

Nothing truly veils awareness

It's one thing to stand knowingly as the presence of awareness, and to be in touch with the peace of our true nature when we are sitting quietly at home with nothing going on that demands our attention. But what about those times in our lives when 'things go wrong'? How can we remain abiding as awareness while at the same time responding appropriately to a negative or difficult situation?:

Q. I received word last night that my house had been broken into. ... So it's a 'wave' and [being here on this retreat] I'm able to ride the wave a little easier. So I felt a 'pulling out' of this state of abidance, being pulled out into a situation where some decisions had to be made, a phone call had to be made. And then it was like: 'that's all I can do'. ...

RS: You see when something like this happens, we don't have to feel that we have been 'pulled out'. We would only be 'pulled out' if we were at the first stage of 'awareness in the background and objects in the foreground'. We would feel we've been pulled out of the witnessing position of awareness, and we now have to get involved with the body/mind/world. But we can also be involved with the body/mind/world. This situation requires your attention. It requires your thoughts, your actions and so on. But in the midst of all of that, you don't have to feel that somehow you have left awareness behind. It comes with you wherever you go. Your entire dealing with the situation thus far has been pervaded by the knowing of it. So you can still deal with these intense, or fairly intense situations, and not lose touch with the experience of being aware. Now obviously this situation requires some thought and some activity, and you deal with it as a practical matter. But there's nothing inherent in the situation that need cause you any suffering.

Q: There's a temptation to feel a vulnerability or a sense of the risk of loss ...

RS: But that's legitimate at a physical level. Yes, you feel vulnerable, you imagine what it would have been like if you had both been sleeping there. So then you may take some measures to prevent that happening in future. That's all natural – to feel physically vulnerable, to have to deal with the loss etc. All of that is just natural, you have to deal with all of that. But in dealing with all of that there is no actual suffering inherent in any of those activities. And you'll be surprised sometimes – you just deal with it. You just make the appropriate phone calls, you go home, you clean up, you call the builders, or whatever it is. You go through the whole thing and you may notice at some time 'no, it doesn't really faze me'. Yes, of course at one level it's inconvenient and it takes time. But it doesn't really *touch* you. What you essentially are just remains unscathed throughout the whole process.

[1st July 2014 San Raphael, CA: *The gravitational pull of our true nature*]

Rupert often points out that consciousness has no agenda with any appearance just as the space of a room has no agenda with what takes place within it. But there are times when the body-mind does seem to be required to take a position, to have an agenda:

RS: If you start from a place that truly has no agenda, then if an agenda is required in response to a particular situation, you can take up that agenda. But then when the situation finishes, the agenda finishes. You don't carry it on. You go back to a place of just being open. And then another situation may demand that you have an agenda, and you take up the opposite agenda from the agenda you took up yesterday, because it's in response to a different situation. So the fact that consciousness has no agenda with any appearance, doesn't mean that it isn't appropriate at the level of the mind and the body to have 'local agendas'. It's fine to do that,

because they are held as it were, in a broader context. The broader context has no agenda. But that doesn't stop us dealing with situations appropriately in our lives. In fact, free of the separate self, the separate self's agenda doesn't interfere with our responses to situations and circumstances.

So we are free – not just to sit on our cushions all day long and not respond. No, our body-minds may be required to respond. Our body-minds may be required to respond very actively, very quickly – to work very hard, to move very fast, to think a great deal, to talk a lot. That may be required of our body-minds. But the separate self's agenda will not interfere with the body-mind's agenda. The body-mind will be free to respond appropriately, which may mean being very active in a situation. Another situation – we may walk by and not get involved. Both our total involvement one day and our lack of involvement the next day could equally be an expression of love and understanding.

It's not whether we are active or have an agenda that matters. It's whether the separate self's agenda is infiltrating and influencing our responses. In other words, is the activity a response to a situation with the body-mind? Is the response on behalf of a separate self? Or is our body-mind responding to a situation on behalf of intelligence, and love, and justice and equity? So it's fine to be very active in life, if that is the natural proclivity of our body-mind. To be in relationships, to have a family, to work. [\[Consciousness Has No Agenda With Any Appearance\]](#)

So, in this teaching, there is no moral code or fixed set of rules by which we try to live. No Ten Commandments, no Sanatan Dharma, no Eightfold Path. In the outward-facing, tantric path, there is just a gradual process in which our body-minds are progressively realigned with our non-dual understanding. And as a result of this realignment, our actions and relationships increasingly become a natural expression of that understanding. This is Rupert's advice on how to cooperate with this natural process:

RS: If things seem not to be working in your life, the first thing to ask is: 'Who says so?'. From whose point of view are things not working? Take an example. In the absence of a thought which says 'things aren't working', where's the problem? So it's always a thought, and that thought is always representing a self. So the important question is: 'On whose behalf is this thought rising?'. Is it rising on behalf of a separate, limited individual self who is in a constant relationship of either pushing away the world, protecting itself from the world, or in a relationship of using the world in order to aggrandise itself? Is the thought arising on behalf of that self, or is the thought arising on behalf of love and intelligence? So that's the first thing to ask. Not to ignore the thought and say 'it's just thought'. No, listen to what the thought says, but ask yourself 'on whose behalf is it rising?'. The separate, seeking, resistant self? Or the true and only self of awareness, pure love and intelligence?

Now if you discover that the thought is rising on behalf of the separate self, then rather than do anything about the situation that the separate self considers to be wrong, explore that separate self, explore the one who is taking exception, and you won't find it. It's not there. In other words, the thought that rises on behalf of the separate self, that sees situations as wrong, rises on behalf of an illusory self. When you see that that self is illusory, then have a look again at the situation and see if it is a problem. But if on the contrary, you find that this thought that rises, rises on behalf of love and intelligence, in other words, if there is no vested interest for a personal self in the outcome of this thought, if it is truly a thought which comes from love and intelligence, then listen to it and act on what it says.

That thought may tell you: 'I'm in a relationship that is not loving, not creative, not generous, not free, not open., and both parties are suffering. We've tried everything several times and it's still not working'. Then love and intelligence dictates that you separate. But if, on the contrary, you're in a relationship – I'm just choosing this as an example – in which there are difficulties, the thought rises, 'there is a problem with this situation', love and intelligence may dictate that you explore that situation. 'What is it that is preventing love from being shared and expressed in this relationship?' In that case the thing to do would be to explore the relationship. See if you can realign the relationship with love and intelligence.

Another example may be the kind of job you are doing. 'I don't like the work I'm doing. It doesn't feel right.' Find out on whose behalf this thought arises. If it rises on behalf of intelligence, then explore it, change jobs if necessary. In other words, act on the thoughts that come from love and intelligence, and the thoughts that don't come from love and intelligence, explore the I that is at their origin. Before doing what the thought tells you to do, explore the 'I' that it is representing.

[20/10/2012 (audio): [Relating on behalf of love and intelligence](#)]

Having recognised the power of this approach, we might wonder whether the realignment process can be speeded up by deliberately putting ourselves in situations that tend to provoke a negative response. This is Rupert's advice:

Q: There's a concept from the previous teaching that I was following which I just wanted to check. I think it is nonsense, but I just wanted to be absolutely sure. And that is that what we need to do is to deliberately put ourselves in situations which provoke negative emotion.

RS: Well, it's not for me to say that any other teaching is nonsense, but suffice to say that in this approach we do *not* take that approach. No. For most of us, life is plenty difficult enough as it is without having to go searching for new causes of suffering and negativity. So no, absolutely not.

But there are traditions – not just the tradition that you used to belong to – there are traditions where this is part of the approach. It's part of some tantric traditions, where you deliberately place yourself in extreme and difficult circumstances precisely in order to stir up whatever is inside that needs looking for.

But it's not really a part of this approach. It's not necessary.

[4th December 2014, Dorset: The Deepest Healing]

In summary, Rupert's approach is to welcome any difficult situation that we encounter in our lives as an opportunity to deepen our understanding, and respond to it appropriately, from love and intelligence.

Contemplation

Meditation in the midst of activity is a thousand times superior to meditation in stillness.

Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769)