

THE COSMIC DANCE OF DIALOGUE

Dialogue of the Head, of the Hands, of the Heart

Leonard Swidler

I. The Universe is a *Cosmic Dance of Dialogue*.

Dialogue—the mutually beneficial interaction of differing components—is at the very heart of the Universe, of which we humans are the highest expression: From the basic interaction of *Matter and Energy* (in Einstein’s unforgettable formula: $E=mc^2$ —Energy equals mass times the square of the speed of light), to the creative interaction of *Protons and Electrons* in every atom, to the vital symbiosis of *Body and Spirit* in every human, through the creative dialogue between *Woman and Man*, to the dynamic relationship between *Individual and Society*. Thus, the very essence of our humanity is dialogical, and a fulfilled human life is the highest expression of the *Cosmic Dance of Dialogue*.

In the early millennia of the history of humanity as we spread outward from our starting point in central Africa, the forces of **D**ivergence were dominant. However, because we live on a globe, in our frenetic divergence we eventually began to encounter each other more and more frequently. Now the forces of stunning **C**onvergence are becoming increasingly dominant.

In the past, during the *Age of Divergence*, we could live in isolation from each other; we could ignore each other. Now, in the *Age of Convergence*, we are forced to live in One World. We increasingly live in a Global Village. We cannot ignore the Other, the Different. Too often in the past we have tried to make over the Other into a likeness of ourselves, often by violence. But this is the very opposite of dialogue. This egocentric arrogance is in fundamental opposition to the *Cosmic Dance of Dialogue*. It is not creative; it is destructive.

Hence, we humans today have a stark choice: Dialogue, or Death!

II. Dialogues of the Head, Hands, Heart–of (W)Holiness

For us humans there are three main dimensions to dialogue—the mutually beneficial interaction among those who are different—corresponding to the structure of our humanness: Dialogue of the Head, Dialogue of the Hands, Dialogue of the Heart—integrated in the Dialogue of (W)Holiness.

a) The Cognitive or Intellectual: Seeking the Truth

In the **Dialogue of the Head** we mentally reach out to the Other to learn from those who think differently from us. We try to understand how they see the world and why they act as they do. The world is far too complicated for any of us to understand alone; we can increasingly understand reality only with the help of the Other, in dialogue. This is very important, because how we *understand* the world, determines how we *act* in the world.

b) The Illative or Ethical: Seeking the Good

In the **Dialogue of the Hands** we join together with Others to work to make the world a better place in which we all must live together. Since we can no longer live separately in this One World, we must work jointly to make it not just a house, but a home for all of us to live in. Stated other, we join hands with the Other to heal the world. The world within us, and all around us, always is in need of healing, and our deepest wounds can be healed only together with the Other, only in dialogue.

c) The Affective or Aesthetic: Seeking the Beautiful

In the **Dialogue of the Heart** we open ourselves to receive the Beauty of the Other. Because we humans are body and spirit, or rather, body-spirit, we give bodily-spiritual expression in all the Arts to our multifarious responses to life: Joy, sorrow, gratitude, anger...and most of all love. We try to express our inner feelings, which grasp reality in far deeper and higher ways than we are able to put into rational concepts and words; hence, we create poetry, music, dance, painting, architecture...the expressions of the Heart. All the world delights in beauty, and so it is here that we find the easiest encounter with the Other, the simplest door to dialogue; through the beauty of the Other we most easily enter into the Other.

d) (W)Holiness: Seeking the One

We humans cannot long live a divided life. If we are to even survive, let alone flourish,

we must “get it all together.” We must live a whole life. In a way there is a fourth **H** here, if we play a little with our English word “whole,” for it is pronounced as “**Hole**.” Indeed, this is what the religions of the Western tradition mean when they say that we **H**umans should be **H**oly. We **H**umans (another **H**!) are not dis-integrated beings. Rather, we can be truly **H**uman only if we bring our various parts together in **H**armony, if we integrate our being **H**olisti-cally. Therefore, we are authentically **H**uman only when our multiple elements are in Dialogue with each other, and we in turn are in Dialogue with the Others around us. We must dance together the **Dialogue of the Head**, the **Dialogue of the Hands**, and the **Dialogue of the Heart** within the **(W)Holy Cosmic Dance of Dialogue**.

Those who know Western Medieval Philosophy will recognize that these are the “Metaphysicals,” the four aspects of *Being Itself* perceived from different perspectives: The *One*, the *True*, the *Good*, the *Beautiful*.