

Chasing States of Mind

For many of us, the spiritual search started as a result of some kind of special experience. We might describe it as an experience of bliss, of oneness, or the Presence of God. It's what Francis calls a 'glimpse'. These glimpses can arise 'out of the blue', or they can be triggered by something we read or someone we meet. In that glimpse, all fear and sense of lack is absent, and our bodies and minds are pervaded by peace and happiness. But above all, there is a feeling of reality: 'this is real'. Then the intensity fades, and we are left with a longing for that reality. That longing impels us towards a spiritual path.

In an unusual interview with Bill Free, Francis speaks about the spiritual path using the language of Christianity and describes the role played by those glimpses. Here is a short extract:

BF: Once you had the experience that was pointed to by Jean Klein, this experience never moved away? Tell us about the experience, did it change from then to now? Is it still the same?

FL: You just get, over time, established in it. For some people it is like a magnitude ten earthquake. But for others, it's like an earthquake that you don't even notice, especially if you live in California. Just a little shake – you don't notice it. But this initial glimpse is followed by a succession of glimpses down the road, and at some point, you realise that some damage to your ignorance has already been done, which cannot be fixed. In other words, you are on the path and you don't know really know at which point you entered the path. Even for those who had one of these big, big Copernican shifts that happens as a big chunk, they don't know whether that's the first, or whether there have been smaller glimpses before that, that have eventually triggered the big earthquake.

So that which really matters is that which is of a permanent nature. Everything which has a beginning or an end is just a state of the mind or of the body. And it is not that which we really love, that which we really seek. It takes time, because – talking about this descent of the Holy Spirit – then it might seem that the Holy Spirit vanishes. And the interpretation is 'I am going to try to reproduce the state', because we see that as a state. Whereas that which was important is not the state the mind and the body were in as a result of the descent of the Holy Spirit. It was the revelation that this non-event gave us. The gift was in the revelation. The gift was not in the fleeting state. The real gift was in the revelation of that which was eternal.

You know, they say 'diamonds are eternal' – it's the title of a James Bond movie! Diamonds are eternal. So if you are given a diamond in a box and the box is beautiful and the diamond is colourless, a little girl may discard the diamond and keep the box. And then the mother is going to keep the diamond for her and say to her 'when you are sixteen, you'll understand where the true value is'. And with the glimpse. it's the same. The state that comes with the glimpse is like the colourful box of the diamond, and the real value is in the transparent understanding, the transparent revelation of the oneness of all things. And that is always true.

Jean Klein used to tell people 'you are perfectly equipped for happiness'. An authentic teacher doesn't present himself or herself as one who has realised or achieved something that other people cannot achieve. They are more likely to say yes, I've been there, I've been to the top of this mountain – if you want, we can go there together. You are perfectly equipped. All you need is two legs, and you have these two legs. So we can go there too. I'm not special. I'm not different from you. It's not a question of not being able to, because we are all equally equipped for it. It's simply a question of do you want to? Do you have the desire for it? If you do, if you really do, then you have these two legs to go to the top of the mountain. You are perfectly

equipped.

[Podcast with Bill Free and Francis Lucille, 7/1/2022: [Living the Non-dual Understanding](#)]

That desire – the desire for freedom, truth, happiness, love, beauty – is an impersonal desire. It comes from freedom, truth, happiness, love, or beauty – not from ignorance. As Francis explains, it is not a desire for pleasant feelings in the body, or a happy state of mind:

FL: The desire for freedom is not the desire for a different phenomenal state. That has to be clearly understood. For instance, someone may have heard somewhere about enlightenment, and have heard that there are people who are very happy because they have got this prize of enlightenment. And then this person says 'I want that too'. This desire is not desire for freedom. It's a desire for a so-called 'enlightenment state' that they attribute to people. So if they have it, I want to have it too. ...

What we are talking about here is something that has nothing to do with our body-mind and with its comfort. ... Am I seeking comfort, am I seeking enlightenment as a gimmick to make me comfortable? Or am I seeking something that is beyond the confines of me as a separate body-mind?

[Francis Lucille: [Does Desire For Freedom Take Me Away From My Self](#)]

At the beginning of the spiritual journey, almost all of us look for a way back to that blissful experience. We continue looking for the beautiful box. The more we try, the more it eludes us. This is *anandamayakosha*, the last of the five sheaths described by Adi Shankara that veil the Self. It is a trap, and escape from this trap is not always easy. We conceptualise enlightenment as a permanent state of happiness, and imagine that all our problems would vanish if only the glimpse we had could reappear and remain permanently. As Francis explains in *The Perfume of Silence*, it is the perfume that has remained from that glimpse that is valuable, not the happy and relaxed states of body and mind that we experienced at the time.

Sometimes I experience ecstatic or very peaceful states, but they do not last, and the rest of my life seems bland and uninteresting by comparison.

You feel that things need to be changed. You feel that things are not satisfactory as they are, that they are not unfolding as they should. Don't worry about things. Although these states, these samadhis, have a mystical quality to them, they are objective experiences. They are very refined objects, but nevertheless they are still objects. They are traps. Just as, on the path of knowledge, powers or siddhis are at some point a trap, so also are samadhis. Siddhis are the active part of the trap and samadhis are the passive part. Samadhis are the last layer of ignorance, *anandamayakosha*, the layer of the illusion of bliss. If we are attached to bliss, we kill bliss. As William Blake said, "He who binds himself to a joy does the winged life destroy."

I had an experience thirty years ago in which I was blissfully happy, everything was so vibrant, but it vanished and I have never experienced it again.

It takes time to understand that the happiness in a happy state never comes and goes. Whatever was happy in that happy state thirty years ago, is still present right now. It is happiness itself. You objectified it and attached it to an experience that happened thirty years ago. To be hypnotized by the past prevents us from being knowingly this happiness in the present. Understand that the perfume of this experience is still present. It has never left you. In fact it is precisely because it has never left you, that you keep thinking about it.

I have had other experiences in which everything is not vibrantly happy but peacefully happy, and everything just flows. There is no feeling of restlessness or ego. I was just referring to that particular one because it was so vibrant.

Nevertheless, the moment we see happiness as an objective experience after the fact, we make an object of it and want it to reappear in an identical manner. However, this will never happen because it is always different. On the other hand, it is manifesting itself all the time. We cannot tell happiness where and how to manifest itself. God knows best what we need, where to appear, when to appear, and how to appear.

The one who refers to these past experiences is the one who still has the nostalgia. It is the same illusion. That which remains when this illusion is seen for what it is, is God.

It is important not to identify with past experiences, especially with past spiritual experiences. On the whole one should refrain from talking about them or even thinking about them. Every time we think of such an experience, we should immediately understand that the happiness that was present then, is still present now. Use it as a means of coming back to the present, of forgetting the past. Otherwise we create an ego that allegedly had these experiences and, the bigger the experience, the bigger the ego.

The truth we are referring to is peace. It is an absence of problems. It is the true background. It doesn't have this vibrancy, this extraordinary knowledge. It manifests it, but it is not it. This expanded state of consciousness appears in the Self, in peace. It is a different mode of knowing. It is unusual but it is not the source. The source is beyond all of that and is always present.

If we focus our mind on these big experiences, it prevents us from seeing the leaf on the tree, the problem in our neighbour's heart, the sky, the stars, the sun dancing on the wallpaper in our room, and so on—all these little things that tell us about God. Krishnamurti used to say that if we want it big, we don't really want the divine. We cannot see how divine the hills and the mountains are, so we want an angel with wings on top of them.

[Francis Lucille, *The Perfume of Silence*: God is Very Mischievous]

What we are really looking for comes from a deep understanding that our intrinsic nature is happiness, and this happiness has always been and will always be with us. Using methods of meditation to temporarily banish worries and unhappiness and achieve a peaceful state is not going to achieve what we want. When we come out of that meditative state, the underlying sense of lack and fear of death that are at the root of the feeling of being a separate entity will come back to the surface. We need to focus our love and interest on that which is permanent. In his recent Thanksgiving Retreat, Francis told the following story to illustrate this:

FL: There is an Indian story. There is a guru and a disciple next to him – disciple number 1, the chosen one. And the guru is about to go into a deep samadhi. And before he goes into samadhi, he tells the disciple 'I'm thirsty, fetch me some water'. The disciple goes to the Ganga, pulls up some water, comes back. When he comes back, it's too late – the guru is in deep samadhi. So the disciple waits and waits. The guru is still in samadhi. The beard of the disciple starts growing. The guru is still in samadhi. Then the beard of the disciple starts getting greyish and then white. The disciple is still waiting, waiting, ... replenishing the bowl with water because it evaporates. And after 50 years the guru comes back out of the state, and his first words are 'I'm thirsty'.

So the story means that the samadhi has not made the initial lack disappear. It has put it in a bracket. But it has not cured the yogin from the sense of lack. So a state is going to have this

effect. It may temporarily put the sense of lack between brackets. Then when you come out of the state, the sense of lack comes back with a vengeance.

But there is something more. It is that it doesn't really make the sense of lack vanish. It's still there. You may have, under the influence of some chemical, a sense of space that feels good. But there's always something in the back which doesn't feel good. All those who have conducted experiments of this kind know what I am talking about. It never feels perfectly, absolutely good. It's more like something has been pushed back, pushed back, pushed back to a distance. But we know sooner or later it will come back. It has only been temporarily postponed. It's like the Fed printing money. At some point there is a day of reckoning. The idea of trying to go after states is a waste of time and a lack of understanding. It's a waste of time and a waste of energy. An investment in a cryptocurrency that is doomed to fail.

Q: You may not go after a state, but as you learn about how thought works and how life works or you live more harmoniously, is it not a sort of meditation if I can use that word, that naturally unfolds out of that? But it's not pursuing a state.

FL: The only thing which is important in those experiments is that which they reveal which is always true, which is always the case. That which is not always the case has no value in this bank of awareness. Only that which is always the case has value, so it's up to you to see what you seek. Whether for you, that which matters is that which is always the case, and then you couldn't care less about that which is not always the case. All truth seekers tend to fall prey to this – what they call in India, *anandamayakosha*, the illusion of states of bliss.

The meditation is not something to be enjoyed *per se*. It's not like 'let's go to the concert and have a nice time'. It's not like that. It's let's investigate, let's understand, let's have the experience. Let's have an experience that may reveal to us that happiness is causeless. And having understood that, any practice to meditate is useless.

[Francis Lucille, 27/11/2021 [The Illusion of Blissful States](#)]

Contemplation

Simply remain in waiting without waiting. You are the love in everything you love. You are the beauty in everything you behold. You are the intelligence in everything you understand. You are the sweetness in all things.

[Francis Lucille: *The Perfume of Silence*]