

The paradox of life-death: the impossibility of there being a body or a spirit.

Oneness means just that. This simply is the clarity that body and spirit are not two but one expression, just as yin and yang cannot be denoted as separate from each other. Another way to put this is that life is yang and death yin, and so this can be termed everythingness and nothingness respectively. There is, as Freud pointed out, a drive towards life and death. I would say there is a drive in life and there is a collapsing of that life process which is death, but both exist at the same time. It is this paradox of yinyang, lifedeath being a single phenomena that is so hard for the human dis-ease state to accept.

We assume that we are looking after people when they die but actually the processes of life and death have constantly been active, there was never a point of life nor a point of death, we have always been at the place in between life and death, or the Oneness of the two together. Therefore what is looking after what? Is it the person dying who is moving into an acceptance of nature and thereby healing the person who is suffering in life by pointing out to them that the whole of the idea of separate life and death is impossible? For those who look after injured animals there is a key question: who is trying to preserve the animal's life... often it is the vet or person involved who is suffering when they see and imagine the suffering of the animal, but in fact the animal is never in a state of suffering. No matter what one does to an animal or to any aspect of wild nature, one cannot corrupt its energy with the madness of the human and as a result it will never be broken into a state of dis-ease. Even though humans can make an animal feel severe pain, the animal is in total acceptance of this pain and has no personal feelings about what is going on. It is only humans and the process of human projection onto nature that cause this kind of issue. So when it comes to nature, as Fukuoka Masanobu rightly points out "the human being will never understand nature". This is very important because as we cannot accept life and death as a single unity, which is therefore to accept the impersonal and yet intimate nature of all things..., then it is impossible to accept nature as it is.

We could say that the yin is the permanent still point and the yang is the changing nature of all things. There is both a drive towards change and transformation and also one for stillness and the end of movement. These two occur together, as one aspect of the body moves so another is still. The life and death process is the same, the body transforms and as it does so life and death transform their cycle, how could there be a body and a separate spirit as this would be to degrade the body as being bad and the spirit as being good. We have created division again. The end of time means the end of division of these things. In the experience of taking the Peruvian herbal medicine Ayahuasca, this process is called "a small death", but actually it is a moment where time ends for a while and in this there's the realization of always being in that place of timelessness, where there is no body, no spirit, no life, no death and no time.

The way we view the world is from the intellect that attempts to split things into parts. Within a true experience of reality there is never this split but inside the cage of the narrow dis-ease of the human there is a desperation to try to make sense of what the natural state is, to define it as something more than unknowable. However this is a road to disastrous thinking and over-analysis, as nothing can or will matter in all of existence. To try to give something meaning is like trying to put the universe into a jam jar. The process inevitably falls short but one of the clearest of things that it falls short of is to describe the separation body and spirit. What might be better is to explain that there is a world of illusion in which we live from day to day, one of separateness of things and of matter and body being all there is, but when this is broken out of there is a much broader field. This is the actuality, the actual ability to describe this field of

unity is absolutely impossible but sometimes is connected to through art and poetry when the metaphor becomes the most accurate description. When in fact we realize that metaphorical language is more accurate than intellectual analysis we realize how obscuring the mind is from our instinctual senses. This is the brilliant description of paradox by the famous poet and monk Thich Nat Han :

Please Call Me by My True Names

I have a poem for you. This poem is about three of us. The first is a twelve-year-old girl, one of the boat people crossing the Gulf of Siam. She was raped by a sea pirate, and after that she threw herself into the sea. The second person is the sea pirate, who was born in a remote village in Thailand. And the third person is me. I was very angry, of course. But I could not take sides against the sea pirate. If I could have, it would have been easier, but I couldn't. I realized that if I had been born in his village and had lived a similar life - economic, educational, and so on - it is likely that I would now be that sea pirate. So it is not easy to take sides. Out of suffering, I wrote this poem. It is called "Please Call Me by My True Names," because I have many names, and when you call me by any of them, I have to say, "Yes."

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow --
even today I am still arriving.

Look deeply: every second I am arriving
to be a bud on a Spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
to fear and to hope.

The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death
of all that is alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing
on the surface of the river.
And I am the bird
that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond.

And I am the grass-snake
that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.
And I am the arms merchant,
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo,
with plenty of power in my hands.
And I am the man who has to pay
his "debt of blood" to my people
dying slowly in a forced-labour camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm
it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
My pain is like a river of tears,
so vast it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and my laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up,
and so the door of my heart
can be left open,
the door of compassion.

~Thich Nhat Hanh

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