

## Realizing Human Happiness

### Toward a Noetic Science of Matter, Mind and Spirit

#### Integrating Science and Spirit

In the 2nd century CE two great scholar-masters—Nagarjuna in the East and Plotinus in the West—began the *Nondual Noetic Revolution* in human consciousness that is only just now unifying our wisdom traditions, East and West. This noetic wisdom view—the prior and present unity of our human cognitive doublet—objective and subjective dimensions of mind—understands the ontological interdependence and identity of all arising phenomena with their basal primordial awareness-consciousness ground. On this nondual view and practice there is no *essential* separation, no subject-object split or inherent duality of knowing subject and its appearing objects, no essential divide between self and other, no separation between relative self and primordial ultimate no-self Presence.

We shall discover herein that this knowing-feeling love-wisdom understanding is our human Noetic Imperative: mind and body, matter and spirit are *ultimately* an integral, trans-conceptual nondual, already unified unbounded whole (*shunyata/emptiness, Tao, dharmakaya, parabrahman*). This vast whole is the selfless, formless Ultimate Truth dimension (*paramartha satya*)—all embracing and all pervading "supreme source" or ground—in which, or in whom the spacetime Relative Truth dimension (*samvriti satya*) of form arises, participates, and is instantiated. In the Buddhist View these two ontic dimensions constitute the prodigious Mahayana/Vajrayana Two Truths ontic and epistemic "dominant trope".

As the developmental dialectic of human intellectual, emotional and spiritual evolution proceeds, and the cognitive estrangement of global Modern and Postmodern Scientific Materialism recedes, a "new science of consciousness" has emerged. This new science has revealed an inchoate integral noetic paradigm that integrates our *subjective cognition*—the "soft," interior "first person" personal experience, and the transpersonal contemplative technologies of the spiritual paths of our wisdom traditions—with *objective cognition*, the "hard," exterior "third person" data sets of the physical and neurosciences. We need hard neuroscience to explicate the hardware of brain, and a soft, contemplative science of consciousness to penetrate the software of mind. An integral noetic science of mind must utilize this epistemic doublet of both objective (and interobjective) and subjective (and intersubjective) methodologies as we evolve,

individually and collectively, toward our next life stage that is ultimately, in the fullness of time, a bright new species—*Homo gnostica*.

Neuroscientists utilizing functional MRI technology with H.H. Dalai Lama's highly trained meditators have discovered an astonishing plasticity of the brain's structure. (Ch. 4 above; Davidson 2017, Begely 2007). This discovery has shown that negative human emotions (fear, anger, hostility, hatred, grasping desire, greed, pride) may be healed, and positive emotions (compassion/joy) may be generated through contemplative mind training. Indeed, on the accord of our contemplative wisdom traditions such quiescent cognition bestows the very causes of human happiness.

### **Choosing Our Reality**

Moreover, such temporary positive "state changes" may become, through contemplative mind training, permanent personality "trait changes" as brief glimpses and experiences of the vast boundless whole become stable consciousness structures.

Contrary to the dreary neuro-genetic determinism of the positivist waning social science paradigm, negative emotions are not "hardwired" into the brain. Humans may be deluded (*avidya, hamartia*), but we are not inherently genetically evil. Nor does there exist a fixed individual "happiness set point" selected by our genes. We are free to *choose* our "basic goodness"—happiness itself—this inherent presence of the great whole that is always already present at the heart/*hridayam*. (Ch. 4; H.H. Dalai Lama 2009)

Thus it is, the nondual View and the compassionate, non-goal directed (*Wu Wei*) "be here now" practice of the Path can transform the mind, and this changes the self-centered behavior that cloaks our innate altruistic compassion as it spontaneously arises from our primordially present love-wisdom mind (*gnosis, jnana, yeshe*).

An effective life-world practice imperfectly frees us from the destructive negative emotions, and from blind faith in the fundamentalist proto-religion that is the Scientific Materialism/Physicalism metaphysic that has now nearly entirely colonized the Western mind and heart. In its most fundamentalist proto-religious cloak this habit of mind is the cult of Scientism, with its naïve and catastrophic reduction and commodification of perfectly subjective, all-embracing nondual Spirit to mere consumable matter. This emerging incipient Noetic Science of Consciousness is an urgent juncture in the integration, then unification of objective Science and subjective Spirit, and with that the emergence of a truly integral noetic science of mind, nature, ethics and spirituality. (Boaz 2021c, *The Noetic Revolution*)

### **The Hard Problem, and the Really Hard Problem of Consciousness**

This incipient integral noetic science of mind has cast new light upon our perennial “Mind-Body Problem”—the infamous “Hard Problem” for Western cognitive science, the neurosciences, and contemporary philosophy of mind. (Boaz 2021b)

The “hard problem of consciousness”, first identified by philosopher David Chalmers (1969) is usually expressed as the “explanatory gap” between exterior, exoteric objective physical brain processing, and interior esoteric subjective awareness states, *qualia*, or phenomenal experience; in short, the perennial “mind-body problem”—the gap between body/matter and mind/spirit. Can the many dimensions of mind, the inherent subjectivity of mind, actually be reduced to merely objective physical/chemical “emergent properties”, or epiphenomena of brain processes, as the waning dualistic Metaphysical Scientific Materialism paradigm insists? Will scientists and philosophers ever understand that this deep Greek cultural background materialist/realist “global web of belief” (Quine 1969) presupposes the very subjective consciousness whole in whom such a denial of consciousness arises and is formulated? (Boaz 2021b)

Our emerging post-empirical, integral noetic knowledge paradigm relaxes this “taboo of subjectivity” (Alan Wallace 2012) inherent in the 400 year old modernist metaphysical dogma of the prevailing objectivist Scientific Materialism/Physicalism and Scientific Local Realism paradigm. The emerging integral noetic view acknowledges the urgency of a noetic science of consciousness that explores this subjective voice of mind, particularly the emotions—our personal negative emotions (anger/aggression) that destroy us, and transpersonal emotions (compassion/joy) that heal and save us.

From the metaphysical ontology you choose, arises the phenomenal reality you deserve. Well, that's cause and effect karma for you.

Our view and understanding of this apparent *problem of subjectivity* determines the root relation of knowing subject to our perceived objects—the odious split between self/subject and other/object. This perennial epistemological question as to how and what we can know, and the “ontological problem” as to what ultimately exists, and how (Quine 1969) constitutes the most vexing dilemma in the history of science, philosophy and religion. What is the *ultimate* nature of this continuum of appearing *relative* phenomena. *What is the essential or ultimate mode of being here in spacetime for we self-conscious beings in form who desire to know our origin, our identity, and our destiny. In short, “Who Am I?” What is our “supreme identity?”* “No small matter is at stake here. The question concerns the very way in which human life is to be lived.” (Plato, *Republic*)

Thus arises two urgent human happiness questions: 1) Who is it That I Am? 2) How shall I realize That in my busy life-world?

### **Bing Here: The Two Truths and Our Four Cognitive Dimensions**

Please consider well the following reflections. The Two Truths unity of the aboriginal boundless whole that is reality itself are: 1) nondual Ultimate Truth,

primordial formless, selfless basal ground of 2) dualistic Relative Truth that continuously arises and appears as spacetime instantiations of form, including all of us. The perennial linguistic-semiotic conceptual dualities of mind/body, subject/object, self/other, finite appearance/infinite reality, matter/spirit, humanity/God arise only at this form dimension of conventional, conditional Relative Truth ( $E = mc^2$ ).

The awareness-consciousness procession that comprises our four cognitive dimensional *mind states* and their corresponding *life stages* of this Two Truths prior and present unity are: 1) pre-conceptual ordinary direct perception, prior to thinking and naming; 2) exoteric objective, empirical, rational conceptual processing, where we spend most of our conscious lives; 3) esoteric subjective mostly trans-conceptual contemplative/meditative cognition; which opens into 4) perfectly subjective nondual unified direct cognizance (*yogi pratyaksa*) of the vast unbounded whole itself. This is the formless selfless dimension of the Buddhas. The lucent already present Presence of that vast interdependent primordial awareness-consciousness ground abides always at the spiritual Heart (*hridayam*) of the human being. It is That to which we awaken, step by mindful step, through assiduous practice of the Path under the guidance of a qualified meditation master, and in the context of the spiritual community.

All four of these self-cognizing *mind states* are potentially immediately available to "normal" human consciousness. We receive glimpses as the busy mind opens and rests in peaceful moments. However, corresponding *life stages* three and four are not accomplished by a contemplatively untrained mind. They are experienced over time as a function of contemplative mind training upon and within *mind states* three and four.

Now each of these ascending consciousness states and stages transcends yet embraces and subsumes the less subtle, less inclusive previous states or stages. For example, cognitive state/stage three understands state/stage one and two, but not the all embracing consciousness mindstream or life stage dimension of a Buddha, or of a great *Dzogchen/Mahamudra* meditation master who abides at cognitive state/stage four.

In all four of these human consciousness dimensions, arising and appearing phenomenal reality is here seen to be objectively, conventionally or *relatively* real, yet its *ultimate* nature is known by the masters of our wisdom traditions to be a perfectly subjective, ontologically prior, interdependent unity of spacetime matter/energy ( $E = mc^2$ ) form arising through its formless selfless emptiness/boundless "groundless ground" (*shunyata, dharmakaya, Tao, Nirguna Brahman, Ein Sof*).

As Buddhist Middle Way Madhyamaka 2nd century founder Nagarjuna told, "In emptiness there is not a shred of intrinsic existence." And this includes boundless *shunyata/emptiness* itself. Mahayana Buddhist emptiness is itself empty of any essential, logocentric, permanent, intrinsic, absolute/ultimate existence! Yet it is not empty of this all too real relative-conventional existence. H.H. Dalai Lama calls this mode of ultimate reality the "emptiness of emptiness". Told Buddha in his nondual *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*,

Form is empty; emptiness is form.  
Form is not other than emptiness;  
Emptiness is not other than form.

Form arises from, abides in, and returns again to emptiness. Relative form and Ultimate emptiness—the Buddha's Two Truths—are always already an ontic prior and phenomenally present perfectly subjective nondual unity. In this nondual ultimate view, as Nagarjuna told, "There is not an iota of difference between (relative) samsara and (ultimate) nirvana." In such an ultimate view these two seemingly separate dimensional regimes of consciousness share a relationship of identity. Just so, as esteemed guests of this relative phenomenal world we beings in form share that ultimate identity with the vast unity of primordial emptiness ground in whom this all arises and participates. Indeed, That is our "supreme identity". *Who Am I? That I Am!*

Again, the clear words of Middle Way 2nd century *mahasiddha* Nagarjuna,

Reality is selfless and not ultimately real, but it  
cannot be proven to be unreal and illusory.  
This is the illusion that we live in, and so must  
not be denied but respected.

Appearing spacetime reality is relatively, conventionally real—the form dimension of Relative Truth—but not ultimately real, the emptiness dimension of Ultimate Truth. And yes, these two seemingly separate dimensional realms are always an indivisible and inseparable prior and present unity (*samatajnana*). It is our innate clear light awareness love-wisdom mind, primordial Buddha nature of mind (*tathata, buddhajnana*)—luminous present "That I Am" Presence (*vidya, rigpa*) that already realizes this great trans-conceptual nondual truth of both relative and ultimate human happiness. It is That that we happily come to realize through meditation. *Mahasukaho!*

Thus do we live in and balance our two worlds—objective conceptual and subjective emotional/spiritual—at once! That is our human condition. These two conceptual categories, these two seemingly separate dimensional realms of our being here in time and space—form and emptiness, existence and nonexistence, objective and subjective, relative and ultimate, "Small Mind" and "Big Mind", appearance and reality—are unified via this subtlest nondual teaching of our wisdom traditions. These two are, as we have just seen, variations on the theme of that essential prior unity of the Buddhist Two Truths, and the consciousness processional of the Four Cognitive Dimensions of our knowing and feeling human experience that arise herein.

Hence, the Two Truths are *one nondual unified truth* that is invariant through all human cognitive state changes—outer, inner, innermost secret, and nondual; objective and subjective; conceptual and trans-conceptual contemplative. Again, as Buddha told,

"Form is empty (*stong pa/shunya*), emptiness (*stong pa nyid/shunyata*) is form." Relative, dualistic cognition sees them as separate. Ultimate, nondual cognition sees in such dualistic experience the always already present ontic and epistemic unity. *Buddic* love-wisdom mind knows these two at once (*samatajnana*), with no distraction or separation whatsoever. Our trans-conceptual innermost secret nondual cognition is utterly present to that primordial awareness wisdom condition and its bright indwelling knowing/feeling Presence. And yes, That (*tathata, satchitananda*) is who we actually are, our "supreme identity" from the very beginning. *Tat Tvam Asi*, That I Am, without a single exception.

### **The Really "Hard Problem" of Consciousness**

Now arises the urgent practical question as to the inherent nondual perfect subjectivity of the primordial ground in whom this all arises. How shall we accomplish this great ultimate understanding in the relative distraction of our busy lives?

The *really hard problem* for human beings is the healing and unification of this apparent but not essential primordial split, the apparent duality of these Two Truths that are our two modes of being here. The objective, *finite* existence of our bodymind and its conduct (ethics) in the ultimate illusory yet all too real relative conventional world of cause and effect (karma) must be reconciled and reconnected to our perfectly subjective *infinite* source-ground, the vast, acausal, timeless unbounded whole itself (*bhavana, shunyata, chittadhatu, dharmadhatu, dharmakaya, dzogchen*)—bright innermost Presence of That. After all, this selfless nondual primordial "supreme source" is our "supreme identity" in which, or in whom everything appears and participates. So how do we reconnect? Or are we already connected? And if so, how shall we know it?

### **Human Happiness: Zen Mind, Wisdom Mind**

An engaged, enduring commitment to the trans-rational, noetic, nondual *View*, and to the relative psycho-emotional/spiritual *Path* lifts the seemingly real obstruction—the negative emotions of the separate self-ego-I—and reveals the fully awake, always already present indwelling *Presence* (*vidya, rigpa, christos*) of that basal primordial ground. Then gradually, step by mindful step, the stable *Result* is unveiled—the fruition that is our primordial love-wisdom mind (gnosis, *jnana, yeshe*), bright Presence of That, by whatever name. And That is the realization of the prior ontic and epistemic unity of the Two Truths, these two modes of our being here as we participate in the vast self-reflexive "enfolded implicate order" (physicist David Bohm) of the all pervading "unbroken whole" itself in whom the "explicate order" eternally, continuously unfolds.

Thus does the practice of the Path offer a conscious *relative* finite portal into that infinite numinous nondual "groundless ground" that is *ultimate* reality itself, our true home, in whom this all arises and plays. That bright portal is mindfulness meditation.

Mereology is the inquiry into part whole relations. We learn here that where there's a whole, there are participating holons as Ken Wilber (2006) terms the part-wholes that participate in ever greater more inclusive wholes. Where there are parts, *ipso facto*, there's a more inclusive subsuming whole. We discover through meditation practice how it is that we may consciously realize that we are already connected to that vast whole that embraces and includes all of these lesser part-wholes—the ultimate whole itself. We come to know, and feel we are always embraced and pervaded by it!

Hence does Hamlet's "Consummation devoutly to be wished" become, wonder of wonders, "Already accomplished from the very beginning...To remain here without seeking something more is The Meditation." (Garab Dorje)

As to the Result or Fruition of the Path, "The fruit is no different at the pinnacle of enlightenment than it is at the primordial base." (Adzom Rinpoche). The spontaneous compassionate expression of this great realization in our everyday lifeworld conduct is the secret of relative human happiness (*eudaemonia* or *human flourishing, felicitas*); but it is also ultimate liberation, even enlightenment that is Happiness Itself (*mahasuka, paramananda, beatitudo*); the harmless, selfless human happiness that creates no negative karma. The happiness that cannot be lost.

Here is the miraculous ironic paradox: not only do we realize this double happiness by not seeking happiness—by "letting it be as it is", as Buddha told—but we reflexively utilize the ignorance/*avidya* of relative "Small Mind" to realize ultimate "Big Mind," our indwelling perfect love-wisdom mind itself! In other words, we utilize the Relative Truth of the Path, to realize the Ultimate Truth that is the Fruit or Result of the Path—liberation from suffering—selfless harmless happiness that causes no harm to living beings. Both Tibet's Padmasambhava, and Japan's Zen Master Dōgen have told it well: We must practice these Two Truths as a prior and present unity.

Because past and future are elsewhere, ultimately only this present moment now exists. The past is but a present memory. The future is but a present anticipation. This timeless moment here and now is when and where everything happens! Is it not? Therefore, we cannot *become* happy in the past or the future; we can only *be* happy now. Indeed, a most unusual paradox to a dualistic future-looking conceptual mind.

Sadly, our contemplative meditation practice strives mostly for some future state of happiness or enlightenment. Such a program "is doomed to failure" told great Ch'an/Zen Master Hui-neng.

Hence, only this present moment is really real. That is the bodymind location of happiness. Just so, "Make the goal the Path" (Chögyam Trungpa)—your life-world practice as it is right here, this very moment now. "It is already accomplished from the very beginning." (Garab Dorje)

Therefore, "Rest your weary mind and let it be as it is; all things are perfect exactly as they are." (Gautama Shakyamuni the Buddha) That is the ultimate view of our love-wisdom mind—primordial Nature of Mind (*cittata, sem nyid, sugatagarbha*).

It is only through transformation and transmutation of the afflictive negative emotions—the primal atavistic ignorance (*avidya, marigpa, hamartia/sin*) inherent in being in the realm of *relative* spacetime reality, that we realize the "crazy wisdom" that is radical freedom and happiness inherent in the all-inclusive embrace of *ultimate* reality, the conceptually unfabricated, unelaborated beautiful prior unity of this present moment now—but always in the context of our personal past and future. Why? A valorized, idealized "present moment now" without awareness of our personal past and future is meaningless. Our past and future are interdependently enfolded in this karmic moment now, while always unfolding in the timeless continuum of that very same now. (Dōgen Zenji 1986; *Appendix D* below)

Our Zen mind wisdom mind—always indwelling numinous Presence of That—is the open secret of our already present human happiness.

### **View, Path and Result**

Our wisdom traditions have a View, Path and Result. The *View* provides both conceptual and trans-conceptual nondual noetic *ultimate* knowledge and insight, motivation and increased tolerance for the cognitive dissonance—contradiction, paradox, anxiety—of the *relative* Path. Just so, the *Path* provides the method—that ascending subtler strata of teaching, practice and courage necessary to train the wild horse of the often destructive mind of self-ego-I. Together the View and the Path awaken our always present love-wisdom mind that envelopes, develops, then completes the *Result*, the fruition of liberation from suffering—Buddha mind full *bodhi* enlightenment that is harmless radical Happiness Itself.

On this relative path to wholeness "*development is envelopment*" (Plotinus) at ever subtler, more inclusive levels of spirit embrace. Yet, in the ultimate view, "Let it be as it is and rest your weary mind; all things are perfect exactly as they are." (Buddha)

From the view and understanding of the relative *outer* and *inner* levels or dimensions of our above Two Truth/Four Cognitive Dimensions (state/stage 1, 2, 3) this process of the Path requires intention and effort—courage, generosity, discipline, patience and perseverance. However, from the view and understanding of the ultimate timeless *innermost esoteric* (advanced mind states of 3), and *nondual* dimensional state 4)—"It is already accomplished from the very beginning." No dilemma. No problem at all. Now, there is nothing left to do. So all that we do is selfless, harmless, authentic and kind. Twentieth century Zen Master Suzuki Roshi has told it well:

When we forget ourselves we are actually the true activity  
of the big mind, or reality itself. When we realize this fact,

there is no problem whatever in this world. The purpose of our practice is to be aware of this fact. It may be too perfect for us, just now, because we are so much attached to our own feeling, to our individual existence...When we reach this understanding, we find the true meaning of our life.

—Suzuki Roshi, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*

This very practical no-self/*anatman* understanding of our being here in spacetime form is the realization of both relative and ultimate human happiness. No metaphysics is required. No conceptual philosophical or belief system is required. Such a selfless understanding is the foundation of realization of our always already present happiness.

Our emerging 21st century Noetic Science of Matter, Mind and Spirit begins then completes the integration of this great gift of our human inter-dimensional cognitive doublet that is relative objective Science, and perfectly subjective ultimate Spirit. (Boaz 2021c, *The Noetic Revolution: Toward an Integral Science of Matter, Mind and Spirit*)

David Paul Boaz davidpaulboaz.org info@coppermount.org