

The Inseparability of Knowing and Being

We normally think that the existence of a thing and the knowing of that thing are two separate events. For instance we think that to *be* a tree is one thing and to *know* a tree is another. That is, we think that the tree *is* a tree but that a person *knows* or *experiences* the tree.

Moreover we think that the existence of the tree is independent of its being known. In other words we think that an object, such a tree, exists whether or not it is being known or experienced. That is, we think that there is a world independent of knowing or Consciousness.

Let us explore this in detail. Let us take, instead of the tree, our car standing in the garage. If we are sitting at home reading this, the 'car in the garage' is not known or experienced and yet we have a deep conviction that it is sitting 'there' in exactly the same form in which it present when we *are* in the garage perceiving it.

In other words, all the characteristics of the car, such as its colour, shape, size etc., which are present while we are seeing it are also considered to be present when they are not being seen. They are considered to be present there but unseen. That is, they are considered to have existence independent of knowing or experiencing.

Now go the experience of perceiving the car in the garage. If we are looking at the car, our only knowledge of it is a visual perception.

First of all we can ask ourselves would it be possible to experience a visual perception independent of 'seeing?' In other words, are 'visual perceptions' and 'seeing' two separate, independent events or are they inseparable? Explore your experience and come to the unshakable conviction that it is impossible for there to be a 'visual perception' independent of 'seeing.' In fact, they are two phrases for one and the same experience.

Now we can go further. Can we say that the 'visual perceptions' of the car, which we have understood as being identical with 'seeing,' are inherent in the car? That is, does the car see itself? In other words, is 'seeing' a quality that belongs to the car or does it belong to the mind?

It is very easy to answer this question for ourselves. We simply remove the mind from the experience of the car and see if the 'seeing' remains with the car or with the mind. For instance, we walk out of the garage into the street. Now does 'seeing' come with us or does it remain with the car?

It comes with us! In other words visual qualities are not inherent in the car. The visual qualities of the car are inseparable from the *seeing* of the car, but when that 'seeing' is not present, the visual qualities cannot be said to remain with the car. How could visual qualities be present in the absence of seeing? Really try to imagine the experience of visual qualities independent of seeing.

When we now think of the car in the garage we *imagine* that it exists in the same form in which it was perceived when we were present in the garage, seeing it. But this is simply imagination. We *imagine* the car sitting in the garage, indeed we imagine the garage itself etc., retaining the same visual qualities as it is does when we are there perceiving it.

However we have already understood that visual qualities are brought in by the 'seeing mind' and do not exist independent of it.

So now we are left in an uncomfortable position. On the one hand we know that our experience of the car was real. It was 'something.' At the same time the car cannot exist now (when it is not being perceived) in the same form as it did when we were 'there' perceiving it. In other words, it cannot have visual qualities. So, in what form can the car be said to exist when it is not being perceived?

Try to actually imagine the form of the car when it is not being perceived or experienced. It obviously cannot have any visual, audible, tactile or sensory qualities because each of these requires the senses and we are trying to understand in what form the car exists independent of the senses, that is, in its own right.

See clearly that the car 'in its own right,' independent of the senses, has no perceivable qualities.

Now go back to the actual experience of the car and ask yourself what else is present there. Whatever else is present there cannot have objective qualities because all objectivity requires the mind. that is. perceiving and thinking.

Obviously the car, whatever exactly it is, is *present*. Something *is*. That is, there is *Being*. And likewise in order to assert the experience that something *is*, that Being is present, it must be *known*. In other words, as we have seen before, it is not possible to have Being without Knowing and vice versa. Hence the term Knowingbeing, which is intended to indicate their inseparability. In fact it is not even meant to indicate the inseparability of two things, but rather that they are one.

So we are left with the conclusion that the inherent substance of the car is Knowingbeing, upon which the senses superimpose their own characteristics of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling and upon which the mind superimposes its own label of 'car.'

However, when we look in our own intimate and direct experience towards that which is inherent and inseparable from our self, by removing all that is intermittent in our experience of our self, such as thoughts, images, sensations and perceptions, we find again only Knowingbeing.

Now can there be two Knowingbeings? No! We have already discovered from our own experience that this Knowingbeing has no objective qualities and only something with objective qualities could have a border or be distinguished from something else.

Therefore, although it may take some time to recognise the fact that this is already the case, it is our own intimate and direct experience that the Knowingbeing that I *am* is the very same Knowingbeing that the car *is*.

It is what I am.

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In other words, there are not two things in our experience. We normally think that to *be* the car is one thing and that it takes place 'over there,' in the garage, and that to *know* the car is another thing and that it takes place 'here' in the body. In other words, Being or Existence is conceived as having its own independent existence, called the 'object,' and Knowing is conceived as having its own independent existence, here, as the subject, 'me.'

However, this apparent division between Knowing and Being is entirely imaginary. It is never experienced. There is no such thing as a car, a tree, a person, an other, a world or indeed anything, existing in its own right independent of its being known.

In other words, *being* a thing, is made up of *knowing* that thing and *knowing* a thing is made of *being* that thing.

Or we could say that to *be* a thing is to *know* a thing and to *know* a thing is to *be* that thing.

That is, Knowing and Being are one, Knowingbeing.

Knowingbeing is in fact known simply as 'I.' That is, it knows itself, as itself, by itself.

It is 'I,' Knowingbeing, that takes the shape of sensing and perceiving, in the same way that water takes the shape of a current that flows within it.

'I,' Knowingbeing, is the *substance* of sensing and perceiving and simultaneously the *knowing* or *experiencing* of it.

The only way to *know* a 'thing' is to *be* that 'thing.'

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In taking the shape of sensing and perceiving, 'I,' Knowingbeing, knows itself, as it were, as this sensing and perceiving. As yet there is no 'body,' 'world' or 'other.' There is just the utter intimacy of 'I,' Knowingbeing, in the shape of sensing and perceiving.

However, 'I,' Knowingbeing, also takes the shape of thinking. And it is with thought alone that Knowingbeing is apparently divided in two, that is, into Knowing *and* Being.

That is, thought imagines that the Knowing of a thing and the Being of that thing are two different events, independent of one another. Thought imagines that *Knowing* an object takes place *here* and that the *Existence* or *Being* of the object takes place over *there*.

Thought creates two apparent events out of one reality.

It is at this very moment that the 'body' and the 'world' are apparently born. The 'body' is conceived as the place where Knowing takes place. It becomes 'me' the knower, the container and location of knowing or experiencing. And the 'world' is conceived as the place where *Existence* or *Being* takes place. It becomes the container or location for the existence of all things, that is, of all objects and others that are known or experienced.

However, this division of experience is entirely imagined. It never actually happens. Knowing and Being are never actually separated in this way.

With the apparent separation of Knowing and Being into two things, the peace and happiness that are inherent in Knowingbeing or, we could say, in the Knowing of Being, and the natural joy and wonder that accompanies the intimacy of sensing and perceiving, is lost.

From this moment onwards, we no longer feel ourselves utterly, intimately at the heart of all things and yet at the same time independent of all appearances, but rather we confine ourselves to one little fragment of experience.

This little fragment, the 'knower' or 'experiencer' in the body is always afraid and in need; afraid that it will disappear or die and in need of constant reassurance of its own identity. It is this fear and need that define the apparent entity within the body and that veils the innate peace and happiness that resides at the heart of all experience.

And it is the clear seeing that Knowing and Being are inseparable, in fact that they are closer than inseparable, that there are not two 'things' there in the first place that could be separated, that restores the peace and the happiness that are inherent in us, that *are* us, and that simultaneously restores the natural enjoyment, wonder and delight in sensing and perceiving.