

The Power of Clear Seeing

The aim of the Direct Path is happiness; the discovery that our essential being is happiness. The aim is not self-improvement, evolution to a higher level of being, or attainment of 'higher states of consciousness'. There is only one essential being, it cannot be improved, and there are no different 'states of consciousness' – consciousness just *is*. The different 'levels' or 'states of consciousness' referred to in progressive teachings are actually states of mind, just as deep sleep, dreaming, waking are states of mind. States of mind, including blissful states, come and go – they are not the unchanging, immovable, imperturbable, ever-present happiness that is our true nature.

Near the beginning of his first book, *The Transparency of Things*, Rupert explains that the approach he teaches is based not on practices to change the nature of experience, but simply on clear seeing. It is clear seeing that leads us to discover this innate happiness for ourselves:

All that is happening in these contemplations is the clear seeing of the essential nature of experience. There is no attempt to change or manipulate it, to create a peaceful or happy state, to get rid of suffering or to change the world. There is simply the clear seeing of the true nature of this current experience.

This clear seeing is not an intellectual understanding, although it may be formulated provisionally in intellectual terms when required by the current situation. Rather, it is the direct, intimate and immediate knowing of oneself resting in and as the formless expanse of Presence, and simultaneously dancing in the vibrancy and aliveness of every gesture and nuance of the body, mind and world. [Rupert Spira, *The Transparency of Things*, ch 2]

The connection between happiness and 'clear seeing' may not be immediately obvious. We are so used to looking for happiness in objects that there's a tendency to imagine a subtle object, a happy state of mind, and then look for techniques to evoke this. But the happiness that we all really want and that is the aim of this teaching, is not a temporary state of mind. We want happiness under all circumstances. It is in clear seeing that our innate, inherent happiness is revealed – the happiness that has always been with us and can never leave us because it is what we are. We see that nothing needs to change, nothing needs to be improved and we don't need to 'do' anything, other than to see clearly.

Clear seeing is quite different from the 'change of attitude' taught in some progressive paths, such as an attitude of acceptance, or an attitude that everything that occurs is God's will. Such a change of attitude would be a subtle colouring of experience. Clear seeing is entirely neutral, transparent, and uncoloured by any kind of belief or feeling.

One possible starting-point is to look clearly and dispassionately at the body. If we feel that our happiness depends on the physical health of the body, then we are imagining that we *are* the body. But if we see that we are aware of the body, then it becomes obvious that we cannot *be* the body. We cannot be that which we are aware of. If our car has to go to the garage for repair, do we feel unhappy because it is sick? Most likely not. So why shouldn't the same apply to the body? If we needed to have a leg amputated, would that make ourselves, 'I', any smaller? Of course not.

What about physical pain? Is it possible to be happy when we are in physical pain? If we see clearly that pain is just a sensation arising in awareness, then yes, there's no reason for us not to be gently at peace, even if we are not actively and positively happy. Pain is unpleasant, and necessarily so, as it is the body's call for help. But although it tones down our underlying and innate feeling of happiness, it does not need to completely eclipse it, unless we allow it to, by identifying with the body.

We can look at the mind in a similar way. All there is to the mind is just a flow of experience. We can observe that experience, therefore we cannot *be* that experience. So we are not the mind. We are that which is aware of the flow of experience which we designate as 'mind'. Depression is commonly seen as a cause of unhappiness. But all we know of depression is simply a particular type of experience flow – a succession of thoughts and feelings that is unpleasant. Once again, clear seeing shows us that, although unpleasant, it does not need to eclipse our innate happiness.

Here are Rupert's suggestions for responding to physical pain and depression:

RS: All there is to your experience is the awareness of it, is the knowing of it. When you are sitting at home, when you are walking down the street, when you are sitting here, when you are eating dinner, just continually remind yourself. Just pause, say to yourself: 'is there any substance present in my experience other than the knowing of it, other than the experiencing of it?' You see the habit of believing I, consciousness or awareness, am identical to this [the body], I'm limited to this, I live inside this, is so strong in us.

Q: For me it is because I have such a lot of physical pain ...

RS: Well then, you go to your physical pain. Do this to begin with when it's not too intense. You treat your physical pain just like the sound of the traffic. Because physical pain is a sensation. It's an intense version of the sensation you are now experiencing with your hand on the mike, but it's more intense. But it's still made of the same stuff. Pinch yourself, pinch your arm. It's a little bit painful, it's not very painful. It's not very pleasant. Yes? Is there anything there other than the knowing of it? It's made out of the same stuff. Now pinch yourself harder. OK? What's it made of? What is the stuff that it is made of? Just the knowing of it.

Pain is unpleasant. It's supposed to be. It's an intelligent signal, one of nature's intelligent signals, something needs attending to in your body. It's supposed to be unpleasant. But just because it's unpleasant, doesn't exempt it from being made out of consciousness. It's still made out of consciousness. All that's there, is the knowing of it. Now it's true that at a certain stage pain may become so intense or circumstances may become so demanding that the knowing of that may seem to be obscured. Or the depression may be so deep that we lose touch with the fact that the only substance present there is knowing. Just like when the image on the screen goes black, we may think the image is completely obscured. But it's not true. When the screen goes black, it's not obscured any more than it is when the screen is white. A deep depression is lit up, it is rendered knowable by the brilliant light of pure consciousness.

Even the darkest depression – you know that experience. When you're depressed, you are aware of being depressed. You can say to yourself: 'I am aware of being depressed'. Now the 'I' that is aware, is what illuminates or renders knowable the experience of depression. Depression is dark – it is heavy, dense and dark. But it is lit up by something that is brilliant, luminous, transparent and innately peaceful – pure consciousness. So even our deepest depressions confirm primarily the presence of the brilliant light of consciousness. Nothing can obscure that unless we consent to its obscuration, in which case, it seems to be missing.

If we believe the black image on the screen has obscured the screen, the screen will be veiled. If we believe the landscape on the screen is a real landscape, we will, by definition, think that the screen has disappeared. Only because we believe it. As soon as we realise 'no, the landscape is just an image, it's just a modulation of the screen', right there, it's totally visible. If we believe that our depression obscures consciousness, that's how it will feel. If we realise our depression is lit up or known by the light of awareness, and our attention is drawn towards that light of

awareness, rather than towards the darkness of the depression, then that light of awareness will be our experience. And the depression will gradually dissolve in that light.

[Rupert Spira, 18th May 2014: [*Even Depression is Illuminated by the Light of Awareness*](#)]

More generally, if we look carefully at our experience, we see that all unhappiness, all suffering is caused by resistance to the current situation. We can't choose not to feel annoyed or agitated when things don't go our way. But we can look carefully at our experience and see that this annoyance or agitation does not obscure the natural peace and happiness of our true nature. Here is Rupert's explanation of how this clear seeing can have a profound effect on our lives:

Our self witnesses all agitation but cannot itself be agitated. This absence of resistance or agitation is known simply as the experience of peace.

Peace is not a quality or attribute of our self. It is our self. It can never be parted from our self just as the inherently peaceful quality of space cannot be parted from it. We are peace itself.

Peaceful states of the mind, body and world may come and go—and it is in the nature of the mind, body and world that cycles of calm and agitation follow one another—but our self is the ever-present and inherently peaceful presence which knows and allows all such states, and is intimately one with them, but is never in the least affected by any of them.

Our self, like space, is undisturbable. This peace is not a state of the mind or body that comes and goes but is ever-present, sitting quietly behind and within every thought, feeling, sensation or perception, open and available at every moment, simply waiting to be recognized. ...

In fact, the longing for peace is itself the peace of our true nature, thinly veiled by the 'I-the-separate-inside-self' thought and feeling.

When this longing is divested of time, that is, divested of the past and future into which it projects an imaginary self, it stands revealed as the peace that is ever-present within our own being, quietly shining at the heart of all experience, simply waiting to be recognized.

To mistake the peace of our true nature for a peaceful state of the mind or body simply postpones the realization of the peace that is inherent in the simple knowing of our own being as it truly is.

Having said that, when we have accessed the peace that is ever-present in our self under all circumstances, the body, mind and world are profoundly affected and, in time, become increasingly permeated by it. They begin to shine with the peace of our true nature.

[Rupert Spira, *Presence: The Art of Peace and Happiness, Our Essential Being is Peace Itself*]

That is not to say that we should 'like' everything and everyone. It is natural for our body-minds to have preferences. For example, our bodies enjoy some foods more than others, and our minds enjoy some activities more than others or being with some people rather than others. But that is very different from the resistance that comes from a feeling of separation. Here is part of a longer dialogue that was included in our earlier paper: *20181004 Resistance*.

A certain segment of our seeking and resistance comes from the sense of separation. That's the important thing to find out when you feel resistance. Is this a natural resistance of the body, is it a natural resistance of my Western conditioning, or is it a conditioning that comes specifically from a feeling of separation? That's the only resistance that needs to be investigated. You don't need to investigate the fact that your body likes certain temperatures, you don't need to investigate that your mind prefers Western harmony to Chinese harmony, if indeed it does. The

resistance that needs investigating is the resistance that comes from the sense of separation. And what is to be investigated then: the separate self that you imagine yourself to be.

Q: So if I get to know someone and I feel 'I don't like this person', what would be the appropriate approach then? ...

RS: Stop seeing them and go onto another ... But if you find yourself in a situation, for instance, where you have to spend time with that person every day – say they work in the same studio or office as you – then it is necessary to explore the sense of separation. But if you don't need to, no, just move away. In other words, allow the natural conditioning of the body and the mind to draw you towards certain people, certain places, certain activities.

[Rupert Spira, 24/11/2016: *Separation is an illusion*]

In summary, this is Rupert's description of the effects of clear seeing on our lives:

The few core beliefs and preconceived ideas that we hold about the nature of ourself and the world are exposed in this disinterested investigation. We do not do anything to these beliefs. We are not trying to destroy them but rather to expose them. ...

Any feelings or patterns of behaviour that were dependent on the belief that has been exposed will, in due time, naturally dissolve, simply because they are no longer nourished by the belief. They die of neglect. ...

This dissolution of beliefs and feelings has a profound effect on our lives, our ideas, our relationships, our bodies, our work, the world, in fact on everything.

However, the purpose of this investigation and exploration is not to change anything. It is simply the clear seeing of what is, and clear seeing is the shrine on which Being shines.

[Rupert Spira, *The Transparency of Things*, ch 2]

Contemplation

It is this clear seeing that truly dissolves the apparently separate 'I.' It is not that something that really exists is dissolved, but rather than it is seen to be utterly non-existent. The belief in its real existence is dissolved by seeing that it is non-existent.

[Rupert Spira]