

Conflict and Violence in the World

When we see what is happening in the world – a global trend towards right-wing ideologies, conflict, cruelty, war – it is obvious that it comes from a sense of separation. But what action should we take, if any? Is there anything we can do to bring about peace and harmony?

Jean Klein spent World War II in France working in the French Resistance helping thousands escape from Germany. After the war, he went to India where he met his teacher and came to a recognition of his true nature. So he was well-qualified to answer those questions in the light of the non-dual understanding:

Q. You say that we must be free of ideals. What do you see as the function of idealism?

A. It is a tool of society to organise the various individuals and small groupings of individuals which naturally make up a culture into a larger and more homogeneous collectivity. All idealism, even the most spiritual, is based on calculative thinking and becoming. War of course belongs to the becoming process, to comparison and aspiration. It is becoming for the hypothetical survival of the person, when, in fact, there is no person.

Ideals may take you to war but at the moment of fighting where are the ideals?

Q. How can I best bring about peace in the world?

A. So you're looking for peace? You'd like to see your surroundings in peace? Are you in peace? Because, before giving peace to your surroundings, you must be in peace yourself. First, face your lack of peace. See that you are constantly at war with yourself, you are violent and aggressive with yourself. As long as there is an ego, there is war. As long as you think you're an independent entity, there's war, and it's useless to try to end conflict on a social level. If you are not in harmony with yourself, you remain an accomplice to society.

This question of war and peace is very important. When you come to the life experience of global being, there is real freedom and absolute security. As long as you have not integrated this freedom you cannot help bring social or political freedom. Freedom can never come through a system.

Q. But we need to influence institutions. How can we do that?

A. Don't try to influence. The moment you breathe, the whole world is affected by your inhalation and exhalation. So when you live in peace you radiate it. If someone asks for help, help of course. But don't become a professional do-gooder.

Q. Doesn't one have a personal responsibility to change things one feels are wrong?

A. When you are free from the idea of being somebody, the problem of responsibility doesn't play a role. When you are no longer limited by the personality, there is intelligence, and acting is adequate from moment to moment.

If you have any idea of being somebody, a friend, helper, political person, teacher, mother, father, and so on, you will only see the situation coloured by this image. It is a fractional view and because it is partial it breeds conflict and reaction. Since the action did not appear and disappear in wholeness there will be residue. Before acting, one must understand the situation. To fully comprehend it, you must face the facts free from ideas. It must belong to your

wholeness; otherwise you are stuck to the wheel of reaction where there is only relationship from concept to concept.

When you become a professional doer you are no longer spontaneous. You can never create harmony. It is beautiful to be really nothing, without qualification. All that appears, appears in you, and you act according to the appearance using your capital, intellectual, bodily, material, etc. Then all action is balanced.

Q. You say don't become a professional do-gooder but what if that is my job? Also, I know that you yourself travel the globe doing good. We cannot just sit and let people suffer! No one who is starving is interested in self-inquiry. Biological survival must be taken care of first. This requires professionals.

A. I don't say you must ignore the world but first you have to know how to face the facts properly, that is, free from the limited individual point of view. Our surroundings appear to us according to the stance we take. From the point of view of the body and senses, the world appears as sense perception. From the mental view the world appears as mind. From consciousness the world is only consciousness. When you leave here don't try to change anything. Only be aware that your ideas and actions stem from the mind. The moment you look at your surroundings from consciousness you will see things differently and seeing things differently your understanding and actions will be different. You can never change the world from the personal standpoint. You can only change society from the impersonal, from consciousness.

The question often arises: how can I change society; I disagree with so many things? Realise that there can be no transformation unless action comes from a completely different view than before. In the personal realm you remain an accomplice with society. Creative action can only come when you see your surroundings from the point of view of consciousness. Then you are really related to society, the situation, the world. Otherwise, you remain related only to yourself, your reactions and resistances. See that society begins with you.

You are your own nearest environment, so begin with yourself. When you learn how to look at your closest environment you will automatically know how to look at the broader environment. In this way of looking there's understanding, and understanding brings right acting. The moment you come to the living understanding, you won't need to ask me or anyone else what to do.

Q. Isn't there work to be done to improve communication and dialogue between different countries?

A. What is communication? As so-called communication has grown, has war decreased? First learn to communicate with yourself and your nearest surroundings. Clean your own room and make it ready for the guests. When there is order and harmony in one society it affects the whole world. Becoming a professional do-gooder is an escape from facing one's own field. It is only a camouflage. But of course if the opportunity to help comes, never refuse.

[Jean Klein, *Who Am I: Relationship*]

We tend to see these world events from an emotional perspective – 'this is terrible, it shouldn't be happening'. But when we look logically and unemotionally at what has happened, it's often possible to see how one event and circumstance led automatically to another, with no individual being solely responsible. Seeing things that way can make it easier to understand that at an absolute level, 'everything is unfolding as it should'. Francis gives an example:

Q: What is happening now often makes my spiritual awareness, intuition and experiences seem trivial in comparison, since it could quickly lead us into a path similar to things we saw in World War II. I am curious and enthusiastic to see what your view of all of this is from the perspective of non-duality.

FL: Of course, if you mention bringing about World War II, obviously it would be better if World War II never happened. But then, we have to ask ourselves, under what circumstances could World War II have been prevented?

That's for historians, but I can see two scenarios. One would have been, after World War I, not to put Germany in an impossible situation economically. That would have been one thing. And the second thing would have been to act militarily, much sooner, to prevent Hitler from acquiring all his momentum and military power. So, these are two ways we can analyse. In other words, there are moments when it would have been better to act militarily sooner than later. And in hindsight, it's very easy.

So we have to be careful when we say, of course, war should never have happened. That's true. Perhaps it wouldn't have happened if we had behaved differently with Germany. But then, with Hitler rising to power, World War II should have happened much sooner.

What I'm saying is easy to say in hindsight. It's more difficult to analyse the situation when it is unfolding. But to go back to the non-dual perspective of this, we have to remember what Robert Adams used to say. 'All is well and unfolding as it should, exactly as it should.' Be not too concerned about the world. To be concerned about the world is an escape.

Do whatever you feel has to be done, which comes from your personal understanding of the situation. Be ready the next moment to do the opposite.

[Francis Lucille, 19/3/2017, Temecula dialogue]

It is natural to feel compassion for innocent civilians who are injured or suffer loss as a result of war. But as Francis explains, we need to distinguish ignorant compassion from real compassion. If we are in a position to help, it is through real compassion that we can be of most use to those who are suffering:

Q: All my life, especially with animals, I could sense the innocence and I would get very emotional if I saw animals getting hurt. And people, but animals more so, I think. But my question is, is that oversensitivity or is that just being in your innocence and feeling?

FL: It depends whether there is fear in it. There is a form of pseudo-compassion, which is in fact fear. That is happening to somebody else, so I'm very much afraid that could happen to me. And there is another form of compassion which is totally fearless, which is a direct response to the context, to the situation.

For instance, there are people who say, I don't like war. What they really mean is I'm afraid of war. And what they really mean when they say I'm afraid of war, they mean I'm afraid of war because if war comes to me, I might get killed. So this could be interpreted as compassion, but in fact it's ignorant compassion. It's not real compassion. Ignorant compassion is to true compassion what military music is to music.

[Francis Lucille, 2016 Thanksgiving retreat, week 2 day 6]

Wisdom is seeing a situation in its totality from a global perspective. It includes understanding where each side in a conflict is coming from. Identification with a nation, a team, a religion, a political party

or an ideology is a form of ignorance. These kinds of attachments are the norm in our society, so they can easily go unnoticed. As Francis explains, we need to see clearly when the residues of this form of ignorance come to the surface in our own thoughts and behaviour:

FL: Clarity has to be brought both to the mind, to the belief systems, and to the body, to the sense of me, to the concepts of me. And to all the concepts to which we attach, like rooting for this team, for this tennis player, for this nation, for this ...

Someone asked Lester Levinson, but after his realization or stabilization in the truth, did you ever come back to a feeling? And he said, well, yes, when six-day war broke out, broke out in Israel – he was Jewish – he felt his roots attacked by all his neighbours. And so he said, yes, at that moment, some residual identification arose.

So we can never be certain that all the residues have been cleansed, because there might be, a few residues that are dormant and then will be triggered by events. But that shows the type of identification. It's not just with the body, but it can be with a nation, with political ideas, religious ideas, soccer teams, football teams, baseball teams.

... All these identifications, when we see the mechanism, we see the blatant ignorance, which is involved with those, all these people that are in a persuasion, and they take everything without the slightest discrimination. ... You say, 'my country is the best'. I mean, come on. Your country may have some things that are good, but there might be some things that are not that great either. So in other words, when we are not involved as an individual, we can see things from a different perspective. They are not that important.

[Francis Lucille, 2016 Summer retreat, week 2 day 5]

Every situation we encounter in life is an opportunity for spiritual development; war is no exception. Francis describes two experiences that his friend William Samuel had during his time in active service in the army:

FL: William Samuel related two stories to me. First, he was serving as a captain in China fighting the Japanese during World War II. And he met his teacher who was his interpreter and who was a Taoist sage. And this teacher had had his wife and children, the entire family, killed by the Japanese. And they were, with these platoons, they had ventured into Japanese territory and they had been spotted by the Japanese and the Japanese were after them, after the tracks and they were retreating and very fearing for their lives of course and very fast.

And at some point his master, the Taoist interpreter, pulled his arm and said look, and he shows on the hills, there were beautiful purple flowers. He was full of fear of course, and he had this thought, how can this guy think of beauty in a moment like this with all this fear.

And then a few years thereafter he was serving still as a captain in the war in Korea. And with this strange absurdity of war, he finds himself fighting the same Chinese regiment he was fighting *with* during World War II. And now they are against him with the North Koreans. And at some point in this battle a shell falls on his platoon and instantaneously three, I guess three of his men get killed. And he told me, and 'then I saw some kind of blue light coming out of the bodies. And there was a quality to this light that I was feeling inside there is no death'. There was at the same time in the aura of this experience, a spiritual experience, an awakening that there is no death.

[Francis Lucille, 2015 Temecula retreat, Week 2 Day 6]

I once asked Francis what he thought about the commonly held view that the world has got into such a bad state that more and more people are awakening in order to improve the situation. This is part of his response:

FL: The evolutionary perspective is a mistake, that the world is evolving towards a better place or a worse place. The world is whatever it is. The events in the world, their purpose, is not another state of the world, their purpose is to take us to the truth and then to celebrate it. So the events in the world are designed to make us grow in wisdom, all of us. The revelation of the truth is not in the world. It may be through the world and through the events in the world but ultimately, it's not in the world.

In the grand scheme of things, who cares about planet Earth which is a grain of sand lost in the infinity of this universe, among perhaps many more universes and many more dimensions? And the human species on it, a very recent appearance on this grain of sand, you see, which has an appearance, which has a beginning and which is going to have an end.

Mankind is not eternal, obviously. Obviously. So our intelligence is telling us that. Open your eyes. You are not, as a separate person, the centre of the universe. As a human species, you're not the centre of the universe either. As planet Earth, you're not. And as this galaxy, you're not either. In fact, the centre of the universe is everywhere, as you know. Every point on the bubble was the centre of the bubble at the beginning.

[Francis Lucille 4/10/2022, Online satsang]

Contemplation

We are not here to save the world or alleviate the suffering in the world. We first have to save ourselves from suffering, because unless we are free from suffering, we cannot help others. As long as we see this world as a world of misery, we perpetuate the misery. It is only in the moment that we see the beauty of the whole painting and not just the light places, that we are able to convey this sense of beauty, this sense of eternity, to others.

[Francis Lucille, *The Perfume of Silence*]