

## Living in the Now

In Meditation 8 in *The Light of Pure Knowing*, Rupert leads us to the understanding that awareness lives only in the Now and the illusory separate self is simply the activity of resisting the Now:

The apparently separate self is made out of the resistance to the Now. There is only one place the separate self cannot stand, and that is Now. In fact, the separate self is not an *entity* that resists the Now; it is simply the *activity* of resisting the Now.

In other words, the separate self is not an entity; it is an activity – an activity of thinking and feeling that takes us into an imaginary past or future.

In the Now, our Self, Awareness, is intimately one with all appearances. It is only by denying this intimacy that pervades all experience that a separate self can arise.

In the Now, there is never someone who experiences and something that is experienced; there is just the ever-present, indivisible intimacy of pure experiencing.

See clearly how many of our thoughts contain this imaginary entity at their origin, and how this imaginary entity ventures into a past or future in order to avoid the Now.

Don't control or discipline this avoiding, seeking thought. At most we may ask it, 'Where are you going? What is wrong with the Now?'

Does Awareness have a problem with the Now? Does Awareness have a problem with anything that appears within it? Does the empty space of the room in which we are currently sitting, relatively speaking, have a problem with anyone or anything that appears in it?

The space of our room has no mechanism for rejecting anything that appears in it; it is just pure openness, pure allowing.

Likewise, our Self, Awareness, knows no resistance. It doesn't know the meaning of the word 'resistance'. It is pure openness; it is defenceless: it says 'Yes' to all appearances.

In order to resist what is present, we have to first forget our true nature of pure Awareness.

This forgetting or overlooking of our essential nature of ever-present and unlimited awareness is the essential ignorance that is responsible for the belief and subsequent feeling that we are a temporary, limited self.

It is only as such an apparently separate self, which exists in the imagination alone that we can resist the Now and, as a result, venture into a past or a future.

However as Awareness, we resist nothing and go nowhere.

[*The Light of Pure Knowing*, Meditation 8: The Rejection of the Now]

How much of our life is spent living in the past or imagining the future? Why are our memories so important to us? When we meet someone new, or attend a job interview, one of the first things we are often asked is 'tell me about yourself'. Without further thought we reach into our memories and pull out something appropriate to the situation. We have been conditioned to feel that we are defined by our memories. It can be a shock to recognise that this isn't true. Here is an extract from a dialogue Rupert had with someone who had just had that recognition, but now wanted to know what memories really are:

RS: So then on to your question 'What then are our memories? Are they not real?' Yes, they are real. There's no such thing as an unreal experience. But the important question is not so much 'are they real?', but 'am I defined by them?' or 'am I limited to them?'. Yes, there are traces still left in your mind from past events. Those traces, we could say they are like the present echoes in your mind of a previous event. Those echoes still reverberate in your mind and carry with them much of the content of the original experience. Just like when you hear an echo in the mountains, you're not actually hearing the sound itself. Depending on how far away you are, the echo is a remnant of the original sound reverberating in your mind that still carries at least some of the information or the experience that was contained in the original sound. So your memories are like echoes in your mind. And like an echo in the mountains slowly fades, so in general, the further we are away from the original experience, the fainter the echo or the fainter the memory.

So each of our minds is echoing with various memories of our previous experience. And those memories are real. But what is important is 'do they define what I essentially am, or do they confine what I essentially am?'. And this series of questions that we went through yesterday was a way of discovering in our actual, direct and intimate experience that what we essentially are is not limited to or defined by or confined by any of these memories, nor indeed by any of our current experiences. That what we essentially are is completely free both of the content of our current experience and of the content of any past experiences that we have had.

So this is not in any way a denial of memory. It's not either to suggest that it isn't appropriate to think of one's past, to discuss it if necessary. The past may need processing. I'm not suggesting that there's no room for that. But what I'm suggesting is that what we essentially are should be kept free, kept pristine, that we see that what we essentially are is free of all these limiting qualities, features.

*Q: Because it almost feels like if we don't refer to memory, it's as if we're born new in every moment. If we don't refer to memory it feels as if every experience is completely brand new.*

RS: And how would that be?

*Q: I don't know.*

RS: Try it. As you walk along the lanes here, as you have your meals, as you have conversations with friends. Meet every experience without the filter of your memories. Just meet it fresh. Like a new-born infant meets its experience, it has no reference point. A new-born infant is a field of pure experiencing. It has no idea what it is experiencing, nor indeed does it have an idea that it is a person who is experiencing. There is just experiencing. And actually that's how we experience, except that we overlay on that pure experiencing a series of ideas, filters, prejudices, memories etc. which distort or colour the actual experience itself.

If you met every experience in this way – just fresh without relating the current experience to a past experience – would you be able to suffer? I'm not talking about physical pain – psychological suffering.

*Q: No.*

RS: You're absolutely right. In other words, there is no suffering in the Now. If we live in the Now, we are always on holiday. Ask yourself, at any moment of suffering, 'if I wasn't comparing this experience to something in the past, or comparing it with an imagined experience in the future, is there any actual suffering in this current experience?'. You've already got the answer.

It's so easy. You just have to refer to that understanding. And then, when you need your memory, for practical purposes, it's there. You don't go mad. You don't lose the ability to act and relate appropriately in life. In fact, you gain a new ability to both act and relate in a new way, to act in a way that is free of past considerations, unless those past considerations are required for your action, in which case they will be available to you. But your actions are no longer guided by prejudices that come from the past. They are a response in the moment.

And likewise your relationships. When you relate to someone, you relate to them each time as if for the first time. In other words, you don't project an image onto that person. You don't allow your memories to colour your experience of that person in the moment, unless of course your memory is required for practical reasons, in which case your memory will be available to you. But that's a beautiful observation. Not to filter the present through the past, through your memory.

[21<sup>st</sup> August 2017: There is No Suffering in the Now]

There are situations when it can seem difficult to avoid thinking of the past or future. It's almost as though we want to dwell on misery – illness, break-up of a relationship, family difficulties, money difficulties and so on. Of course, the practical aspects of the situation need to be dealt with. But it's not necessary to dwell on it or to keep talking to our friends about it. Here is a conversation Rupert had with someone who was suffering because of a marriage break-up. She asked Rupert for just one thing to do to relieve her suffering:

RS: I'll give you one thing to do: referring only to your current experience, in other words not referring to your memory, tell us about your experience now.

Q: *I'm sitting here.*

RS: Is there any suffering in that?

Q: *No*

RS: Tell us more.

Q: *I'm listening to your voice.*

RS: Is there any suffering in that?

Q: *No*

RS: Tell us more. Is there anything about your current experience, if you don't refer to your memory, which is after all, all you have, is there anything about your current experience that tells you, you are suffering?

Q: *No*

RS: That's it. That is the place of refuge. It's called Now.

Q: *But I forget that it's here when I'm stuck ...*

RS: Buy the recording, put it on your iPhone. Keep reminding yourself of this conversation or write it down on a bit of paper. But it's so simple. You don't even need to write it on a bit of paper. If you want refuge from your suffering, Now is the only place you'll find it. As soon as you leave the Now, you start suffering. Try it now. Go into the past. ... Yes, immediately it begins. Stop referring to the past, your suffering comes to an end. It's that simple. The whole weight of suffering that you carry around with you in relation to your past relationship is contained in a

single thought about the past, because you can never have more than one thought at a time. All your suffering is contained in a single thought. So if you want respite from your suffering, Now is the place to find it.

We normally think that we suffer in the Now, and therefore we have to escape from the Now, into the past or the future, into time, into objects into substances into activities in order to avoid our suffering. It's the opposite. Now is the only place where suffering cannot stand. And it is in the past and the future that our suffering stands. And the Now is not inaccessible to you. It's not inaccessible to anybody. It is so readily available. Just try, at any moment of suffering, just ask yourself this simple question: If I don't refer to thought or memory, where is my suffering now? Just that. That's it. If I don't refer to thought or memory, where is my suffering? That takes you directly from where you are to peace. ...

*Q: There's a part of me that feels that I need to be doing a little suffering. ...*

RS: Well if you want to do a little suffering then feel free – if that's what you want to do then you know very easily how to turn it on. You just start referring to your past, start thinking of your ex. Do it as much as you feel you need to do it.

But can I ask you a question? Why do you feel you need to suffer?

*Q: I think it's because I've created this story, I'm xxx whose relationship has ended. All my friends and family are in this with me like 'Oh you poor thing, it's really terrible'. And it's like if I suddenly stop that – it's kind of added to by the people around me. I think it's society as well that does that.*

RS: Don't blame the people around you for your suffering. None of your friends are imposing suffering on you. Your ex is not imposing suffering on you. You're doing it to yourself. Your suffering is your own activity. Just have the courage and the clarity to see that clearly. ...

Do you want to talk to people who support your suffering or support your peace? Choose the people you talk to carefully. Do you want to be at peace or do you want to suffer?

*Q: I want to be at peace.*

RS: I've just given you the quickest, the easiest and the most direct route to peace that there is.

[Buckland Hall 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 *The Direct Route to Peace and Happiness*]

## Contemplation

*The separate self is the rejection of the Now. I, Awareness, am in love with the Now. In fact, I am the Now.*

[Rupert Spira]