

Integrity

True integrity exists everywhere in nature. Everything functions together as a whole. Also, in nature time is not linear, it is cyclical; a circle of life representing a whole. The seasons change every few months, and they give each other integrity, they give each other change. Right now it is fall, and the leaves can fall because of the spring, summer and winter. In the winter the leaves are gone, but in the spring new leaves can grow in the place of the fallen, and in the summer the new leaves live happily giving us oxygen until they must die in the fall to start the cycle all over again. They live so they can die, and die so that they can live. The leaves have integrity because they live when it is time to live and die when it is time to die. They know these times because of their relationship to everything else; their relationship to spring, summer, fall, winter and the mechanisms of the earth that produce the seasons, and the mechanisms of the universe that make the earth.

As humans, we do not live when it is time to live because we do not live in relation to everything else, we live according to the dictates of our egos and steadily march towards death-time. We do not perceive time as a circle, a whole, held together by a web made by each other and each thing because we want to have our own separate integrity, defended by the creation of linear time. This separate integrity feels assured by the steady ticking of linear time, like a heartbeat its existence is affirmed every second. It ticks until the very end, our heartbeat stops and we are no longer conscious of the ticking. The clock we have created never stops ticking, even if we can no longer hear it. It only mattered to us while we were alive, when it gave us order and what we perceive as integrity. However, the beat of the heart does not conform to the ticking of the clock, it has its own time and the clock does not know it; it is a secret. Only time will tell it.

We think that death is not a part of us; it is the anti-ego, when we die we lose "our" consciousness and control. It is something we dread at the end of that road of linear time we march on. We march boldly and proudly like soldiers on their way to war with an attacker, we can't let ourselves be seen as cowards. We cannot desert the army or our egos, we cannot show weakness, or the "Other" just might kill us. We use our time wisely, getting our work done so that we can become something, because we are not enough; we must be victorious and stand apart from the rest. Time is money; linear time is valuable, it can bring us success in the future. In circular time there is no future to bring success, nothing stands apart but stands together as a whole, and time is a tree that makes leaves instead of money. Our pride and bravery is now recognized as cowardliness, fear of relation, and we stand there looking stupid in our uniforms, holding our weapons up against an opponent that isn't there. Our opponent morphs into a friend that has been supporting us and keeping us alive the whole time.

If death is not a part of us, then life is not a part of us. When life and death become one, they produce rebirth. In a way death does not really exist, only rebirth exists. Rebirth is a constant cycle of existence, but not a monotonous one because it can never produce sameness. Rebirth is really in the middle of the circle, it is not in the cycle anymore. Rebirth is the whole that life and death make. It is in the present moment, it is the merging of space

and time. It is birth after birth after birth after birth. It is one whole life giving birth to itself. Where is there death in the universe? I do not see it when I look outside of myself. Everything just looks like reformation, rebirth, shifting in form, constantly in movement. Everything is always in the middle of the circle in an infinite universe.

When I picture true integrity, I picture a web in the shape of a sphere. But really I think it is impossible to imagine an image to represent true integrity. Since everything and everyone is every part of that sphere, there is no place to place things and therefore no form to be held, because everything is everywhere. It is almost like it is beyond form and therefore beyond our comprehension. Thinking is a very limited thing, being is not. Being in a web, interconnected, has infinite possibilities.

These truths are no good unless we put them to practice, or rather, let them put us to practice. We will not take them and shape them to ourselves like we do with systems of government; we will let them govern us. They are much more alive and capable of leading us than our governments ever have been. They are not ideas, and they are definitely not my own; they are alive by themselves and you would not be alive without them. They belong to no one, but if you see them yourself they are yours to shout at the top of your lungs to anyone else who might hear, and you just might stop a war, poverty, hatred or all of the endless miseries humans inflict on each other because of their egos. Everyone on earth is a savior if they try to be. Are we capable of forming a web together, of being each other's brothers and sisters? If not then thinking about this is the true meaning of a waste of time.

What Is?

Finding what is true involves also discovering what is not true. In fact, it is easier to realize what is true when you have realized what is false.

Everything your mind creates is not real. Lower life forms do not impose their ideas on reality; they live in accordance with it. They live in the present moment, and react to stimulus when it is in the present with them. Plants photosynthesize when the sun is out; animals react to their predators etc. Plants and animals follow a pattern of reactions nature has programmed into them. Humans are different because we have evolved to have minds in order to better control our environment. Our minds are able to think about the past and our future and make decisions.

The problem is not that we have a mind that is able to react to things that are not immediately present, but that we do not recognize that the things are not immediately present. We do not recognize what the present moment is. We think we are our minds, we think we are what we think about our past and future. As living beings, we identify with our thoughts and become complicated. But our mind is just a tool that helps us to think abstractly about our environment, in order to gain better control of it. We have gained control of our environment and created civilization, now it is time to gain control over our inner environment. We have homes that give us shelter; now we must recognize our spirit is our true and infinite home, and the ultimate shelter. Jesus said "I am the bed; the person

who lies on me will enter perpetual rest. I am the Light; the person who sees by me will view all things."

Ultimately, we are just a consciousness that has no control. It is just part of the mystery of life. Our bodies just support our consciousness and it helps our brains to make sense of life. Right now we are using it to create false identities for ourselves, but they are impermanent. Nonetheless people hold onto this falsehood, and this causes many problems in the world. The truth is that we are just pure consciousness, living in an impermanent body. We all share the body of the infinite universe.

You Have No Control

We are at the complete mercy of life itself. It knows how to create hunger within us so that we may sustain ourselves; how to create desire so that we may reproduce; how to create fear so that we may protect ourselves. Our environment is constantly changing. Today it was raining and it was cold, so I had to bring along an umbrella. The coldness made me want to have a hot drink. So I stopped at a coffee shop and got a hot chocolate. Stopping for hot chocolate made me bump into a friend, and bumping into a friend determined that I would not go home for another hour. Things are always happening that determine how things will turn out. You know some days will be rainy, but not all days, because it is improbable.

Everything physical is constantly changing, and the present moment is constantly being recreated. That means that the past is constantly dying to create the present. Everything material is constantly changing, and to let it change, something has to die. Dying is only the process by which life changes into something new. But we hold onto our forms and try to control them. Because we try to control them we do not realize they are uncontrollable, and become perpetually dead, holding on to the material past that has already died. We do not live with the stream of change. We are nothing more than constant change. An immortal spirit, a nothingness at one with the change and also witness to it. At least that is how we should live. Instead we deny that is how it is, which is silly because it is like denying we have an arm or a nose. But humans work in silly ways, while God works in mysterious ones that can never be known, just surrendered to.

There is no God Higher than Truth

God is not a separate entity controlling or creating everything. It is every part of everything. It is the simplicity and complexity of everything. It is the inherent knowledge in everything. Everything knowing that it is a part of everything else, working together in perfect balance and harmony. The universe is perfect the way it is, if it was not, it would not be what it is. That is the truth.

From the small atoms to the supernovas, their largeness and smallness only relative, there is perfect integrity. They know each other and recognize how to create themselves and

everything else in the process. It is a knowing that is not separate from the present moment, it acts when it is supposed to according to the dictates of natural order.

And it is infinite, because it is impossible for it not to be. It is infinity every moment. Every moment is always. Every moment that ever existed is now. Time does not exist. But infinity is incomprehensible. All we can know is that it is the way it is, because the finite cannot have perfect integrity, cannot be nothing to be everything all the time, for no reason at all. Does not have a reason for anything, so it has no reason to be finite. Every moment is made of infinity.

This is God; the incomprehensible but the obvious, love (infinite creation). Nothing and everything. The whole.

Pleasure and Pain

I have noticed that the more interested in pleasure I am the more addicted I become to it, and I cannot get out of the habit. If I eat one ice-cream cone, I start craving more ice-cream. Wanting things only makes the hole of emptiness in you grow bigger. Your mind makes you feel empty and like you need more, and it is a hard thing to break the habit of. We seek pleasure constantly in our daily life. We grudgingly do our work and dream of the pleasure we will get when we are done. The free time we will spend watching TV, hanging out with friend, or eating something tasty. When we are not doing those things, our mind is dreaming of them, and when we are doing those things, our expectation of them takes away from the experience. So we are constantly dissatisfied. Restless and dissatisfied from day to day. The wheel turns.

Every time I have a craving for something I wonder if I should really follow it. I know it is just an impermanent condition of my mind. But it is so convincing it is hard not to follow it. The only thing I can suggest to combat this problem is to feel your body, hear the noises around you, and smell the air. Be fulfilled by your life in that moment. Do not be a slave to the conditions of your mind.

Balance

In the last section about pleasure and pain, I forgot to mention the fact that pleasure and pain are just two sides of the same problem. Whenever you feel pleasure, you can be sure that you will also feel pain in the future. Things just naturally happen that way. You never continuously feel pleasure; a painful time always comes, just like the fact that it rains some days and is sunny other days. In a way pleasure is pain, and pain is pleasure, because they create each other; they are recognizable by each others' existence. We also see them as separate things because that is how our mind perceives them, but they are really one movement; they make up a whole together. If you put the two together, you see the whole circle. You step off the merry-go-round.

Buddha said to walk the middle path. Do not seek out extreme pleasure or pain, unless you want their opposites. Do everything knowing what you are doing, and knowing the other side of it. Intentionally seeking pleasure or pain enslaves you to material conditions. Step back, take a look at how you are feeling, and know it is just a passing condition, like a cloud in a sky. Right now we always think we are the clouds in the sky. But we are actually the sky; infinite. So if you try to get extreme pleasure, you will keep identifying yourself with an impermanent condition, and it will be harder to walk the middle path, as Buddha said. I think he suggested the middle path because it is easier to reach spiritual understandings when you are not letting yourself be tossed around by extremes.

When people see some things as beautiful,
other things become ugly.
When people see some things as good,
other things become bad.

Being and non-being create each other.
Difficult and easy support each other.
Long and short define each other.
High and low depend on each other.
Before and after follow each other.

Therefore the Master
acts without doing anything
and teaches without saying anything.
Things arise and she lets them come;
things disappear and she lets them go.
She has but doesn't possess,
acts but doesn't expect.
When her work is done, she forgets it.
That is why it lasts forever.

-From the *Tao Te Ching*

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