

UNITED WISDOM

Experiencing Unity and Claiming That the World Is One

World and Consciousness

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

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@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

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Epigraph

> *It is the True.*

— *Chāndogya Upanishad*, VI.13.3, a complete sentence from F. Max Müller's English translation, 1879. “It” refers to the subtle basis of existence named in the passage. This is a proposition within the religious text, rather than the result of a contemporary experiment.

What this article is about

A person remembers a moment when the familiar distinction between self and surroundings seemed to disappear. It was convincing and important to them. Later they say: “Therefore, everything that exists is really one.” A new question has appeared between those sentences. The first describes an experienced boundary; the second makes a claim about the whole world, including what was not given in that episode. This article examines the transition without dismissing the experience or deciding the metaphysical dispute in advance. We read a dialogue from the *Chāndogya Upanishad*, William James's philosophical qualifications, and a contemporary study of meditation reports. We distinguish unity as a quality of experience, a concept within a teaching, and a general conclusion about reality. Religious interpretation, research, and personal choice retain room to speak, without their answers becoming interchangeable. The reading practice uses an existing account; no unusual state is needed to try it.

I. One word and several questions

“Unity” can express very different relationships. In ordinary conversation it can mean agreement among people; in an experiential account, the absence of familiar distance; in philosophy, a particular view of what exists. This distinction is our editorial framework, rather than a complete dictionary of traditions. To understand a claim, we must ask what is united and in what sense. The topic's name cannot answer for us. Even the same phrase in two accounts can raise different questions when one concerns relationships and the other the structure of the world.

Imagine a fictional scene beside the sea. One person says that, for a few minutes, they stopped feeling like a separate observer of the landscape. Another describes seeing the interdependence of living things. A third means that a group of strangers acted together. All

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

three might use “unity.” But the first reports a quality of participation, the second proposes an understanding of connections, and the third characterizes collective action. If we immediately treat them as three confirmations of one theory, we lose what each account concerns before examining it.

For clearer reading, temporarily remove the shared label. “I did not feel the usual boundary between myself and what I saw” preserves the first subject. “I believe that living things depend on their environment” identifies the second. “We coordinated our actions” concerns the third. These are examples of clarification, rather than compulsory translations of someone else's account. The speaker can correct the wording. If it distorts their experience, restore their words and acknowledge that precision is unavailable. Uncertainty deserves to remain visible instead of disappearing behind a convenient name.

This approach also removes a supposed obligation to have a special experience before discussing unity. Relationships, teachings, and philosophical arguments can be considered on their own grounds. Someone unfamiliar with the described state remains able to discuss concepts and reasoning. Conversely, someone who experienced it need not immediately become a theorist. They may keep the account personal. Distinguishing the subjects makes room for both people: one can express the episode's significance more accurately, while the other asks what conclusion and what grounds are being offered for shared consideration.

II. What the dialogue about salt does

In VI.13 of the *Chāndogya Upanishad*, a father offers Śvetaketu a comparison involving salt that cannot be seen after dissolving in water. The dialogue ends with a teaching about the subtle basis, Sat, and the Self. We read Müller's 1879 translation alongside the specified notes. This is religious instruction within a particular text: invisibility does not equal absence. That point should not become a claim that comparison with salt establishes every invisible object. The passage asks its own question about the basis of existence and answers in its own language.

The analogy's work matters. It makes a relationship available for reflection by comparing the familiar with the less familiar. Readers still need to see what is being transferred. In an invented example, a teacher might compare trust with a house's foundation. The comparison emphasizes support; it does not mean trust consists of concrete or follows engineering calculations for foundations. Similarly, the religious dialogue cannot transfer every property of salt to the Self. An analogy helps readers understand the proposed relationship while preserving the difference between the image and what it explains.

Moreover, this dialogue is not an interview about the disappearance of an experienced boundary. A father teaches his son; meaning is established through the teacher's speech and

sequence of explanation. Its genre differs from a contemporary account saying “I felt unity.” If we use the passage to interpret such an account, we should name that additional step. It may have religious significance, but the modern episode does not retrospectively appear in the ancient text. Accuracy requires distinguishing the original teaching from our decision to apply it to a report today.

Müller's note frames the question as why Sat is not perceived if it is the basis of existence. The note belongs to translation and commentary; it cannot silently become another verse. Together with the dialogue, it clarifies what is being discussed. A public reader can be given an honest, limited foundation: this text teaches a particular relationship between the Self and what exists. The article declares that relationship neither established by neurophysiology nor refuted because a questionnaire uses different words. Those further claims would require their own arguments and procedures.

III. Where a description becomes a general conclusion

The transition from “I experienced” to “the world is structured” should be considered through its content, as well as its conviction. The first statement identifies a person and an episode. The second may expand to encompass everything that exists. This expansion needs an explanation of why a quality of one experience provides knowledge on that scale. Asking is not accusing someone of lying. A speaker can be entirely sincere while offering a conclusion whose grounds have not been sufficiently shown to a listener. Sincerity, confidence, and a claim's scope remain distinct.

Return to our fictional seaside scene. The person stopped feeling separate from the landscape and understood this as a sign of universal unity. We can acknowledge its importance and ask what “universal” means here. They may mean dependence, a single basis, or the value of care. These answers differ. Clarification sometimes reveals that a dispute arose from different meanings of a word rather than from the experience itself. At other times it reveals a substantial disagreement that one friendly formula cannot remove. Both possibilities deserve room in an accurate conversation.

A powerful analogy cannot replace the transition either. When two things resemble one another in one respect, their identity in every respect is not established. Here, the salt dialogue offers religious instruction, whereas the contemporary episode has its own circumstances. They can be compared, but the rule of comparison needs naming. “This text helps me understand my experience” makes a narrower claim than “My experience proved this text for everyone.” The first reports a chosen interpretation; the second presents a general demand that needs to be considered separately on its own grounds.

The same distinction applies to an opposite conclusion. Noticing the possible participation of memory, language, or attention in a report does not finally refute every religious interpretation. Describing conditions of reporting cannot automatically settle a metaphysical question. Otherwise, both sides make the same leap: converting a limited observation into a universal answer. A substantial discussion preserves the opportunity to assess a particular argument without asking one episode or one hypothesis to resolve every question about consciousness and the world. Its limits remain part of what can honestly be discussed.

IV. What meditation reports can tell us

Gamma and Metzinger's MPE-92M study offers a factor-based description of selected retrospective reports. Its discussion of non-egoic awareness concerns an experienced quality rather than the discovery of a metaphysical Self. The authors themselves note that item wording may conflate philosophical emptiness with an image of empty space. Methods, results, and limitations belong together. Self-selection, memory, and question comprehension limit conclusions. For this comparison, the material consists of participants' answers; mentioning unity cannot turn those answers into an observation of the whole of reality. Their subject remains the reported experience and the procedure examining it.

The religious proposition in VI.13 and this description should not become two names for one thing. The Upanishad's translation speaks of the Self as the subtle basis; the questionnaire examines qualities of reported experience, including the absence of familiar features of a personal self. Readers who see an important connection need to explain it rather than hide the distinction under a common word. Otherwise, agreement is manufactured: a source speaking about the Self and another describing non-egoic experience are declared identical without examining their subjects or methods of support.

An imagined example clarifies the model's limit. Several people describe the same garden: spaciousness, quiet, a sense of presence. Their responses can be organized, combinations identified, and differences distinguished. This analysis still does not answer whether a single basis of the entire world exists. Nor does it prove that the garden consists only of the reported qualities. This is our analogy, rather than a reproduction of the study's statistics. It shows why a map of answers and a philosophical ontology can address related questions while remaining different kinds of work.

A limited result need not be insignificant. A more precise description can improve discussion: someone clarifies that a sense of personally owning attention disappeared, rather than every capacity to act. Another notices that “emptiness” meant quiet rather than a visual image. Such clarifications are sufficient for a descriptive task. Research gains no necessary value from promising a final answer. The clearer its actual subject, the easier it is to understand the help it

provides and which questions require another procedure or remain matters for philosophical consideration by interested readers.

V. Why similar feelings do not select one doctrine

In discussing mystical states' authority, James qualifies his earlier generalization about their consensus. He distinguishes philosophical and religious interpretations and observes that union's feeling does not lend its prestige to one particular doctrine. His position does not categorically prohibit religious meaning. This historical qualification can be compared with MPE-92M's contemporary concern about previously acquired concepts. Both grounds invite questions about interpretive language. They do not measure the same cause or provide common statistics of belief. Their connection rests on a shared question and a difference that must remain explicit.

Imagine three readers of one account. The first sees confirmation of a personal relationship with God, the second an invitation to consider a universal basis, and the third a change in habitual self-description. Three interpretations do not establish that all are equally justified. They do show that each conclusion's content needs separate presentation. We cannot give everyone their own interpretation and then declare agreement because a feeling resembles another. Meaningful comparison begins when readers identify disagreement and ask what argument supports each proposed connection between the reported episode and its interpretation.

A school or tradition may supply words that help connect an episode with a life. This does not make every borrowed term mistaken. For reading, however, when and where those words appeared matters. In our example, a person initially wrote “quiet clarity” and, after reading a book, began saying “nondual awareness.” Preserve the later term with its history. Then its relationship to a teaching can be considered without turning familiarity with the book into an original detail of the experience. Such recording does not recover memory; it clarifies the current account's construction.

Preserving distinctions also means avoiding a ladder of maturity. When one person speaks of God, another of the Self, and a third of attention, the article does not rank their development. Particular claims, terms' meanings, and grounds for inference can be compared. An entire person cannot be evaluated through whichever metaphysical formula sounds most convincing. Our proposed work is narrower: identify a related question, distinguish its answers, and leave people free to choose how they relate to them. Respectful conversation does not require making every teaching the same first.

VI. Union does not always mean identity

In James's discussion, union with God and original identity with God appear as distinguishable propositions. A relationship permits participants in that relationship; a claim of identity raises another question. This limits what “unity” can cover. Someone may understand an encounter as becoming closer to what remains distinct from them. Another describes the disappearance of difference itself. Naming both answers one teaching removes what may matter most to each reader. A shared term should help comparison rather than quietly decide the dispute before the positions have been accurately expressed.

VI.13 of the *Chāndogya Upanishad* offers its own connection between the subtle basis, the Self, and Śvetaketu. A modern phrase about good relationships cannot replace it. Nor must every good relationship confirm this teaching. In a fictional everyday scene, two people finally hear each other carefully after a long disagreement. They can call this union. Their agreement alone says nothing about whether all beings are one Self. Distinguishing the scale preserves the encounter's value without promising more than it established or converting an ordinary meeting into a metaphysical test.

The reverse substitution is also possible: a philosophical proposition becomes a demand to erase differences between people. A universal basis does not automatically mean everyone must accept someone else's wish or grant access to their own life. Such a demand would require an additional argument addressing actual relationships. Here we propose a contemporary ethical boundary rather than assigning the ancient passage a ready-made rule of consent. Mutual respect can be justified and discussed separately; naming “unity” does not authorize bypassing that discussion or deciding on another person's behalf.

Reading should therefore leave room for a personal boundary even when an account describes its experiential disappearance. “Then I felt no separation” and “Now I agree to this action” are different statements. A person can retain the episode's special meaning and refuse a particular request. A listener can respect that meaning without adopting the offered ontology. These possibilities need not destroy an encounter. They clarify what belongs to an account of experience, what concerns a teaching, and what participants decide in their present interaction with each other.

VII. What conclusion can be discussed publicly?

A public claim should show its subject. If an author says an experience is possible or participants describe it in a certain way, readers can ask about the sample, questions, and recording procedure. A conclusion about the world's single basis requires other grounds and an explanation of the transition. These questions are not interchangeable. A study of reports can be conscientious while leaving the second conclusion unexamined. We need to assess what was actually done rather than burden a limited procedure with responsibility for every philosophical development someone attaches to it.

MPE-92M's authors explicitly distinguish the described experience's subjective simplicity from the possible complexity of its objective conditions. Experience may seem without parts; this does not establish an absence of distinguishable processes in the studied system. The reverse equation also fails: several identified conditions need not make personal simplicity imaginary. These words answer different questions. The distinction helps readers connect first-person accounts with research while preserving each subject. It permits further work without declaring either level the final map of everything available to another kind of inquiry.

In our example, one person hears a chord as a whole. Another describes its separate notes. Whole perception and distinguishing components can concern one instance without literally coinciding. This analogy is neither a model of meditation nor proof of a neural mechanism. It shows only the logical possibility of different descriptions. It cannot establish that unusual states are organized like music. It can clarify why a unified experienced quality does not force every condition to be indivisible, and why examining conditions need not cancel the quality that someone describes.

Respectful inquiry need not preselect a winner between inward testimony and an external procedure. It needs a more precise account of what each procedure does. An account reports what is available to its speaker; examination may assess particular conditions and claims; philosophical argument discusses connections between them. When a connection has not been shown, name it as a question. This is more accurate than making experience final proof or a proposed mechanism final refutation. A conclusion's limit becomes part of a result others can actually consider and challenge through its content.

VIII. What can be chosen without resolving the whole dispute?

Experiencing unity sometimes becomes an occasion for a different relationship with people or surroundings. The article does not make this an obligatory consequence of every episode. Someone may independently decide that an account reminds them of dependence on others and the cost of inattention. Present this as a choice rather than a demonstrated universal necessity. It can then be evaluated through a concrete action and its consequences without asking everyone first to accept a complete metaphysical system. Personal meaning remains, while the shared conversation gains a subject that others can understand.

In a fictional situation, someone wants to join collective care for a garden after an important memory. Their understanding of unity may explain their motivation. Others may agree for different reasons: they enjoy the garden, value neighbourly relationships, or care about living plants. A shared decision can discuss participation, available resources, and the right to decline. Practical agreement emerges despite different grounds. It neither proves identical beliefs nor requires anyone to stop honestly naming why they are participating now. The shared action has a limited, negotiated purpose.

This choice also leaves consequences open to scrutiny. When a beautiful word conceals pressure, exclusion of dissenters, or promises of other people's resources, address the concrete action. Personal certainty gives no authority to decide for everyone. This is the article's ethical position; it was not measured by MPE-92M and is not the salt dialogue's literal conclusion. Keeping the source boundary visible preserves authorial responsibility: contemporary recommendations need their own reasoning rather than sheltering behind a text's authority when that text does not directly consider the question at issue.

An open metaphysical question need not postpone every helpful action until a final answer arrives. Nor does it authorize making a chosen action the universal meaning of someone else's experience. One person may share an account, another keep it private, and a third find no guidance in it. An available choice names its own grounds and respects its scope. This is narrower than an answer about everything that exists, but can be sufficiently precise for a real encounter where people need to agree on a particular task while retaining differences.

IX. Comparing while preserving different answers

Our three grounds address related questions in different ways. The *Chāndogya Upanishad* teaches a particular understanding of the Self and the basis of existence. James discusses mystical states' significance and the limits of their authority for others. MPE-92M studies retrospective meditation reports within procedural limits. Comparison becomes meaningful through a shared question: how does experienced wholeness relate to what a person claims? The answers remain different. An ancient dialogue, a philosophical lecture, and a factor model do not become hidden copies of one another simply because a reader brings them together.

Comparison can hold two points together. Experience may have significance that a list of external conditions does not convey. A general conclusion may require grounds that personal conviction alone does not supply. This is our reading framework, supported by the specified distinctions, rather than a formula all three sources literally share. It can be revised if a more precise explanation of the transition becomes available. Revision's value lies in clarification rather than retrospectively declaring the original account entirely wrong. It changes an argument without requiring erasure of every meaning associated with it.

A reader can keep two records: what they can confidently say about the account, and what interpretation they consider possible. An open question can stand between them. Perhaps the account shows how someone describes the disappearance of a familiar boundary; perhaps it helps discuss a teaching they choose. These are different kinds and degrees of claim. The open space need not be filled with the widest answer merely because it sounds complete. An unfinished argument does not empty an experience of significance; respecting experience does not complete an argument without grounds.

The topic's central distinction survives. Experiencing unity tells us how something was given to a person. Claiming the world is one requires naming what is considered one and why the conclusion is accepted. Religious, philosophical, and research connections may exist between them, but each needs separate presentation. For United Wisdom, this offers a route to mutual understanding through accurate reading. Shared discussion need not end with a shared doctrine. It can end with a clearer question, an acknowledged limit, and a free decision to continue inquiry on suitable grounds.

What this means in practice

Choose an existing account of unity: your own voluntarily kept record or a published text that can be read without intruding on someone's private life. Do not seek a special state for this exercise. Write down one short sentence about what was experienced and another interpreting it, if available. If the text does not draw that boundary, mark your difficulty as a reader. Do not add details the speaker never reported, or use the exercise to recover forgotten memories or confirm that an external event occurred.

Under each sentence, identify its subject. The first might concern distance, wholeness, or participation. The second might concern dependence, a relationship with God, a single basis, or a chosen value. These are questions for the text, rather than a ready-made classification of a person. Clarifying someone else's voluntary account requires their consent. They can leave a word unexplained. Your reading can simply acknowledge that the shared label remains unclear and the conclusion is limited. An unanswered question does not remove the speaker's right to retain their own account.

Now compare two specific grounds from the article. For example, read VI.13.2–3 alongside MPE-92M's discussion of non-egoic awareness. Write one sentence about each source's subject and one about a substantial difference. Do not turn analogy into confirmation of identity. Separately ask what step would be required to move from a reported quality to a claim about the whole world. “That step has not yet been shown” is an acceptable answer. It characterizes available grounds without diagnosing the speaker or deciding whether the episode matters to them.

Finish with one voluntary decision about reading or conversation: retain a question, check a particular translation, clarify a term, or keep a personal account private. If the episode's meaning prompts you to choose an action, name it separately and consider the consent of those concerned. The exercise requires no common doctrine and does not assess anyone's development. Its result is a set of more distinguishable statements that you can revise. Preserve room to say both “This mattered to me” and “I do not yet know what it establishes for others.”

Key quotation

> *Varying understandings may have led to unwanted variation in responses.*

— Alex Gamma and Thomas Metzinger, MPE-92M, “Limitations,” discussion of understanding instructions and questions. This complete sentence qualifies answers in this questionnaire; it does not conclude that every experience or belief is false. The Russian version is United Wisdom's own translation.

Connections between traditions

Shared question	Two grounds	Connection and boundary
What does the disappearance of separateness mean?	*Chāndogya Upanishad*, VI.13.2–3; MPE-92M, Factor 8 discussion	Teaching about the Self is compared with reported non-egoic awareness. A related question does not establish identity between a metaphysical basis and an answer's quality.
What does an image of a single basis provide?	VI.13, salt analogy and Müller's note 104:2; James, XVI–XVII, doctrinal diversity	Analogy clarifies a proposition; criticism of shared intellectual content limits automatic inference. James does not test this particular dialogue.
How does acquired language enter interpretation?	James, qualification concerning selected schools and different beliefs; MPE-92M, conceptual and instructional limitations	Both invite attention to language and context. Philosophical discussion and questionnaire features do not measure one causal quantity.
Do personal conviction and public authority coincide?	James, four marks and three authority propositions; MPE-92M, selection of an impressive episode	Conviction illuminates an account's significance; a selected episode need not represent every case. Selection does not refute personal meaning.
Does one experienced quality mean simple conditions?	VI.13.3, proposition about the Self; MPE-92M, subjective simplicity and objective complexity	Comparison distinguishes a teaching about a basis from the level of experiential description. The factor model neither confirms nor refutes ontological identity.
What is required of a reader without such experience?	James, limits of obligation for outsiders; VI.13.2–3, the teacher's speech	Readers can understand a proposed teaching and discuss its grounds while retaining a question. James's position does not become the Upanishad's doctrine.

Primary sources

1. **Chāndogya Upanishad, VI.13.** *The Upanishads, Part I*, translated by F. Max Müller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879. VI.13. All §§1–3 and the translation's three notes were read, printed pages 104–105; edition title information was checked separately. United Wisdom translated the epigraph into Russian from this English version. The dialogue is religious instruction; translator's notes remain distinct from the text. Contemporary consent rules and scientific results are not attributed to it.

2. **William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.** Longmans, Green, 1917; lectures delivered in 1901–1902. English text. Reading covered the opening of XVI–XVII with four marks, the complete selected concluding passage on the states' authority, and the opening of XVIII on philosophical discussion; title and preface were checked. Passages already read in this task are honestly reused. This is an early twentieth-century philosophical examination of religious testimony. Its historical psychological explanations are not presented as contemporary clinical findings.

3. **Alex Gamma and Thomas Metzinger. "The Minimal Phenomenal Experience questionnaire (MPE-92M): Towards a phenomenological profile of 'pure awareness' experiences in meditators."** *PLOS ONE* 16(7), e0253694, 2021. Main article; 2024 correction. Selected accessible methods and results, the complete limitations and conclusion, were read in this task; discussion of factors and non-egoic awareness's descriptive limits was freshly reread. One inaccessible methodological passage is not claimed as read. The correction concerns the data link; data and supplements were not analysed. The questionnaire studies retrospective reports from selected participants rather than establishing the world's ontology. United Wisdom translated the quotation into Russian.

Tags

unity, experience, awareness, consciousness, Self, Upanishads, Chandogya, William James, MPE-92M, meditation, interpretation, ontology, metaphysics, philosophy, religious experience, testimony, first person, personal conviction, public evidence, analogy, language, memory, self-selection, inference limits, comparative reading, respect, consent, traditions, United Wisdom, open questions

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.