

Spiritual and Secular Worlds

If you have been here lately and as a separate issue, if you have been paying attention, you may have noticed I've been exploring a series of Divine Paradoxes. It's even on the sign outside! Two truth statements that seem polar opposites and yet both are equally true. It stretches us to hold both statements with equal weight and with equal attention.

Today I want to explore two worlds. The spiritual world that is unchanging and absolute, without duality. And the Secular or Material world that is every whit changing and temporary. Do we live in two worlds? Yes. Are they separate? No! How can that be? Is this some sort of Twilight Zone sermon? Not really but it may stretch us outside our normal comfort zone of thinking. I invite you to listen with an open mind and see what sounds true.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote in 1955, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." He wrote this in *The Phenomenon of Man*, published the year of his death. Why does it matter and what is the distinction he is trying to make? I think he is trying to establish the TRUE nature of our being and what he proposes seemed radical at the time and continues to be subject to criticism as blasphemy. Yet if we read the Bible, that collection of stories and writings scribed by flawed humans that still contains much hidden wisdom, we find confirmation.

There are two stories of creation. In Genesis 1:27 it says, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female." In God's image is our first nature. This is spirit; we are spiritual beings.

In Genesis 2:7 it says, "then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being." This is our manifest being; the breath of life surrounded by a body made up of the atoms of the earth. This is our human experience.

De Chardin also says, "There is neither spirit nor matter in the world; the stuff of the universe is *spirit-matter*. No other substance but this could produce the human molecule. I know very well that this idea of spirit-matter is regarded as

a hybrid monster, a verbal exorcism of a duality which remains unresolved in its terms.

But I remain convinced that the objections made to it arise from the mere fact that few people can make up their minds to abandon an old point of view and take the risk of a new idea.”

What does it take to abandon an old point of view and take the risk of a new idea? And what exactly is the risk? The risk might be moving into unfamiliar territory. There is some sort of comfort in the familiar even if it is clear it no longer fits us or serves us. We wear the old shoes and shirts with holes in them or that are too tight. We continue in the same old routine, even while we long for our life to change and get better. The other risk is that ego, that puffy chested little bird in our head, might feel threatened. If this new idea is different, then ego will want to name one idea right and one idea wrong and ego HATES to be wrong. Even if it was in the past. So what if one idea was past and one idea is present and they are just different: neither wrong but just appearing at different times. The little bird finds this very confusing. Like a blue jay, ego is always squawking and ready for a fight. But let’s play with the new idea.

This new idea is that both worlds exist simultaneously and in a web of connection. The spiritual world is not a place you go on Sunday or in a quiet moment in the woods or a favorite chair. The spiritual world is not something you can only experience after death. The spiritual world is present in you and as you in every moment. And it is how you connect with that world that actually shapes and influences the material, secular world you see and touch.

This is our Unity principle: thoughts held in mind produce after their kind. We are co-creators with God, creating reality through thoughts held in mind.

If you do not like what is appearing in your outer world, look to your inner world. Now, I’m going to just say right here, this is often uncomfortable. Sometimes I like the old view that my spiritual life is waiting for me and I just have to muddle through this life and take what the world gives me. The devil makes me do stuff and I may get punished but I can always pray that God will intervene on my behalf. In separate worlds, I have a lot less responsibility and control.

But I cannot un-know what I know. I am a spiritual being having a human experience and I am the one co-creating that experience. I came into this world as a spirit taking on the cloak of humanity. You can believe various things about choice, soul decisions, reincarnation but the bottom line is you are a spiritual being and you have the body you have. You have the mind you have. You have free will. Life is now up to you.

Charles Fillmore, Unity's co-founder says, "Man lives in two worlds, the world of cause and the world of effect." The Spiritual, absolute and unchanging world is the world of cause. The Secular, manifest world is the world of effect that we have shaped and brought into being. The manifest world is temporary. The ice caps are melting; tornados and hurricanes and earthquakes reshape our world almost daily. Humans come into being and return to their spiritual essence every day. And it is easy to abandon our power in the face of unyielding change. It is difficult to accept the interconnection and admit that we created the economy, the war, the destruction of living habitats that is reshaping our earth.

I find it interesting that on page 118 of separate books by Charles Fillmore and Eric Butterworth, we find the same thought and admonition.

Chuck says, "Tell me what kind of thoughts you are holding about yourself and your neighbors, and I can tell you just what you can expect in the way of health, finances, and harmony in your home." Sometimes it is hard to identify those thoughts so Butterworth takes the opposite approach. He says, "Admit to yourself that your present experience, even the condition of your bank account, reflects your present level of awareness. You are not the victim of circumstances. Consciousness creates circumstances or at least sets the climate in which they happen." You can look within and predict what you will see without or you can look without and know that it is a reflection of thoughts and beliefs within. The two worlds are not separate.

So here is the good news: we are not victims of circumstance. We are powerful, spiritual beings able to make new choices and create anew every moment. Myrtle Fillmore's healing is the very foundation of Unity but how did it begin? It began with a thirty-ish woman who hated her body and felt a victim of genetics. She had always been sickly and she had been taught that it was just how her family was. She had tuberculosis or some disease that

affected her lungs and intestines and seemed to rule her entire life. By her own admissions she blamed her body for her experience of life. Then one day she attended a lecture and heard a new idea; "You are a child of God and you do not inherit sickness." Her spiritual being resonated with the truth of this statement. She began to bring that new idea into her conscious awareness. She changed the conversation she had with her body. She no longer condemned her body. She asked forgiveness for her past beliefs and how she had treated her body. She praised every organ and cell and gave thanks for that breath of God, that wholeness, invigorating her body. Slowly, over a period of two years, those new thoughts began to manifest in her material world. Her body healed. She experienced new life and energy. Her third son, Royal was born. She had always been a spiritual being having a human experience but she did not identify with nor claim the power of her spiritual being-ness. She only identified with her human experience and with her thoughts and words she continued to create that which she most disliked. When she began to claim the power of her spiritual being and began creating out of that truth, she began to transform her material world.

So tell me what thoughts you are holding about yourself and your neighbors today? Our thoughts are those channels through which we weave our worlds together. When we feed our thoughts with the values and perceptions of our senses and we only know what we physically see, we may find ourselves living in fear and lack because what we see is threatening and lacking. Those thoughts are creative because we are creative beings but we will create more fear and lack. Thoughts of hate create destruction. Thoughts of greed create poverty. When we feed our thoughts with the true ideas of love, peace and abundance, those thoughts are creative also. We can create a very different human experience with those thoughts, no matter what goes on around us. I am not burying my head in the sand; I am not ignoring reality; I am not feeding you fluff. I am simply stating the law. I am sharing with you my experience. I did some research at the Unity archives about the letters to Unity publications during the great depression. I am sure there were desperate letters but the letters they published were no different than any other months. There were letters about new businesses and purchasing the perfect house and receiving guidance.

Unity did not address the economy but focused on the abundance ever present and available to access and shape through faith, imagination and the power of thoughts and words. The wholeness that is within us as spiritual beings does not change. It does not depend on the appearance of our bodies or the economy or the opinion of those around us.

Right here, right now, we can create a world of peace, harmony and abundance. It is within our power but it is a choice. It depends on our ability to see ourselves as peaceful, harmonious and abundant. It depends on our ability to want that for every being. Yes, every being. Any thoughts of hate or separation deplete the fullest flow of the energy of love and plenty. What we create depends on our ability to live our lives and make our words and actions consistent with peaceful, harmonious and abundant beings. It depends on our ability to own that we live in worlds of cause and effect; and that our expression and experience is shaped by our thoughts. The world of spirit and the world of manifestation are not separate but we can choose to live as if they were. Or we can integrate those worlds to create the life we desire. What will you choose today?