

Three Dialogues from

17th of October 2021 Satsang 'The Thingness of Things'

First Dialogue

1- DEFINITION AND ATTRIBUTES OF REALITY OR BEING OR CONSCIOUSNESS

Questioner: I would like to ask you to help me streamline the investigation on the topic of the attributes of Consciousness. Starting from establishing philosophically the definition of 'Reality' being that Consciousness or Awareness is an attribute of Reality. This is undeniable at this point, it is seen very clearly.

Francis: My definition of Consciousness is not as an attribute of Reality but as the Reality that perceives.

Questioner: Yes, Consciousness is the Reality that perceives.

Francis: Yes and it is perceiving itself that is an attribute of Reality. First, the proper term for the way I use the term 'Reality' would be 'Being' or 'Substance' in Western philosophy, but 'Reality' is not too bad. It comes from the word 'thing' and it can be construed in two ways. One way would be the set of all things, and that's the way the word is usually used. Another understanding of the word 'Reality' would be 'the thingness of things', in other words that which makes the things things and which itself is not a thing. That's the meaning of the definition I use.

Substance [...] is 'that which cannot not exist'. For instance a chair can not exist. If the wooden chair burns it ceases to exist. So Substance is that which cannot not exist. Reality and Being is that which is. We all have the intuition that there is something rather than nothing. Everybody agrees on that, but not everybody agrees on what that thing which is, is. So we know that there is something rather than nothing but we do not really know or agree upon what that thing which is, is. The 'thing that is' is what I call Being. And we have to put a question mark next to it because we know that Being is but we do not know what Being is. [...]. I leave it up to you to convince yourself that Substance and Being are one and the same. It's easy because of the definition of Substance, 'that which cannot not exist', In other words Substance is and Being is. [...].

Regarding Reality, in my use of the word, it is the same as Substance and the same as Being. The next step is to convince ourselves that there is only

one Substance or only one Reality or only one Being. Now I define Consciousness as the Reality which is hearing these words right now, in other words as the Reality that perceives. If we convince ourselves that there is only one Substance - aka one Reality, aka one Being - it follows that the Reality that perceives has to be this Reality. In other words I define Consciousness as Reality, not as a function or an attribute of Reality.

Regarding Substance's attributes now. There are attributes and there are modifications of a Substance. The distinction is that an attribute is specific to a substance if it is proper to the substance. In other words if you have an attribute it means that you have the substance. Whilst a modification is not specific to the substance.

An example of modifications is a colour. If you assume that a plant is a substance, the colour green is not an attribute of the plant, because a door or a car can be green. In other words if you have green you don't necessarily have a plant. Green is a modification of the plant but not an attribute.

Perceiving is an attribute of Consciousness. In other words if you have perceiving you have Consciousness, or Reality, or Being. We cannot have perceiving without something that perceives, in other words without the underlying Reality that perceives.

2 - LOVE IS THE EXPERIENCE THAT YOU AND I ARE THE SAME BEING

Questioner: To build on top of that, how can I go about, just as logically [...] about beauty and love being attributes of Reality or Consciousness. Is it possible even to define beauty and love in the same way we define Consciousness?

Francis: When we speak about beauty and love of course we use concepts, just like when we speak about Consciousness. The word Reality or the word Being is not the experience of Being or Consciousness, which is the same. So the word 'love' is not the experience of Love, the word 'beauty' is not the experience of Beauty, the word 'reality' is not the experience of Reality and the word 'being' is not the experience of Being.

The understanding that there is only one Reality leads to the experience of Love, because the experience of Love is really the experience that you and I are the same Being, that my Being and your Being is the same Being, translated into concepts yes, but it is the experience of Love. So the moment we understand that there is only one Reality, only one Being, that's Love. That's Love in the deepest sense.

Now, a common misunderstanding is a confusion between Love in its deepest sense, meaning Love as the deepest experience, and the impact or aftershock of this experience in the body, which is perceived as a positive

emotion. So actually the experience of Love can trigger different kind of emotions, depending on the context of the individual body-mind that is subjected to this response to the experience of Love. So the misconception is to take the effect on the body of the experience of love for the actual experience of Love. The experience of Love is non-phenomenal, and the effect on the body, in the form of various emotions, is phenomenal.

3 - AT THEIR VERY CORE, TRUTH, LOVE AND BEAUTY ARE THE SAME EXPERIENCE

Francis: If you follow that about Love, then you will follow that for the experience of Beauty, because it is the same with the experience of Love: the aesthetic experience of Beauty also triggers positive emotions in the body. The positive emotions in the body that are triggered by the experience of Love and by the experience of Beauty are actually very similar, and it is only normal because ultimately it is the same experience that, at its very core, on its deepest level, that produces these effects.

In other words, although the effects on the body of the experiences of truth, of love and of beauty may be different according to circumstances, according to the individual body that is affected by it, they are nevertheless very similar. These three experiences on the noumenal level - at their very

core - they are the same experience and on the phenomenal level they are very similar.

So if we look at the response of the body to this experience, the only distinction is on the level of the phenomena that comes before the experience and leads to it.

In the case of Truth for instance, the phenomenal content that leads to the experience of our true nature as Truth, is conceptual and a little bit geometrical, if you will.

The phenomenal content that leads to the experience of Love is often on the level of bodily sensations, of feelings. For instance empathy is about bodily sensations: the ability we have to feel the way the other people feel, so it's bodily sensation, really. So these bodily sensations that enable us to feel the way that the other person feels leads to this dissolution in our common nature.

In the case of the experience of Beauty we go to the experience of our true nature through sense perceptions, either because they are directly perceived through the senses, as it is the case for music or seeing a beautiful scenery or a beautiful object of Art, or through the imagination or our senses, as it is the case upon reading poetry for instance. When you read poetry, these are words, but these words have sounds to them, so there is a music and images that we recreate using our imagination. So Art takes us to Beauty through the senses.

So at the very core of the experience of our true nature, the manifestations in the body and in the mind are very similar, but the paths to the noumenal experience of our true nature are different, and that's where the real differentiations between Truth, Love and Beauty appear.

For people who don't have a clue about the reality of our noumenal experience, then of course they only see it as different because they are three different paths to access the experience. So on that level it seemingly makes sense to establish a distinction between Truth, Love and Beauty

4 - IT IS A MISTAKE TO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF TRUTH WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF LOVE AND OF BEAUTY.

Questioner: What I was trying to see is if Consciousness or Reality is beautiful, as an attribute. It has to be so in an unbroken way. Perceiving is an attribute I can see that, because perceiving is an unbroken experience. For the experience of Beauty or Love, there is a path, it is undeniably there. But it's not constant, there is the experience of absence of Beauty and the absence of Love, while there is never the experience of not being aware or of not perceiving. That's how I know perceiving is an attribute of Reality, I have no problem agreeing with that. Intrinsically I do know that Beauty and Love have to be attributes of Reality, but I would like to come to it through this

amazing way of understanding, the philosophical understanding, so that I would know it.

Francis: If you understand that ultimately the experience of our true nature is at the same time the experience of Truth, Love and Beauty, your question boils down to 'Is there moments in which there is not the experience of Truth, Love and Beauty?' Instead of taking it apart into three aspects, if you truly understand that nominally there is only one experience, then the only question that arises is 'why is the noumena experience of truth, love and beauty seemingly not continuous?'

And the answer to this is that it gets seemingly discontinuous the moment we relapse into ignorance, the moment we believe to be a separate limited reality, at that moment for short periods of time we fall out of Grace, if you will. But it is a mistake if we believe that we constantly have the experience of Truth and we don't have constantly the experience of Love and Beauty, because they are inseparable, there cannot be one without the other, for the very reason that they are all attributes of Reality, so the moment you have an attribute of Reality, all the other attributes are present. The only way we don't have the experience of Reality is through a trick we use to separate ourselves from Reality, through ignorance. It's a trick we use. In that moment we don't experience Truth, Love and Beauty. But it is a mistake to believe that we can have the experience of Truth without Love and without Beauty.

5 - WE REMAIN IN THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR NATURE UNTIL WE CHOOSE OTHERWISE.

Questioner: So once it does not feel harmonious, loving and beautiful, is that the first indication [of the trick of ignorance]?

Francis: It does not mean that you have to find everything beautiful, because the experience of Beauty is very different to the experience of the beautiful. Not everything is beautiful. [...] The beautiful is a qualities of an object, not all objects are beautiful.

Questioner: But Beauty is an attribute of Reality.

Francis: Beauty is an attribute of Reality and therefore it is not attached to an object.

[....]

Francis: The experience of Truth, Love and Beauty is the same. Depending on whether we go there through the senses, or through the feelings in the body or through the concepts, it may seemingly take on the colours of truth, of Love and of Beauty. A beautiful objects has specific qualities, that's why I say not everything is beautiful. A loving action is one which comes from love, Not every statement is true. A true statement is one that comes from the experience of Truth. In the world of phenomena there are truthful objects,

there are beautiful objects, there are loving objects. And there are also objects or events that are not truthful, beautiful or loving. [...]

Questioner: So the experience of Reality or Being is intrinsically harmonious, beautiful and loving.

Francis: But even then, when you are in harmony itself, you don't need to tell yourself 'it's harmonious'. Harmony speaks for itself, you just enjoy it. [...]. You have already been touched by the Universal Harmony, so your thoughts, your expressions are just an after effect of this first experience of harmony. And when you experience harmony this way you don't go out of it, you stay in it until you choose to go back into [the apparent] separate self. So we have to understand very clearly that we don't go out of it until we choose to leave it. But then of course life goes on, what we were seeing that triggered the experience of Beauty is replaced by a thought we have that then triggers the experience of Truth, or an encounter we have that triggers the experience of Love. It constantly changes because the contents always changes but we can remain in harmony, unless we choose to 'be' separate again.



Second Dialogue

GOD HAS MANY FACES, NOT ALL FACES ARE BEAUTIFUL.

Question: How would you reconcile the Sufi's statement that 'wherever my eyes falls is the face of God' with 'not everything is beautiful, or not everything is an act of kindness, or love or harmony' ?

Francis: Because God has many faces, and not all faces are beautiful.

Questioner: So all faces are God's faces, all appearances are God's appearances. Yes.

Francis: There are a distinction to be made between objects. There are objects that point to Truth, to Love, to Beauty by design. Such as true objects of Art, they points to Presence, they point by design.

All objects, even the ugly ones, by their appearance and existence, they point to the Substance, to the Being. So all objects, even the ugly ones, point to Reality. But some of them point to the experience of Beauty not solely because they are being perceived but also because they are designed to point to this Presence. In the case in point for instance are the Teachings, the words of the teachings. They are words and all words point to the Awareness that perceives them, but the words of the Teaching are different

than the words of politicians. And because they point to Reality by design, their purpose is to remind us of our true nature. [...]

Questioner: So could it be that when we are in love with Truth, and living as best as we can according to that guidance, could it be that we do not get hijacked by the ugly or disharmonious designs?

Francis: Well, you can say 'that's ugly' or 'that's not true' or 'this action was not very loving', it means you don't lose your sense of discrimination. But it does not make you miserable. It does not affect you. Because if ugliness, lack of love and lack of intelligence made you miserable it would be hard for you to be happy, because these commodities are readily available in the 'world's supermarket'. [...].

Questioner: So what makes us get stuck around certain situations?

Francis: If we believe to be a person in those situations, always. If we see ourselves simply as the manager of the body mind and the creator of the situation playing the game of Maya, if you will, then we act differently in the situation, but won't be affected. We would be in the situation of watching the movie. To be more precise - because in [the metaphor of watching] the

movie we are very passive, participating in a video game with other players, but knowing that it is a video game.

Questioner: So there is nothing at stake on the personal level.

Francis: Yes ultimately no event in the game really affect us.

 *Third Dialogue*

THE EXPERIENCE OF LOVE CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF UNDERSTANDING. AND CONVERSELY.

Question: In Truth, Love and Beauty, Truth to me seems to be different [...]

Francis: We all know the experience of love and the experience of beauty. If you take the experience of love, when we love someone or are loved by someone we feel that we understand the other deeply or that the other understands us deeply. So the experience of love cannot be separated from the experience of understanding. And conversely if we are interested in a question there is love, there is love for the answer. Interest is a form of love. When we get an answer in a moment of understanding, there is a resolution.

In other words, understanding refers to love under the aspect of love for the truth, while usually love is understood as love for people, which is a very restrictive meaning of love. [...]

It is amazing how restrictive we have been with love, when we don't take love as a whole, which includes truth and beauty. That's love for our true nature, for God, for Reality. But we restrict it to love for people, and then we restrict it to love between the sexes, and then we restrict it to making love. But as we do that we have completely lost the original meaning of love [...]

IN THE PRESENCE OF FORMS, REALITY IS THE FORMS

Questioner: Another thing I have been pondering is that the phenomenal is not real.

Francis: [*That is only*] if we extract an object out of the totality of our experience, which is always whole. [...] The duality - meaning the multiplicity of objects - comes only as a concept, not an experience.

Questioner: But the whole of the world, the whole of the phenomena is not real, it is not substance.

Francis: Well, as a concept, yes. The Substance is what in Buddhism they call it the Emptiness, and the objects is what they call 'the Forms'. But you know that the Forms is Emptiness and Emptiness is the Forms. It is only the dualising mind that makes a distinction between Forms and Emptiness.

Questioner: The cutting edge for me is that I can experience Being-ness, but I cannot really experience Forms because it is not really there. Because it is not real.

Francis: First, Reality is always present, whether there is Forms or in the absence of Forms. Now, in the presence of Forms, Reality is the Forms. That's the meaning of 'wherever the eyes falls is the face of God.'

In the presence of Forms, the Substance of the Reality of the Form does not stand separate from the Form: the Substance and the Form are one. So at that moment the Substance is the Form and the Form is the Substance.

Questioner: Then help me with this. [...] I can experience the not-seeing a boundary to Presence and I know that Form is what presence is doing. But while I experience the Noumenal I don't experience the Form, as it is a concept, a trick and a delusion.

Francis: In the presence of Form where is the distinction between the Noumenal and the forms? Other than as a concept the Noumenal is not separate from the form. And in the case of it being a concept, the concept itself is a Form. We can create a subtle perception of the noumenal that seems to be there in the presence of the Form, but then as any other Forms it is going to fluctuate intermittently. You have to convince yourself that in the presence of Forms, the noumenal and the phenomenal are not separated experientially. It's only a false concept we have about Forms and Substance that separate them, but in the actual experience we cannot separate Consciousness from Its perceptions, for instance.

Questioner: Where I am kind of going is to try and see the truth and the beauty and the love even in the ugly and the hateful. To know that that is Consciousness and not be tricked.

Francis: We are affected by the ugly, the unloving and the false only if we believe to be a separate reality. Awareness is not affected by the manifestations, any more than the ocean is affected by the waves.

[...]

The first dialogue is also published on Youtube, find it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNF0THKZVkk>

