

Dualism vs. Monism

Judeo-Christian religion tends to be dualistic, seeing the world in mostly black and white terms. Eastern religion, on the other hand, tends towards Idealistic Monism which emphasizes the unity of all that exists and views humanity as an integral part of, and inseparable from, a single divine godhead.

According to popular Christianity, God and man are separated by sin; man has two natures, one spiritual and the other fleshly; people are saved or lost with nothing in between; good and evil are separate and distinct; God is responsible for the good, while Satan is to blame for evil; and so on.

Here are some examples dualistic teachings of the Bible:

1. God is good, yet allows evil to exist.
2. God is love but at the same time tortures people in Hell.
3. God is omnipresent, but at the same time exists separately from us.
4. God is omnipotent and desires the salvation of everyone, but does not save all.
5. God answers our prayers, but most of time says “No.”
6. God is either our best friend or our worst enemy.

Is it possible to harmonize the above contradictory aspects of the Christian God and at the same time remain true to the teachings of Scripture? In other words, can we have our cake and eat it too? If we want believe the good stuff are we forced accept the bad stuff and live with the contradictory nature of a very schizophrenic God? Or, must we throw out the “bad stuff” in order to believe the “good stuff?”

Although the writers of the Bible expressed themselves in largely dualistic terms, one must resort to Idealistic Monism in order to harmonize all of their teachings. In order to do this, we need to assume that all the so-called “bad stuff” must actually be “good stuff” in disguise.

Here’s how I would harmonize the bad stuff with the good stuff:

1. *God is good, yet still allows evil to exist*, so long as the evil serves a good purpose. Evil serves many good purposes. For one thing, it creates the need for us to be helped, forgiven and saved by a very loving God. It creates a need for God to express His unconditional love towards us. It teaches us the folly of sinful attitudes and behaviors. Once freed from evil, we appreciate and enjoy all the more the love and joys of living our lives in harmony with will of God.
2. *God is love but at the same time tortures people in Hell*. Actually, God doesn’t torture people in Hell. Hell is not a place. It is not God who sends us there, and it doesn’t last forever. Hell is a state of mind whereby we experience the natural consequences of our sinful behavior. God is the one who rescues us from the Hells of our own making. He will not be satisfied until the last of His stray sheep are found and safely returned to the fold.
3. *God is omnipresent, but at the same time exists separately from us*. Actually, our separation from God is an illusion. From our human, earthly perspective we are separated from God. This is due to the fact that we are unaware of God’s presence all around and within us. God does not exist

separately from us. He is omnipresent. One day, after we have been awakened to our true identity in Christ, we will realize that God was with us all the time.

4. *God is omnipotent and desires the salvation of everyone, but does not save all.* Actually, God does save us all. We are all at one stage or another in the salvation process. One day, every knee will bow to Christ and acknowledge Him as Lord. God is at work in all of our lives before, during and after our conversion experience.
5. *God answers our prayers, but most of time says "No."* Although God mostly says "no," He always says yes to what we need the most. God answers our prayers in one of four ways: (1) Yes, (2) No, (3) Wait for the right timing, and (4) Roll up your sleeves and get to work.
6. *God is either our best friend or our worst enemy.* God's wrath is directed against all sin and ungodliness, not against sinners. Sin and ungodliness make God angry because they are harmful to us, the objects of His love. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The Eastern Religions are right about one thing. We are sparks of the divine, with divine natures, never separated from God, indwelt by God's Spirit, and will one day be completely reunited with God in our conscious awareness. What they are missing is all the "good stuff" that Jesus offers us that can make our lives so much better in the here and now.