

The Laws of Nature – an introduction

The realisation that what we are is pure Consciousness – unlimited and unlocated in time and space – is just a half-way stage in the spiritual path. As Rupert Spira explains, in order to reach this stage ‘we provisionally concede a distinction between Awareness (pure Consciousness) and its objects ... If we go more deeply into the nature of experience, we do not find this distinction.’ The objects of the mind, body and world are simply ‘modulations of Awareness’.

That being the case, how can ‘laws of nature’, which by definition are concerned with interactions between objects, have any reality? Here is Rupert’s explanation:

Imagine that you are dreaming the exact same experience that you are now having in the waking state. In other words, reading these words is all happening in a dream. That is not hard to imagine for even a real dream appears, from the point of view of the dream itself, to be a waking state.

Now in this current experience (which we are imagining to be a dream) all the normal laws of nature operate. That is, when you tap the keys, letters appear; when you have a cup of tea, thirst is assuaged; when you look out of the window, you see buildings or whatever...etc. In short, the law of cause and effect seems to be absolutely real and operative, and within the confines of the dream, it is.

In this view for instance, there are past periods of time, past karmas which seem to create present circumstances and a survival instinct amongst species that seems to determine who survives etc. It all works fine within its own parameters.

However, when we wake from the dream, we realise that the time, causation, karma and evolution, whilst real from the point of view of the dream, was unreal from the point of view of the waking state. We realise for instance that in the dream the past did not create the present, but rather that each present moment was co-created with its own past and future. In other words, that every present moment came with its own history. From the point of view of the dream this history was very real. From the point of view of the waking state this history was no history at all, but rather a present arising.

This all becomes obvious when we rise from the point of view of the dream state to the point of view of the waking state. ...

Now, what happens when we rise from the point of view of the waking state, to the point of view of Consciousness (if we can agree, provisionally, that Consciousness has a point of view)? The laws of the waking state, whilst absolutely coherent and consistent from the point of view of that state, are seen in a very different light when considered from the point of view of Consciousness. In fact they are considered to be unreal in exactly the same way as the dream state ideas are considered unreal from the point of view of the waking state. ...

In the dream and waking states, the laws of mind prevail. In the dream state these laws are quite loose. In the waking state they are tighter and more predictable.

However, at the level of Consciousness there are no such laws. Or we could say that only the law of love prevails there in which everything is given birth directly from, abides in and disappears into Consciousness alone. In other words Consciousness is simultaneously the origin, substance and destiny of all apparent things.

[\[http://non-duality.rupertspira.com/read/is_there_cause_and_effect_in_non-duality\]](http://non-duality.rupertspira.com/read/is_there_cause_and_effect_in_non-duality)

The second stage of the spiritual path, the path of inclusion, involves 'the realignment of the *mind, body* and *world* with our new understanding'. Realisation that we are not a separate self does not immediately get rid of the residues of separation that lie hidden within the body/mind as habitual responses. It takes time. Understanding the laws that govern such responses can help shed light on their origin, and provide support for this natural process of realignment. However, it is important to remember that such laws are not universal truths – they are simply helpful models that we can use to point the way back to the true nature of our experience and to the real Self.

Where does the Universe come from?

This is how Mr Ouspensky describes 'the origin of everything':

The Absolute, that is, the state of things when the All constitutes one whole is, as it were, the primordial state of things, out of which, by division and differentiation, arises the diversity of the phenomena observed by us. *[The Cosmology of Man's Possible Evolution, Lecture 1]*

He goes on to describe how the Absolute successively divides itself into three and from each division a more complex and diverse 'world' is born, the whole process forming a Ray of Creation. He places 'Man' in the sixth of these worlds. In Mr Ouspensky's system, 'threeness' is an inherent property of the universe – a 'universal law':

Every phenomenon, on whatever scale and in whatever world it may take place, from molecular to cosmic phenomena, is the result of the combination or meeting of three different and opposing forces. Contemporary thought realizes the existence of two forces and the necessity of these two forces for the production of a phenomenon: force and resistance, positive and negative magnetism, positive and negative electricity, male and female cells, and so on. But it does not observe even these two forces always and everywhere. No question has ever been raised as to the third force, or if it has been raised it has scarcely been heard.

According to real, exact, or objective knowledge, one force, or two forces can never produce a phenomenon. The presence of three forces is necessary, for it is only with the help of the third force that the first two can produce what may be called a phenomenon, no matter in what sphere.

The teaching of the three forces is at the root of all ancient systems. The first force is called *active* or *positive*; the second, *passive* or *negative*; the third *neutralising*. But these are merely names, for in reality all three forces are equally active and appear as active, passive and neutralising only at their meeting points, that is to say, *only in relation to one another at a given moment*. The first two are more or less comprehensible to us and the third may sometimes be discovered either at the point of application of the forces, or in the 'medium', or in the 'result'. But, speaking in general, the third force is not easily accessible to direct observation and understanding. The reason for this is to be found in the functional limitations of man's ordinary psychological activity and in the fundamental categories of our perception of the phenomenal world; that is, in our sensation of space and time resulting from these limitations. People cannot perceive and observe the third force directly any more than they can spatially perceive the fourth dimension. *[The Cosmology of Man's Possible Evolution, Lecture 1]*

This 'threeness' of things occurs throughout many of the esoteric traditions - the Christian trinity is one obvious example and in the Indian tradition there is a clear parallel with the cosmic functions of creation (active), maintenance (neutralising), and destruction (passive) personified as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva respectively.

In Mr Ouspensky's System, each successive 'world' comes under an increasing number of laws corresponding to the division of the original three forces into an increasing number of parts:

In the Absolute, the three forces are one and there is only one law—the single and independent will of the Absolute. In the next world, where the forces have separated, there are three forces or orders of laws. In the next, there are six orders of laws; in the following world twelve; and so on. In our world, that is, the earth, forty-eight orders of laws are operating, to which we are subject and by which our whole life is governed.

[The Cosmology of Man's Possible Evolution, Lecture 2]

One of the aims of the System was to enable man to ascend the Ray of Creation by evolving the capacities needed to inhabit higher level worlds under fewer laws. But when, with the help of the Shankaracharya, Dr Roles traced the System back to its origin, he discovered that what we already *are* encompasses *all* of these 'worlds'. Nothing new needs to be created. 'We already are that for which we are searching.'

From this perspective, we can perhaps see the varying numbers of laws or constraints to which we are subject as relating to degrees of identification with objects of the mind, body or world. All that is needed to be free of these 'laws' is as Rupert says 'to be knowingly the open, empty, luminous space of awareness which allows all experience to come into existence' – pure openness, no resistance.

The view from above

In his article entitled *Nature's Eternity*, Rupert explains how Consciousness creates the world:

We do not perceive a world outside Consciousness. The world is our perception of the world. There is no evidence that there is a world outside the perception of it, outside Consciousness.

The seen cannot be separated from seeing and seeing cannot be separated from Consciousness.

Following a beautiful account which takes as its starting point a quotation from Paul Cezanne, Rupert goes on to use another example of the inherent threeness of the universe, *SatChitAnanda*, in the form of the Sanskrit equation '*nama rupa, SatChitAnanda*' to point towards the ultimate reality of our experience:

... if we take away that which appears, the objective aspect of any experience, we are left with the undeniable and yet invisible experience of both Existence or Beingness and Consciousness.

So, in exploring the true nature of experience, we first remove name and form, '*nama*' and '*rupa*', the veil of mind and senses in which Reality is 'enclosed'.

This leaves us with the presence of two undeniable facts of experience, Existence and Consciousness, which in Indian philosophy are referred to as '*Sat*' and '*Chit*'.

In every experience there is something that is being experienced. That something, whatever it is, is real. It has Being. That is '*Sat*'.

In every experience there is also something that experiences. There is '*I*', Consciousness. That something, whatever it is, is present. It is conscious. That is '*Chit*'.

From the point of view of the apparent separate entity, we formulate our experience by saying, "I see that". That is, '*I*', Consciousness, sees 'that', the object or the world. '*Chit*' experiences '*Sat*'. They are considered to be two things joined by an act of knowing.

However, if we explore our experience carefully, we come to the understanding that Consciousness and Reality are one, that there is no separation between 'I' and 'other', between 'me' and 'you', between 'me' and the 'world', between 'Chit' and 'Sat'.

The experience of this realisation is known in India as '*Ananda*', which has traditionally been translated as 'bliss'. However, this translation can be misleading. It suggests that the realisation of Oneness is considered to be accompanied by a rare and exotic state. And this in turn initiates the search for an extraordinary experience, for something that is not simply this.

'*Ananda*' is perhaps better translated as Peace or Happiness, or simply Fulfilment. In fact it is very ordinary. It could be described as the absence of agitation or the ease of Being.

[\[http://non-duality.rupertspira.com/read/natures_eternity\]](http://non-duality.rupertspira.com/read/natures_eternity)

Sometimes understanding can be triggered more readily by a poetic description. Here is one that you might like to try reading and contemplating after a period of silent meditation:

The Unknowable Reality of Things

Every time I open my eyes
I invite the world to take shape
And every time the world takes shape
I'm invited to open my eyes
And see the world raw and naked
Holding out its hand
Calling me into its self
Where I am taken into the transparency of things
And find myself transparent there
Standing on the edge looking down
And in to the dark silent pool in which the world is cradled
And I am cradled there, held with all things
And hold all things in myself
Myself, not a thing in the world but this – here – seeing
In which the world opens, inviting and offering itself
And every time it is seen – it dies
And in dying, holds out its hand again
Asking to be taken in
And every time I take it in
I too die
And in dying – am known
As this here – seeing
Every time I open my eyes

[Rupert Spira]