable probability of occurrence is not a synchronicity.

Now consider the coincidence of a person getting a newspaper getting entangled on his legs while walking on a road and the vacant situations column in the paper gets him a job. Obviously, the probability of its happening is infinitely small and unmeasurable. This is synchronicity--if the coincidences do not have a measurable probability of occurrence and have very infinitely minimal probability it tends to become Synchronicity. But the example of the band playing "Happy Marriage Anniversary" on the cruise could not be synchronicity because another couple on board could have the same marriage anniversary; and its probability is not small. Next in line is understanding the component *of Acausal*

Acausal coincidences

Synchronicity are those coincidences which are acausal. It means that there is no causality between the two coincidences. For example, consider the person who is thinking about searching for a job and while walking a newspaper page gets entangled between his legs which has an advertised vacancy for him. There is nothing causal between his thought and

manifestation of the opportunity through the newspaper page which comes to him without any rhyme or reason.

The famous golden Scarab incident between Carl Jung and his lady patient is another example where there is no rhyme and reason for the appearance of the golden insect at the window precisely when the patient was describing dream of golden scarab jewellery. In occurrence of these coincidences i.e., there is no causality and the incidences are acausal and hence constitute synchronicity.

But there are times when coincidences happen which baffle us but there is a causal connection between them. We are baffled about the occurrence of the coincidences as these surprise us but there are some reasons which had caused the coincidence. The glaring examples are Telepathic incidences which baffle us but these happen due to mind-to-mind connections between people. The extra sensory ability in people causes telepathic incidences to happen and these coincidences have a causal base.

Consider Telepathic examples--- a thought comes into your mind about a friend who has been away for many years and you don't have any contact with him and precisely at this moment your mobile phone rings and you find that friend online. Such coincidences baffle us but these were caused by extra sensory perception of Telepathy.

Another such example quoted in my book ¹⁴:

Dean Radin (2006) in his book, "Entangled Minds" (pp21,22) gives an incident in the life of Mr. Hans Berger who gave the world "EEG":

One morning, while a young boy, Hans was on horseback during a training exercise, his horse suddenly reared. Hans was tossed into the air and he landed hard on the road, directly in the path of a fast-approaching, horse-drawn cannon. He realized with horror that he was about to be crushed, but the driver of the cannon managed to stop the horses in time. The accident left Hans thoroughly shaken but without serious injury.

Many years later, Hans wrote, "This is a case of spontaneous **telepathy** in which at a time of mortal danger, I transmitted my thoughts and my sister, who was particularly close to me, acted as the receiver".

Telepathy, a connection between two minds is not possible as per current laws of science but such incidents do happen and constitute coincidences which are caused by telepathy. Hans's sister had the capability of establishing mind-to-mind connection with her brother and this caused her to learn about the unfortunate condition of Hans. Thus, there is a cause for this coincidence to happen. Consider another example from the same book¹⁴---

"Joseph Murphy, an eminent writer, narrates queer and interesting incident:

A widow visited me last year, saying that her husband, shortly before his demise, had told her that he had made out a new will leaving all of his estates to her. But his lawyer knew nothing about it and he had a will made ten years back. She had searched everywhere but could not find the new will.

I suggested to her that she claimed, 'Infinite intelligence knows where the will is and reveals to me.'

She started praying and after three or four days of praying, she distinctly heard her husband's voice in the kitchen where she was ironing: 'Look up the 45th chapter of Isaiah.' She did and there she found the new will, attested by two witnesses, all in legal phraseology, dated and signed.

The after-death communication (ADC) from a dead person is beyond belief —"How could this happen?" Some people have the extra-sensory capability of communicating with people who are dead and this capability caused this incident. Such coincidences are unbelievable and mindboggling but these are not acausal; there is a cause behind these. And since there is a cause, this incidence also is not Synchronicity.

One more example from the same book:

Abraham Lincoln, some have said, was a clairvoyant who accurately predicted his own death. Whether this is true or just a coincidence is debated; however, the facts seem to tell a very interesting story.

Just days before Lincoln was shot, he told his wife of a dream that he had:

"He was woken up by the sound of crying and went into the East Room of the White House, where a casket was laid open. There was a throng of mourners as well as several men guarding the casket. When he asked who was in the casket, one of the soldiers told him that it was the President, who had been killed by an assassin."

Three days after telling his wife this dream, Lincoln was shot and killed by John *Wilkes Booth.* (https://biography.yourdictionary.com/abraham.lincoln)

This is the most profound incident and is mind-boggling. How could a person see into his future. Such coincidences are unbelievable but these have been caused by the extrasensory capability- Clairvoyant Premonition and since these have a causality aspect, the incident cannot be termed Synchronicity.

Let us take one more incident; this is from the book "Entangled Minds" by Dean Radin who talks about an event which had *Precognition* as a causal reason:

On September 10, 2001 midnight, Dr MacGregor was on a flight and managed to occupy vacant seats and tried to sleep as it was a long flight. In his own words, I emptied my mind of all thoughts, focused my attention on the muted roar of engines, and lay very still—more awake than ever.

In the evening it was almost imperceptible, the strange feeling that started to come over me. It began with an awareness of how absolutely still my body was. I wondered vaguely why it was so perfectly motionless and felt a strong urge to move it. The more I tried to move, however, the more I detected a kind of resistance. Something hard and unyielding surrounded my body, immobilizing it. Yes, I felt it clearly now, I was encased and held fast in concrete.....

The feeling of being imprisoned in concrete intensified—with it now was a sense of dread. I could not turn my head or move my arms or legs or expand my lungs with a deep breath of air. I was hopelessly trapped and on the verge of claustrophobic terror. And then the pain began. The concrete was moving. From all sides it was pressing on me, tighter and tighter, squeezing me with unbearable

Three thousand miles away, the World Trade Tower Centre was bursting into flames after being hit by aeroplanes. Thousands of lives ended that morning in the crush of concrete!!!!!!.......

Scientists do not believe that the future is predictable but real-life incidents do give proof that it is possible and happening of such coincidences are caused by the human extraordinary capability of Precognition. Since the above coincidence had a causal root, it was not a synchronicity.

The above phenomena are covered under psi and more on this when we discuss the comparison between psi and synchronicity.

We have discussed above several incidents- some have been caused by some phenomenon and have causal roots and there were incidents which did not have any cause for manifesting them.

The coincidences that do not have any cause attached to them are called *synchronicity*. Coincidence being acausal is a prime characteristic of synchronicity which makes it different from ordinary coincidences

The above discussions bring ample clarity about the acausal component of Synchronicity. Other terms in the definition, namely incidents from *the outside world* and incidents from a *psychological state of mind* need no elaboration as these are clear to all. Normal incidents which happen are the incidents from an external world like the appearance of a golden insect scarab on the window (in the famous incident by Carl Jung) is an incident from the outer world and the golden scarab jewellery in the dream of the patient is incident from the psychological state of mind.

The above paragraphs have dealt with all important aspects of Synchronicity and give us good clarity on its several perspectives. We shall examine one more perspective of synchronicity i.e., How to identify an event as an incidence of synchronicity before we move on to a comparison between psi and synchronicity.

Identifying a synchronicity incidence

During our lives, we experience coincidences very often and are surprised. But all the coincidences are not synchronicities. We have already discussed many perspectives of synchronicity and have ample clarity about these coincidences. But sometimes we may be in doubt to understand whether the experienced coincidence is ordinary coincidence or a synchronicity.

A few tips to identify synchronicities are provided by Esther¹⁵ in her paper:

How to recognize Synchronicity

If we're not living mindfully, sometimes we can go about our daily lives and not even notice the signs that are right in front of us. If you're not used to recognizing synchronicities in your own life, these three easy steps can help you get into the routine of doing so.

Step 1—Pay Attention: It sounds obvious... but are you really paying attention? If you spend most of your time using technology or going about your day on autopilot then you're not going to notice the signs and synchronicities around you (or enjoy the present moment as much, but that's a whole other topic). In order to recognize synchronicity you have to be aware of what is going on around you. Mindfulness techniques are an absolute must for this. Essentially, you want to slow down and exercise all of your senses. Actively engage with the world around you otherwise you're bound to miss out on important messages!

Step 2—Notice Repetition: This should, in theory, come naturally if you're paying attention – the more you pay attention, the more you notice things. Repetition is one of the biggest signs of synchronicity and something you should definitely be looking out for. When things are aligning, you will notice them most commonly in recurring events, things you see or things you hear. For example, you might hear the same phrase repeated by multiple different people—It will have a *clear* message

Step 3—Take Note: A handy tip when you notice something that may have significance is to **write it down.** Often, we'll forget things that may not seem huge at the time, but writing them down (no matter how big or small) helps us to track them over time and see how they play out.

It can also help us to notice further patterns that help us interpret what certain signs mean. For example, if you write down something that you think may have been a sign you can then determine if it was in fact a sign by seeing what events happen after it. Without acknowledging it and writing it down you're less likely to notice these sequences of events.

The above simple tips will help to identify whether the coincidence had been an event of synchronicity.

With this, we complete the exploration of perspectives of Synchronicity and we shall close this paper after making a comparison between synchronicity with psi. Let us explore this aspect in the following paragraphs.

Is psi a form of synchronicity?

You may be surprised why this topic. I shall shortly explain it but let me first acquaint the readers with psi.

Psi is comprised of phenomena of ESP, Psychokinesis and theories of after-life i.e., what happens after we die.

ESP, in turn, comprises of Telepathy, Clairvoyance and Precognition.

We discussed some examples of these while discussing the acausal component of synchronicity. Still, I will explain these phenomena very briefly. Perception of all these phenomena don't use the known five human senses, these happen and we perceive these without using the known five senses-seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. For example, Telepathy is mind to mind connection where communication seems to flow between people without the use of normal known channels of communication.

Clairvoyance is seeing through mind's eyes. Person having this capability can see without using his/her eyes and distances does not have any meaning for them; they can see things happening thousands of miles away. A true real-life incidence is for a clairvoyant person located thousands of kilometers away from his house. He learns in his mind about a fire

breaking out in the area where his house is located; the fire stops just few blocks from his house and he heaves a sigh of relief. He saw fire around his far distant house without using his eyes.

Precognition is seeing future through mind's eyes. People with this ability can foresee future events. We discussed examples of Abraham Lincoln who saw his death few days before he was shot.

Psychokinesis is Mind influencing matter. We all know Shakuni of Mahabharata who could influence the dice to bring out desired numbers. In current times, Uri Geller became very famous for his capability of Bending a spoon simply by gazing at it and using mind power.

Gazing must be sending some energy which influences matter. The subject is being researched and it has been proven in laboratories that Mind can influence matter.

Life after death is the queerest topic because no one knows what happens after death but real-life instances of reincarnation tend to suggest there is life after death. We don't get finished when we die. How else could be after death communications as we saw in the real-life example of a widow locating the lost will of her deceased husband through a communication from the dead husband.

Lot of research is going on about these topics by Parapsychological researchers around the globe.

Having learnt the term psi, I want you to recall examples of the different fields of psi. Be it a telepathic event wherein you remember a friend a long-lost friend and mobile rings and he is online and you exclaim at this weird coincidence or accident of Hans Berger giving chills to her sister miles away. Or be it a clairvoyance event wherein Abraham Lincoln sees himself in the coffin; Precognition of the 11/9 terrorist attack or an event of life after death detailing after-death communication where a widow gets a piece of vital information from her late husband.

All these events come under psi.

The events of psi are all spontaneous and rare and when they happen, they evoke a sense of awe and surprise at the rare coincidence. The same is the case with events of Synchronicity, they are also rare and spontaneous and baffle us with the rare coincidences they exhibit.

Both types of incidents are meaningful to the experiencers.

Both have a surprise element in them. Thus, there are many similarities between Synchronicity and psi and hence we are led to think about the relevance of Synchronicity and psi.

To explore the comparison, we need to find whether these similarities make them identical or do they differ in some respect which makes them different phenomena. Let us examine:

Causality aspect

John Palmer⁴ has much to say on this topic. He brings out great mutual admiration between the father of experimental parapsychology (study of experimental psi) and the father of Synchronicity Carl Jung and how they differed on the matter of causality in psi:

"Jung became acquainted with experimental parapsychology through the writings of J. B. Rhine, who was responsible for moving the field from its emphasis on spontaneous ("real-

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world") experiences, mediumship, and the question of post-mortem survival to controlled and statistically evaluated laboratory experiments with ordinary people, such as college students (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980⁷). Over a period of about 25 years beginning in 1934, Jung and Rhine exchanged a series of letters that were uniformly friendly in tone and indicated mutual admiration. Jung accepted Rhine's evidence for the validity of psychic processes and also considered these data as support for his theory of synchronicity. Jung even proposed to Rhine an experiment on retrocognition (psychic knowledge of past events), which Rhine tactfully rejected, pointing out that retrocognition cannot be differentiated operationally from contemporary psychic awareness. Rhine nonetheless welcomed Jung's support and repeatedly urged him to publish his thoughts in English. On the other hand, the two men agreed to disagree on whether the mechanism for psi was causal or acausal, with Jung, of course, defending acausality. However, Rhine's defence of causality was far from dogmatic." The stalwarts of psi and synchronicity disagreed on the causality aspect of their respective phenomena. Synchronicity has at its roots that the coincidences must be acausal; Carl Jung felt that psi events are also acausal but Rhine did not agree and posited that the psi events are causal.

While discussing the acausal aspect of Synchronicity, examples of psi were cited and arguments were put forth that all the psi coincidences were causal.

Thus, the first difference between Synchronicity and psi is that while psi coincidences have causal bases, synchronicity is acausal.

This alone makes the two phenomena different. There is one more reason to support the assertion that psi and synchronicity are distinctly different phenomena.

Element of probability

Synchronicity has an infinitely small probability of occurrence or in other words, the probability of its occurrence is so small that we cannot even measure it. Synchronicity has this element of rarity inherent in its definition.

Psi is totally different. It is possible to calculate its probability. Not only calculate; it is shown that these have a high probability of occurrence even higher than chance probability. While it is difficult to measure the probability of the occurrence of spontaneous psi incidents but it does not mean that these are improbable events. Whereas psi when taken to the laboratory by J B Rhine cleared this doubt. He took psi to the laboratory and was able to measure the probability of their occurrence, and he could prove that psi events had a high probability which is even higher than chance probability. His card-guessing experiments statistically proved that correct guessing of inverted cards had a probability higher than the chance level, thus proving that clairvoyance is just not a coincidence. Laboratory experiments for testing telepathy through Ganzfeld experiments established that Telepathic incidences were not chance coincidences abut had a probability much higher than chance probability.

Thus psi, unlike Synchronicity has a significant and measurable probability of its occurrence and makes it distinct from synchronicity.

This is a very vital factor to establish that there is no relevance between synchronicity and psi i.e., these are different phenomena.

With this realization that synchronicity and psi are totally distinctly different phenomena and have no relevance to each other, we come to the end of this paper.

We have explored in great detail the fascinating topic -Synchronicity and I hope the readers would have got good clarity about this puzzling phenomenon.

I conclude the paper by indicating that with some effort it is possible to invoke Synchronicity and make it happen at will. I invite you to watch a video which supports my assertion. The video captures the personal experience of a great parapsychologist Dean Radin who was totally stumped to observe synchronicity being invoked in his presence.

Please watch the video by tapping twice on the following link: (Source:https://youtu.be/6LUEE6dzPRw)

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