

Non-Duality for Beginners in an Age of Polarisation.

Chapter 1 — A World Split in Two

Anyone reading the newspaper or watching television can feel it: the world seems to be drifting further apart. In editorial rooms, political halls, cafés, community centers, and living rooms, discussions turn sharper. Positions harden. The contrasts grow larger and more defined — as if someone has drawn a ruler-straight line between “us” and “them.”

Left versus right. Progressive versus conservative. City versus countryside. Young against old. It is as if everyone is expected to choose a side, while the middle ground slowly disappears.

Even without any digital networks accelerating opinions, the sense of division is unmistakable. It shows up in heated radio debates, television panels where people mostly wait for their turn to speak, political pamphlets, and long letters to the editor. Nuance struggles to survive, and hesitation is often mistaken for weakness.

But where does this urge to divide everything into two camps come from? And why does it feel as if the distance between people is widening, even when they live on the same street?

Non-duality offers an unexpected way into these questions.

The Illusion of Two Worlds

We are taught from childhood to think in opposites. It's in our language, our schooling, our logic: good and bad, success and failure, inside and outside, self and other.

Duality — the idea that reality is built from opposing parts — feels practical, but it also misleads us. It gives structure, but simplifies a world that is far more fluid than our categories suggest.

Non-duality proposes something radical: that these divisions are not inherent to reality, but arise in the mind itself.

They are not properties of the world, but of our interpretation of it.

When we do not see this clearly, polarization becomes almost inevitable. For as soon as there appear to be two sides, one side must be defended and protected.

The “I” at the Center of Conflict

To understand why opinions clash so fiercely, we have to look at the foundation of belief: the feeling of being a separate “I” who thinks, chooses, and acts.

It feels natural to assume that we are the ones controlling our decisions. But psychological research — echoing insights from older contemplative traditions — points out that thoughts and impulses arise before we are consciously aware of them. The thought appears first; only afterwards do we claim we have “chosen” it.

If our free will is less free than we imagine, it changes the way we look at conflict. How fair is it to harshly judge others for ideas that grow from a history, upbringing, and environment over which they had limited control?

Non-duality does not deny responsibility, but it does question the certainty that “I” am the true origin of all my thoughts.

And that certainty is precisely what fuels polarization: the belief that *I* see things as they truly are — and the other does not.

Polarisation as a Repeating Story

The hardening of society often arises not from ill intent, but from a misunderstanding: the belief that our thoughts represent truth.

- If *I am* my thoughts, I must defend them.
- If someone challenges my conviction, it feels as though they are challenging *me*.
- And once the world seems divided into camps, every conversation becomes a battlefield.

Non-duality starts with a simpler question:

What is a thought, and why do we believe it so quickly?

Not by opposing one opinion with another, but by looking at the process of thinking itself — the moment a thought appears, the feeling that follows, and the instinctive move to say, “This is me. This is my side.”

What Non-Duality Is *Not*

Before going further, it is important to clear away some misunderstandings:

- It is not a religion.
- It is not a vague escape from reality.
- It does not claim that differences do not exist.

It simply points out that differences are not as absolute as they seem, and that much conflict arises not in the world but in the *idea* of separation.

A Different Way of Looking

The first step is surprisingly simple:

Look not only at what you think, but at the nature of thinking itself.

Where do thoughts come from?

Who decides which thought appears?

Do they vanish on their own?

What remains when a thought is not believed?

This book aims to explore these questions against the backdrop of a time in which debates harden, groups drift apart, and everyone appears convinced they have the correct view.

Not by choosing a side, but by looking closely at what happens when the illusion of two separate worlds begins to shift.