

Ontological Interdependence and the Quantum Vacuum

The Problem of Knowledge Revisited

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There is not the slightest difference between samsara and nirvana.

—Nagarjuna

We have seen that our post-transcendental Principle of Ontological Interdependence informs us that the *conceptual* Two Truths of our Great Wisdom Tradition—the unbroken whole that is nondual, all-embracing reality of Ultimate Truth, and the pragmatic realm of Relative Truth, the surreal mindscape that is the reality of spacetime phenomenal particulars arising therein—are always an ontologically relative “prior unity” that is the immediate, immanent *transconceptual* one truth. Does this mean that the empirical, relative-conventional world of physical matter is merely an aspect or dimension of an organizing physical or material Unified Quantum Vacuum? Yes. Is this quantum “Zero Point Field” the ontologically prior unity of Absolute Truth and Relative Truth that is the one truth that is the emptiness matrix of non-conceptual, nondual primordial Spirit? We suggested above that it is not. Why not? The answer depends on the view, exoteric relative or esoteric ultimate. I have written elsewhere that *“Nondual Ultimate Reality that is Absolute Spirit cannot be reduced to, located in, or identified with dualistic finite physical spacetime particulars, not even gurus, deities, gods, or the nonlocal quantum vacuum potential.”* Rather, physical, mental, and spiritual relative spacetime phenomena, the furniture of the dimension of conventional, empirical Relative Truth—our perceptual and conceptual reality interpretations and designations—are all “located” in Absolute Spirit (a nontheistic panentheism), and abide in a relation of identity with it (pantheism). Spirit is “always already” the actual inherent nature of everything (panpsychism).

“From the beginning all beings are Buddha” (Hui Neng). It’s not that “everything *has* Buddha Nature,” rather, “everything *is* Buddha Nature.” “All *is* Brahman.” The greater esoteric or “innermost secret” view is that appearing spacetime reality with its perceiving beings arising from the nonlocal coherence of the Unified Quantum Vacuum already *is* Absolute Spirit Itself that is the nondual one truth, beyond or prior to discursive concept-mind. Perhaps we are not yet fully realized Buddhas, yet we are always Buddha. Who am I? We are all inherently the indwelling ultimate Buddha Reality (*Dharmakaya*). We are *Atman*, “The Bright” *Kham Brahm*, Nirguna Brahman, utterly empty of attributes. That is our original face, our intrinsic nature. That (*Tat*) is who we actually are. The radical nondual teaching of our Great Wisdom Tradition (*Dzogchen*, *Essence Mahamudra*, *Saijojo Zen*, *Tao*, *Advaita Vedanta*) is clear on this urgent point. Yes, *Spirit is in everything (Pantheism), because everything arises in Spirit (Panentheism). Thus Spirit pervades consciousness and all cognition (panpsychism). Spirit and matter, the paradigmatic perennial Two Truths are an ontically prior nondual consciousness unity.*

Again, the vast Primordial Awareness Wisdom (*gnosis, jnana, yeshe*) that is nondual Spirit is the actual identity of everything arising therein. The Unified Quantum Vacuum, all physical/mental reality *is* already transconceptual, post-transcendental nondual Absolute Spirit. The quantum vacuum with its quasi-objective, quasi-material spacetime reality arises in or

through the one truth that is nondual perfectly subjective Spirit. Yes, there is spacetime relative-conventional difference. There really is a real world out there (RWOT) arising not independently, but interdependently from the quasi-physical Quantum Vacuum. But this is all merely relative and conventional spacetime process with no absolute inherent existence, all located in nonlocal Absolute Spirit, Ultimate Truth. Here Middle Way (*Madhyamaka*) Buddhism and *Advaita* (nondual) *Vedanta* agree: there is no *essential* separation between the two worlds. In Buddha Cognition (*samata jnana*) and in Hindu *Moksha*, samsara and nirvana, form and emptiness, Brahman and the World, these paradigmatic Two Truths are one and the same (*samata*). So it is told by the masters of our Great Tradition's nondual intrinsic Primordial Awareness Wisdom, recognized then realized through our indwelling wisdom presence *vidya/rigpa/saksin*, always present in human ordinary direct perception. Isn't this all a bit fantastic? Yes! Is it the crux of the matter? Yes!—when we “relax into it,” and see, and know. Well, how do we do this?

“The love which moves the sun and stars” (Dante). According to this great universal teaching, the nondual wisdom Base or Source or Ground that transcends yet embraces and subsumes the material world with its nonlocal Quantum Vacuum ontologically descends as the “spiritual” presence (*vidya, rigpa, christos, epinoia, shekina*) that is inherently present within all beings, the divine seed (*tatagatagarba, hiranyagarbha, christos/logos*) abiding now at the spiritual heart (*hridayam hsin/kokoro, nyingpo*) of each being, always ascending, returning to Source, whether or not this is recognized. And each and every moment of ordinary perception—before it is tainted by conceptual reification, imputation, entification and designation—is “primordially pure” “exactly as it is,” arising pristine from our “Supreme Source” that is the perfectly subjective source condition of all that is. Indeed, in our primordial wisdom nondual view, this esoteric “innermost secret” ascent to liberation/enlightenment “is already accomplished” now, deep within us. It is from this recognition, then realization that altruistic compassionate (the *kar* in *karuna* is action) conduct spontaneously arises and manifests. “Ascend with the view, then descend with the conduct. Practice these two as a unity” (*Padmasambhava*). Yet, this great esoteric wisdom truth is veiled (*vikshepa*) to our gross exoteric consciousness by our feculent adventitious negative emotions (ignorance, *avidya, hamartia/sin*).

And from this primordial wisdom of emptiness—this radical, transconceptual, nondual ultimate knowledge—spontaneously arises the moral imperative—compassionate feeling, intention and conduct (*karuna, tonglen, nyingje, ahimsa, hesed/charis, altruism*) for the benefit of all sentient beings. And from this wisdom of kindness arises—not so spontaneously—a liberal democracy and a non-oligarchic political economy, and with that the empirical possibility of the free pursuit of both hedonic material human flourishing and happiness (*felicitas*), and enlightened liberating ultimate happiness (*paramananda, mahasuka, eudaemonia, beatitudo*).

Here then, in this Primordial Awareness Wisdom of our contemplative Great Tradition tentatively rests the ontological foundation for the resolution of the three problems of human knowledge and conduct, namely, the Problem of Knowledge, the Problem of Morals, and the Problem of Governance. If, that is, we relax our cognitive grip on the metaphysical dogma of Physicalism (Materialism), the requisite metaphysics of the prevailing Western ontology of Scientific Materialism (Scientism) that currently precludes any provident rapprochement of Science and Spirituality. Materialism is, after all, merely part of the total Reality equation. “Science” must come to know this. Again, the

burden of rejoinder to this argument resides with the apologists of the dogmatic metaphysical presumptions of Scientific Materialism (Scientism, Functionalism).

Thus it is, Absolute Spirit, the nondual one truth that is the prior unity of the conceptual Two Truths—ultimate and relative—transcends and subsumes all objective physical matter, and all subjective mental phenomena, including spacetime’s very organizing principle, namely, the Unified Quantum Vacuum.² So the physical or quasi-physical Unified Quantum Vacuum—David Bohm’s “implicate order” that enfolds the “explicate order” of all arising phenomena participates in, indeed already *is* the one truth that is *Kosmos*, all inclusive, primordial nondual Ultimate Spirit, utterly beyond the grasp of discursive, concept-mind, but not ineffable to yogic direct perception (*satori, pratyaksa*) and realization. This Primordial Wisdom “presence always present” (*vidya/rigpa*) is the enlightened, self-liberated gnosis (*jnana, yeshe*) driving the methodology and *praxis* of our emerging Noetic Revolution. Could it be, wonder of wonders, that this *desideratum* is “already accomplished” at the deepest “innermost secret” heart of our being? Let us now consider the *Prasangika* Middle Way Buddhist view that is the complementary of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection.

²We have seen that our perennial Great Wisdom Tradition teaches of the dialectic of the paradigmatic “Two Truths”: Relative Truth (*samvriti*), the finite objective relative-conventional empirical reality with its physical and mental phenomena, and Ultimate or Absolute Truth (*paramartha*) the infinite, nondual perfectly subjective unbounded whole, the Ultimate Reality that transcends yet embraces the phenomenal world of Relative Truth. This world of Relative Truth includes the dyad of outer exoteric and inner esoteric reality dimensions. This esoteric dimension then transcends and includes yet deeper or subtler strata of hidden dimensions, the “innermost secret,” and finally the ineffable nondual which is ultimate Reality Itself. The prior ontic unity of this conceptual duality is the transrational nondual one truth. The realization of these ascending levels of knowledge is a function of the psychospiritual lifestage development of the spiritual aspirant or knower. As to the experience of these hidden dimensions, whether conceptual *dianoia*, or direct contemplative *epinoia/gnosis*, it is most important to maintain the understanding awareness that these dimensional reality realms—these “many mansions of the Father’s house”—arise in a relationship of interdependence with one another and with the whole, and therefore possess no inherent, independent existence in themselves; not even the nondual Ultimate Reality itself (the “emptiness of emptiness”). I have elsewhere referred to the great prior unity of these none too tidy epistemological dualities as the “Principle of Ontological Interdependence,” an ontological relativity. Indeed, our nondual Great Tradition views all objective and subjective entities as ultimately empty of inherent existence (*shunyata, pratitya samutpada, Nirguna*—empty of attributes—*Brahman, Tao*). This does not however, deny them their reality status as objectively real objects in the realm of Relative Truth that is empirical, relative-conventional spacetime reality. This principle of the Two Truths—emptiness and form, spiritual and physical—is the key to understanding the emerging paradigm shift that is the resolution of the “explanatory gap” between mind and matter (the “mind-body problem”), and between Science and Spirituality that is the “hard problem” of consciousness with its urgent need of an integrative principle between the quantitative third person methodologies of Western science and the qualitative first person modes of inquiry of Vedic/Buddhist contemplative science.