

Why does Consciousness Allow Suffering?

At some point almost all of us ask questions such as: Why is there so much suffering in the world? If infinite consciousness is love itself, how can it allow suffering to manifest? Why are there all these floods and bush fires that are responsible for so much death and devastation? If there is only one being, and that being is universal love, how can unkindness and cruelty occur? These are all versions of the perennial question: Why does God allow suffering? They are important questions because they point to a need for a deeper understanding about the nature of consciousness. Here is one way of answering those questions:

Infinite consciousness only ever knows itself. It is that infinite consciousness that rises as the finite mind by identifying itself with a temporary body that seems to know something other than itself. But that is an illusion. There is no finite consciousness. There is no mind. There is no real mind. The finite mind is made out of infinite consciousness. Another way of saying that is that the finite mind is only the finite mind from the illusory point of view of a finite mind. That is why I say that the finite mind gives birth to itself. We cannot blame infinite consciousness for giving birth to duality. Consciousness is innocent. God is not responsible for the suffering of the world – it's another way of saying it. That is why this image of a mother giving birth to herself, it's the finite mind that gives birth to the finite mind within its own imagination. It is not consciousness's fault.

[Rupert Spira, 11th November 2013 [Why Does God Allow Suffering?](#)]

Francis Lucille exposes the egoic nature of the desire for a perfect universe in which there are never any natural disasters:

We want to play God, to tell God what to do and how to make the perfect universe. We would like no mosquitoes, no death, no flu, no cancer, no autumn, no seasons, and no bugs. We want everything in the right place. By thinking in this way, we are forgetting the perfection that is evident from moment to moment. We are living in the past, in the future, in thinking. The now is always free from suffering, problems, and separation. It is always free from ego. In the now there is no ego. The ego cannot live in the now.

If we think there is a problem with the world, we have a problem! We are not the problem, we are freedom. The world appears in accordance with our views. It is for this reason that keeping our mind on the problem only perpetuates it. You have to de-hypnotize yourself from the problem, which is the object, and to turn towards the Self. The Self will deal with the problem in an appropriate way. Surrender to the Self.

Don't allow yourself to think in terms of problems. Think in terms of solutions if you want, or in terms of the universal solution, which is the Self. Solution means to dissolve. Everything gets dissolved in the Self. You didn't come here to have your ideas about suffering reinforced. You came here to hear a different tune, a shocking tune!

[Francis Lucille, *The Perfume of Silence*, There is no time at all times]

For many of us, it is the unloving behaviour and cruelty that we see being perpetrated throughout the world that is hardest to accept. We wonder how people can behave in that way towards other human beings and animals. How can we say that such behaviour arises out of pure consciousness, which is inherently loving? Here is an explanation from Rupert using the analogy of a dream:

In this analogy, your mind represents infinite consciousness. So imagine that your mind is not a limited mind. Imagine that your mind is infinite consciousness, in the sense that you are capable of having any dream. All dreams possible to be dreamed could be dreamt by each of us tonight. We don't know what we are going to dream. So tonight, most of us will have a dream. In this dream that we dream tonight, we will dream a new world. It won't be the world that we are familiar with, the streets of Amsterdam. It could be a different realm; it could be any kind of a dream. However, in order to experience that new dreamed world, we will have to enter into our own dream and view that dream from the perspective of somebody in the dream. In other words, when we dream at night, we forget we are dreaming unless we are lucid dreaming. The mind forgets that it is comfortably asleep in Amsterdam. It dreams a whole new world within itself. But in order to experience that world, it has to contract into a person in that world. Our mind contracts and it enters into its own imagination as a separate subject of experience, from whose point of view, it is able to know the new dreamed world. So that is a model.

Go back now to infinite consciousness. Infinite consciousness contains everything within it, just as our minds, relatively speaking, contain all dreams within them, in potential. But in order to experience this world, infinite consciousness has to contract, it has to enter its own imagination. It dreams the world within itself, but in order to experience that world it has to forget itself. It has to overlook itself. ... Each of our minds are like dreams in the mind of consciousness, or in God's mind, from whose point of view, infinite consciousness is able to view its own potential as the world. But there is a price to pay. Just as each of our minds at night has to forget that it is dreaming, and believe that it is a separate individual in the dreamed world, so infinite consciousness has to forget or overlook the knowing of its own infinite being, and seem to become a separate individual. Now that separate individual feels cut off from and separate from everyone and everything else. That's just how most people feel. And because of that feeling of being cut off, the separate self feels that it is a fragment and vulnerable. ...

So one movement of the separate self is always to acquire, to seek fulfilment through an object, a substance, a relationship. That's one movement that is inherent in the separate self. And the other movement in order to overcome the feeling of vulnerability, is to protect itself. 'I don't like you', resistance. These are the two modes of the separate self – seeking and resisting – although all the separate self is seeking is to be divested of its sense of separation and to go back to its original wholeness. But it doesn't know that because it feels separate, so it tries to complete itself through seeking and protect itself through resisting. So from the point of view of the separate self, the separate self will do things to others that it would not do to itself, because it has forgotten that it is one with the other. So the separate self is able to act in ways that take advantage of other people, that are unkind to other people, that are cruel to other people, as long as those activities make it feel better about itself.

So that's why it is possible for there to be unjust, unkind, unloving behaviour. And yet the fact that there is this behaviour doesn't contradict the fact that everyone and everything, ultimately is made out of a single infinite, indivisible and loving consciousness. ... Once infinite consciousness has forgotten itself and seemed to have become a separate individual, that separate individual is capable of all possible extremes in order to fulfil itself. That is why our first duty in life, above all other duties, is to realise the non-separate nature of our being with all others and things, and to live the implications of that understanding.

[Rupert Spira, 8th September 2017: [Why Does Consciousness Allow Violence Towards Children?](#)]

When we understand this, further questions arise: Are we responsible for our actions? Was Hitler responsible for his actions?

Q: If someone has antisocial behaviour or criminal behaviour or addictive behaviour, that's just what's happening? ...

RS: Yes. There's no entity that is responsible for that behaviour. That behaviour is a response that has been conditioned – the thoughts and feelings that lead to that behaviour are just a result of that person's conditioning, plus whatever it is that conditions any single action. But there's no *individual* responsible.

Q: You mean there's no responsibility?

RS: There's no personal responsibility. And strangely, understanding this doesn't make us behave in irresponsible ways. It's when we feel there *is* personal responsibility that we find ourselves behaving in irresponsible ways. We feel 'I am a separate person'. It is that feeling that gives rise to irresponsible behaviour. Let's take an extreme. What enabled Hitler to behave like he did? What was the founding thought behind his behaviour? A deep sense of being a separate self. Without that feeling, it would have been impossible for him to think, feel, act and relate like he did. So it's the apparent presence of the separate self that makes us behave in irresponsible ways. When that sense of separation goes, we don't find ourselves going around trashing people and behaving in unkind, ugly, irresponsible ways. No, our behaviour is in line with the totality and serves the totality.

[Rupert Spira, 22nd November 2012: [There is no Personal Responsibility](#)]

This raises the question of whether we should take action when we see unkind or criminal behaviour or whether we should just accept everything that arises in consciousness. Here is Francis Lucille's response:

If consciousness doesn't intervene and doesn't have preferences, why should we put Hitler in prison if he reappeared?

Consciousness welcomes the totality of the situation. By "the totality of the situation" we mean all the elements that comprise the given situation, including your own reactions. Out of this impartial welcoming, in response to the circumstances, understanding arises that may or may not lead to action. Action that flows from the totality of the situation is right action and will always be beneficial even if, in the short term, it may not appear to be effective. Action that comes from a fragment of the totality, from a separate entity, will subtly perpetuate the suffering it is trying to relieve, even if it appears beneficial in the short term, because it is itself the root cause of that suffering.

The body is involved in the world and although the witness doesn't participate in action, the body does. Even non-action is a form of action. Cowardice, for instance, is a form of action. That is the lesson that Krishna teaches Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. As the Self we are the witness, but as the body, we are already involved. So just do your dharma, do what's right, do what flows from the circumstances.

[Francis Lucille, *The Perfume of Silence*: There is no 'there']

This gives an entirely different view of crime, justice and punishment. It was Arjuna's duty to go out and fight a war, and kill his relatives, friends and teachers. It was impersonal action in response to a situation that required that action.

Francis later explains how instead of looking to assign blame, we can regard conflict and war as natural disasters, in the same way as illnesses such as cancer and the diseases caused by coronaviruses are natural disasters:

Cancer can be accepted as a natural part of life. Are you saying that the conflict and violence that mankind perpetrates is natural as well?

Yes. It is also a natural disaster that human beings lack compassion. We have to go to the root of this specific natural disaster and ask, "Why?"

It is because most people feel that they are separate entities. At the root of war, at the root of lack of compassion, there is the ego, the notion that I am a separate, personal entity. How am I going to liberate everybody from their ego? Maybe that is not my mission. It is ambitious and pretentious.

All we can do is work on ourselves. We can start with our own sense of being separate, with our own judgment, with our own feeling that things should be different, with our own refusal of the present situation, with our own refusal of others. As a person, we are not going to save the world and perhaps the world doesn't need to be saved. All we can do as a person is to do our best. To do our best, we start by liberating ourselves from our own ignorance. We stop stirring up more disharmony and conflict in the world by freeing ourselves from inner conflict, which comes from fragmentation. In this process we discover our eternity, our immortality. That will fill us up to the brim with happiness, and this will overflow and start resonating in others around us, without our doing anything to cause it. That is the only way to be happy and to do our best in the world as we know it. I am not suggesting that if we have a job in the world that involved helping others, we shouldn't do it. Of course we should. However, it is the understanding that is important, because it is the understanding that is truly implemented in any activity.

[Francis Lucille, *The Perfume of Silence: Love in Search of Itself*]

Finally, it is natural to ask how we can best help the world. This is Francis's advice:

We have to be practical: if there is something that we can do about the situation then we will do it. But we have to bear in mind that our mission is not to save the world. The world is big and we are small and frail human beings. Our mission is to discover genuine happiness and then, when we have discovered it, allow it to overflow and share itself, in an entirely natural fashion, with the rest of the world.

From the perspective of higher reasoning, my feeling is that the ones who have given most to the world were the great sages and the great artists, rather than those who felt that they had a mission to save the world. There were people who were not widely known in their lifetimes who nonetheless exerted a great influence for good. There were many more whose names are not found in the historical record. Although they have been forgotten, the intelligence and love that they released into the world is still reaching us.

Our true gift to the world is to be a source of love and clarity, and to recognize that to be this source, one has to know oneself intimately. This doesn't seem to be an efficient approach, but it's actually the most efficient.

[Francis Lucille, *Truth, Love, Beauty: Deathless*]

Contemplation

Have the courage and the clarity to see that God neither cares nor even knows about suffering. Suffering is resistance, and God—eternal, infinite Awareness—like empty space, knows no resistance, and therefore cannot know suffering. [Rupert Spira]