

## Unity vs Duality

In the Book of Mormon, in the second chapter of Nephi, there is a passage where Nephi's father, Lehi, says to his eldest son, Jacob, "... for there must be an opposition in all things. If not so, my first born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass; neither wickedness; neither holiness nor misery; neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must be a compound in one. Wherefore, if it should be one body, it must remain as dead, having no life, neither death nor corruption, nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility. Wherefore, it must have been created for a thing of nought; wherefore, there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation.

... the Lord God gave to man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.

...Now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen; but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state which they were, after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. They would have had no children; wherefore, they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. But, behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knows all things. Adam fell, that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy."

[2 Ne 1:81] For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things.

[2 Ne 1:82] If not so, my first born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass; neither wickedness; neither holiness nor misery; neither good nor bad.

[2 Ne 1:83] Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one;

[2 Ne 1:84] Wherefore, if it should be one body, it must needs remain as dead, having no life, neither death nor corruption, nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

[2 Ne 1:85] Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of nought;

[2 Ne 1:86] Wherefore, there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation.

[2 Ne 1:87] Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God, and his eternal purposes; and also, the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God.

[2 Ne 1:88] And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin.

[2 Ne 1:89] And if ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness.

[2 Ne 1:90] And if there be no righteousness, there be no happiness.

[2 Ne 1:91] And if there be no righteousness nor happiness, there be no punishment nor misery.

[2 Ne 1:92] And if these things are not, there is no God.

[2 Ne 1:93] And if there is no God, we are not, neither the earth, for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away.

[2 Ne 1:94] And now, my son, I speak unto you these things, for your profit and learning:

[2 Ne 1:95] For there is a God, and he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them is;

[2 Ne 1:96] Both things to act, and things to be acted upon;

[2 Ne 1:97] And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition;

[2 Ne 1:98] Even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter;

[2 Ne 1:99] Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man, that he should act for himself.

[2 Ne 1:100] Wherefore, man could not act for himself, save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.

[2 Ne 1:101] And I, Lehi, according to the things which I have read, must needs suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written, had fallen from heaven;

[2 Ne 1:102] Wherefore he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God.

[2 Ne 1:103] And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable for ever, he sought also the misery of all mankind.

[2 Ne 1:104] Wherefore, he said, unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies; wherefore he said, Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

[2 Ne 1:105] And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth.

[2 Ne 1:106] And they have brought forth children; yea, even the family of all

the earth.

[2 Ne 1:107] And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh;

[2 Ne 1:108] Wherefore, their state became a state of probation, and their time was lengthened, according to the commandments which the Lord God gave unto the children of men.

[2 Ne 1:109] For he gave commandment that all men must repent;

[2 Ne 1:110] For he shewed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents.

[2 Ne 1:111] And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen; but he would have remained in the garden of Eden.

[2 Ne 1:112] And all things which were created, must have remained in the same state which they were, after they were created; and they must have remained for ever, and had no end.

[2 Ne 1:113] And they would have had no children; wherefore, they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

[2 Ne 1:114] But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

[2 Ne 1:115] Adam fell, that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

[2 Ne 1:116] And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall.

[2 Ne 1:117] And because that they are redeemed from the fall, they have become free for ever, knowing good from evil;

In 1933, a displaced Polish scholar by the name of Alfred Korzybski published the first edition of his magnum opus, Science and Sanity, which introduced the general public to the term "General Semantics" and the nonAristotelian system of logic underlying it. As you may or may not know, newborn infants appear to be in what might be called an objectless state, in which they make no distinction between themselves and the rest of the world. It is believed that only through the mother's interactions with her infant, in her "mothering" of it, that there is established in the infant an awareness, first of all, of its own body as a reality separate and distinct from the rest of the world. This differentiation of self from the rest of the world occurs mainly between the second and eight months of life, a stage in which the infant is becoming increasingly aware of the existence of his mother, but has not yet had enough experience with the world to be able to

differentiate himself from her; and the infant behaves and functions as though he and his mother were a unity with one common boundary. Within this context, the child is developing memories of "good" or pleasurable experiences, first of all with the mother's breast (and later with an ever widening world of experience), and memories of "bad" or unpleasant experiences such as being hungry or cold or wet. And by establishing memories of his interactions with his mother, he is taking into himself those good and bad experiences which form the basis of his perception of the world.

Eventually, the growing child learns not only to classify some of his experiences as "good" and some as "bad," but also to make even finer distinction among his experiences: to think of one of the adults in his environment as "mother" and another one as "father," to drink "milk" or "water," to eat "breakfast" or "lunch" or "supper." He learns that he lies on a "bed" and sits on a "chair," and so on; and in this way he is able to make at least a limited amount of sense of what has been called the "blooming, buzzing confusion" into which he was born.

The child's ability to form these concepts -- Korzybski calls "time binding" -- gives him an advantage over the rest of Nature in that it facilitates his adaptation to changes in his environment, giving first intellectual and then physical control over the things that go on around him. In effect, it enables him to at least temporarily break Newton's second law of physics, the progression of the universe towards greater entropy.

This inborn tendency of mankind to try to bring organization out of chaos is a very powerful one. However, the particular way in which we in Western society organize our experiences is based on the Aristotelian system of logic which characterizes most of the thinking of the English-speaking nations. In classical Aristotelian logic, it is taken for granted that all judgements about what goes on in the world can be broken up into simple statements in which something (a predicate) is asserted about something else (a subject) -- Examples are "water is wet," "grass is orange," and so on. It is assumed that such statements are either "true" or "false:" water is wet is a true proposition; grass is orange is usually a false one. In this system of viewing the world, things are either black or white, good or bad, psychologists or not psychologists, people or not people, and soon.

Our classification system seems to require a division of the world. As soon

as there is a class, there has to be what is inside of it and what is outside it. The separation between what is inside a class and what is outside of it seems to be as clear cut as that between a solid and a space, a figure and its background. And the separation, the difference, is what we notice, at least partly because it fits into our language system. We tend to ignore, on the other hand, and therefore to be ignorant about, aspects of our world which do not fit nicely into the way in which we ordinarily think and talk. Our language encourages us to think in terms of subject and predicate, actor and action, objects and their attributes; and it encourages us to read into nature fictional acting entities, simply because our verbs have to have some object in front of them. We have to say, for example, "it flashed," or "a light flashed," setting up an actor, a light, to perform what we call an action to flash, because that is the way our language is constructed. But this way of thinking about things has many disadvantages. Modern physics, chemistry and biology, for example, have had to discard our language in favour of the language of mathematics in order to continue to develop their ideas about the world and we cannot even understand the world as they see it because we do not even speak the same language. This is not true of all world languages. The Hopi Indian for example, is a better physicist than we are when he says "flash" -- one word for the whole performance, no subject, no predicate, no time element- than we are when we say "the light flashed." And the same is true of other languages such as Apache, Mayan, and Chinese. Perhaps an even greater disadvantage, however, is that we literally come to be at the mercy of the language which is the medium of expression in our particular society (Whorf, 1956). For example, around the storage of what are called "gasoline drums," behaviour will tend to be of a certain type. That is, great care will be exercised. While around the storage of what are called "empty gasoline drums," it will tend to be different: careless, with little repression of smoking or of tossing cigarette butts about. Yet the "empty drums" are actually more dangerous since they contain explosive gasoline vapour. Physically, the situation is hazardous, but the descriptions which we use must employ the word "empty" which inevitably suggests lack of hazard.

During the last hundred years, however, there has been such a profound revolution in the way in which both science and philosophy have come to view the world that we can no longer afford to remain ignorant of the meaning which these recent changes may have for our understanding and experience of reality. The essence of these recent discoveries is that whether it is describing chemical changes or biological forms, nuclear

structures or human behaviour, the language system employed is more productive if it is concerned with changing patterns of relationship rather than separate acting entities. It may seem, at first, that it is an affront to common sense to describe the world as patterns of relationship without needing to ask what "stuff" these patterns are "made of." But modern science affirms that the sensation of stuff arises only when we are confronted with patterns so confused or so closely knit that we cannot make them out. Take an orange, for example. It appears solid enough, but if you were to expand that orange to the size of the whole Earth, the atoms in that orange would still be only the size of grapes. And if you were then to expand those grape-sized atoms to the size of Toronto's new Skydome, the nucleus would still be no larger than a grain of salt. And all the rest of that space would be filled with nothing more than the probability of occurrence of an electrical charge, from time to time.

Now, modern psychiatry has not been totally oblivious to the field of general semantics and has begun to take advantage of some of this recent knowledge in its treatment of psychiatric patients. Psychiatrists, for example, have begun to think of the patient as the representative or emissary sent out by a family for treatment. Man can no longer realistically be thought of as a detached ego which merely acts upon the world. Rather, emphasis is beginning to be placed upon man as "being in the world", with emphasis on the dynamic, process character of being and on the fact that our being is necessarily in relation to the world. In this pattern, every push from within is at the same time a pull from without, arising mutually and simultaneously, so that it is always impossible to say which side of a boundary any movement begins on.

That is, the individual no more acts upon the world than the world acts upon the individual; and when an individual acts in a particular way, it is never demonstrable that he or she could have acted differently. Only by ignoring the full context of an action can it be said either that I did it freely or that I couldn't help it. I can try the same action again, and if it comes out differently, I can say that I could have done otherwise, but if the same, that I could not. But in the meantime, the context has, of course, changed. Thus, in a family, one starts out by blaming some identified individual for his behaviour, but then discovers that these symptoms are a response to, or an effect of, the relations between the members of the family, and that these relationships are a function of an infinite regression of causes stretching back to the beginning of time. With this realization, we will no

longer blame either the parents or children for their 'bad behaviour' but will instead think in terms of how family or other social relationships can be changed, in order to change the behaviour of the individuals involved, which should go along way towards alleviating many of our social ills. In terms of the potential offered by this new conception of the rule of language, however, even such a radical change as this is but a first faltering step. The next big step is what I would call the Second Gift of the Magi, for it is indeed magical, because following our previous line of thought to its logical conclusion, we realize that any classification system provides us only with units of description, perhaps useful to us in organizing our experience but not natural entities and not necessarily the best way in which to conceptualize events, and that all of the ideas that we have of the world and of ourselves are really social conventions which have no universal validity and which should not be confused with reality.

According to Capra (The Tao of Physics, 1975, P.27), throughout history, it has been recognized that the human mind is capable of two kinds of knowledge, or two modes of consciousness, which have often been termed the rational and the intuitive, and have traditionally been associated with science and religion, respectively. In the West, the intuitive, mystical type of knowledge is often devalued in favour of rational, scientific knowledge, whereas the traditional Eastern attitude is, in general, just the opposite. The Upanishads (one of the Vedas or Hindu scriptures), for example, speaks of a higher and a lower knowledge and associates the lower knowledge with the various sciences, the higher with religious experience. Chinese philosophy, on the other hand, has always emphasized the complimentary nature of the intuitive and the rational. Accordingly, two complimentary philosophical traditions -- Taoism and Confucianism -- have developed in ancient China to deal with the two kinds of knowledge.

Confucianism is a philosophy of social responsibility, the ethical basis for the traditional Chinese inter-generational family system with its ritual of social etiquette and obligation. Taoism, on the other hand, is concerned with teaching spontaneity and the wisdom of trusting in intuitive knowledge. In a book of profound Western Taoist wisdom,<sup>1</sup> we read:

“When you wake up in the morning, Pooh,” said Piglet at last,

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<sup>1</sup> The Tao of Pooh.

“what's the first thing you say to yourself?”

“What's for breakfast?” said Pooh. “What do you say, Piglet?”

“I say, I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?” said Piglet.

Pooh nodded thoughtfully. “It's the same thing,” he said.

“What's that?” the Unbeliever asked. “Wisdom from a Western Taoist,” I said. “It sounds like something from Winnie-the-Pooh,” he said. “It is,” I said. “That's not about Taoism,” he said. “Oh, yes it is,” I said. “No, it's not,” he said. “What do you think it's about?” I said. “It's about this dumpy little bear that wanders around asking silly questions, making up songs, going through all kinds of adventures, without ever accumulating any amount of intellectual knowledge or losing his simple minded sort of happiness. That's what it's about,” he said. “Same thing,” I said.

“When the Chinese mind came in contact with Indian thought in the form of Buddhism around the first century A.D., ... the pragmatic side of the Chinese mentality responded to the impact of Indian Buddhism by concentrating on its practical aspects and developing them into a special kind of spiritual discipline which was given the name Ch'an, a word usually translated as meditation. This Ch'an philosophy was eventually adopted by Japan, around A.D. 1200, and has been cultivated there, under the name of Zen, as a living tradition up to the present day.” Capra, 1975, p.124). Zen is concerned with the cultivation of intuitive awareness of reality (called Enlightenment or Satori) unmediated by the concepts of our abstract thought, the experience of reality as it really is rather than as we have constructed it to be.

Zen, like its predecessor Taoism, is convinced that such ultimate knowledge can never be apprehended by the intellect and can certainly never be put into words. Nevertheless, Zen masters have devised ways of helping their students to attain enlightenment, usually by pointing directly to the reality of immediate experience or by posing problems which cannot be answered in any rational way.

In Zen Buddhism, enlightenment is "the realization [at a gut level] that the universe is not external to you." (Kapleau, 1965, 1980). As the sixth Zen patriarch said: “The flag doesn't move, the wind doesn't move, only your mind moves.” Whatever is in your mind is the reflection of your mind,



therefore it is you. There is no universe separate from yourself. "The big clock chimes -- not the clock but mind chimes. The universe itself chimes. There is neither mind nor universe. Dong, dong, dong."

Enlightenment is believed to be something worth seeking, and Zen Buddhists spend many hours attempting to attain it. One Canadian Buddhist student, after many long years of study, felt that she had finally achieved that desired state and, in the aftermath of her enlightenment experience, wrote the following:

1. The world as apprehended by the senses is the least true (in the sense of complete), the least dynamic (in the sense of eternal movement), and the least important in a vast "geometry of existence" of unspeakable profundity, whose rate of vibration, whose intensity and subtlety are beyond verbal description.
2. Words are cumbersome and primitive - almost useless in trying to suggest the true multidimensional workings of an indescribably vast complex of dynamic forces, to contact which one must abandon one's normal level of consciousness.
3. The least act, such as eating or scratching an arm, is not at all simple. It is merely a visible moment in a network of causes and effects reaching forward into unknowingness and back into an infinity of silence, where individual consciousness cannot even enter. There is truly nothing to know, nothing that can be known.
4. The physical world is an infinity of movement, of time-existence. But simultaneously it is an infinity of silence and voidness. Every object is thus transparent. Everything has its own special character, its own karma or "life in time" but at the same time there is no place where there is emptiness, where one object does not flow into another.
5. The least expression of weather variation, soft rain or a gentle breeze, touches me as a - what can I say? - miracle of unmatched wonder, beauty and goodness. There is nothing to do: just to be is a supremely total act.
6. Looking into faces, I see something of the long chain of their past existence, and sometimes something of their future. The past ones recede

behind the outer face like ever-finer tissues yet are at the same time impregnated in it.

7. When I am in solitude, I can hear a song coming forth from everything. Each and everything has its own song: even moods, thoughts, and feelings have their finer songs. Yet beneath this variety they intermingle in one inexpressibly vast unity.

8. I feel a love which, without object, is best called lovingness. But my old emotional reactions still coarsely interfere with the expression of this supremely gentle and effortless lovingness.

9. I feel that consciousness which is neither myself nor not myself, which is protecting me or leading me into directions helpful to my proper growth and maturity, and propelling me away from that which is against that growth. It is like a stream into which I have flowed and, joyously, is carrying me beyond myself. (Kapleau, pp. 279, 280)

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“The truth is that everything is One, and this one is not a numerical one.”

“...fundamentally, not one thing exists,” for things are terms, not entities. There is no such thing as cow, for example. There is Mazie and Alice and so on, but “cow” is an abstraction, an idea rather than a thing. Its “existence” is confined to the world of thought (or conceptualization), not the concrete world of nature.

All distinctions are arbitrary. On the other hand, while Oneness is valuable, variety is also wonderful – as in “Vive la difference.”