

The Game of Ignorance

Why does evil exist? If our true nature is consciousness, and if there is only one undivided consciousness whose characteristics are love, truth, beauty and freedom, how is it possible for evil acts to flow from the activity of this one consciousness? Francis suggests that the cause of any actions that would generally be considered 'evil' is ignorance, the belief in being a separate entity:

FL: Observe that every time, what a reasonable person calls an evil act, the origin of this act can be traced back to the belief in the perpetrator, that he was a separate doer. In other words, an evil action is the action that flows from the belief that we are a separate person. Therefore, what is the ethical action? Any action – total freedom – that doesn't flow from this belief.

[Francis Lucille 20/4/2021 *The Itch Of Ignorance*]

So our initial question now becomes: 'Why does ignorance arise?' One commonly-held but mistaken view is that human beings are divided into two categories – those in ignorance and those in wisdom. The acts of those in wisdom are impersonal and always 'good' and the acts of those in ignorance are personal and sometimes 'bad'. The purpose of spiritual teachings is to remove the ignorance from ignorant people, and bring them to wisdom. In answer to a question on this subject at the 2015 SAND conference, Francis explained why none of that is true:

FL: That there are many individuals – some in ignorance and some who are in knowledge – that itself is a dualistic view. It's not our experience. In fact there is not a multiplicity of beings, there is only one single being playing all these parts.

Everybody at every moment is exercising their freedom. Nobody forces us to believe to be separate entities. And there is no compelling evidence that this consciousness which is hearing my words here, is limited to a single individual which is separate. In other words, that which is our real nature – not our human nature construed to be a body and a mind – our real nature, that which is hearing these words, there's no evidence that this consciousness is a prisoner of this body or of this mind. My teacher once said 'the mind is a cage, but if you look inside you will find no prisoner'.

And after all, if we enjoy playing this game of being separate and limited, who am I to put an end to the play? I would be a party-pooper. Ignorance is great fun. People who are in it complain, but they love complaining. So they have great fun complaining. It's like the story of the guy (who was committed), who was hammering on his head, and he was asked 'why are you doing that?' He replied 'because when I stop it feels good'. That's the story of ignorance.

So you see from the vantage point of wisdom, ignorance is not a problem, and there is not a mission to convert people for their own sake and liberate them from ignorance. That's a mistaken view. Because to see ignorance as a problem is missing the mark. Ignorance is part of nature, like the bad guys are part of the theatrical play or movie. A movie without bad guys is kind of bland. So ignorance is the spice of life.

So you could ask 'what are you doing here and why are you speaking?'. The answer is very simple. I'm here because I was invited to come, and because – being from the South of France – I like to speak!

[\[Question and Answer Session with Francis Lucille from SAND15\]](#)

So ignorance is a game played by consciousness. Most of the time it's not too difficult to see it that way. We can laugh at some of the manifestations, and enjoy the movie. But when the consequences

are more serious and when they involve ourself and our loved ones, we tend to look for someone to blame, a 'guilty party' who needs to be punished.

This is a real test of the depth of our understanding. If we really understand that we are not a limited entity then we will know that thoughts come to us just like the weather and our decisions and actions flow from thoughts. So we have no more control over our decisions and actions than we have over the weather. When we fully feel this to be so, then we don't feel guilty for our past actions and cannot attribute responsibility or guilt to another body-mind. Here is Francis's explanation:

Q: When I see people who are doing something that I think is unethical, there's a resistance because they are choosing to do that and people shouldn't do that.

FL: That's why it's important to see in your own case, do you choose your decisions? Would you agree that your decisions come as a thought: 'let's do this'?

Q: Yes.

FL: Then ask yourself the question 'do I choose my thoughts?'

Q: No, I don't.

FL: So the beauty of that is that we understand that as a separate person, we don't choose our decisions – the good ones, the bad ones – and therefore we are not guilty of our past deeds. We have only been an instrument of God. When we understand that in our own case, we understand that it is the case for everybody else. They are not different from you. So the same understanding that liberates you from guilt, liberates you from judging others.

Q: So the system we have of punishing people and treating people as guilty ...

FL: I'm not saying we shouldn't put some bad guys behind bars in order to protect society. I'm not saying it wouldn't have been better to kill Hitler in 1933. That would have been a good idea. But that's not the point. The point is that whatever happens is God's intent and God's decision. Not our personal decision. If we believe to be a personal decider, we are in trouble. Because here you have a separate person – right here. And the entire purpose of this meeting is to show that it is not the case. Experientially we have no valid reason to believe that way.

Q: So we can put people in jail and all those things?

FL: Yes, nobody's guilty. ... You have to see the beauty of it. It's the real meaning of mercy. To really have mercy, you need to start with yourself, you have mercy for yourself. And then you become merciful to others. Universal mercy is through this understanding that there is only God. So everything is an act of God. There is nothing that is not God.

{Francis Lucille, 1/7/2021 Week 2 Day 1 Summer Retreat.}

When we apply this to extreme cases of evil actions, it can provoke a strong reaction. From a human point of view, it certainly doesn't feel like a game. That resistance is a natural reaction, but it's worth investigating where that reaction is coming from. Does it come from a hidden fear of death? Do we feel that death is 'bad', that it shouldn't happen? Are plane crashes, earthquakes and pandemics 'evil' because they kill hundreds, thousands or millions of people? Here are some further insights from Francis:

Is Hitler an act of God? Is nobody responsible?

Nobody, nobody, nobody! You do not choose your thoughts or your actions as a person and neither does anybody else, because there are no personal entities endowed with free will. The person is chosen; it does not choose. Why not see Hitler as cancer? Cancer has killed many more people than Hitler. We feel that cancer is natural and that Hitler is not. Everything is natural. Everything appears in nature. Hitlers are natural. Although we have these feelings about Hitler, we also know deep inside that the reason that Hitler was the way he was, is because he judged people. From the vantage point of Hitler, there were good people, the Aryans, and bad people, the Jews, the gypsies. Hitler was the way he was because he judged good and bad. The last thing we want to do is become a Hitler ourselves, so don't judge anyone, Hitler included.

So should the likes of Hitler just be left alone to do their thing?

Certainly not. In every situation, we welcome the totality of that situation, including our own responses and reactions. Having looked at the situation with this impartial attitude, we act accordingly, taking everything into consideration. It is the lack of judgment in such a case that enables us to act in the best possible way for all concerned. Judgment comes from an apparent separate entity and is directed towards a similar separate entity. However, discrimination is impersonal and impartial. It comes directly from higher reasoning, from consciousness. It is not mediated through the thought or the feeling "I" as a separate entity. It sees the situation clearly and acts appropriately with efficiency, confidence, and courage.

Peaceful means are employed whenever possible, but varying degrees of force are occasionally necessary. Even apparently violent action may, on very rare occasions, be necessary. However, in this situation, the action taken will come from love of the truth and not from hatred of an individual. Consciousness is spontaneous. It doesn't rely on ready-made solutions. It does whatever is necessary to restore the truth in the situation and is then open for the next moment, without any residue from the past. It is fearless.

[Francis Lucille, *The Perfume of Silence*, ch11]

The recognition that as a separate, limited entity, we don't choose our thoughts, decisions or actions can lead to the belief that there is no escape from ignorance and the consequent suffering. But that is not the case. There are no separate limited entities, and simply understanding and noticing this takes us immediately to freedom. The following is an extract from a wonderfully clear and reassuring dialogue on this subject from a recent satsang:

Q: What happens is there is shift [away from ignorance] for a few seconds, but it goes away.

FL: Well, in fact every time you notice ignorance you are free from ignorance. You have to know that. ... Because the tendency is 'Oh I'm in ignorance, I shouldn't have been in ignorance' and then you recreate immediately the one who is in ignorance. Whereas in fact, nobody is in ignorance.

Ignorance is a choice I make because I choose to believe to be a separate person. The moment I notice that I am making this choice, I'm free. And I remain free up until I make the choice again. The first bad habit to eliminate is that whenever we notice that we are in ignorance, to judge ourselves for having been in ignorance. Instead we should congratulate our beautiful self, because now because I'm aware that I was in ignorance and therefore I'm no longer in ignorance. I don't believe to be a separate person any longer. It can last forever if I choose to do so. If I choose to believe again, that's my freedom – no problem either. There are no problems, you see.

Q: I do want it to last forever, but it doesn't happen.

FL: That's a mistake. This wanting is ignorance. Already when you want it to last forever, you have fallen into ignorance because you have forgotten that it is under your own power. It solely depends on your freedom, on your decision. If I say 'I wish I could always be free from ignorance, it means that I am praying to God to lead me, to liberate me forever, and in this moment I am separating myself from God, who is going to allow and disallow me. But at that moment, because I am separate from God, because I have this wish, this intention, this intention itself separates me from my true nature, because I fall back into the misunderstanding that ignorance is imposed on me, or can be imposed on me. The moment I understand, it's a choice of my freedom ...

Q: I don't see that I have the choice.

FL: If you don't see that you have the choice, it means that there is compelling evidence that you are a limited person.

Q: No, I don't have evidence. ...

FL: If there is a wish to stay in this space, whose wish is it?

Q: I don't know. I don't know whose wish it is. I just see that the space is no longer there at some point. It just somehow disappears.

FL: Yes. It means you have fallen back into ignorance – that's all. It means you believe to be a separate entity.

Q: Yes, and I don't see it because you say it is my choice to do that. This is the point – I don't see that this was my choice.

FL: No, no, no, no. It's not that you don't see it. It's that you don't remember – very different. ... You are claiming 'I believed to be separate and I don't see that it's a choice I made'. Because now you believe to be separate. You don't remember when this belief has begun. Perhaps it began three seconds ago, perhaps a week ago, perhaps 30 years ago. Because you don't remember that such a moment exists, it doesn't mean that this moment didn't exist. Because it did. Because when you were born or when you were conceived by your parents you didn't believe to be a separate human being. So along this timeline at some point, you began to believe to be a separate human being. And then after meeting these teachings or your teacher, you may have got rid of this belief. And then you have fallen back into this belief again, got rid of it, fallen back and got rid of it again. ...

Q: Yes, I understand. So any time there is this wish to remain in the space, then that's already a red flag?

FL: What I'm try to do as a first step is to eliminate this usual belief according to which ignorance is forced upon me. This disbelief that I *chose* ignorance, that ignorance was an act of my freedom. Because you have no right to say that that was the case, that it was imposed onto you. Because you don't remember this moment when it was imposed onto you, and therefore you cannot make the claim that it was imposed on you at that moment since you don't remember the moment. Is that clear?

Q: Yes.

FL: So then stop forever. ... From now on, stop making this statement that ignorance is imposed onto you. Be open at least to the possibility that at that moment which you don't remember, you chose it. It was a kind of a fun thing to do. It was sweet, it was intimate, it was cute, it was beautiful, it was something interesting, an adventure. Because then we eliminate this desire to be forever established. So it was your choice. Instead of putting you in the future, in this 'forever thing', it will take you back to this real moment *now*. And *now* what do I do, what do I chose, it's my freedom, what do I believe to be *now*? It will immediately take you to your freedom *now*, away from this entertaining idea of being a separate person on whom ignorance is imposed, and who as a result, wants to be free from such imposition forever.

Q: This wish to be free, isn't it coming from myself? Why is it, if it is coming from myself, that it's not true, because it sounds like it is a habit ...

FL: Everything is coming from yourself. The desire to identify and the desire to disidentify. And it is your freedom at every moment – you have to understand – at every moment you are free to identify, you are free to disidentify. It's the beautiful sentence of Ksemaraja, the tantric sage: 'In the moment one liberates oneself; in the moment one falls into bondage'. It is this eternal moment of our freedom.

Q: So in the case of the sage, he essentially lost the magic of identification, because it is no longer anything attractive for him?

FL: There's no such thing as a sage. To be more precise, there is only one sage. So 'sage' is a word which shouldn't have a plural. There is only one sage, which is awareness, the source of wisdom. All beings are the same sage. The difference is that the sage chooses to play the game of ignorance using some human body-minds as toys, as vehicles. And the sage also – this universal consciousness – chooses to play the game of wisdom in other human toys. That's all.

Q: So is it up to me to play the game of wisdom then?

FL: You are the sage who chooses. You are not the toy who gets chosen. You are the sage, you have the toy, and you choose what to do with it. You are the sage, you have the vehicle, and you choose what to do with it.

[Francis Lucille 9/5/2021 *Ignorance Is Not Imposed On You*]

As a separate entity, we cannot choose: as universal consciousness we have complete freedom.

Contemplation

Our most precious treasure is freedom, and that means the freedom to be miserable if we so choose. We are free to identify with the body-mind organism if we want to. We are free to carry the baggage of the past with us or to drop it. It is very easy, but we choose not to. That's our freedom. We are freedom itself.

[Francis Lucille: *The Perfume of Silence*]