

## The Imaginary Glass Wall

Sometimes it seems like we come up against a solid wall in our investigation of our true nature. We feel stuck. This can happen both before a liberating glimpse and after. In this paper, we look at some of reasons why this happens, and how to get past the block.

There is sometimes an assumption that after awakening, we should no longer experience any negative feelings such as fear or anxiety. In some cases these feelings are natural, and it is the body-mind reminding us to take action to avoid some potential problem. But sometimes the feelings have their origin in a sense of separation. This can arise even after a glimpse of our true nature. It usually points to incompleteness in our investigation of our true nature and a lack of clarity in our understanding. Here is Francis's suggestion for investigating further:

*Q: Today I had some feelings of fear and anxiety come up in the solar plexus and my gut, and I believe you've said that when it happens to trace them back to their source, and I was trying to figure out how to do that. All that occurred to me was to talk to them, and I actually did that. In my mind, I just had a conversation, and they said they came from my father when I was very young, like something he said or did that caused this fear ...*

FL: The fear, when it arises, will have all kinds of alleged causes, like in this case, whatever your dad has told you. That's the alleged cause. But in fact there is only one root cause to the fear, which is to accept to be a separate entity, without questioning it. The only way is to question that, relentlessly, every time it arises, because there is no evidence. So if we let it in and question it, we see that's an illegal alien in your country that wins your happiness.

*Q: So what would it look like to question the fear?*

FL: It's not a fear. It's the person who is afraid.

*Q: Would I do this in words? Would I do it wordlessly?*

FL: You may start with words, which are thoughts. But the thought will lead you to someplace else. Because the thought you are going to use is the thought 'I'.

*Q: So like 'who am I?'*

FL: Or any synonym of this thought. What I suggest is not 'who am I', but 'what am I?'. And the first answer that will come to you is 'I am consciousness'. That's the first answer. Now, if you believe to be anything other than consciousness, then you are still stuck. You are not ready for the big question. So you have to remain at that level until you are absolutely convinced that you are consciousness rather than a woman, rather than a human body, rather than anything else. That's the first step.

And that's not an obvious roadblock to overcome. The way to overcome it is to see that I have to make a choice. Because there is a marked difference between the woman I believe to be, who has a size, a birth certificate, a name, a personal history etc., and the consciousness who is hearing these words, who is invisible, doesn't have a size, doesn't have a birth certificate. Nobody was there when it was born to certify that. There was no midwife there to write on a paper, I hereby certify consciousness was born on ... . No, the baby was born, but for consciousness there is no birth certificate. And our problem is that we believe that consciousness has a birth certificate. ...

So that's the first step. We have to stay there until we are really convinced 'I am consciousness rather than the body', because these are obviously two different items. And one is not a usual item. Consciousness is very different. The other item is relatively common because like the computer, it has a colour, it has a size, it has a location in space, in time, etc. It has all kinds of qualities that it shares with other objects.

*Q: OK. So I've heard you say that we can't really know with the mind what we are. We can only know what we're not. Would you say that's correct?*

FL: Yes, in fact the mind can know nothing. Only consciousness knows anything. When we say we can know with the mind, it's a kind of shorthand to express the mind only knows objects. That's shorthand for what the mind is really, it's objects. The mind is made of all perceptions. What the mind is, is mentations appearing in consciousness. The mind is really a concept, which is a generic term for the mentations. Because what we actually experience is mentations. We don't experience a mind, we experience mentations. These mentations appear to something which is stable, which is changeless, and which is utterly different from each of those mentations. I call that consciousness. And that's really the centrality of our human experience.

The only thing that has never changed is the centrality of our human experience. Just like the axis of a wheel. The wheel moves, and the axis is the motionless centrality of the wheel. So in the same way, the changeless consciousness is the centrality of our human experience. In the sense that our human experience constantly changes, that's the wheel of karma, the wheel of activity. And the centre of the wheel is the presence, the consciousness, which doesn't change. So when we ask the question 'what am I?', we first have to come up with this answer, 'I am consciousness'. The centrality of what I am, the centrality of my experience, is consciousness.

[Francis Lucille, 19/4/2014 [Questioning the Reality of the Limited Entity](#)]

For most of us, the trickiest stage of our investigation, where we are most likely to come up against a wall, is in recognising the possibility that consciousness is universal. Our bodies and our minds are limited, but we have no evidence that consciousness is limited. As Francis explains, it is necessary to see clearly the difference between mind and consciousness:

FL: So, the moment we are open to see, to understand the extraordinary difference in nature between thoughts or perceptions and consciousness, between that which is the content of consciousness and that which is the reality of that which is perceived, then the 'mindishness' of consciousness disappears. It was our own superimposition identifying consciousness with a thought. In this twilight zone, not looking carefully at it – consciousness, thoughts, same thing. But when we really take a closer look, we see this extraordinary difference in nature between that which is perceived and the reality of those perceptions. ...

The moment we have seen and understood this deep difference in nature between consciousness and the objects of consciousness, that opens a possibility for consciousness as reality, to be something completely else. And in particular, there are two aspects. First, we are open to the possibility that consciousness spans across minds, just as it spans across time. For us it's obvious it was the same consciousness yesterday, aware of my breakfast, and the same consciousness hearing Francis right now. But if you think about it, that's kind of exotic. What's the evidence? It's just that, because of memory, we are kind of accustomed to thinking in this way.

But, moreover, it's because we deeply know the absolute continuity of consciousness, and its unchangeability. Therefore, it was the same yesterday and today. So also across minds – the

same consciousness being in you, in me, so that which you call you, or which I call me, is the same. That's the path of love. It's a love which is not artificial, because it's a love which is natural. That's the way things are. You can tap dance around it as much as you want, but then, at the end of the day, that's what it is.

And, finally, the second conclusion, which is important, is that because we have detached consciousness from mind-stuff, consciousness not being made of mind-stuff, but, on the contrary, consciousness being the stuff mind-stuff is made of. In other words, consciousness is not made of mind: mind is made of consciousness. So there is a hierarchy here, descending hierarchy from consciousness to mind, which opens the possibility that it's not only a descending hierarchy from consciousness to mind and to minds, but also from consciousness to matter, since consciousness is not in bed with mind any longer. We have separated it. Consciousness is a reality; that's all it is.

And so then, the reality that is underlying this extraordinary world of physicality, with the laws of physics, with space-time, gravity, curvature, all of that is simply another way for consciousness to play, to create. ...

So we have to cease to see consciousness as mind, and that's why it's important at some point to stop thinking of consciousness in terms of mind, but to think of it in terms of reality. It's part of the sadhana, to see that that [table] is made of consciousness, everything is made of consciousness. Not mind. That's very important, because then, not to fall into the new-agey thing, 'OK that's mind, everything is mind', no, because then I'm still stuck within the jail of the mind, of ignorance. No. The possibility is that that which is hearing these words is not in the mind, is not of the mind, but that the mind is of it, and perhaps in it.

[Francis Lucille, 4/10/2015, Dialogue 1]

Another common situation in which we seem to encounter a wall in our investigation is when we are making an effort. For example, it could be an effort to practice, understand, or somehow achieve a peaceful state of mind. But this path is about effortless living, and no amount of effort is going to take us to the natural, effortless state. In the following dialogue, Francis explains how the effortless path works:

*Q: I have been practicing seeing and feeling that there is no reason for consciousness to be more attached to this body-mind than to the rest of what appears. And the truth of the absence of a separate self is becoming more and more clear. However, I still have the desire during some meditations to see what is left when I drop any object that appears. And inevitably, I arrive on this silent black screen after which I am frustrated because both this wish to go further, and the absence of its realization, comes from my true self, right? My question, is it really useless to try to see what I am when I drop all objects?*

FL: When you hear the truth from your Guru, or when you read the saying of a sage in a book, there are moments when you feel that all of a sudden you understand something about yourself, about consciousness, about reality, that up until that moment had escaped your attention, that you were not aware of. All of a sudden, something gets revealed to you in this infinitesimal moment of understanding. ...

But you have to be led there in a very natural way. If you try to do that with the mind, you will be stuck with a blank state of thoughts. But if you are led there, taken by the hand so to speak, in a more natural way, then this obstacle won't even appear to you. Before you know it, you

have understood and that's it. When you understand something about your true nature, you never encounter a blank wall.

You see concepts, images perhaps evolving in your awareness and at some point you are grabbed by the understanding. At no point do you bang your head against a black wall or a white wall or a blank wall. So that's an example of one of the natural ways to go to Nirvikalpa Samadhi *[pure consciousness without objects]*.

And these are not the only ways. There are also ways that don't even use reasoning. For example, sometimes you read a poem by Rumi and the words, the images, you follow them and at some point, it catches you deeply inside. It is also an understanding of a sort, but it is an understanding that defies logic. It is not reasonable. It is different.

Sometimes upon hearing the voice of my teacher, something in his voice was bringing in me a resolution of any expectation. I could feel the peace, and I would go into this peace without encountering a blank wall because I had no intention. The problem is when the mind has the intention to go towards Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This very intention of the mind is the obstacle because it keeps us in the mind.

[Francis Lucille, 15/11/2014, Dialogue 4]

In the early stages after a glimpse of our true nature, it seems to be easy and effortless to feel at peace when we are on our own in pleasant circumstances. But then life seems to get in the way. We have problems at work or with our neighbours or our family, and that brings back a sense of separation. We feel we need to make an effort to return to our natural ease of being. In this dialogue, Francis explains how that type of relapse is not problem as it automatically gets resolved in time.

*Q: You have said that at a certain point, we enter the middle of the river and then stop efforting. The river carries us to the ocean. Is the way of being in the movement towards increasing abidance in the self, the same as the way of being in the movement through the interaction with people and circumstances which can sometimes be problematic? Does the river carry us without our efforting, through both movements of life?*

FL: The answer is the river carries us through both movements of life, because in fact there is only one movement of life. The difference is that in one case we are swimming against the flow, and in the other case we are just not swimming, we are just floating and letting the flow take care of it.

Now, prior to awakening there is always effort. After awakening during the sadhana, there is residual effort, of which we let go much sooner than in the pre-awakened context. In the pre-awakened context there is never a real letting go, because a real letting go requires the letting go of the person. The awakening is the first letting go of the person, the first total letting go of the person. Prior to this there is never a real letting go of the person, so there is never a total letting go.

After awakening, every time a new effort comes up as in a space of pseudo-relapse into ignorance, because we are not stuck any longer with the person, this relapse doesn't last for too long. And then at some point, this relapse becomes extremely rare and of short duration.

[Francis Lucille, 21/9/2014, Dialogue-12]

Another way in which the sense of separation can reappear is through a feeling of regret for past mistakes. As Francis explains, we are not responsible for past ignorance or past actions that have arisen through ignorance. There is no guilty person. But we can learn from our mistakes:

FL: Now, as a separate entity, you make wrong decisions, or the decisions that come from the belief to be a separate entity are wrong. However, you are not responsible for believing to be a separate entity. It's God who is responsible for that. So ultimately, you are not responsible for your past wrong decisions.

Now, it doesn't prevent you from learning from your past mistakes. That's something different, because learning is something that happens now, that is happening now. And now you don't have to identify with a separate entity. Actually, in the now, there is never a separate entity. The separate entity always comes as a past or as a future event. But in the now, there is never a separate entity, because only the now is real, and a separate entity is not real. So now and ignorance are mutually exclusive, just as water and oil.

[Francis Lucille, 2/11/2014, Dialogue 5]

Even after we have a clear, experiential understanding, it can take a while for the body to catch up. Emotions arise which seem to be at odds with our understanding. Francis sometimes describe these as skeletons hiding in the closet. A deeper investigation is needed to open all the closets and expose the skeletons to the light. When we do that, we see that these emotions all stem from a sense of lack or a fear of dissolution:

*Q: So, the mind comes to this place of not knowing, and can't really move anymore, because any movement is knowing, or is a product of concepts. So, it kind of feels like stillness and peace. But then there are these emotions, they come up, and they try to force a movement, because I've been doing it all my life. But the mind can't move. So I'm stuck somehow. So, I know you've been teaching us to surrender these emotions to the space.*

FL: They have a deeper source. The peace has to be established very deeply. It's like when engineers dig a tunnel through a mountain, they often start from both sides at once, and at some point they meet, the two teams meet in the middle. And also in this process here, we can start from two sides.

By pointing directly at the truth, the teachings take us to the innermost experience of it. And from there, from the innermost experience, it starts digging outwards. And with this surrender of the body and of the feelings, we start relaxing from outside inwards, so to speak. And at some point, there is a meeting that can take place.

Of course, everything I say is a little bit theoretical, but we shouldn't be entirely satisfied when in our meditation we reach a state which is more peaceful than usual, but which is somehow nevertheless artificially created. And a state in which not all the closets have been opened, and there are still skeletons in hiding there.

So that's why, for instance, the investigation that we did earlier about the sense of lack has to go very deep, up until it has all been uncovered. And we may discover in this process that we reach areas where we don't want to go. We are not really interested or enthusiastic about going further. Because we are afraid that our dear life can be taken away from us. So there are layers of fear and of identification. The inside glimpse of our true nature destroys the deepest origin of fear, the very core. And then all these layers are squeezed between a rock and a hard place, so to speak, and we cooperate with this process.

The more we become acquainted with these residues of ignorance in the body, these feelings, the less they dictate our deeds, our thoughts. That's very important. Perhaps during the exploration it's not that pleasant, but it creates a lot of freedom in our daily lives because we are no longer fooled the way we used to be.

[Francis Lucille, 27/11/2014, Dialogue 2]

## **Contemplation**

*Ultimately, we have to understand that because our true nature is the effortless state, that more effort cannot take us to the effortless state. When we understand that, that's the moment when we leave the progressive path and we enter the direct path, which is the effortless path.*

[Francis Lucille, 27/5/2018]