

Residues of Ignorance

Rupert has often spoken about the residues of ego or ignorance that remain buried in the body after the recognition of our true nature. Following my discussion with Francis on post-enlightenment sadhana (a transcript of which is in the previous paper), I wanted to explore more deeply the mechanisms whereby these residues get dissolved:

JB: I have a question about the residues of ignorance that are stored in the body as a result of childhood experiences and later experiences. I want to understand more clearly about the processes whereby these get dissolved.

FL: So we are addressing here these residues of ignorance that are related to bodily sensations. What we have to be clear about is what is meant by 'dissolution'. It's not the dissolution of the sensation per se. It's the dissolution of the belief that the sensation is 'me'. Now, the corresponding sensation, as a result of this dissolution, may disappear, may change, or may remain as it was. We have to be very clear about that point, otherwise we are chasing the wrong prey, if you will. We are not trying to dissolve a sensation. We are not even trying to change a sensation. But we are trying to realise that we are not a sensation.

Of course, that can be understood easily, intellectually, right? Intellectually you understand 'I am not a sensation; I am the awareness of the sensation' or 'I am the reality which is aware of the sensation'. Yes. That's true. And these are true concepts and they correspond to an understanding which is through thought. But there is another form of understanding which is through bodily sensations. A little bit as if you learn to play a sport, or musical instrument, in one second you can get the correct movement or the correct position, and see how this correct movement or correct position is more functional and enhances your performance. That is also a form of understanding but it is not an understanding that goes through concepts. Whereas concepts can prepare it, but ultimately, it's a feeling-understanding.

So this understanding that I'm not the bodily sensation has to be brought from this conceptual level, which is important, but also down to the sensation level. But ultimately, we are not trying to get rid of or to change bodily sensations or feelings, but we are trying to 'unmask' feelings. When we unmask them, they reveal their true nature, which is bodily sensations. At that moment, our identification with them disappears. And then the sensation remains, at least for a while. And then over time, the body in its own wisdom will get rid of it or will change it, or not change it. But no matter what happens, it's irrelevant. It will be perfect, no matter what.

JB: So I think I've made a mistake in the past in thinking that in watching the body, and noticing any slight tension for which there doesn't seem to be a functional physical reason (e.g. to do with the activity that my body is engaged in at the time), thinking that there's something wrong with that.

FL: Well there might be. If I think 'I' and if I try to find where this 'I' is in the body, what does that mean – 'I' on the bodily level? You may find that candidates will show up. It may be the solar plexus, it may be the forehead, in the throat ... It will rarely be the hands or the feet, for instance, that will show up as candidates for being 'me'. ...

The point is that when you think 'me' and you look in the direction of bodily sensations, it doesn't mean that nothing comes up. It suffices that whatever comes up is clearly identified as a bodily sensation and not you. ...

The corollary of that is that when that has been fully explored, when you look at an external object, it appears as being your body. There is no distinction, there is a seamless continuity between your physical body and the universe in which it is embedded. So then, the moment you feel that, there is nothing to do. Why would you do anything? ...

Also I wouldn't waste my time trying to find a perfect relaxed state of the body. Because the problem is when we do that we are kind of playing whack-a-mole with the sensation because the moment we focus on a contraction, we create a person, we create a contraction somewhere else, that tries to eliminate it. Just as more thinking cannot eliminate a thought. And in the same way, on the physical level, more tension cannot eliminate the tension.

JB: Yes, I had come to the conclusion – and maybe you're confirming that – that to search for that perfectly relaxed and functional state of the body is really servicing a sense of lack, which is ludicrous.

FL: Yes, and between you and me, it's not real fun. I mean it's not a smart way to spend your time. But on the other hand, if it is what you want to be doing at that moment, then yes, be my guest. What is important is that at every moment, we do what we really want to be doing, because that's the way to honour our true nature. Even if what we want to be doing seems to be ludicrous or stupid or useless. The most important things in life are useless. Music is useless, art is useless, beauty is useless, humour is useless. You see what I mean – all of that is useless. Because what is 'useful' is everything that is to do with this body – its perpetuation, its living longer. If you live up to 100 years or 120 years of age, and you get bored during this 120 years, what's the point?

JB: Yes it's about enjoying ourselves, enjoying life.

FL: Yes

[Francis Lucille: 15th September 2020 *Everybody Is Innocent*]

His point about unmasking feelings to reveal their true nature as a bodily sensation is important. What does it really mean when we say that somebody 'hurt my feelings'? Only that their action provoked a mild bodily sensation! Here is a further explanation from an earlier satsang:

FL: You see in my world, there are no feelings. There are only bodily sensations and thoughts. ... I thought when I was younger that there were feelings. But after having observed my experience, I discovered there are no feelings. There are only bodily sensations and thoughts and they are intertwined. ...

[Francis Lucille 25th July 2020 *Beauty is in the Artist*]

So when we experience an 'unpleasant feeling', the first step is to investigate it clearly and see that it is just a bodily sensation. If the sensation seems to have a story attached to it, then we need to look into that story. Is there a rational element to it? For example, we may feel scared of catching Covid-19. That would be entirely rational. It is rational and sensible to try to protect the body as best we can. There will be sensible precautions we can take. Once we have taken all the precautions that we can and which we feel are sensible in our individual circumstances, we know there is nothing more that we can do, so we can relax and fully enjoy life. We have no more worries. But if we find that's not possible, then we need to look more deeply into the story. Is the real, underlying fear a fear of death? If so, this can only be resolved through self-enquiry – by seeing and feeling that the 'I' that I am is not limited in time or space. If we have already had a clear glimpse of that, we will be able to go back to that understanding. If we haven't, then there is more investigation to be done.

If there is no story associated with the sensation, then nothing more needs to be done.

Here is Francis's description of that process:

FL: It's a change of status. It's about downgrading from the status of feeling to the status of bodily sensation. Now the moment you have established that it is a bodily sensation, either this bodily sensation tells you a story, for instance 'I am afraid because I think that I am going to lose my money because I've made a wrong move in the business'. Then you have to go with the flow. In other words, to move from the feeling of fear, the sensation of fear, to the concept, the intellectual aspect of your problem which is 'the business'. But if all there is to it is this bodily sensation, then don't focus on it. The job is done. You have downgraded the feeling to the status of bodily sensation. You have established that it is a bodily sensation and you have established that this bodily sensation has nothing to tell you. It is done in a few seconds. So often the misunderstanding is that people will stay with that for hours hoping that it is going to change. Then in this process, they focus onto it – this bodily sensation– and of course amplify it.

Q: I shouldn't feel fear. I want intellectually to not feel fear, so I try not to react to those thoughts.

FL: You have a sensation of fear, right? And either this sensation of fear is triggered by a thought. In other words, you can rationalise this fear. Or it just pure fear. No reason for it. Now if it is pure fear, no reason for it, you can take it completely, meaning you welcome it, but you don't have to welcome it for hours. If it is pure, irrational fear, raw fear, this fear is telling you 'I'm going to eat you alive, I'm going to kill you if you keep observing me, if you keep welcoming me'. Then the only thing you should do is to say 'yes'. You offer yourself to this fear, because it's purely irrational. It's not going to kill you, but it's going to exhaust and consume all the energy. Because all it was, it was energy there that needed to dissipate.

If the fear is simply a reaction of your body to thoughts you have, like fear of illness or fear of not having enough money or fear like that, then you have to move to the rational aspect of your fear and relate it clearly to the belief you have to be a separate consciousness. It is for you to make the determination.

But in both cases you don't spend the night with the feeling. You just look at it and it tells you whatever it has to tell you. You don't want to get rid of it – that's the most important point. ... You don't want to get rid of the feeling. You want to allow the feeling of fear to tell the rest of the story.

Of course the feeling is a bodily sensation. But this bodily sensation either stands on its own – meaning irrational fear – or then it has a reason – rational fear. Then you have to move up to the alleged reason for the fear and connect it to your belief to be a separate awareness, a separate entity.

[Francis Lucille 25th July 2020 Beauty is in the Artist]

In this passage from *The Transparency of Things*, Rupert describes the same approach in relation to an irrational sense of lack – a feeling that something is missing, without being able to point directly to what it is that is missing. It is through the clear seeing that this 'feeling of lack' is nothing more than just a sensation, that it ceases to veil happiness.

The desire to experience Consciousness as an object comes from the belief that Consciousness is not already present. This belief is fuelled and substantiated by a deep sense of lack at the level of the body, the feeling, 'I want something. I need something.' ...

We simply allow the feeling of lack to be fully present. We do not add anything to it. That is easy because we, Consciousness, are already the allowing or welcoming of all things.

We simply let Consciousness take care of everything.

The clear seeing of these feelings reveals that they are in fact no more than neutral bodily sensations with no inherent power to generate thinking, desiring or fearing, let alone a sense of lack or separation.

This downgrading of feelings to bodily sensations in our understanding is accomplished effortlessly through clear seeing.

We do not *do* anything to the feelings. In fact, we *stop* doing something to them. We stop investing them with the power to veil Reality. We stop investing them with the power to generate unhappiness and its attendant seeking.

As soon as we stop superimposing feelings onto bodily sensations, they cease to be an abode of ignorance and confusion, and are revealed instead as a beautiful display of creative energies dancing in the emptiness of Presence, revealing its fullness moment by moment.

[Rupert Spira, *The Transparency of Things*: Knowingness is the Substance of All Things]

Contemplation

The biggest obstacle on the path is to think that the natural state is necessarily a pleasurable one. In such a case, every state that is deemed non-pleasurable is immediately rejected and we appear to fall from our enlightened state. To surrender the world means that nothing pleasurable attracts us and we feel no repulsion for anything that is unpleasant.

[Francis Lucille, *the Perfume of Silence*]