

Post-enlightenment Sadhana

Rupert often quotes Francis as describing the yoga meditations to be ‘post-enlightenment sadhana’. In other words, the practices that we engage in after the initial recognition of our true nature. Rupert usually uses that term to refer to his yoga meditations and to our activities and relationships in the world. But is Francis referring to something even broader than that? Is there more investigation that needs to be done on the inward-facing path to deepen our understanding? I explored this topic with Francis on one of his recent satsangs:

JB: I'd like to know what you mean by the term 'post-enlightenment sadhana'? I've not heard you use that term, but Rupert quotes you as using it, mostly in connection with yoga meditations. But is it broader than that? And what does it really encompass?

FL: It encompasses everything that goes on after having a first glimpse of our true nature. Because ultimately, everything that goes on both in the world and within ourselves, because our body is part of the world, our mind is part of the totality, is the movement of the universe if you will, or the movement of the reality. So everything that we apparently do out of our own volition, is in fact, willed by the universe. However, it can be willed directly by the universe, or it can be willed indirectly by ignorance, whenever we believe to be a separate individual.

However, after having had a first glimpse of our true nature, everything which is undertaken, having as a goal to realign the body-mind to bring it into compliance with the universality of consciousness and the oneness of reality, is not an action from an individual entity. All this undertaking is apparently accomplished through a body-mind apparatus, and it is this body-mind apparatus realigning itself with the truth of awareness, with its true nature. Just as when the body ceases to be subjected to a state of permanent fear and desire, the consequences in the state of this body from this quasi-permanent state of fear and desire, all these left-overs from the state of fear and desire when the root cause of the fear and desire is removed, all these left-overs dissolve. Because the body has the organic memory, if you will, of its natural state.

In the same way, a parallel process takes place in the mind. All the belief systems that have been acquired under the reign of ignorance, that were consistent with ignorance, once ignorance has been evinced to be questioned under the light of awareness, all of these belief systems, all of a sudden, have lost their foundation. They have been revealed as being irrational, meaning not based on facts. And as a result, these belief systems get destroyed. So once a glimpse of truth has taken place, there is a natural process that goes on that removes the residues of ignorance on these two levels – mind and body.

This removal, this dissolution of the left overs of ignorance, to an outside observer, may – to an ignorant outside observer – may be misinterpreted as a person, a yogin or a truth-seeker doing a sadhana. But from the vantage-point of the truth-seeker, it is only a natural process, because there is nobody doing the yoga. There is nobody pondering the truth, reflecting upon the truth, using the logical apparatus of the mind to fact-check the residues of ignorance on the conceptual level. That is the *sadhana* – the sadhana after the glimpse. The beauty of it is that there is nobody doing the sadhana. It's a sadhana without a '*sadhaneur*', if you will. And that is clear from the vantage-point of the so-called '*sadhaneur*', because all of that is based at least upon the presumption of the universality of awareness. Whereas before, what you call the progressive path is based upon the opposite tenet, that there is a separate entity there, trying to reach enlightenment. Enlightenment is really the experiential discovery of the non-existence of such a separate entity.

JB: So is it really a kind of natural response to a curiosity that arises in the mind, and then you follow that curiosity and you do the sort of experiments that you suggest, or other things that you think of for yourself? Is it like that?

FL: Yes. There are two kinds of curiosity. I would say 'interest'. Impersonal interest, because the engine of impersonal interest is in fact love. And there is a joyful quality to it. Whereas personal interest comes out of fear, you know 'I'm interested in this because I want that', or 'I don't want this'. Then that comes from misery: 'if I don't get what I want, I'm going to remain miserable'.

JB: I meant the sort of interest which is more like an interest in science or an interest in music ...

FL: Exactly. That's beautiful. Exactly. So that's really the engine of this type of sadhana. But the distinction I made – there's this beautiful expression, from a German Zen teacher Graf Dürckheim, and he had this expression 'the path, and the path to the path'. As long as we believe to be a separate entity we are on the path to the path. 'The path' is whatever is undertaken based on the assumption that awareness is universal and therefore that we are not a separate entity. And that's what I call the post-enlightenment sadhana.

Now something else has to be said. It's not like we are first on the path to the path, then we enter the path, and we remain on the path. No. Because there are relapses. So we are on the path to the path. At some point we enter the path. We have a glimpse of our true nature. As a result, we are now open to the possibility that awareness is not personal. That awareness is the experience of a universal reality, and that there is only one reality, which we experience in its purity as awareness. And that's where the change is. From that moment we are moving along the path. But at some point, we may be taken back, and have a relapse into ignorance. And then we will be believing again to be a separate entity. However, the main difference is that once the first glimpse has taken place, we cannot stay for too long on the path to the path. Pretty soon, we are called back to the path. Pretty soon, the glimpse reminds itself to us, and again we find ourselves on the path. Then just as a baby learns how to walk, in the beginning falls, and then stands up again and falls and stands up again, in the same way we fall out of the path, then we go back to the path, we fall out of it, we go back to it. But pretty soon we stay on the path. And as we stay on the path, already we experience the peace in the background and the perfume of our true nature. And this perfume becomes more and more fragrant as the old left-overs of ignorance that were stored in the body and in the mind dissolve during this post-enlightenment sadhana.

JB: Does there come a point when we don't fall off the path?

FL: Oh yes. And there is a moment when, if we were asked: 'is awareness universal or separate? Is this reality, the reality that is hearing these words, universal or separate?' Every time we were asked this question, we would look deeply within, the answer would be – without any hesitation – yes, it is universal. It doesn't mean that at that moment we, for one second, or for longer, we don't have the ability to again play the game of being this human body-mind. Especially if we need to interact with others, for the sake of the argument, we can play this game, but a substantial change has occurred because whenever we stop and ask ourselves about the deepest truth, the deepest truth comes back without any hesitation in its full clarity. And this stage can be reached pretty soon – quite early on in the path, no matter whether we still off-road from time to time. Because we are not going to off-road for long.

JB: So does that mean there is no post-enlightenment sadhana after that point?

FL: No. On the contrary, the post-enlightenment sadhana – there is no end to it. Because the only thing that changes if you are walking on the post-enlightenment path – it seems in the beginning perhaps that misery is your travelling companion, and then down the road, you look sideways, and misery is no longer travelling with you. And you didn't notice when it left. At some point between now and then, it parted company. That's all that happens. Does the path stop there? No. Life goes on. As long as this body-mind instrument which has now become an instrument of celebration, as long as this instrument receives some breath, to make some music out of it – that will be the case.

[Francis Lucille, 25th August 2020 – from my own recording]

What was particularly interesting about this dialogue, is that Francis puts equal emphasis on removing the residues of ignorance on both the level of the mind and the level of the body. On the level of the mind, it is about going into the teaching more deeply and gaining more clarity. As Francis explained in response to a question about preferring idealism over realism:

Even after having had many glimpses of truth, there is a purification process that takes place and this purification process takes place on both levels. On the conceptual level, it is important to achieve more and more clarity. For instance, if one still errs on the side of realism or errs on the side of idealism, there is still a lack of clarity there. And this lack of clarity will then generate doubts about the truth, and rightfully so, because the truth wants to shine in its totality. So as long as there is a lack of clarity there is going to be a dynamism towards abolishing this lack of clarity. So that's why, as long as there is a preference either for realism or idealism, there is an imbalance, there is a lack of clarity and that has to be investigated and completely eliminated.

[Francis Lucille, 5th September 2020 *Before You Save The World*]

On the level of the body, it is more about feeling the body as it truly is. As Francis says, there is a natural process that goes on in the body to remove those residues of ignorance, and the role of the yoga meditations is to help in this process. Here is Rupert's description:

The imaginary separate self is made of the belief that our essential nature of pure Awareness shares the destiny and the limits of the mind and body, and this belief has its counterpart in the body, where it is substantiated as 'me' feelings.

In fact, the feeling of being a separate self is by far the larger part of the sense of separation. Many of us may have a clear intellectual understanding of the non-dual perspective: that is, we may know from genuine experience that what we are essentially is the open, empty, unlimited space of Awareness, and yet still feel that we walked into a room and are sitting on a chair.

While it is perfectly obvious to us that Awareness didn't walk into a room and is not sitting on a chair, nevertheless, we still feel that we are located in and as a temporary, limited body. In other words, there is a discrepancy between what we understand and what we feel. ...

This feeling of density, solidity and locality substantiates and validates the belief in being a separate self. Thus, this belief and feeling mutually support one another and, in doing so, are responsible for the complexity and tenacity of the apparently temporary, limited self around whom most of our lives revolve.

In these yoga meditations, we explore the body as it is really experienced, and in doing so, liberate it from the tyranny of a non-existent, separate self. We allow the body to gradually return to its natural, organic state of openness, transparency and sensitivity. We learn to feel and move the body in a way that is consistent with our understanding.

The well-defined borders or contours that seem to separate the body from others and the environment are seen and experienced to be non-existent. To begin with, we feel that the body is made of permeable space, in direct contact with everyone and everything, no longer sealed up in a clearly defined, impervious container. The borders between our self and the object, other or world dissolve, until we can no longer locate ourselves as someone, somewhere.

In time, we drop the space-like aspect as our Self: we are no longer the open, empty space of Awareness, but rather the dimensionless presence of pure Knowing. We know and feel our Self as the light of pure, dimensionless Knowing, which not only intimately pervades the entirety of our experience, but is its only substance and reality.

[Rupert Spira: [Introduction to Yoga Meditations](#)]

Francis explained in more detail how these yoga meditations work, in a response to a question I asked him about the meaning of Jean Klein's term 'energy body', which is also sometimes called the 'subtle body':

FL: It's very important not to make of the energy body something mysterious that reveals itself only under very specific circumstances – during meditation, doing yoga, or in the presence of your teacher. That's not what the energy body is really. The energy body is something very simple. Experientially, because it exists only as an experience, the energy body is nothing other than our bodily sensations. So that's simple. Very ordinary. You are hungry – that's your energy body. You have hurt your knee – that's the energy body. You are thirsty – that's the energy body. You are tired – that's the energy body. So I'm sorry to demystify it that way. So the energy body is the perceptions of your body, the bodily sensations.

Now let me also tell you what the physical body is as an experience. As an experience, the physical body is the body we perceive through our external senses. So basically, if I see my hand, this sight of my hand, this image is an experience of my physical body. Same thing if I see it in the mirror. If I touch my body with my hand, what is felt by my hand is my knee, and what is felt by my knee is my hand. These tactile sensations are the experience of my physical body. Now there is a correlation, usually, between physical body and body of energy. For instance, if I hit my knee, then I might feel a slight pain or discomfort as a result of that and this pain or discomfort is part of the body of energy.

And we have in the mind an image of our physical body, and our physical body is the image of our body in relation to the world that surrounds it. As a young child, as an infant, we have learned to make a distinction between what is this physical body and what is not this physical body. We were trying to reach for a plastic toy in our traveller, and then we were trying to reach for the moon – and the moon is not a good plastic toy and we realise it is beyond our reach. So in this way we acquire this notion of distance, objects. And also when we navigate, if we bump into solid objects, it hurts. So we have an image of our physical body, a pattern in the mind. And when we think of ourselves in ignorance, we think of ourselves as this physical body.

As a result, the subtle body which we also associate with 'I', has been restricted to the confines of the physical body. Because we identify with the physical body, we are keeping the bodily sensation within this envelope. So the envelope is a good thing for the safety of the physical body – how to navigate in the world. But there is no real need to localise the bodily sensations, meaning the body of energy, within the confines of the physical body. This limitation of the body of energy, or subtle body, within the confines of the physical body, is the by-product of

identifying awareness with the physical body. If we don't identify awareness with the physical body, the bodily sensations are free to evolve in a limitless space.

JB: This now makes sense to me, of the yoga meditations.

FL: So the goal of the yoga is to liberate precisely the bodily sensations from the prison of the physical body, and to allow these bodily sensations to be free-floating in the space, in limitless space. Because that's true to our experience – they appear in the limitless space of awareness. And that is important because if it is true that awareness is universal, then our real body is the universe. So our real physical body – what we perceive through the senses – is our human body which we perceive through the senses plus the rest of the universe which we also perceive through the senses. So our real physical body is the universe. Our real body of energy is free-floating in this space, and is also limitless.

So I go back to what happens when you begin this process of liberation of the body of energy from its usual prison in which it has been confined during years of ignorance, of unawareness. There are states in which the body feels unusual because it is expanded. It feels beyond the usual parameters. And then there is this discovery of this possibility, and we call this experience the body of energy. And we attach a mystical or mysterious label to it. But that's just a transitional state. Because eventually, everything goes back to normal. It's just that something has disappeared in the process, which is this sense of separation between the body and the world. So mystical states or *samadhi* states during which the subtle body or body of energy seems to expand to the world are only part of the transition.

[Francis Lucille, 5th September 2020, *Before You Save the World*]

Contemplation

Our real body includes the mind and the entire universe. This is the body we have always had and the one in which all bodies, gross and subtle, come into existence.

[Francis Lucille]