

# ONENESS

## *The Nature of Global Civilization*

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

*How can the divine Oneness be seen?  
In beautiful forms, breathtaking wonders,  
awe-inspiring miracles?  
The Tao is not obliged to present itself  
in this way.*

*If you are willing to be lived by it, you will  
see it everywhere, even in the most  
ordinary things.*

Lao Tsu

### **We Are One**

Oneness is very simple; everything is included. Every leaf, every laugh, every tear, every child playing, every soldier weary of fighting, is part of the oneness of the world. Nothing can be excluded. Nothing is separate. Every thought, every dream, is connected to every other thought and dream. To exclude anything is to exclude everything.

And this oneness is present everywhere in each moment of time. When the poet Blake wrote, "To see the world in a grain of sand," he was not describing a poetic image but a simple truth. Everything, every cell of creation, contains the oneness of the world. We are a part of the whole and we are the whole.

Once we step outside of the paradigm of dualism and separation into the oneness that is present, a very different image of life emerges. Light and dark, good and bad, laughter and tears are still different from each other, and yet they belong together. We are a part of one another and although we each have our own individuality and unique qualities, there is something that embraces everything - that is everything. This oneness is life itself.

Sadly, over the last era the images of duality have dominated our consciousness, creating a life of separation. We have become separate from each other and more damaging, separate from the earth and from the natural rhythms of life. This has allowed us to rape and pillage our planet with disastrous results. We need to reclaim the knowing of oneness before the world dies from the pain of separation.

We know this truth. We know that we have to step into an era of global responsibility and acknowledge the interdependence of all of life. Science has revealed to us the ecological wholeness of life -

how we are part of a delicately balanced ecosystem. Technology has given us the tools of global awareness: satellites, cell phones and the internet. But, these tools of global communication are being used by our corporations to spread more greed and materialism over the world, further desecrating the planet. Even the nightmare of terrorism has become global.

We have been given a vision of oneness and an understanding that the world is a living whole. And we have been given some of the tools to enable us to live this vision. Yet we are giving this gift away, allowing the powers of global awareness to be used by those forces that would destroy us. Is this our destiny? What is it that prevents us from claiming the real fruits of oneness?

Perhaps we are frightened to acknowledge the real meaning of oneness and its responsibility. What would it mean to face that our life is not our own, that we are a part of something greater, something vast and beautiful and terrible that we cannot control but only acknowledge with awe? The illusion of the supremacy of our separate self and all that it involves may be the real barrier to living the power and potency of oneness - of working together for the sake of the whole.

Stepping into an era of oneness means losing our sense of autonomy and desire to control our own destiny. It requires that we surrender some of the values of the ego; that we look beyond our own self-interest and the drives of protectionism and isolationism it fosters. Is this the step we are so reluctant to take? Traditionally it is the images that come from the spiritual world that help us to make such a transition; images that belong to our divine nature which is the wholeness of life. But sadly, much contemporary spirituality has been subverted by the ego, promising dreams of self-development or self-fulfillment rather than demanding that we step beyond our self. Our greed and self-interest have polluted not only the physical world but also our spiritual perception. Instead, in order to claim what has been given, we must return to the very core of our being, to the direct and fundamental knowing that we are one.

### **Ways of Oneness**

A world of oneness is around us and waiting to be lived. It is simpler than our fractured and complex contemporary world, because the nature of oneness is very simple. And this oneness belongs to the organic nature of life itself, rather than to any



image of civilization to which we must force the world to adhere. Nobody can impose oneness; it belongs to each of us as well as to every atom. Oneness is also a direct expression of the spiritual principle behind creation; the divine essence that is within each of us. The true nature of life and of our self is a state of oneness. Everything is one and everything is divine.

The ways of oneness belong to life, to its organic, self-sustaining patterns of development and to its divine unfolding. Life is a living organism that can heal and transform itself. Life also has a divine consciousness that is our own divine consciousness. This consciousness has the knowledge that life needs in order to evolve. Through our awareness and co-operation, the oneness inherent within life can reassert and recreate itself. Life will reveal to us the ways of oneness - how to live in harmony with all of creation in a self-sustaining manner that nourishes all, both materially and spiritually. Humanity and its cultures can once again become a natural part of life, an expression of the divine oneness of which we are all a part.

The signs of this regeneration are all around us in ways that are so simple that we overlook them. It is present in the new ways people are coming together. The Internet is an essential tool of this process in the way it connects people regardless of the barriers of physical location, race, or nationality. Through the Internet different people in all parts of the world are linking and forming networks of shared interests. These networks are outside of the control of any hierarchy or government. They belong to life itself.

People are also making connections through global trade, travel, telecommunications, conferences and other forms of gathering. And these connections are being made on many different levels. For example, interfaith dialogues are one level of interreligious communication. On a deeper level, the migration of spiritual paths and traditions from the East to the West has formed a level of global connection in which East and West are merging; creating a light that is "neither of the East nor of the West".

All around us patterns are growing that link people together in new and diverse ways. We have yet to fully understand that it is these patterns of relationship, which are so essential, and which provide the simple answers to the complexity of the times. They are not just for conveying information; they are creating a new, fast-changing, organic interrelationship of individuals and groups. Something is coming alive in a new way.

In these patterns of reconnection a new life force is flowing. This life force has the urgency that is needed for humanity and the planet to survive and change at this time of crisis. It also has the power of oneness, and the simplicity of bringing people together. It is about sharing rather than possessiveness and isolation. It is the deep joy of knowing that we are one life. It carries the imprint of divine oneness.

But we are still faced with the barrier of our self-interest, unable or unwilling to recognize that this emerging oneness is not about us. It is not even about humanity having a better life. If we remain with our self-centered worldview we are like those who refused to accept that the earth is not the center of the universe, those who denounced Copernicus and Galileo. The emerging global civilization is about the whole world and about the divine of which it is an expression. Until we awaken to this simple but radical truth we give the energy and tools of oneness to the forces of self-interest that are destroying us. We need to return to what is fundamental. The whole world is an expression of the divine and we are just a part of this creative oneness. Our responsibility is to bring this truth into life so that with our awareness life can redeem itself from the desecration and pollution we have caused it to suffer. Only then can a global civilization come alive and flourish.

### A Note from Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

For the mystic oneness is not an idea or a concept but a living experience of the true nature of creation. Separation is an illusion created by the ego, and when the ego has surrendered to the Self, this illusion dissolves and there is the realization that everything is God, and life is nothing other than divine presence. When "the eye of the heart is open" the oneness of life is directly perceived. The contribution of the mystic is to live this awareness with each and every breath, witnessing the divine in everything.

Our awareness of oneness means that we can participate directly with life as it really is, rather than in an illusion created by our mind and ego. If the next era is not founded upon spiritual awareness we will be recreating another illusion, chasing a different set of shadows. If the divine is not returned to its true place at the center of our consciousness, at the center of our experience of life, nothing real can be born. The work of the mystic is to hold this note of true awareness for humanity - in the words of the Sufi master, Ibn 'Arabi, to be the "pupil in the eye of humanity."

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**Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee** is a Sufi teacher and author. In recent years the focus of his writing and teaching has been on spiritual responsibility in our present time of transition, and the emerging global consciousness of oneness (see [www.workingwithoneness.org](http://www.workingwithoneness.org)). He has also specialized in the area of dreamwork, integrating the ancient Sufi approach to dreams with the insights of modern psychology. Llewellyn is the founder of The Golden Sufi Center ([www.goldensufi.org](http://www.goldensufi.org)). His most recent books are *Working With Oneness* and *Light of Oneness*.