

**DUALITY.** We are two beings - material and spiritual.  
**T**he material us is temporary - we come and we go.  
 Our spiritual being is eternal - it's reborn over and over.  
**T**he world is sustained by two forces - one is uplifting,  
 the other is the opposite. The first is the creative force  
 (spirit) - the other (created by the first and part of it,  
 but subordinate and inferior to it) is the material world.  
**B**oth forces are within us, as soul and mind. Soul/spirit has  
 the capacity of love and creation, mind/nature that of reason  
 and destruction - it is this duality that causes our conflicts.

*"Luminous beings are we ... not this crude matter."*  
 Yoda

*Duality or no duality - that is the question. Eastern philosophies maintain that all is one, the material world is nothing but an illusion. Western philosophy is not much more accommodating, where the Cartesian 'Ghost in the Machine' has long been ridiculed.*

*For science the argument is: Nothing is created, because who/what created the creator? Thus science restricts itself to the observable. Conversely, since we are conscious beings we want to know: What is our origin? Did the world we live in have no beginning?*

*The concept of dualism goes back to Socrates and Plato and was popularised by Descartes, who advocated the distinction between mental and material. But again, sciences see great problems in dualism; they ask: How could the immaterial interact with the material?*

*So this question has no answer in science, while religions insert God at this point. In philosophy a creative spirit (however it is defined - whether as physical/mathematical law, energy or as consciousness) is much debated and probably will always defy proof.*

*Just to be devious, allow me to inject an idea from quantum physics: All matter is energy. Somewhere in there seems to be an answer to the duality dilemma: If spirit and matter both are a form of energy, perhaps they can interact. Maybe the whole argument is irrelevant.*

Socrates, Plato (ca. 400 BCE) ...

*held the view that body is material and soul (immortal and briefly united with the body - to be separated again at the time of death) is from the world of spirit. The body exists in time and space, but soul is not limited and therefore can access the universal spirit.*

*The 17th-century Dutch rationalist Baruch de Spinoza asserted (reminiscent of Eastern philosophy) that God and Nature are one. Be that as it may, I nonetheless see (and feel) - in all practicality and on a worldly level - duality of the spiritual and matter does exist.*

*Were we to adapt the Eastern understanding of no duality and the spiritual reality as the only reality of consequence, then - to be true to ourselves - we probably have to assume a monastic life. This is a noble choice, perhaps a preferable one, but surely only for the few.*

*For now we have to live in this world. So as soon as we deny duality, we - as material (Western) beings - tend to assume the world of matter as the only reality and reject the spiritual realm. I cannot accept that; I believe a world without spirituality is dire indeed.*

*But exactly that has happened in our society. Governments, businesses and interest groups ignore the spiritual. They are guided by political opportunism and economic rationalism - rather than spiritual ideals. The results: Small-mindedness, selfishness and prejudice.*

René Descartes (1596 - 1650) ...

*declared the body is like a machine and it follows the laws of physics, whereas he described the mind (or soul) as a non-material entity. Cartesian dualism set the agenda for the philosophical dialogue of the mind-body problem. The issue is an enigma to this day.*

*Daniel C. Dennett, in his book Consciousness Explained, says "the confrontation between quite standard physics and dualism is regarded as the fatal flaw of dualism."*

*Indeed, it must be understood that all material systems described by duality are subordinate to the fundamental one-ness of the all-encompassing consciousness.*

*In any case, if there is no duality and all physicality is an illusion ... was the Holocaust also an illusion? The answer of 'yes' is a disturbing aspect of non-dualism.*

*One last word from essayist R. W. Emerson (1803 - 82): "Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and Soul" ... the material and consciousness.*

see also CONSCIOUSNESS, EXISTENCE  
 FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE, REALITY  
 THEORY OF EVERYTHING  
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