

Sancta Sophia Seminary

MARRIAGE OF SPIRIT
RECONCILIATION AND UNIFICATION OF OPPOSITES

For
PRACTICUM PROJECT

By
Marilyn Louise Buehler

March 2006

MARRIAGE OF SPIRIT:

RECONCILIATION AND UNIFICATION OF OPPOSITES

Everything is dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extreme meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes must be reconciled.¹

This paper is inspired by the book *The Marriage of Spirit, Enlightened Living in Today's World* by Leslie Temple-Thurston.² Presented here are the Marriage of Spirit processing techniques described in the book. These explain the nature of duality, and how to process reoccurring issues experienced in life, and to balance undesirable emotional and mental states. This is a valuable tool for working with the shadow and to bring to light the unconscious motivations that cause one to live under addictive and self-defeating patterns.

There are many self-help methods to help move towards a state of freedom or balance. The Marriage of Spirit techniques are a unique way of viewing and working with undesirable emotional and mental states in order to consciously grow in awareness of the unity that is behind and sustains duality. The term marriage in this context refers to the unification of the opposites, to create unity and equality and to reconcile the opposite in one's awareness.

¹ Three Initiates, *The KYBALLION, A Study of the Hermetic Philosophy of Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Chicago: The Yogi Publication Society, 1940), 149.

² Leslie Temple-Thurston with Brad Laughlin, *The Marriage of Spirit, Enlightened Living in Today's World* (Sante Fe: CoreLight Publications, 2000).

Teachings on the Nature of Duality

The teaching on dualistic nature of the physical world is expressed in various spiritual traditions. The human experience takes the soul on a journey into the physical world to learn through the experience of the opposites, hot/cold, pleasure/pain, light/dark, and yin/yang, etc.

In *The Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna teaches Arjuna about the nature of duality, “All beings, from their very birth, O Bharata, are deluded by the spell of the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion. . . But the men of virtuous deeds, whose sin is ended are free from the delusion of the pairs and worship Me with firm resolve.”³ In another chapter, Krishna explains, “He who is everywhere without attachment, who neither rejoices nor despises on meeting with anything – good or bad, his wisdom is established.”⁴

According to Vedanta philosophy, in the book *The Quintessence of Vedanta of Sri Sankaracharya* the opposites are explained to be states of mind. Discrimination is the path of liberation, which comes from a pure mind that is not bound by the opposites.

Bondage and liberation are alike of the mind; so too are good and evil. A pure mind is the cause of liberation, but an impure mind is the cause of bondage. What is good comes out of discrimination, and out of lack of discrimination comes evil.⁵

The Buddha taught the Middle Way, to live “between the extremes of asceticism, on one hand, and indulgence on the other.”⁶ In the Gospel of Thomas, “Jesus said: When

³ Swami Nikhilanada, *The Bhagavad Gita* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekenanda Center: 1987), 89.

⁴ Sri Swami Venkatesananda, *The Song of God (Bhagavad Gita)* (Cape Town, S.A.: Mills Litho, 1999), 57.

⁵ Swami Tattwananda, *The Quintessence of Vedanta of Sri Sankaracharya - fourth edition* (Ernakulam, Kerala, India: Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, 1991), 105.

⁶ Houston Smith, *The Worlds Religions, Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991), 85.

you make the two into one, you will be called sons of men.”⁷

The dualism is expressed in the Taoist Yin/Yang symbol,



Figure 1.

. . . sums up all of life’s basic oppositions: good/evil, active/passive, positive/negative, light/dark, summer/winter, male/female. But though the halves are in tension, they are not flatly opposed; they complement and balance each other. Each invades the other’s hemisphere and takes up its abode in the deepest recess of its partner’s domain. And in the end both find themselves resolved by the circle that surrounds them, the Tao in its eternal wholeness. In the context of wholeness, the opposites appear as no more than phases in an endless cycling process, for each turn incessantly into its opposite, exchanging places with it.⁸

In Carol Parrish-Harrah’s, *The New Dictionary of Spiritual Thought*, she defines the world of duality as:

The dense world, physical in nature, known as Assiah in Kabbalah has a nature that exists as polarities. Here, opposites are the nature of the natural state of life. The Kabbalistic tree symbolizes this with three pillars: masculine, feminine, and a middle column of balance. Polarities are reflected in hot and cold, up and down, good and bad, and the human exists in this world of dichotomies until it integrates awareness and develops the spiritual nature where it can see the oneness of all life.⁹

Meher Baba explains duality in the *Discourses*,

The history of the limited individuality is a history of the development of a triple entanglement with mind, energy, and matter (body). Duality prevails in all these domains; and the soul gets entangled therein, although it is in essence beyond duality. Duality implies the existence of opposites limiting and balancing each other through mutual tension. Good and bad, virtue and vice, are examples of such opposites. The ignorant soul enmeshed in duality is in the clutches of both good and bad.¹⁰

⁷ Stevan Davies, ed. Andres Harvey, *The Gospel of Thomas, Annotated and Explained* (Woodstock, Vt: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2004), 129.

⁸ Houston Smith, *The World’s Religions Our Great Wisdom Traditions*, 215.

⁹ Carol E. Parrish-Harra, Ph.D., *The New Dictionary of Spiritual Thought*, Expanded 2nd ed. (Tahlequah, OK: Sparrow Hawk Press, 2002), 74-75.

¹⁰ Meher Baba, *Discourses*, 7th Revised Edition (Myrtle Beach, SC: Sheriar Foundation, 1995), 19.

The Human Imprint

How is it that humans get entangled in and experience duality, and do not perceive the oneness behind the many? It is due to Human Imprint, which holds the structure of the ego. To describe the nature of this egoic structure Temple-Thurston introduces the model of the Human Imprint. “The upward-and-downward-spiral model is a useful tool to discern when you are acting from your ego. It helps to develop the vigilance you need and to remind you when to get into your neutral witness and process. It is a map for understanding how awareness spins, cycling into negative and positive, and when its upper and lower limits are.”¹¹ These upper and lower limits are experiences as one moves through the polarized states of consciousness that she explains as the downward and upward spirals.

The Downward Spiral and the Upward Spiral

The first imprint that occurs when the individual descends into duality is a negative imprinting. Temple-Thurston refers to this as the Downward Spiral. She explains that from unity consciousness a vibration begins and shatters this unity consciousness as the individual falls into duality. Temple-Thurston provides the states of consciousness held in the egoic structure that are experienced in this Downward Spiral.

SHOCK
SHATTERING
DOUBT
CONFUSION
SUSPICION
FEAR
REJECTION
BETRAYAL

¹¹ Leslie Temple-Thurston with Brad Laughlin, *The Marriage of Spirit, Enlightened Living in Today's World*, 116.

ABDONDONMENT
 LOSS
 DISSAPPOINTMENT
 PAIN
 BLAME
 ANGER
 RAGE
 FEAR
 SELF-BLAME
 GUILT
 SHAME
 SELF-RECRIMINATION
 INADEQUACY
 HATE OR SELF-HATE
 REGRET
 DESPAIR
 WORTHLESSNESS
 HOPELESSNESS
 MEANINGLESSNESS¹²

These states of mind are seen from an inward perspective of oneself, or they are projected outwardly on to others. As one reviews the list, one may reflect how far down the spiral his or her experience is. Identifying one's experience in the downward spiral may help one to name the state of consciousness and begin to witness the state and to move back up the spiral.

At the moment of this egoic imprinting, the next imprint that occurs is the Upward Spiral. Temple-Thurston provides the states of mind held in the Upward Spiral.

STILLNESS
 COHESIVENESS
 CERTAINTY
 CLARITY
 SECURITY
 COURAGE
 ACCEPTANCE
 TRUST
 CHERISHING

¹² Ibid., 116.

GAIN
 SATISFACTION
 PLEASURE
 PRAISE
 PEACE
 CALM
 COURAGE
 SELF-PRAISE
 INNOCENCE
 PRIDE
 SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS
 COMPETENCE
 POSSESSIVE LOVE
 GRATIFICATION
 EXULTATION
 SELF-WORTH
 HOPEFUL
 MEANINGFUL¹³

The Neutral Witness

Temple-Thurston explains how to detach from the dualistic viewpoint.

There is a way through the labyrinth of life, which is all bound up by the law of opposites. Sometimes called the middle way, or the third way or the razor's edge, it is the way of neutrality, where we surrender the idea that we should be attracted or repulsed by anything, whether to the negative or positive side of any polarity. We choose instead to identify with the neutral place, the center point between two poles. Here the witness has the power of observation without the reactivity of judgment. Developing the ability to view life from the neutral position assists enormously in extricating us from the turning cycles of the wheel of karma. The center is the eye of the storm, the still-point, the hub of the wheel.¹⁴

To observe the ego structure held in the personality and become aware of the inner judge, the one that labels the good and the bad, that which is attracted and repulsed, cultivates this neutral witness. One becomes aware that one is not the personality, but something much greater. Cultivating the neutral witness helps one to observe the working of the ego, and to become free of the pull of duality.

The following sections will step through the Marriage of Spirit processing techniques. At first the procedures may seem tedious. Eventually one can dispense with the paper and the writing. By identifying the polarity expressed in the moment, one can mentally choose to move to the ascended state of awareness. Here is how it is done.

The Marriage of Spirit Processing Techniques

Telling the Story

The first step is to write about a negative or challenging experience that has happened. It may be best to pick a recent or recurring theme to process. Using pen and paper write about the situation. Let the story unfold without editing; allow the stream of consciousness to flow onto the paper. Capture the thoughts, emotions and states of mind. When the story is complete, move on the next step.

Identifying the Pairs of Opposites

Reading through the story, highlight the theme words and phrases. "*Theme words and phrases reflect the structure of the experience rather than the content.*"¹⁵ These are the words that reflect emotions or states of mind that have a particular charge. Also, note words that are repeated through out the story.

Once the theme words have been identified, take another sheet of paper. Extract the highlighted words and phrases into a list in the left side of the paper. This process helps identify the egoic structures that hold the experience.

¹³ Ibid., 119-120.

¹⁴ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵ Ibid., 155.

Now, on the right side of the paper, list the opposites or antonyms for each theme word or phrase. In the world of duality, pairs of opposites exist everywhere; when one thing is found, the opposite is also found, because it is contained within it. Identifying the antonym will make that apparent. If there is more than one antonym, use the one that best describes the opposite of the theme word in context of the story.

One cannot be attached to one side without having to deal with the other. One must become conscious of both sides; that one polarity is inherent in the opposite pole. The list represents the unreconciled dualities held within the mind and emotions. The way to process these dualistic states of mind is to surrender them to God. Offer these states of mind in a prayer, such as: Father-mother God, please take all of these states of mind, which are unbalanced in this pattern and balance and clear them. Do this so that I may see more clearly and find my way home more easily. I give thanks knowing it will be done.

The last step here is to wait for grace. Acknowledging these states of mind, and the helplessness that one experiences can be reconciled by surrendering them to God. This allows for the energy held in these states to be freed and the light will replace the previously held shadow.

Squares

Sogyal Rinpoche, in his book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, explains a fundamental principle of Buddhism, “Be free from attachment and aversion. Keep your mind pure. And unite your mind with the Buddha.”¹⁶ Desire for something causes

¹⁶ Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 223.

attachment. Fear of something causes aversion. In the world of duality, one is constantly attracted and repulsed to the polarities being experiences in life.

Take an example of having a manager who is a tyrant, and one experiences oneself as a victim. This is the victim/tyrant polarity. If we take each side of the victim/tyrant polarity and see it through attraction and aversion, one has aversion for (or fear of) and attraction (or desire for) the victim state of consciousness, and aversion and attraction towards the tyrant. One may argue that “desire to be a victim” is not really the case, but that is the other side of the “fear of being a victim” that exists. It is time to look closer. This is how becoming aware of the unconscious motivations comes into the process.

Considering the nature of the ego, one is attracted and repulsed to each side of a polarity. In the victim/tyrant example the four states that are held in the Human Imprint are 1) desire for a tyrant, 2) fear of a tyrant, 3) desire to be a victim, 4) fear of being a victim. These four states of mind are held, consciously or unconsciously, when one has manifested a tyrant in his or her life.

Now, take the two-column list, and select one of the more charged themes. Find that theme and its opposite. This is the polarity, which will be used to create the square. Using the principle of attraction and repulsion, write down the four states of mind inherent in the original experience. These four states are used to fill out the square.

To create a square, take a sheet of paper, and draw a line across the middle and a line down the center of the page. This creates four squares. Write one of each of these four states of mind in the top of each square.

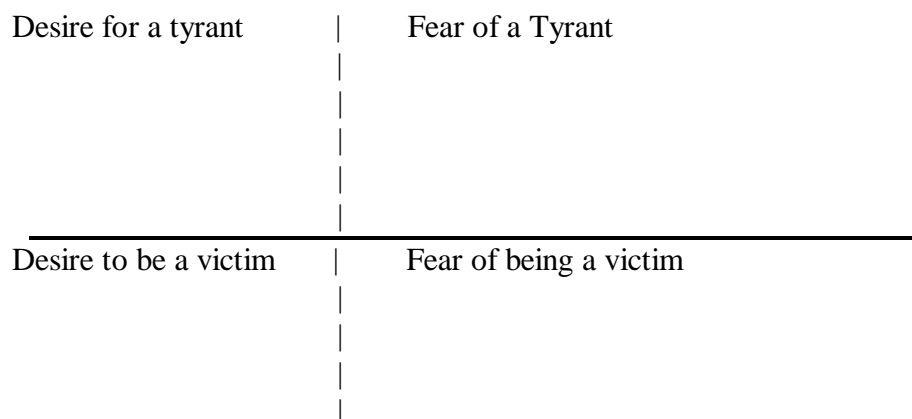


Figure 2.

Now, write in all the states of mind, emotions, thoughts associated with each square. Even if one doesn't feel they have any issues in one square, the motivations are there, by nature of the human imprint, duality and nature of attraction and repulsion. Fill in every square. If one doesn't have much written in one square, for example, "desire to be a victim", fill in the square, imagining what someone else might think or feel that would motivate them to desire to be a victim. In this situation, the ego has projected these states of mind on to someone else. This exercise will bring to light the unconscious motivations, which the ego has been seeking to fulfill through experience.

Filling out the square brings to light all the conscious and unconscious motivations that are attracting a situation into one's experience. The states of mind and emotions listed appear to be irreconcilable. The next step is to offer them up to God. For it is in acknowledging and releasing these states of mind, that they are reconciled back to the source.

Because thoughts are things, that they are filled with vibratory frequency, as we release these thoughts, one may perceive a sense of grace or lightness after completing and offering up a square. Waiting for grace is the last step of the squares process.

Figure Eights: The Ego is Seeks Gratification in a Closed System

Consciousness moves through the square in a figure eight. Consciousness remains trapped in the experience of duality. It is out of fear of one polarity that causes movement to be attracted to the opposite polarity. For example, one has 1) the desire to be in a relationship. After sometime, this may cycle into 2) the fear of being in a relationship, and thus one would eventually be drawn to 3) the desire to be single. After being single for some time, 4) the fear of being single, surfaces. Once, one has been single for a while, and the ego does not find satisfaction there, it becomes the fear of being single, and the ego seeks gratification through the desire for a relationship. Which is back where one started. The ego is seeking gratification in a closed system that can never bring complete fulfillment.

The Double Bind

Occasionally, the same word or phrase appears in more than one square. This is called a double bind. A double bind must be acknowledged and offered up separately as it indicates an intense area of stuck energy and consciousness, a catch-22. The same thing will pull one into two squares.

Triangles

The next technique of the Marriage of Spirit processing is the triangle. The square works more on the physical and emotional level related to the first, second, and third charkas. The triangles work more in the mental realm relating to the fourth, fifth, and sixth chakras.

To create the triangle, take the polarity worked on the square, and label the bottom of a triangle. Next, identify the ascended state that would take one beyond duality

(Ascended state written here)

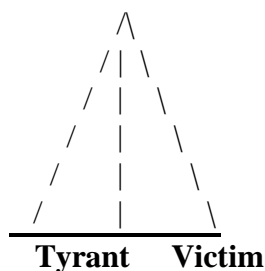


Figure 3.

of this polarity. Write the ascended state at the top of the triangle. This ascended state is one from which the neutral witness can observe the polarity being played out. Moving into an ascended state helps one move out of the duality. Temple-Thurston provides the following list of ascended states to work with:

ACCEPTANCE	FAITH	PATIENCE
ATTUNEMENT	FLOW	PURITY
BALANCE	FORGIVENESS	QUIESENCE
BLISS (ANANDA)	GENEROSITY	SAMADHI
CLARITY	GRACE	SELFLESSNESS
COMPASSION	GRATITUDE	SURRENDER
DETACHMENT	HARMLESSNESS	TOLERANCE
DEVOTION	HARMONY	TRUST
DHARMA	IMPECCABILITY	TRUTH
DISCERNMENT	JOY	UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
EQUALITY	LOYALTY	UNITY
ETERNALITY	NEURTALITY	WISDOM

The final step of the triangle process is to offer up the polarity and wait for grace. As the states of mind are released it allows for a descent of grace and influx of light where previously were shadows.

Group Processing: Clearing the Collective Shadow

A group of individuals can meet to work a square by selecting a state of mind or condition being displayed in their community, country, or a global issue. By identifying its opposite, the group will observe the polarity being played out in the collective consciousness. The group completes the square, as they express all the states of minds and motivations for them selves and the collective. They work through both a square and a triangle. As they offer of the unbalanced states of mind, the group has served to work to clear the collective unconscious and to bring light into the human collective.

Conclusion

Since learning the Marriage of Spirit techniques, I have used them for situations that keep repeating themselves or when I feel stuck. Leslie Temple-Thurston was the first spiritual teacher I met who emphasized the importance of clearing the shadow. I had been attracted to primarily Eastern teachings, which put an emphasis on meditation with no way to process the shadow as it surfaces. There were deep emotional issues held within my self and family, which these techniques helped me to see and release.

The Marriage of Spirit techniques are easy to learn. They can be taught with little philosophical explanation. It is a valuable tool for oneself, and for sharing with others. The Marriage of Spirit techniques are offered to remind us, “The soul is beyond the opposite of experience, but it does not know itself as such. . . for the soul in its true nature is eternally unqualified, unmodified, and unlimited.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Meher Baba, *Discourses*, 378.

Father-mother God, please take all of these states of mind that have come to light during the reading of this paper, balance and clear them. Do this so that we may see more clearly and find our way home more easily. We give thanks knowing it will be done.

Amen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Davies, Stevan. ed. Andres Harvey. *The Gospel of Thomas, Annotated and Explained*. Woodstock, Vt.: Skylight Paths Publishing. 2004.
- Meher Baba. *Discourses*. 7th ed. Revised. Myrtle Beach, SC: Sheriar Foundation. 1995.
- Nikhilanada, Swami. *The Bhagavad Gita*. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekenanda Center. 1987.
- Parrish-Harra, Ph.D., Carol E. *The New Dictionary of Spiritual Thought*, Expanded 2nd ed. Tahlequah, OK: Sparrow Hawk Press. 2002.
- Smith, Houston. *The Worlds Religions, Our Great Wisdom Traditions*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco. 1991.
- Sogyal Rinpoche. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco. 1994.
- Tattwananda, Swami. *The Quintessence of Vedanta of Sri Sankaracharya*. 4th ed. Ernakulam, Kerala, India: Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama. 1991.
- Temple-Thurston, Leslie with Brad Laughlin. *The Marriage of Spirit, Enlightened Living in Today's World*. Sante Fe: CoreLight Publications. 2000.
- Three Initiates. *The KYBALLION, A Study of the Hermetic Philosophy of Ancient Egypt and Greece*. Chicago: The Yogi Publication Society. 1940.
- Venkatesananda, Sri Swami. *The Song of God (Bhagavad Gita)*. Cape Town, S.A.: Mills Litho. 1999.