

Experiments

When Francis was asked how we can verify for ourselves that consciousness is universal, in other words, that the reality of 'me' is the same as the reality of the universe, he described two approaches: the path of the mathematician and the path of the physicist. Last year, we took a detailed look at the path of the mathematician in the paper *20200819 There is Only One Reality*. This time we are focusing on the path of the physicist. First, here is an explanation of these two paths:

FL: There are two paths open to you – I call them the path of the mathematician and the path of the physicist. The path of the mathematician or philosopher, is to ponder with all the might of your intellect, this notion of plurality, to explore the possibility of a plurality of realities. Is it possible that there would be many realities, one of which would be 'me', as 'a consciousness'. But there would be many others. ... So that's the first path. That's the path that through the sheer power of the intellect we reach an area of universal ideas and beyond that, we reach the Absolute.

The other path, the path of the physicist, is the experimental path which I often describe, which is to check it out, asking the question through our various experimentations: 'Is consciousness universal?' or 'is the reality which perceives, the same as the reality that is perceived?'. If that's the case there should be phenomenal events that could enable me to find out.

Q: So both these paths are taking you to an understanding. It's not immediately experiential.

FL: The outcome of the experiment may be delayed somehow. The phenomenal outcome. Because this experiment has two outcomes. One is phenomenal which is serendipitous events which are happening in the world as a result of our experimentation. But there is another one which is noumenal, which is an increase in the sensation of peace and harmony within, which is immediate. On the other path it's a little bit the same because we go through a succession of concepts that purify themselves and finally lead to an experience of understanding. So already in the conceptual phase, there is a feeling of harmony that we experience, and then with the final release in the moment of understanding.

[Francis Lucille [17 Nov 2019 Temecula Dialogue](#)]

The path of the physicist involves conducting experiments. The approach is similar to that of an experimental scientist: we start with a hypothesis and then test whether there is any evidence that this hypothesis is either true or false by collecting and analysing information from a variety of experimental situations. The main difference is that experiments in science involve only phenomenal experience, whereas the experiments that Francis is suggesting involve both phenomenal and noumenal experience. Here is an example illustrating the difference:

In order to learn or know anything about consciousness, we need to perceive or experience consciousness. We cannot know anything about something we don't perceive at all. There is a distinction to be made between the experience through which we perceive an object, for example a chair, and the experience through which we directly experience consciousness, for example the experience that leads us to answer the question "are you conscious?" with a non-equivocal "yes". The former (experiment 1) tells us everything we may know about the chair, and nothing about consciousness, except perhaps that it exists. The latter (experiment 2) tells us nothing about the chair, but tells us everything we may know about consciousness. Therefore only a type 2 experiment can tell us anything about consciousness, in particular whether it is limited or not. Our mistake is to believe that type 1 experiments can give us some knowledge

about consciousness that type 2 experiments couldn't provide. This is a fallacy.

[Francis Lucille: [Is there evidence of a limited consciousness?](#)]

One of the main sticking points for those on the Direct Path is seeing that consciousness is universal. So how can we design experiments to test this? The first step is to try to find evidence that it is *not* universal. If we come across any arguments or facts that seem convincing, then we need to discuss these with our teacher. At some point, we will be convinced that there is no such evidence. The next step is to start from the hypothesis that awareness *is* universal and experiment with perceiving and interacting with the world as if that is the case. As Francis explains, the evidence we obtain will not fall within the realm of science, which deals only with phenomenal experience. It usually comes in the form of a noumenal experience which is just as obvious and convincing as the experience 'I am aware':

If it is true that consciousness is the reality of the universe, which restores love, intelligence and beauty at the core of it, there must be numerous implications, many of which can be experimentally tested. The outcome of these tests may not be phenomenal in nature, or, if it is, it may be subject to several divergent interpretations or it may not meet the scientific thresholds of repeatability or of verification by independent observers. However, it may have an absolute convincing power similar in that sense to the inner experience of being conscious, an experience which cannot be in any way scientifically validated and has nevertheless absolute convincing strength. Let's take as an example our social interactions. It may make a difference whether, in our relations with a fellow human being:

1. we believe to be a separate consciousness interacting with another equally separate consciousness, or
2. we are truly open to the possibility that we are universal presence interacting with itself, talking to itself, listening to itself, understanding itself.

We may as a result observe different outcomes, both at the phenomenal and at the non-phenomenal levels, depending on the stand we take (1 or 2). We may notice that in order to conduct this type of experiment there is a prerequisite: we must be genuinely convinced of the possibility of the non-dual hypothesis. Many other similar experiments can be designed regarding our connection with the world and its events, with the body and its sensations, the decisions we take, the way we think, feel perceive, etc...In fact every moment of our life can be envisioned as such an experiment. Just as the physicist, by conducting experiments, establishes a dialogue with nature, asking questions and awaiting outcomes (nature's answers), we may open a similar dialogue with absolute Reality itself, provided we are open to that possibility. Reality is waiting.

[Francis Lucille: [I cannot grasp the concept that the mind is contained within me](#)]

The mind automatically applies some model or other to our perceptions in order to make sense of them, and to enable the body to function and interact in the world. As we grew up, our minds were trained to superimpose a materialist model in which each body-mind has its own separate awareness. Once we realise that we have no evidence that this is actually the case, we can conduct experiments to discover what difference it makes in our lives if we adopt the opposite position that awareness is universal. Here are some ideas from Francis:

Q: My question relates to the second stage, after realising that I am awareness. Can you give me an example of the conducting of experiments to increase the probability of recognising that awareness is universal.

FL: It relates to five realms: the way we think, the way we feel our body, the way we perceive the world, the way we interact with human beings and with living beings, and the way we act in the world. ... In fact it corresponds to five types of yoga: the way we act is karma yoga, the way we interact is the yoga of love, the way we think is the yoga of knowledge, the way we feel is hatha yoga, the way we perceive is the yoga of beauty or could be the yoga of the senses.

So the exercise I was just mentioning is about changing the way we perceive the world, and the way we feel our body. These exercises, when I notice that I feel separate, ... to make a deliberate attempt to eliminate this sense of separation, to switch to the non-separate mode. That has to do with how I feel and how I perceive. They are both intertwined because the sense of separation is also the feeling that I am here [*located in the body*]. So it's difficult to dissociate both. But to dissolve the feeling 'I am here' you can use two elements. First, to look at the feeling 'I am here' and know that I am in fact the space in which this feeling appears. And the other way is to project 'I am already there' [*outside of the body*] so I am not just 'here'. These are two aspects.

Now, the way we think: every time you catch yourself red-handed, thinking of yourself as a separate person, clarify that. Ask yourself: what did I mean by 'I'? Did I mean my car? Did I mean my body? Did I mean my consciousness? And then, if I meant my consciousness, the one who perceives, the one who thinks, the one who loves, the one who understands; if I meant my consciousness, I know that I have no evidence that this one is separate. So then I drop the separation concept of it, and I act. Then in the actions – that's another form – to act as if consciousness were universal, was the reality, was the reality of everything – of the mountains, of the events in my life. So that the universe is my friend and not my adversary, my enemy. And finally, how we interact with others, whenever we are interacting, to interact from the assumption that the consciousness there, with whom I am interacting, to whom I am speaking, or to whom I am doing things, is the same as me. That I am talking to myself, doing things to myself.

So when you have the totality of these five categories, five ways of conducting experiments, you will realise that almost every moment in our life is an opportunity to conduct an experiment. And what you have to understand is that the moment we conduct the experiment, we are in the position of wisdom. Because the moment we challenge the separation, we are not separate. So wisdom is not something to be reached in the distant future. Wisdom is something that we can reach here and now in every moment. And then we get established in it, when our life becomes a quasi-constant experimentation in consciousness.

[Francis Lucille: [The Red Sea Is Going To Open](#)]

The tantric techniques that Rupert and Francis teach through their yoga meditations often use visualisation. But as Francis explains, it is important to regard these methods as experiments rather than a practice and to avoid them becoming mechanical and repetitious:

Q: When I offer the sensations to the space in the yoga meditations, since my eyes are closed, I usually visualise what surrounds me, and usually it helps me to offer the sensations, but it's still using a concept as space.

FL: That's not bad. It's part of the progressive path. But you may also go directly to the borderlessness of your experience, for instance. Or the absence of distinction between the space within the body and the space without. Or go directly to the space within which the bodily sensations and the sense perceptions concomitantly appear. So you can use these tools. They are more part of the Direct Path, whereas the ones you are using have an element of progressivity in them. But they are OK because they nevertheless have the power to move you somehow beyond the usual beaten path.

Q: When I use these yoga exercises at night when I'm mentally and physically tired, I don't need to use that visualisation.

Although these visualisations are useful, they have to be abandoned at some point. They have to be abandoned as soon as they become repetitive and mechanical. That's very important, because there's no juice in them. They have to be just used as stepping stones, but don't wait on them, because it becomes repetitious. In other words, don't feel that you are practising. Just feel you are conducting experiments, looking at the outcome, and that's it. And also do that only for as long as you are interested in doing it.

[Francis Lucille: [Offering Sensations To The Space Seems Conceptual](#)]

Contemplation

When you are facing a so-called other, be open to the possibility that the consciousness behind those eyes in front of you, is the same consciousness that you feel inside yourself. It means being constantly open to the possibility that we are like two flowers looking at each other from two different branches of the same tree, so that if we were to go deep enough inside to the trunk, we would realize that we are one.

[Francis Lucille]