

Letting Experience Flow

Some years ago, I remarked to one of the leaders of the spiritual organisation I belonged to at that time: 'but surely all the members want self-realisation? That's why this organisation was set up.' It was a rhetorical question, and so his answer surprised me. 'No', he said, 'I think very few people here want that. We enjoy coming here for meetings, we enjoy talking about self-realisation, we enjoy the companionship of nice people. What need would there be for any of that once one is self-realised? It's a large part of our lives.'

Of course, that was a misunderstanding about the nature of enlightenment, but perhaps there was something deeper going on which might apply more generally. Is there anything we are telling ourselves which might be inhibiting the recognition of our true nature? Do we believe enlightenment is only for special people? Or that we need to purify our body/minds first? Or that it takes a long time? Or that it requires a lot of work and effort in spiritual practice?' None of those is true. Realisation of our true nature is very simple – it's just clear seeing – 'I thought I was a separate entity, limited in time and space, but it's clear to me now that I'm not'. That understanding requires nothing more than looking deeply and impartially at our experience, abandoning all our prior beliefs. That's all. If instead, we focus our interest and efforts on spiritual practices or trying to 'become a better person' then we are staying on the edge of the ocean, never immersing ourselves in it, afraid of getting out of our depth, afraid of having nothing solid under our feet.

As Rupert explains, no effort is needed:

In this moment there is the knowing of your experience. In fact that's all there is in this moment – the knowing of your experience. That knowing is what you are. The slightest effort to be that, would appear to take you away from that. Any effort could only be an effort away from yourself. When you feel frustration you then make an effort to cease feeling frustrated because the frustration seems to be a contradiction of what is being suggested. But even in the feeling of frustration, you can leave it totally alone – the frustration, the confusion, the irritation. Even if it builds into anger, it doesn't matter. Don't touch your experience, don't try to manipulate it. Even in the frustration, just say to it 'this frustration is made of the knowing of it'. Look at the frustration, but see the knowing, know the knowing. I can't find another way at the moment of evoking in you this relaxation of the attention, the sinking back of the attention into its source.

[2nd March 2014 [The Effort is Away from Yourself](#)]

The normal activities of life continue in the same way after enlightenment –work, practical activities and celebration with our friends. As the Zen saying goes: 'before enlightenment chop wood, carry water: after enlightenment chop wood, carry water'. The main difference is that instead of sometimes feeling like an unpleasant or burdensome activity, the action is just allowed to flow, without resistance. In this extract from a yoga meditation at Buckland Hall last year, Rupert describes how resistance and seeking impedes the free flow of experience.

Our true heart is the heart of awareness – open, empty, available, sensitive, free. A healthy heart – that is a heart in its natural condition – is one that allows all experience to simply flow through it unimpeded, without grasping anything and without rejecting anything. Such a heart is completely open to all experience, intimate with all experience, but is never stained or sullied by any particular experience. The heart of awareness does not need to be made open, empty, available, sensitive, and free. Its nature is to be such. The space of this room never clings to the pleasurable experiences that take place within it and never rejects the unpleasant ones. No event leaves a trace on its inherent openness. The screen never resists the unpleasant episodes in the

movie, and never seeks or grasps the pleasant ones. It is equally open to all the scenes in the movie – at once intimate with them, and at the same time free of them. It is never stained by the content of the movie.

Do not allow your heart, the heart of awareness, to be stained by the content of experience. The only reason the heart of awareness seems to be stained by experience is because we either resist some experiences or we seek to hold onto others. And in doing so, the heart of awareness establishes a particular relationship with certain experiences. Most experiences simply pass through the heart of awareness without leaving a trace on it, but some experiences get stuck in our heart. Those are the ones we either particularly dislike or the ones we particularly like. The ones we particularly dislike we try to resist or get rid of. The ones we particularly like we try to hold onto or seek. So it is this relationship of resistance or seeking that traps experience in the heart, that stains the heart of awareness.

With the exception of extreme pain, no experience is inherently unpleasant or pleasant. It is our resistance and our seeking that dictates that an experience is pleasant or unpleasant. It is our resistance and seeking that prevents experience simply flowing through us without leaving a trace. It is our resistance and seeking that prevents us from living fully as the heart of awareness, completely open to experience as it appears, empty of any inherent quality other than our own natural openness and availability. It is this resistance and seeking that prevents us from simply living in enjoyment in the moment. ...

What is preventing you from being totally at peace, fully happy, in this moment? What is preventing your total enjoyment of the current experience? Awareness lives in total enjoyment, totally open to every experience, allowing whatever comes to come, allowing whatever remains to remain, allowing whatever goes to go, with not the slightest impulse to resist any particular experience or cling to any particular experience. Awareness doesn't know the meaning of the word 'problem'. The peace and happiness that we seek can only be found in this utter openness to experience, this utter sensitivity or availability to the current experience.

[6th May 2017: *The Heart of Awareness is Our True Heart*]

Often it is uncomfortable feelings that seem to get trapped and overlaid on the heart of awareness. Here is Francis Lucille's advice:

When we say, "I am this" or "I am that," it is always a mistake. We are not "this" or "that." We are both nothing and everything. It is not true to say, "I am sad." We should say instead, "At this moment a feeling of sadness is flowing through me." If we just let the feeling of sadness flow, we automatically and unknowingly take our stand in that which is not flowing. In order to be aware of the movement of whatever is flowing, we take our stand unknowingly, naturally, and spontaneously as the presence in which it appears. In fact that is the only way to take our stand as this presence. This presence is not an object, so any effort towards this presence would make us take our stand in an artificial place, as an object. However, by letting everything flow we simply find ourselves as that which we truly are.

[*The Perfume of Silence*, Just say 'yes' inside]

In an early video, Rupert describes the change of perspective that occurs when we live life in this way:

I am on a train to Heathrow Airport on my way to the States. At least, that's what thought says. Experience tells me that I am going nowhere. I am always in the same placeless place of experiencing; never going anywhere. Perceptions flow through me; sights, sounds, textures,

tastes and sounds flow through me. And thought arranges these into a story which says 'I,-this-collection-of-thoughts-and-sensations-called-a-body-and-a-mind, is moving through the world'. But experience says no such thing. Experience says 'All these flow through me'.

Buildings, wires, trains, sounds, sights; all these are moving through me. I am not moving through them. Thought says 'I am moving forward toward a place or a location or an object'. But experience tells me that I am always in the same placeless place of experiencing; that all things come to me, I don't go to them. Experience comes towards me, I don't go towards it. I remain eternally present in the dimensionless, placeless place of experiencing, never going anywhere, never going towards an object or another. Just being pure sensitivity, pure openness that allows all experience to be just as it is; coming to me, flowing through me, dissolving into me. But I, this-openness, this availability, this sensitivity, never going anywhere.

[14th October 2012 [I Never Go Anywhere](#)]

In a recent YouTube clip, a young woman asks Rupert whether she should look for a career and 'do something useful', or whether it's OK to sit in her bedroom watching his YouTube clips and reading Nisargadatta which is what she most enjoys:

Q: I always hear you say 'Oh life will take care of itself'

RS: (laughing) No, you never hear me say that. You've been watching too many other YouTube clips and now you can't even remember who said what! It's true – life does tend to take care of itself, but we need to cooperate with life. So the cooperation with life is to take the skills and the interests and the inclinations and the proclivities that you have as a body-mind, and use them in the service of truth and love and beauty. The religious way of saying that is we do everything for God:

*Teach me my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee'.*

That's a 16th century religious way of saying 'use your body-mind in the service of truth and love and beauty'.

Q: This will be a happening? Or do I have to search for it?

RS: No – don't just wait in your bedroom for it to happen. You have to cooperate. You have to make your body and your mind available. You have to go out into the world. This is not a path of renunciation. This is a path of celebration. It means we use our minds and our bodies to the fullest in the world. We engage in activities and relationships. We spend periods of the day or periods of our life on the inward-facing path when we close our eyes, we turn away from activities and relationships and we investigate our true nature. But that's only half the journey. In this approach we go back out into the light – and it's not just first the inward-facing path, then the outward facing path. On a daily basis we are doing both. We are going inwards, resting in the heart of being, but then we are also going out and taking whatever we find there, so to speak, taking the peace, the love, the beauty that we find there, taking it out and using it to the best of our abilities. Using our minds and our bodies to share that, to communicate it, celebrate it.

[3rd May 2018 [Do Something That Expresses Truth, Love or Beauty](#)]

There are occasions when, despite our best efforts, our activities may not always have the positive effect that we hoped for. It doesn't matter. What's important is to have an attitude of benevolent

indifference to what occurs, and avoid being attached to the results of our actions. This is Rupert's description:

Krishnamurti once said - 'I've one secret in life. I don't care what happens'. ... That is the position Awareness is always in.

My Teacher sometimes used to qualify it as *benevolent* indifference. Just make sure that there is no rejection in the indifference ... no resignation. But it is indifference that is totally allowing and open. No vested interests for or against. Disinterested not uninterested.

To be disinterested is to have no vested interest in the outcome. You can still be very interested in it. But you have no investment in the outcome. So, it is not in any way a removal of ourself from life. That would be rejection posing as indifference. We can be freely engaged in life but at the same time right at the heart of life, completely free of the consequences of what happens.

[26th February 2012 [The-Allowing-Indifference-of-Awareness](#)]

Contemplation

if you draw a line in earth, then the line remains there for some time at least. If you make a line in stone it will remain there for a longer time, but if you draw a line on water, then no sooner have you drawn it than it will disappear. ... Those who have pure hearts are very like water—they perform actions, and then they are gone. It doesn't leave any trace or residue on them.

[Shankaracharya Shantanand Saraswati, *Record of Audiences* 29th October 1977]