

A number of sages point to our true nature as that of emptiness. What do they mean by this?

The central tenet of emptiness in this context is that we as human beings do not possess a quality that permanently radiates that quality to all sentient things in the universe.

Our qualities and consequently our identities, which often we invest in heavily, are impermanent experiences that are consistently fading in and out of consciousness. In a very real sense, they are not true qualities, but rather are illusory and dependent upon consensus reality. An absolute truth must be independent and be able to be verified by all things in one way or another. Therefore, in this sense then the qualities we think we have are said to be illusory. Some examples may help to explain:

Consider the Dali Lama for a moment. To many people, he is a loving compassionate being. But does he radiate the qualities of love and compassion to all beings? Apparently not, as evidenced by the Chinese government who tend to think of the Dali Lama as an insurgent and troublemaker. If the Dali Lama truly was radiating love and compassion to all beings then this quality would be seen by all people everywhere but it isn't. As such, it is a relative truth, which is dependent upon who perceives the Dali Lama and consequently is not an absolute truth.

The same can be said of Jesus, some would venture to say he was a kind man, a miracle worker, compassionate, loving and so on. Yet those that condemned him to death and apparently there was quite a number, did not perceive these qualities. In other words, Jesus did not have a quality that radiated out his "holiness" to all sentient beings because if he did, everyone would have noticed it and he would not have been nailed to a cross.

We can also look at the other side of the coin by examining another famous figure: Adolph Hitler. Most would say that he was an evil man. Yet to the Neo - Nazis he is a hero, a beacon of sorts to them. To his mother and partner and those close to him, he was not evil. In other words, he did not radiate evil to all things and some, in fact, admire him.

So when it is said that our true nature is emptiness it is a pointer to look deeply into the nature of mind and begin to comprehend that who we think we are is illusory and impermanent.

There is one quality (strictly speaking it is not a quality) however that we do radiate to all things. Can you guess what it may be? If not here it is.

It is that we exist.

What exists cannot really be defined in absolute truth terms but we can say there is existence. Even when we interact with a rock, the rock at a sub-atomic level reacts to our presence. There is an awareness there though it is a very different type of awareness to what we human beings seem to have.

The pointing to emptiness then is really a pointing to existence or said another way a pointing to life. Existence in this context is an existence where everything appears on the screen of consciousness. Consciousness is where existence appear. All qualities appear in consciousness and equally, disappear in consciousness. Rather than defining ourselves to qualities that come and go this great spiritual pointing attempts to help us look towards the source which allows all appearance to arise.

When we directly perceive the source (not to be confused with something which appears in mind) then we directly see true self, which is not a thing of definition but does allow all definitions to appear. This can be tremendously freeing for beings.

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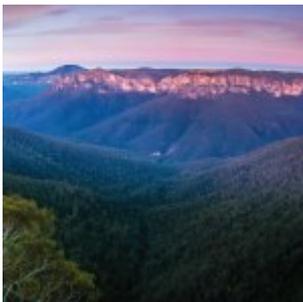
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