

Toward a New Paradigm for Science and Spirituality

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Materialism is that form of philosophy which leaves the universe as incomprehensible as it finds it.

—C. S. Peirce

The inseparability of the two truths, absolute and relative, is called ‘primordial Buddha.’

—*Kunjed Gyalpo, The Supreme Source*

Appearance and reality: ontological interdependence of the Two Truths. On the account of our primordial Great Wisdom Tradition, phenomenal reality arises and appears as two levels, modes or dimensions of awareness. These two ways of being here are the perennial “Two Truths” (*satyadvaya, denpa-nyis*) of the unbounded whole that is Reality Itself. We live in two irreducible dimensions at once! These conceptual Two Truths—objective form, subjective emptiness—are a prior ontic unity that is the one truth, the Buddha’s “one taste” that defines the way in which phenomena appear, and their actual intrinsic ultimate reality nature, which is not the way that they appear. Human beings experience the emptiness of Ultimate Truth through direct perception (*percept*), then cloak this through the Relative Truth of conventional, secondary conceptual elaboration (*concept*).

Every one of the six Yoga Systems of the Hindu *Sanatana Dharma*, and each of the four Buddhist Schools—the *Hinayana* (*Vaibhashika* and *Sautrantika*) and *Mahayana* (*Yogachara/Chittamtra* or Mind Only and *Madhyamaka* or Middle Way)—subscribe to some version of the Two Truths. In Taoism these Two Truths are *Tao* and *Te*. In *Advaita Vedanta* and Neo-Vedanta the Two Truths are *Nirguna Brahman* and the World. In the West the Two Truths began with Heraclitus’ Becoming and Parmenides’ Being, then as Plato’s metaphysical substance dualism (early Dialogues) of what is ultimately the immutable universal nondual monistic *Reality* of the Forms/Ideas, and the impermanent shadowy world of Appearance (late Dialogues); of absolute Spirit with physical matter; of infinite Consciousness Being Itself, and its Becoming in relative spacetime reality. In the Quantum Theory this primordial dualism appears as the objective physical appearance of Classical Newtonian mechanics, and subjective quantum mechanical reality that is the nonlocal coherence of the zero point energy of the Unified Quantum Vacuum.

According to Buddhist Mahayana/Vajrayana Middle Way *Prasangika* and *Ati Dzogchen*, appearing objects are nominally, relative-conventionally real, but not intrinsically or ultimately real. Ultimately, appearing phenomena are *mahashunyata*, the great emptiness, that is to say, form is empty of any intrinsic or essential nature or inherent existence. We shall see that in a middle way view emptiness (*shunyata*) is not an absolute reality, nor is it nihilistic nothingness. Emptiness is not some ultimate deeper transcendent Reality behind relative spacetime reality, but merely the actual nature of ordinary reality “just as it is,” empty of any essence, identity, permanence, or independence.

This perennial wisdom conceptual duality of relative and ultimate dimensions—form

and emptiness—is resolved in the non-conceptual “one truth, devoid of its own inherent nature,” yet that includes both. This one truth is the nondual, discursively unelaborated and conceptually ineffable ontologically prior unity of our Great Wisdom Tradition’s Relative Truth (*samvriti satya*) with Ultimate Truth” (*paramartha satya*) that is Buddhist emptiness (*shunyata*); that is the *Nirguna Brahman* of Shankara’s *Advaita Vedanta* and the Neo-Vedanta of Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi; that is the unity of yin and yang in *Tao*; that is *Ein Soph* of Zohar/Kabbalah. These two truths are the nondual one truth. “Truth is One. Many are its names” (*Rig Veda*).

Again, “nondual” (*advaya/gnyis-med*) means the prior ontic unity of perceiving subject and perceived object. There is no *essential* separation between the two truths that are “emptiness and form,” the primordial emptiness matrix base, and interdependently arising spacetime mental and physical forms.

This one unifying truth is simply the transpersonal, transconceptual unbroken whole, that golden thread of radical, nondual truth—perceptible only to yogic “spiritually empirical” contemplative direct perception (*satori, pratyaksa*)—the warp that runs throughout the entire fabric of the “innermost secret” teaching of the major traditions of our primordial Great Wisdom Tradition. This ultimate reality transcends yet embraces the dimension of “Relative Truth,” the “truth that conceals,” endless “concealer truths” (*avidya/vikshepa*) that are mass-energy spacetime phenomena interdependently arising (*pratitya samutpada*) in and as the “Interbeing” of empirical spacetime reality. This Relative Truth reveals conceptual relative conventional, empirical causal truths while concealing their nondual ultimate nature. As Professor Jay Garfield has said, “To understand that things are empty is to understand that they are just conventional. To understand the conventional reality of things is to see that they are empty.”

For Buddhism and for Hindu *Vaisheshika* the relative truths of conventional perceptual and conceptual mind—whether as inferential valid cognition (*pramana, kalpana*) or as yogic direct perception (*gompa, pratyaksa*)—cloaks (*vikshepa/avidya maya*) the great primordial liberating nondual one truth. (*Mimamsa* and *Yoga* also accept “testimony” and “analogy” as valid cognition.) Again, the nondual one truth transcends yet embraces the conceptual entities that are Ultimate or Absolute Truth and the Relative Truth that is the pluralistic multiplicity of the conventional truths of physical and mental spacetime reality. Yet all of that is merely our concepts and beliefs about the non-conceptual Absolute that enfolds everything that arises and appears. With the failure of the Western traditional representational correspondence and the coherence theories of truth to pass epistemological muster, this “one truth” may be viewed less empirically and objectively and more pragmatically, as the meaning of truth for the ancients—*Aletheia*—the uncovering or uncloaking activity that reveals (*rolba*) our non-conceptual/nondual source that is the infinite vast emptiness expanse that is Reality Itself abiding ontically prior to all the relative-conventional “concealer truths” and our concepts about them.

An integral ecology of mind. For Buddhists these fundamental Two Truths are “emptiness and form.” The never-ending dialectic of these conceptual Two Truths that are the nondual, transrational monism of the one truth is nothing less than the infinite dance of geometry: involution and evolution, infinite Base (*gzhi*) that is nondual “Big Mind,” ultimate Consciousness-Being-Itself (*cittata/sems nyid*) continuously becoming (*karma*) the finite

particulars of the consciousness (*vijnana*) that is the Small Mind of relative conventional spacetime reality.

This process is traditionally viewed conceptually—dualistically and pragmatically—as the *descent* (Plato’s *Eros*, Telos, ontogeny) of our formless primordial awareness matrix sourceground, Absolute Spirit (*Kosmos*) into the broken symmetries and narratives of the relative conventional forms of empirical spacetime (*cosmos*), including we sentient beings. Then, in due course comes the *ascent* or “eternal return” (agape, evolution, phylogeny)—through the unconscious horizontal and conscious vertical spiritual paths—again to the realization of nondual Spirit, our supreme source. “The nature of mind is no different at the pinnacle of enlightenment, than it is at the primordial base” (Adzom Rinpoche). In the nondual view, spirit and matter have never separated, but abide as a timeless nondual unity. Nondual Spirit is both pinnacle and base, the pinnacle of psychospiritual development, and the all inclusive basal sourceground of all that arises therein. Once again, “Form is emptiness, emptiness is form” said the Buddha in his *Heart Sutra*. The principle *Dzogchen semde* tantra states:

In terms of the source, the root of all phenomena, there is no such thing as an observer and an object to observe. All the phenomena of existence, without exception, abide in the supreme source in a condition of birthlessness... As the supreme source (*Samantabhadra*), pure and total consciousness, I am the mirror in which all phenomena are reflected. Although lacking self-nature everything exists clearly; without need for a view, the nature shines clear. Understanding the essential unborn condition is not an object to observe dualistically. This is the great Understanding!

—*Kunjed Gyalpo, The Supreme Source* (trans. Chogyal Namkhai Norbu 1999)

This trans-physical or meta-physical sourceground of Reality—*Kosmos*—subsumes the Quantum Vacuum that is cosmology’s quasi-physical “Zero-Point Field”//“Akashic Field” that is the entire physical/material cosmos. *Kosmos*, the all-embracing non-material, non-entity that is perfect ultimate subjectivity (the ontologically prior unity of all subjects and objects), is the vast primordial emptiness (*shunyata*) potential in which or in whom arises the cyclic nonlocal coherence that is the interdependent connectedness (*pratitya samutpada*) of this bright primordial aboriginal stuff becoming matter, beings, minds, stars, galaxies, and universes of the infinite oscillating Metaverse, the very unbounded whole (*cittata*), Ultimate Reality Itself. (*Kosmos* here is the Pathagorean, *Apeiron*, the divine “One,” and Supreme Good of Plotinus, the Basic Goodness of the Buddhist Shambhala teaching that enfolds, transcends and embraces the unfolding “Many” that is the sublime luminous plurality and multiplicity of the merely physical spacetime cosmos.) We must again remember that in the nondual view these two seemingly incommensurable paradigms—emptiness and form—are an interdependent prior ontic unity that cannot be conceptualized, yet can be cognized and experienced by yogic direct perception.

So, this one truth—unspeakable ultimate reality by whatever name—the “Tao that

cannot be named,” is the conceptually ineffable, but not contemplatively ineffable monadic source or matrix, David Bohm’s “Zero Womb” of the primordial Goddess (*jnananirvakalpa*) that generates the force fields that give rise to all material bodies and their forces. (This rose, by any name would smell as sweet.) These forces and charges are of course, the relative particles and waves that we have come to know and love—photons (light) and bosons (force)—of the arising energy of relative spacetime reality. “What we observe as material bodies and forces are nothing but shapes and variations in the structure of infinite space” (Schrödinger).

According to our Great Wisdom Tradition, phenomena arising from this vast unbroken whole, our primordial sourceground (*prajnaparamita*, *gzhi*, *kadag*, *cittadhatu*, *dharma*, *kaya*, *dharmata*, *chos nyid*, Tao, *Ein Soph*) that is perfectly subjective Ultimate Reality, Consciousness Being Itself, Absolute Spirit, in due course evolves a self-consciousness, then a witnessing presence or intelligence/ consciousness (*vidya*, *rigpa*) that recognizes the fundamental nonlocal, interdependently interconnected prior unity, while abiding in a relationship of identity with all of the parts. This is the process of the Platonic “eternal return” to nondual Spirit. *All arising spacetime phenomena participate in the “primordial purity” (*kadag*) of this vast consciousness base (*gzhi*), this primordial awareness wisdom (*gnosis/jnana/yeshe*) whose spontaneous presence (lhundrub) abides within all things and beings.* Thus, while “spacelike separation” of the participating parts of the unbroken whole obtains, there can be no essential separation from this vast primordial nondual emptiness, openness or oneness (*longchen*, *svabhava*), this ontic prior unity that is the basis or sourceground of all that arises therein.

Thus this relationship is, at once, nonlocal, interdependent and nondual. I have called the unifying principle of this transpersonal, transconceptual “one truth” the *Principle of Ontological Interdependence*. According to both the Quantum Theory and Buddhist Middle Way *Prasangika*, all arising physical and mental phenomena are causally, mereologically (part/whole) and conceptually (imputation, designation, naming) interdependent and non-separate. Again, this one truth is the nondual monistic, monadic, nonlocal coherence of the prior ontological unity of the conceptual perennial Two Truths, relative and ultimate. This unity, this “one taste” is a most profound subtle ecology of mind. This ontologically necessary yet epistemologically contingent interdependent prior unity must be the fundamental principle of any theory of ontological relativity—Alan Wallace’s Theory of Ontological Relativity or David Finkelstein’s Universal Relativity Principle (Wallace, 2003), or Bohr’s or Quine’s Ontological Relativity—and of any “Theory of Everything” (TOE). Clearly, the burden of rejoinder to this Principle of Ontological Interdependence lies with the physicalist/materialist/functionalist.

Let us then briefly consider the Unified Quantum Vacuum that is the zero point energy field, in its relation to this “primordially present” one truth that for the nondual Buddhist View is the “self-perfected state” of the perfect sphere of *Dzogchen*, the Great Perfection. We will then explore Buddhist epistemology and ontology through the view of the *Madhyamaka Prasangika* and its complementary, the Great Perfection that is *Dzogchen* and their potential impact upon the emerging, noetic paradigm in physics and cosmology, whose precursor is the holistic antirealist Quantum Field theory.