

The Outside Inside

"It's all one thing." For most people in the metaphysical world this is not news. Even physicists studying the non-rational quantum world agree: the universe is one immense energy field. Over the eons, some of this energy has temporarily hardened into matter. (In cosmological terms, "temporarily" can mean billions of years.) Some of it has condensed into light — a mysterious in-between substance manifesting as both energy and matter.

Aside from being a unifying theory, we can use the "all-one-thing" idea in everyday life. We can catch a glimpse of reality beyond the material plane of separation. Before describing a way to trigger this experience, we will explore what the "all-one-thing" idea implies in practical terms. We also will analyze the forces that say the universe is *not* one, and why they are saying that.

While everything *is* all one, our senses usually interpret the surroundings by the differences they notice. The most obvious difference between, say, you and a tree is the form that each takes. How we interpret our existential surroundings, like people and trees, is a two-step process. First, each life form has its own set of sensors. Humans have eyes and ears; trees have roots and leaves. Their job is to register incoming data from the world around it. Second, each species has an "interpreter organ" or system that evaluates that data. Humans have a brain, which identifies, sorts, and interprets the information, while trees have a far more rudimentary system of understanding. (Story: <http://www.science-frontiers.com/sf063/sf063b11.htm>.) For information about the psychology of plants, read "The Secret Life of Plants," by Peter Tompkins.

Consciousness, Body, and Spirit

Metaphysicians, in contrast to brain scientists, do not consider consciousness to be the result of chemical activity in the brain. Some of them believe instead that consciousness *causes* chemical activity in the brain as spirit interacts with the body. Spirit, as a rarefied form of consciousness, projects its awareness into a body and, as the life force, animates it. It probably communicates with the brain at the quantum level or perhaps at what IROOT:NOT calls the sub-Quantum level. The sub-Quantum level may operate on the same infinitesimal scale as the "light strings" of string theory. (Story: <http://lightlounge.org/irootnot/index.html>)

By taking on a body, spirit accepts the limitations inherent in that form. These limitations reflect the varying degrees of free will that we observe in different species. They range from reacting solely on instinct (like algae) to figuring out how to become a better person (like humans).

The Biology of Separation

Imagine living as if you knew for certain that it was all one. Your spiritual body knows it, but biological nature has programmed the emotional, mental, and physical bodies to see everything as different.

The emotional body is reactionary. It seeks happiness and avoids suffering. Under certain conditions, it automatically expresses fear and hurt. When we experience and identify with these or any number of other feelings, we sense that we are not one.

The mental body functions in an "either this or that" fashion. It interprets incoming data and defines it in *contrast* with other items or ideas. Looking at the data, I logically cannot be that tree. We determine a creature's evolutionarily status by noting how developed its ability to reason is, particularly in the area of abstract thought. For humans, the mental body is what allows us to imagine the oneness of everything.

In addition, we have an ego. This is the mixture of impressions, attitudes, and beliefs that the emotional and mental bodies hold. It creates additional — and even more artificial — barriers to oneness.

The physical body with its porous skin wall instinctively knows its limits. Primarily, its concern is to survive. It, too, knows that it is different from a tree. Lightning could strike the tree, but that would not injure the body (unless it was standing by the tree during the storm).

As material creatures, then, nature designed us to exist in the physical world of differences.

The Spiritual Body

In this model, spirit is a rarefied form of consciousness and can transcend the material barriers that nature imposes. Although it has a shape, its body is much more refined than dense matter. It can easily slip in and out of whatever material form it chooses. It can even inhabit a multitude of forms simultaneously. Identifying with this aspect of spirit can impart a more harmonious view of the world. In the "All One" universe, we are not limited to our feelings, thoughts, or body. We are beyond.

Most religions offer practices that help purify the individual, often with the goal of communing with one's spiritual body and becoming whole. Like that, he or she can relate more intimately to the world and to God. These practices can work, but often you have to immerse yourself in that particular religion to get the full benefits. Like everything, religions have their drawbacks. The usual is, "We know the Truth and you don't." In the more extreme cases, they expect you to kill for *their* God. Killing for God only makes sense if a person unwittingly (or, in rare cases, wittingly) is worshiping an angry death god. These attitudes create division and suffering, and they are a reason many people have abandoned mainstream religions.

Religion can counter some negative influences of materialism and provides a path for spiritual development. It must, though, "get over itself" and move its focus from separative religious dogma to spiritual inclusiveness. It must become humble. Until then, they will continue to breed fanatics who stir up humanity with their distorted perspectives and actions.

Because of this, it is reasonable to weigh the benefits against the shortcomings of a religious system before diving into it. Many people, though, just adopt whatever they feel is useful to their needs. In this respect, religion is a tool, not an absolute authority on reality.

The Social Roots of Separation

Some believe that spirituality and world events do not mix. They ignore institutional policies — a valid strategy. You can be more peaceful that way. On the other hand, spiritual leaders like Jesus, Mohammed, Moses, Confucius, and Gandhi believe that making the world a better place is worthwhile. Maybe helping the world to evolve is what we are here for. *How* to make the world a better place has always been the question. Even Buddha, who saw the universe as a manifested illusion, agreed.

In any case, not everyone sees the world as one. Ironically, people in "developed" countries are the least developed in seeing it that way. We will see, in part, why this has happened. We also will discover why materialistic societies treat everything as separate. When compounding this belief with greed, they can cause large-scale suffering.

A War of Pictures (of Reality)

We are in the middle of a war of cultural ideas. Corporate, neoliberal philosophy nourishes materialistic consumerism. So far, their view has been winning.

Starting in the late Middle Ages, the English moneyed class instigated the practice of *enclosure*. Landowners began fencing off their property to increase their profits. Peasants, losing their "commons" — land that the community shared — suddenly found themselves landless, adrift in a new and alienating world.

Through the centuries, the practice of enclosure spread and, today, much of the world is fenced off and owned by someone. Many people today believe that this is normal. If multinational corporations and institutions have their way, *everything* will be owned — most of it by them. Like the game *Monopoly*TM, one person wins everything and everyone else loses. They will commoditize all of nature; it will have a price tag. They defend this radical economic plan by claiming that if something does not have a price tag, then it has no value. Money equals Value.

A Few Examples and Limits of This Trend

Fortunately, people will only permit this expanded claim of ownership to go so far. For example, in March 1995, the University of Mississippi Medical Centre patented the turmeric plant, the main ingredient in the spice mixture curry. The New Delhi-based Council for Agriculture Research (CSIR) challenged the patent and the US patent office later cancelled it. (Story: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/tur-cn.htm>)

In another well-publicized incident, the San Francisco-based company Bechtel *privatized* the water supply of Cochabamba, the third largest city in Bolivia. The World Bank had pressured the country into giving Bechtel the contract. Soon after the company took over, water prices spiked 60%. Collecting rainwater became illegal as the rain was considered company property. In February 2000, the citizens said, "Enough is enough!" They spontaneously poured into the streets en masse to protest the spiraling price hikes.

President Hugo Banzer, siding with the banks and the company, summoned over 1,000 police to crush demonstrations. Firing tear gas and rubber bullets into the crowds, they killed one 17-year-old boy and injured hundreds. The next day, the number of demonstrators surged. The police remained in their barracks, while government officials left town. Soon afterward, Bolivia cancelled its contract with Bechtel. (Story: <http://www.democracyctr.org/waterwar/>)

However...

Multinational corporations are now forcing similar concessions on Iraq, although the corporate-owned press gives little coverage of this. What some call the "U.S. Corporate dictatorship" is now replacing Saddam's dictatorship. CEOs move into the White House, Pentagon, and other government institutions, while outgoing government officials take high-paying positions in the companies that they served while in office. (Story: <http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2003-05/12shiva.cfm>)

Today, countries, corporations, and institutions have enclosed all land, air space, coastal waters, the electromagnetic spectrum, and certain genes. The U.S. is also claiming to own outer space for military purposes. We have separated and branded everything. This includes ideas, art, and methods of procedure, which they consider "intellectual property." Institutions own much of this intellectual property — the works of artists, scientists, programmers, and inventors. They claim that their ownership rights entitle them to profit from these works for well over a century, decades after the creator has been dead. Normally a work reverts to the public domain after a reasonable time. This allows its creator has profited from it and for the work to enrich society.

The penalties for downloading intellectual property from the Internet (music and movies) are severe, perhaps because these crimes are easy to commit: five years in prison and a \$250,000.00 fine per incident. To most, these penalties are unbalanced. It is a worse crime to download electrons than, say, to burglarize someone's home. You could steal someone's CDs, DVDs, TV, sound system, and computer and suffer less punishment than from downloading electrons, though the ethical comparison is absurd. Going further, we have the staunch supporter of the entertainment industry, Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah). He suggested that people who download copyright materials from the Internet should have their computers automatically destroyed. (Story: <http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,59305,00.html>.)

These extreme penalties came into being because the industry wrote the copyright laws. Through intensive lobbying, Congress passed them. (Story: <http://www.eff.org/IP/>) In addition, the government aggressively protects ownership rights of corporations by force. The introduction on DVDs warns that the FBI and INTERPOL will investigate the illegal downloading of copyrighted material (but not home invasions).

What We Lose by Believing

This constant barrage of "who owns what" has helped condition most people, especially in developed countries, to believe that the world is indeed *not* one. It presents a picture of reality that says, "Everything is in pieces and the pieces are for sale." Even electrons. Even people. Even souls. This social conditioning reinforces the biological view that everything is separate.

While the belief of ownership and separation is necessary at this stage of human evolution, what we are addressing is the *degree* of these beliefs. The more unyielding they become, the less you see of community, charity, and prosperity. In addition, we cannot commoditize spiritual and humanitarian qualities such as love and compassion. If we accept the Big Business model of "No price tag, no value," then love and other qualities that enrich our life are worthless.

Choosing the Realities We Want

We determine what is real in several ways. First, we can believe that what someone says is true. Second, we can think something through on our own and then believe it. Third, we can decide it is true based on our experiences. Of course, just because we believe something is true does not make it so. Some people believe in the Easter Bunny.

To a broad extent — broader than most of us realize — everyone uses the first option: we accept other people's word that something is true. This is normal. We are not born or raised in a vacuum. We are social creatures, and we inherit many of our basic beliefs from our culture. Some of these beliefs are true while others are not.

Take these examples. "Jesus is Lord." "Allah is the True God." "Neoconservatives are honest, compassionate people." We often inherit these kinds of beliefs. Some may be contrived for propaganda purposes, but the results are the same. Accepting pictures of reality without questioning them opens us to even more distorted views. Once you believe a false premise, then propositions and conclusions that would otherwise sound mad can suddenly "make total sense." This is one of shortcomings of mental body: it is susceptible to all forms of logic. Irrational content magically "makes sense" when you structure it properly. (Story: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,236209,00.html>)

For instance, "Hmm, my Holy Book is infallible [questionable premise]. It says believers should convert or kill disbelievers [dangerous proposition], so as a believer it's my duty to start converting or killing [insane conclusion]." (Story: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/12/12/MNG8TMU1KQ1.DTL>)

The second option, thinking something through, is more reliable. We use our facility of reason. We try to ignore the hype, study the facts, and consult our gut feelings. Then we draw conclusions. We can, of course, draw wrong conclusions, but at least they are *our* conclusions. This means we probably know more about the topic than those who rely solely on hearsay.

The third option, basing our beliefs on our experiences, can bring us closer to the truth. We have "been there," and we have seen it for ourselves. Even like this, though, we can misinterpret events. Reality is not as easy as it looks. It is full of gray-area possibilities that we can neither prove nor disprove. These areas are the ones that we can investigate and discover if they have any value for us.

For instance, if we believe that everything is one, we can then seek to make it real by experiencing it. Experience affects the physical body directly and is a strong indicator of what is real, at least existentially. Many people accept internal or mystical experiences too, like intuition or revelation, as valid indicators of what is real. These types of experiences are similar to existential ones: they can describe some level of reality accurately or inaccurately. In any case, "Seeing is believing." Sensing something is very convincing. By experiencing oneness even for an instant, we know it is true, because it becomes more than just a theory. This can override any contrary beliefs that we may have held. Similarly, we may think that we know about the all-one reality. Our experience of it, though, is usually different from what we would expect it to be.

A Technique

Not everyone is set up to have mystical experiences; or maybe they are, but they have just suppressed the ability. Whatever the case, one way to invite the oneness experience is through inner work.

Say that you are walking in a mall. Look at all those different people. That is the normal view of reality: "different people." Here is a technique that could make this view a little less persuasive. Start by focusing on an individual. What is the first thought that pops into your mind? You are probably judging them. Judging is the mental, emotional, and physical bodies automated response to incoming data. "Ah, Pretty." "Hmm, unusual hair." "Yikes! What's that?" "Intense." You simply watch yourself judging them without criticizing yourself. Like this, you will become familiar with your biases if you are not already.

After a while, select someone. Say, "That person is inside me," and imagine him or her inside your heart area. Of course, you are not really taking people inside you, not even vibrationally. This technique is an exercise for the psyche. Everybody is already there, though, on the highest plane of this universe's reality. We are one. The practice just helps make us aware of it. Do that with everyone.

Sometime when you are relaxing, picture your friends, family, and enemies and take them in. Go further and imagine that *everything you see or imagine is within you*: the good, the bad, and the ugly. Include the living, the dead, and the yet to be born. If you are feeling ambitious, take in the entire span of history.

From an inner-plane perspective, everything *is* within you. As John Lennon sang in "I Am the Walrus":

"I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together."

Having everything inside does not make logical sense, because paradox — what we are dealing with — is beyond the grip of mental logic. The metaphysical logic is different. While separate forms exist in the outer world as manifested illusions, oneness exists on the highest inner plane. It is a vast, universal soul and represents the singular life force of the universe. (Whether individualized consciousness exists at this level is debatable, as is whether the universal soul is a manifested illusion too.)

Expanding the Inner World

The unity experience can provide many insights. For instance, we can realize that habits are like walls. They block our ability to relate authentically with the outer world. To be real we must let go and break free of them, even if doing so is frightening: if we act spontaneously, we might do something embarrassing ... or worse. We have operated safely within the habit's boundaries for years, and now we are moving into dark territory. If we are on the path of unity, we keep expressing freely anyway, and we work through any fear or negativity as it surfaces. The key to staying on course during this transition is to be honest with others and ourselves.

A technique that supports this work is *The World in Your Heart*. You can download it for free at [LightLounge.org](http://lightlounge.org) (<http://lightlounge.org>) in the Technology section.

Conclusion

Science, and most Eastern religions and mystical traditions, agree that the universe is all one. Nature, however, designed our body and brain to see everything as different. Without distinctions, we could not play the game of evolution. In addition, our institutions have capitalized on the idea that everything is separate — and for sale. They try to convince us that owning many possessions will bring us happiness. Yet, even if our possessions do not make us happy, it *will* make them money.

Separate forms are necessary on all but the highest level of existence. Without them, we are left with nothing (or Nothing, depending on your point of view). From electron shells, to cell walls, to national borders, to galactic rims, to the very edge of the universe, forms define the shape and, to some extent, the character of reality.

To connect with the universe, logic tells us that we should bond with other forms. They are part of the universe. Yet, all forms change and are temporary. They are tentative at best and, in themselves, will not lend to living a life of oneness. In fact, consciously living a life of oneness is probably beyond the reach of most of humanity. Experiencing it completely is extremely difficult; only a handful of masters have allegedly lived like this. The best we can do is to increase the amount of time and degree in which we are there. Having only a brief, partial glimpse of that reality can deeply imprint our psyche. One day, humanity may spiritually evolve to the point where everyone lives like that naturally. Until then, if enough people strive to sustain this state the best they can, then perhaps it would help push the species towards a shift in consciousness.

To see beyond the walls of material separation, we need a spiritual awakening. We must see through the eyes of spirit to whatever extent we can manage. Fear, uncertainty, and attachment can control us because circumstances have convinced us that separation is the ultimate reality. Once we loosen their grip, we find ourselves in a universe that unfolds through us. This brings greater peace, ease, and grace to us and, consequently, to the world.

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