

Gururaj. Good. What shall we talk about this morning?

Questioner. The question belongs to Richard Sylvester but he has incapacitated himself. Could you explain what is meant in the Buddhist teachings by Nirvana, liberation and the void? How do these terms relate to enlightenment and unity? Are Buddhists correct in regarding Samadhi as a very minor step on the path to liberation?

Gururaj. Did any one of you hear that clearly, I couldn't?

Questioner. (Cont'd). Could you explain what is meant in Buddhist teachings by Nirvana, liberation and the void? How do these terms relate to enlightenment and unity? Are Buddhists correct in regarding Samadhi as a very minor step on the path to liberation?

Gururaj. I think I've got that. It's not the sound really, it's the accent. Could you explain – Narish, where are you going to?

Voice. (Inaudible)

Gururaj. Could you explain what is meant in Buddhist teachings by Nirvana, liberation and the void? How do these terms relate to enlightenment and unity? Are Buddhists correct in regarding Samadhi as a very minor step on the path to liberation? Did that sound better? (General laughter). We always start the morning with laughs. They all mean the same thing, really. What is the void? What is Nirvana? Nirvana is in Sanskrit to be nirvrit that means, you have taken leave of all the attachments that you have in life. You have become non-attached, like the old saying goes, in the world, but not of the world. That is Nirvana or Nirvriti. Now 'Vrittis' are composed of the samskaras in the mind, which are like waves and ripples that bubble up and down causing all the confusions in life and where ever there are confusions there are conflicts. And where ever there are conflicts there are problems. And where ever there are problems there are troubles. And where ever there are troubles there is unhappiness, and like that you can go on to miseries.

So to find Nirvana is to be rid of all the miseries of life. Now the miseries of life is really a mystery. Why should man be miserable? That is the question which people have found to be very mysterious because everyone thinks he is so self-righteous, 'I am never wrong!' That is the attitude people have that I am never wrong. And if something does go

wrong, of course there's always others to blame, for what went wrong. So the first step would be to acknowledge the factor that whatever misery there is in life, I have played a part in being miserable, because I feel miserable. If I have not played any part in this misery then I would not be miserable and that is the real meaning of non-attachment. Non-attachment would also mean that, although you are playing a part in the scheme in the pattern of life, you have extricated yourself from it and this sounds paradoxical, yet playing a part in life and being apart from life could be simultaneous.

So when a person is alive, embodied, and could be a part of life, and yet totally apart from it, then you are regarded to be liberated, liberated from the sufferings of life. Because nothing could hurt you, nothing could harm you. Because you have that inborn stability. You have created, acknowledged and realised self-realisation. Realised that all this is but just a play like actors on a stage. And you take the part of Hamlet. You are not really Hamlet. You are playing a part. When that realisation dawns on man, then he has the realisation and that realisation in turn means, that although I play the part of Hamlet, I am not Hamlet, it is just the mind and the body that is performing the part. But I, the eternal spirit is forever free, and that freedom is liberation. So what man strives to do in this world while he is embodied he tries to be free, he tries to be liberated from what, from all the sufferings in life. That means he has to rise above the laws of opposites we discussed last night. And the reward is this, that you are forever happy, for once you indulge, you're forever joyous, that's the better word, for once you indulge in pleasures, you can be sure to know that there will be pain, because the higher you go on the one side of the seesaw, the lower on the other side and life becomes but a pendulum. And yet that pendulum is required for this clock of the world to run.

Now to find the stillness in the motion, there lies the art of life, that the pendulum swings and yet you are still. Now this is not a good analogy, but the essence, the gist of it is, that you are standing still and yet moving about. So you'd enjoy the temporary pleasures and pains but behind that, there is an ever-lasting peace a foundation, a togetherness, an integration. That though you are mixed up in this play of the opposites, you know your centre and even in the play of the opposites, you function from the centre. That means you are established in self, the big self and you allow the little self to play and sway like the pendulum. That is realising that you are essentially Divine. When that realisation occurs, when those thoughts go from the mind level to the heart level, an assimilation occurs. The mind and the body and somewhat the opening of the heart is the food that you have received. But the value of the food lies only when the food is digested, assimilated in your body, that it becomes the marrow of your bones, and the blood that flows through your body. It permeates every cell of your body. So with this kind of assimilation, one truly can stand still and allow the world to move about. Like that beautiful poem by Rudyard Kipling. 'If I can keep my head, while the world loses theirs'. Something like that, you know it all. Good.

So that is a state, that man reaches, and in this state a great tranquillity comes about in the mind. A beautiful freedom is felt in the body, and yet you might be plagued with cancer or any terminal disease and yet you do not care because your attention is not directed to that which had not been looked after well before. But now it is not important anymore. Like the greatest Sages that lived at the turn of the century, Ramakrishna, Sri Ramana, they all had cancer. Some of the modern gurus I know personally are severe diabetics. A few, because of the great tensions they go through, so therefore I doubt their guruhood, have ulcers and all kinds of things. But yet they do somewhat, to some measure rise above that, so the attention is shifted from the body and the mind. Shifting the attention means where are we placing the greatest amount of emphasis? Today our emphasis is just on what the mind and body feels. That is where the emphasis is.

So if the emphasis is shifted to a higher level, and that is the aim of our organisation, is to develop a greater awareness and in developing this greater awareness, the emphasis automatically and very spontaneously goes to the spirit, the unchanging spirit which is unruffled by the play of the mind and body or the little ego-self. And then we come to realise that I am not the centre of the universe. I might have a splitting headache, so what, why must I make all those around me miserable, because I am miserable. I say that because the emphasis is on me as the centre of everything. And that is where all kinds of problems begin. A little thing happens at the office and you blame everybody around in the office. 'Oh they are not treating me right, they over work me and they do this and that to me'. Don't I perhaps deserve that? How congenial have I been? Have I been so loving, that I could become loveable? You see. So we change emphasis there to, that we put the emphasis on the object, instead of the subject. But that is putting the emphasis in the wrong place. Now it requires the same amount of energy to change that emphasis, in saying, 'Look, these people might be right, they're not all fools, perhaps, I'm the fool'. And by that realisation, one takes oneself away from the thought of being the centre of everything, away from the thought, that I am important and nothing else.

We find it daily in the streets. Your car stalls and you'll find fifty cars behind you honking - that's the American word, isn't it - hooting. I'm so confused flying up and down across the Atlantic. Yes, they start hooting because they are in a hurry. They might not be in a hurry at all, to reach anywhere. But their nervous condition is such that they have lost all patience and here genuinely might be stuck in the middle of the road. Instead of jumping out of the car and asking to assist, no, they'll hoot! Yes. But what will happen to them is this, they have got to pay for that karma and when they reach that place, they are going to have all those hootings amplified a hundred times in their ears. (General laughter)

Now of course I'm referring to the place where they could say there is a lot of fire and its burning hot and all that. Now please don't ask me about heaven or hell, because I've got friends in both places. (Gururaj laughs)

So what we have to do is get away from ourselves. Troubles we have but with the emphasis we create mountains out of molehills, we do that. We have that tendency because we regard ourselves to be so, so important. And it is that sense of self importance that magnifies, amplifies our problems. And these are not problems. These are not problems at all. Look at what is happening around in the universe, all these vast explosions that are occurring every moment of the day in this great infinite vastness, creation and destruction, creation preservation and destruction going on all the time. So you stub your toe, what the hell, you see. So once we take the emphasis off ourselves then automatically the emphasis would be placed on the real self, the real doer. And if you do not place the emphasis on the real self, or the real doer, then be sure to know you are just done. You've had it! So, now when we learn and really realise and assimilate this principle of putting the emphasis on the real doer, thy will be done kind of thing, then all our problems are viewed in a proper perspective. Our attitudes change and we bring mountains into molehills, because they are not so important. And that is self-realisation. And that is liberation. You are liberated from bondage, the bondage of the karma that you have brought with you.

Now you can carry on lugging that bag on your shoulder, it is not necessary; we reduce the weight in the bag. We throw away attachment after attachment and even that throwing away of the attachments, becomes such a joy, becomes a great joy, for the burden becomes lighter, and lighter and lighter. And when we are free from attachments then we are truly liberated. That does not mean we can live in some Alpine or Himalayan cave, no. We are householders and we live as householders in the world, amidst all of the problems of the world, and not be shaken. And do you know you are doing this all the time without realising it.

If you take a walk in Piccadilly Circus, all the noise that is there, all the noise. Now if you had to pay attention to all the noise of that heavy traffic and if your ears could take in all that noise there, you'd be driven stark mad, crazy. Yes. But you don't, you know it exists around you and you walk on through Shaftesbury Avenue, or name some streets. And although you are midst all this noise, it does not bother you, unless of course you have some nervous problem, that's a different question, we are not talking of pathological cases. So all that is about you and yet you pleasantly walk down the road and perhaps peep in a window or two, and say, 'Ah, that's a lovely dress, now lets see if I can get my hubby to buy it'.

So if we can do this in daily life, in everything, in everything. You are on a farm and the tractors are going up and down, and yet your mind is so involved in a deep philosophical question. How beautiful? The tractors are there and yet that they are not there. You're moving through dense traffic bumper to bumper, and I know of some people, that drive through these busy streets of England, of London especially, and they have a lovely tape going, and the mind is so involved in that tape, on some talk perhaps, or some lovely music. They do that and by doing that, taking their attention to something better, you don't feel that bumper to bumper ride, it does not affect you. So like that in everything in life, we are doing this. But when it comes to the most important thing, we do not do it. Every little headache assumes a greatest proportion in life.

So here, when we free our-selves through understanding, an understanding is gained, through an integrated personality, which our practices bring about, then we find freedom in bondage and bondage in freedom. You are still bound but free, you are free and still the other way around. That is liberation. When the Buddhists talk of Nirvana, they mean the same thing, is to still the mind. Now stilling the mind is something very much misunderstood. Many people believe that when they do meditations, the mind must become a total blank, there must be no thoughts at all in the mind. Now that is not meditation. You can achieve that state by being conked on the head with a five-pound hammer. (General laughter) Yes. Yes, yes. In meditation, thoughts are necessary. If you make your mind a vacuum, you will become mindless and won't be able to exist. I'm not talking of the mindlessness of Zen Buddhism but I am talking of that senselessness, and you won't be able to exist. So in meditation, thoughts are necessary. Don't push them out. The harder you try to push them out the more they will come.

The idea is when you sit in that silence, with your mantra, you allow the thoughts to come and go. You are not involved in the thoughts; you become a spectator of the thoughts, like watching a cinema screen. And when you sit watching the cinema screen, your body and mind becomes relaxed. The only thing is that in a cinema, people identify themselves with the character on the stage. They go and watch James Bond and when they come out they feel like James Bond, not that, not that, not that. But to watch it, watch the thoughts of the mind, for that too is a cinema screen, nothing else but a screen upon which is superimposed the projection of old memories, old samskaras, while the screen underlying that, is forever white, clean. And the old samskaras through the mechanism of the inner projector, the ego, reflects and projects itself on that screen and you go into a tizzy, because you become attached to those thoughts.

The purpose of meditation is to have the thoughts and view the thoughts objectively, and when the thoughts start running too much and too wildly, gently you take your mind to your vibration, which is your mantra, which has a unifying

effect. And as you identify yourself more and more with your mantra, the more would your thought become objective, rather than subjective. So on the reports - sorry this is going off track of the talk, but I think, this was important. I have read many of the report forms and in some of them they say, 'Oh, I just can't get the thoughts away from my mind'. They come. Don't get them away, they have to be there. Your mind would be dead if they were there, you would not be alive. Thoughts are necessary for meditation. It is only when you reach the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where there are no thoughts at all, but the mind is awakened, dissolved into the entire universe, where the communion takes place, where nothing else exists, neither the body, neither the mind, but the ever effulgent, pure spirit shines on its own. And it is not dependent upon the body and the mind, and that is far, far away. We don't want that yet. No, or else everyone will become ascetics and we want the world to function. Some will reach there; some will reach that stage, one in about a hundred million. Not bad, not bad at all! Good. What we want is to make this life pleasurable, and joyful and trouble free, and closer and closer to Divinity, 'Lead thou me on.' One step at a time is enough for me. You see.

So when the Buddhists talk of Nirvana, this is exactly the same thing that they mean. And through Nirvana, the state is reached of the void and that, that Nirvikalpa Samadhi, nothingness. I think I said it here, that, that nothingness is here. That nowhere is now here. Do you see the similarity in the spelling, nowhere and now here is spelt the same way? Right. And that we want to experience here, never mind the nowhere. It's all here, now here. For when we merge away in the subtlest stable energy, the basis of all existence, the Impersonal God, indefinable and that is the void that is spoken about and in actuality this is just a figure of speech. There is no such thing as void. Nirvikalpa Samadhi, when we experience nothing else but Divinity itself, mind and body is gone, a total Prathyara, total withdrawal of the senses through Dhyana and Dharyana and then Samadhi. Then that could be called a void, but it is a void-less void. I might have told you this story or perhaps there are many here that might not have heard of it. Chela goes to the guru - what time do you want me to end? You want to do some photography, don't you?

Voice. Twenty to

Gururaj. Twenty to. Oh ten minutes. Ah bravo. So this chela goes to the guru, this student goes to the guru and says 'Explain me what this void is all about'. So the guru said, 'You see that tree over there, go fetch one of those fruits growing on the tree'. He did that. He says, 'Now open the fruit'. He opened the fruit. 'Take out the seed'. He took out the seed. 'Open up the seed'. And when that seed was opened, there was nothing there within the seed. So he says, 'That which you see has nothing, is everything. That subtle energy, in that seed, which is so empty, that subtle energy has concretised itself into the shell of the seed and the seed has made this tree grow. So that which you perceive as

nothing is everything'. They talk of the no mind state. It's a very beautiful expression. The mindless or no mind state, where the mind exists and yet it is beyond existence. In other words, it speaks of different dimensions, that in a certain dimension, the body and mind must exist. That very same energy in the mind is of a subtler nature, than the energy that composes the body. It is made of the same substance. It's a matter of degree of subtlety or grossness.

But there is an area that impersonal area, which is beyond, which transcends the entire mind and the body, and that state can be described as the void, the all-encompassing void, that is the basis of all existence. So what are we to do? That is why, that is why Buddhas are created. That is why Krishnas are created. That is why the personal Gods are created, because a personal God, an incarnation, a certain radiance, a certain electrical charge, if you wish to call that, an auric emanation as the occultists would say, so does, so does a town, so does a city, so does a country and so does the world. And all these worlds put together in this solar system also emanates, radiates something and like that, the galaxy does. And all the galaxies put together forms the universe and the universe itself also radiates a certain force, the ultimate force, the combination of it all and that is the personal God, which is at the finest relative. And it is this very energy at the finest relative that incarnates from time to time. So a Buddha, or a Krishna or a Christ is the sum-totality of the radiation of this universe. And the sum-totality of this radiation is the manifestation of the Manifestor. See it works in two ways. The Manifestor manifests this subtle energy and the universe forms a radiation, which is but the same. And that is the Buddha.

So when we talk of the void, we talk we talk of something totally abstract, for the Impersonal God is abstract, while the personal God is concrete because the personal God is of a grosser energy than the Impersonal God. Now here when we talk of a grosser energy, it is far, far more subtler than our comprehension of it. So it has to grossify itself, through various processes into a greater and greater and greater grossness until man's mind, man's senses could hear, see, touch, feel, smell and understand. You see the level from where it all comes. See the level from where Buddha and Krishna and Christ from time to time, from where they come. They bring on earth the sum-totality of the entire universe and yet in their ordinariness, they have within themselves the entire universe, the entire subtleties of the universe, as well as the embodied grossness.

So these voids we talk about is an area that can be reached after one reaches that consciousness, that pure consciousness that represents the entire emanation of the universe. That is the pure consciousness, and once one reaches the pure consciousness, there is still that individualisation involved at a very fine level. So the Buddha, or the Christ or Krishna still has that very fine, thin film of a sense of individuality and yet knowing simultaneously the universality

of it all. And those great Masters have the choice of merging away into the void or being born again, again and again in different forms and shapes and sizes, in different times and climes. They come to teach, to bring this message home. For the void, the impersonal is too neutral and that is why the personal Gods are there, to whom that love and devotion is given. And when you give that love and devotion to the personal God, you are not doing him a favour, he doesn't need it. You are doing that, so that you develop the love and devotion within yourself. In other words, that God, that personal God is just an object, whereby you could bring out from yourself that love that is within you, that devotion that is within you. And in its train, in its train, you also bring out all the virtues, that man should have to make his life beautiful, kindness, compassion and all those virtues. And when these virtues are in abundance then negativities disappear on their own. We don't need to probe into these negativities that we have. We don't need to examine that bundle we have brought with us, and carrying on our backs. We only need to feel that it is heavy, and how can I live and act and think in life, to decrease the weight of the bundle. For if you open up that sack of samskaras that you carry around with you, you'd get the fright of your life. Yes. Yes.

Many people come to me - 'Who was I in my past life?' So this one person came to tell me that and I felt like I pull his leg. I said, 'You know killed twenty-seven people. You were a very vile murderer'. From that day he stopped asking that question. (General laughter) He wanted to hear of course, he was some great Pharaoh or some great King, he was some Mr Big. So therefore God has given man this priceless gift of forgetting. You can't even remember what you did last Saturday at this particular time. Right. You can't. You can't remember what you did on this very date five years ago, ten years ago, you can't, unless it was some experience where you just met someone that you later married and she keeps that memory alive in you. (General laughter) But you don't remember. And we are all guilty of that, we forget important anniversaries until we get subtly reminded of it. And they do it well, it's an art. Nevertheless it is the greatest gift God has given us is to be able to forget. Ain't God good? He sure is! Would you like to join the chorus? You just say it as loud as you can. Ain't God good?

Group. He sure is!

Gururaj. Ain't God good?

Group. He sure is!

Gururaj. Ain't God good?

Group. He sure is.

Gururaj. Namaste.

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