

## BENDING OVER BACKWARDS

Q: Robert Saltzman, you say there is no unique “myself” group of neurons, and a decision is taken by a complex interaction between countless neurons. Those complex interactions are in the same brain which is “you,” Robert. Your “myself” is that entire brain in that body, therefore there is a unique yourself; it is the whole brain. Only a “group of neurons” is indeed not in control, but the entire brain is, therefore there is responsibility. That’s why from infancy you are taught to “be civil” because you are in control and responsible for all you say and all your actions. So, there is a “me”: the brain in the body. Do you agree?

A: No. Defining "you" or "myself" as the whole brain is one way, but not the only one, of looking at the matter. But if I accept your definition and we do define it that way, then is there really a "myself" controlling the brain, or is that an illusion? If whatever the brain does is what "you" do, but "you" have a sense of being in control of what you think, say, and do, from where does that sense arise? From the brain, right? But how can you then say that "you" are in control of anything if all thoughts, feelings, and actions just arise as they do as the result of brain activity? Where is the "you" that controls that activity?

If you really want to understand my experience with these issues, I advise reading my two books which deal with the question of what "myself" is in detail.

Q: Robert Saltzman, I am saying you are your brain in your body as a coherent whole. The brain controls everything (by the virtue of the soul; I could explain this last sentence, but I have a feeling that you know already something about it, so maybe some other time. For now, I would say that spirituality has nothing whatsoever to do with Divine religion) so the brain also creates the sense of self, as you agreed. In that regard “myself” is real, like the brain is real, as part of the same system. You being your brain and asking “where is the you that controls that activity “, is a tautology [I could’ve called it nonsense, but I (brain) controlled it]. I am saying that brain, you, self, yourself, and Robert are all just synonyms. You are definitely smarter and more likable and more convincing than the other so-called “spiritual teachers/gurus/awakened” like Tolle, Spira, Adyashanti, Parsons, Newman, Sadhguru, Mooji, to list a few, and I think you agree that these kind of talks/books are a simple rephrasing of the same old nonsensical Hindu philosophy used as a source of profit (which is ok) from nothing more than a form of entertainment. I would add that if one enjoys this kind of entertainment, your talks/books are better than most of the new age/nondual writings, but it’s still only for entertainment. They do not point, and they cannot point to anything else. I think the real help with angst was done when you were providing professional therapy. Any comments, Robert?

A: Rostrinn, It is not my intention to "point" to anything. If you are looking for that kind of thing, look elsewhere. My words and images are purely self-expression. I have said this countless times.

I should not be bracketed with those people you mentioned. I find them boring. Excessive certainty is the mark of a second-rate mind. I find myself awake, and I am speaking from that

perspective. I have defined what I mean by awake. I do not mean "enlightened" or "selfrealized." What you make of that is not my problem. I don't care what you think of my work--my words and photographs. Some people love what share here. Others see it as transgressive, etc. That's not my problem.

Yes, I will comment. You came on with the notion that the whole brain *is* myself. I replied that if that were the case, then there would be no little "myself" apart from the brain to control anything or be "responsible." There would just be what arises without a doer and controller. Now you bring in the so-called "soul" which I suppose you imagine is an entity apart from the "whole brain," and is the "real" myself. Is that the latest, Rostrinn?

If you intend to make a religious argument, save your breath. I have scant interest in metaphysics including any discussion of non-material entities which can be imagined and believed in but not demonstrated.

Philosophy may be interesting, but its conjectures cannot be backed up with any solid evidence. Logic can be used to "prove" almost any proposition. In my view, the philosophy one embraces is "chosen" pre-logically and later, logic is used to justify the philosophy that best meets one's largely unknown needs and biases which express themselves mechanically as premature cognitive commitments defended by a filter of confirmation bias.

When I say that I find myself awake, I mean that I am free of attachments to unsubstantiated beliefs, such as claims that consciousness is real but the material world is not real or is less real, or assertions that the brain is the ultimate source of consciousness or it isn't. No one is in a position to know anything about all that, I say.

Q: Robert, about pointing, to be clear, I said: "they cannot point to anything else". So I did not say there is your intention to point, or that I am looking for anything like pointing, because I said there is no pointing possible. I said that your words and images, with or without your intention, are only a form of entertainment. I said the brain is yourself in your body, and you are as a coherent whole. It's not a little or a big separate myself. The brain is myself and is in control and is responsible. The brain is the doer and the controller. So there isn't just what arises. While it's true that logic can be used to prove almost any proposition, there is no way around that. Any language has an inbuilt logic system. In the end, all of the solid evidence melts in language. You say you find yourself awake and detached from unsubstantiated beliefs and not interested in entities that are not demonstrated or backed up by solid evidence. If you are "awake", how can you deny the obvious: you are the proof. You cannot get more solid evidence than that. Or you see yourself as some kind of machinery. If you take apart any machine and put it back together, it'll function again. If you are taken apart, "something" (this something has nothing to do with your little myself, or how you called it: the real myself) dies (or it leaves) and it's not possible any putting back together. Do you see the "difference" beyond the physicality of it? You were talking about things that can be imagined but cannot be demonstrated. If needed, I can also demonstrate the "difference".

A: Rostrinn OK. Go ahead. Demonstrate that (in the name of "entertainment.")

Q: Robert, firstly let's make sure we speak the same language; do you know any not-imagined entity (to use your term) which doesn't depend on time and space? Secondly, do you think that a psychological fact is solid evidence?

A: No. I do not know of any entity that does not depend on time and space. And you don't either. Believing--if you do--is not knowing. And a psychological fact is not evidence. It is a feature of how the human mind works. Just to be clear so you do not misunderstand me, an example of a psychological fact is confirmation bias.

Q: Correct, believing is not knowing. It's strange as a trained therapist psychologist you never come across a time/space non-dependent "entity"!! I continue with my demonstration: Robert, what do you know (not believe) about premonition? I am not talking about the cheap/fake street corner fortune-telling, I ask you about the Jungian kind.

REPLY

Robert Saltzman

• 2 days ago (edited)

@Rostrinn I think you go a bridge too far. Just because something cannot be explained naturalistically, currently, does not mean that one can simply assume a supernatural cause (what you called an "entity"). The supernatural cannot be ruled out, but certainly cannot be ruled in just because natural explanations for one phenomenon or another are lacking within our present state of scientific knowledge. If you disagree, that's fine, but then we are not talking about whether supernatural "entities" exist or don't exist, but only discussing our respective epistemological standards. About that, there is nothing to dispute. You will believe what you believe regardless of anything I say.

Q: Robert, I didn't say anything about a supernatural cause as you assumed. Anyway, at least you agreed it's nothing off the table. I asked you about any time/space non-dependent "entity" and you said you don't know of any. I know you are smart (I said that already), but maybe you tend a little to fool yourself, perhaps as a reaction to some art unfulfillment in the past, but definitely, you are not ignorant. I was surprised by your negative answer, as I know and you know, these psychological events are well "known" in the psychological field. This is what I called a psychological fact. I have a little story for you: Some years ago there were two friends and for a couple of years they were very close friends. For the first two years of medical school, they had numerous exams A-F system. For more than 15 exams (after that he stopped counting), she told him beforehand, his exact mark, with no mistake. She was just saying: "you know, tomorrow you'll get a B" or whatever the mark was. He asked how does she always guess so precisely, and she said she dreamed it. He thought it was a rare case of coincidence, but still a coincidence. What got him really thinking was when they went to visit a common friend in another city for the weekend, and before getting there she told him the TV in their room will have a cracked screen. He asked how can she know such a thing and it was the same reply: she dreamed it. It turned out the friend had a large party so they couldn't stay overnight. They got in the car and looked for a hotel. They got a room in a good/expensive hotel. When they got into

the room the TV had a big scratch (like 20 inches long) right in the middle of the screen. Even the hotel personnel were shocked because they never found a broken TV in their rooms (they said). Robert, do you know what are the odds of that, if any! And there were other incredible incidents that shocked all their friends. One day she told her friend Wendy: if you'll go to the opera you'll break your leg. Wendy was perplexed and said she didn't go to any opera in 4 years and had no plans of going soon. Turns out in a couple of days her boyfriend surprised her with an evening at the opera. Coming out after the show she tripped on the stairs and 4 long weeks of an ankle in a cast followed. At that point, the friends paid a visit to the university's professor of psychiatry. He has four more advanced degrees besides his bachelor's and many innovative contributions in his field. He is well recognized and has a big influence on the current practice of psychiatry. He concluded she was indeed capable of seeing ahead, and he added that these "facts" are well known in the medical field and no decent scientist can deny it. When they asked how can she see ahead, he said that parts (entities) of the intellect are not confined by time and space. Not to waste energy, before continuing with my demonstration, now that it's clearer, I'd like to know if you agree that some entities are not confined in time and space. You don't strike me as a dishonest person so I expect a straight answer.

A: Rostrinn, Honest answer: I don't know, It's not a simple question. Give this a look and get back to me.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/seancarroll/playlists>

Q: Robert, I viewed some Shaun YouTubes; he is a good scientist/speaker, but more boring than entertaining, and logically speaking he is wrong from the bat, as he excludes even scientific possibilities, leave alone fields outside of science scope. Dr. Francis Collins is a very good scientist/speaker too, but of a different caliber. My point is, the debates are endless, which is good for their busyness, but their arguments, no matter how many or sound they are, don't shed any light. I was demonstrating to you when you divagated, that even if we use just thinking/language, the only summit humanity can ever reach is Christianity. The true, direct, real path is through Grace. But it seems you deny the obvious imaginary nature of time/space, so our languages differ in an essential way. Therefore the demonstration which is a long, difficult logical thread would lose its comprehensibility. It appears it's not clear for you that even if all the science problems are solved, we don't even begin to touch the mystery of life. Anyway, as you see, as I said, the debate never ends, and more and more scientists with strong credentials are involved in this debate, and they don't convince anybody. So, for those with no granted access to the Truth, it's all a matter of choice. That being said, don't you find it's totally crazy (I mean it's a mental illness of a severe nature) to choose a natural universe, with pointless natural laws coming from nowhere and going to nowhere, a brutal chaotic universe, a world with no purpose, no free will, no higher justice ever, where your actions don't have even a trace of significance?

A: Rostrinn So you did not watch the video.

You don't seem to have much of an idea of how I see things. I have always emphasized the mystery of life in all my writing. For example, "No one knows what any of this is, how it got here, where it's headed. None of that."

I absolutely do not find anything "crazy" about living without believing in a world with an ultimate purpose. I find it a sign of a weak and/or frightened mind to demand that there be such a purpose even if one has to invent evidence for it. Your imagining that some people have been "granted access to (capital T) Truth" is a bizarre idea in my view.

Obviously, you imagine being one of those to whom such access has been granted. I find that sad and terribly limited.

I see no good reason to continue this conversation, Rostinn. I do not enjoy dialogues with people whose minds are already filled with unwarranted certainties. You are, of course, welcome to believe whatever you believe, even if, unfortunately, that includes believing that you have been "granted access to Truth." If you had even the foggiest idea of how I see these matters, you would know how foolish that sounds to my ear. I wish you well.