

Gururaj. Here in England it feels like coming home. Some of you I met at Nottingham University and those that I hadn't seen there, it is so lovely seeing you here. It's a joy to be shared being together and that joy stems from a source which is beyond man's mind. It stems from an infinite source to the infinity of what life is all about. I'm happy to be here with you. Good. Now let us hear some of your earth-shattering, philosophical questions.

Questioner. How does discernment differ from judging? We have been told not to judge, yet, to me, discernment is practising constant judgement - 'This is good, keep it; this is bad, discard it. It was Shankara's way, but the Zen way of acceptance of polarity, that is acceptance of both pairs of opposites, seems more in keeping with Jesus' teachings, and with present day thought. Would you care to comment on this subject?

Gururaj. I would like to, but could I ask you what you really mean by discernment?

Questioner. Discrimination, as Shankara described in 'The Crest Jewel of Wisdom'.

Gururaj. Yes. Right. Beautiful question. When it comes to a philosophical question, one has to be very careful about words, because there are different shades of meaning, and because of these different shades of meaning, one could really speak of something entirely different. The Scriptures say 'Judge ye not that ye be judged', while Shankara would say that 'Have discrimination, let the intellect function in such a manner that you would be able to discern between good and bad, or draw that which could be most applicable to the situation'. Now in this process there is a certain amount of judgement involved, because without knowing what the matter is all about, how could one discriminate? Now are you getting me well over there? Fine. Good.

Now without knowing what issue there is at hand, how could one discriminate? So, although discrimination and judgement might seem paradoxical, they could be well married and could supplement each other. For the basis of discrimination is to be able to use the intellect at such a level, using the left hemisphere of the brain, which thinks, which evaluates and when it fails in words, it will use symbols to interpret what it sees, what it hears. It would interpret the impulses brought to it by the five senses. But now, this is not the end if it all because as we all know the senses could be very deluding. You might see something and really not see anything. Shankara's most well known analogy is, that to see the snake in a rope and the rope in the snake. The rope is lying there in semi-darkness and you pass it and you think it's a snake. All the time it is just a rope. So now, who is seeing what? Our minds are seeing the rope, but is the rope seeing

you? And how does it judge you? You know the old story of 'I dreamt I was a butterfly', but wasn't perhaps the butterfly dreaming that I was a man. Good. Fine. That's an old Zen story by the way.

So, now naturally the rope cannot see you, so naturally the rope hasn't got the power of discernment. It cannot discriminate who is passing me, is it an animal? Is it man? Is it a woman? But the man can discriminate, why? Because he has thinking ability, he has the ability, he has the ability of intellect, he has the ability of analysis. And because of this ability he could discriminate between ordinary things in life for that matter, and not necessarily high philosophical concepts. But now here, Shankara saw the rope as a snake. Why did he see the rope as a snake in the first place? This proves one thing only, that he was looking at the rope with a conditioned mind. His mind because of association of ideas would equate, or see the rope as a snake. Perhaps the dominant idea in his mind, perhaps the situation would have been such that there would be snakes around those forests and jungles where Shankara roamed around. So, automatically his mind associated the rope with a snake. So it was a conditioned reflex of the mind, of the intellect, whereby he saw this and he saw it wrongly. So, therefore a patterned mind, a conditioned mind would be a biased mind. So, now if the mind is biased in any way whatsoever, then it has no right to judge. So here is the opposition which we will try and bring together just now. Fine.

So now when Shankara saw the snake, there was another part of his mind which started functioning. It was at first an impulse carried through the organs of the eyes, to a mechanical part of his brain that received the impulses. But that was not enough, because that could not form a judgement, it still had to go further to that portion which weighs the pros and cons, and which we know as the intellect. So here we have the eyes, we have the organ of the brain, Jnana Sattva is the Sanskrit name for it. But the organ of the brain, but still through the brain, which is only but a physical organ, it has to reach that perception, has to reach a still finer level, the level of the intellect which started weighing, almost automatically is this a rope or a snake. Now in this case it did not really weigh and it passed it on to the judge that is sitting within you, the small judge, should it be a little magistrate rather, or third grade magistrate, the small 'i'. So, what is now really conditioned? The small 'i' is conditioned in accepting that piece of rope as a snake. And so the small 'i', being conditioned and being a repository of all the experiences gained in this life, or many lifetimes past associated immediately the rope immediately, with a snake. And here the ego, Ahunkar, we call it in Sanskrit, passed the message back to the intellect, 'Thank you very much, we've received your brief and this is what I, the ego, have judged it to be, that it is a snake'. Those impulses are sent to the organ of perception in the brain, the left hemisphere of the brain and the decision had already been made, that this is a snake. So, the little ego self is the one that judges. And the little ego self is forever

chained, bound, bound within its own boundaries, bound within its own impressions, its own samskaras, and its own experiences. But then, how come Shankara, a moment later, discovered that 'No, I've made a mistake. This is rope?'

So there again the same process went through. So here from perception, it led to a conception. And then the concept reversed the whole procedure, and it started all over again in saying, in re-judging the situation that this is a rope. Now, who judged it to be a rope? Also the small 'i' judged it to be a rope. It might have just well have been a shadow. It might not have been a snake, neither a rope, just a shadow. So therefore, the small 'i' in man is subjected - God bless you (someone sneezes) - is subjected to all kinds of illusions and the greatest illusion that the small 'i' could ever create for itself is the illusion of self-identity. Now a person must have that individuality. A person must recognise his individuality. Good, fine. And we know that individuality exists within a certain limit or else that individuality is limited. What we are trying to achieve, through our meditational and spiritual practices is this, that, that little 'i' is but non-apart from the big 'I'. There is the real judge, not the third grade magistrate. So when we start on our spiritual practices, what we do is, we expand the little 'i'. And the expansion of the little 'i' in us means we develop a greater awareness. And as man's awareness develops, so does his little 'i' expand.

On the Teachers' Course last week, I told them that we do not want to annihilate the little 'i', because everything in existence is indestructible. Everything changes form and shape but the essence of it is always indestructible. The analogy we commonly use is water vapour, water, ice. Three different things, one is barely tangible, one is liquid, one is a solid block, but yet, the underlying principle H₂O remains the same all the time. So, therefore it is only a change of the same substance, the same matter, the same energy, which condenses itself from a subtler level to a grosser level and that is what all this whole Universe is about, that from the subtlest energies, from total sub-atomic, and even sub, sub, sub, sub-atomic matter, this entire Universe expanded into the grossness that we see around us, into things that are really tangible. So from the intangible, through the process of evolution, all tangibility has come. Now we are stuck with this tangibility. And the one, the thing, as far, as far as a human being is concerned, that keeps up the concept of name and form is non-else but the ego.

Now we cannot annihilate the ego, it is indestructible, but we can expand it. Like a piece of rubber that we can stretch and stretch and stretch until it becomes transparent. If it is unstretched, it is opaque, the light cannot shine through it, but sufficiently stretched it assumes that clarity whereby the full light if the judge within, the Kingdom of Heaven within, that, the fullness of that light through the ego self, through the Individual Self that is really the ego. The window is clean, spotless and the light shines through in full force and the light is so powerful that the glass is not even noticed and

yet it exists. So, this means that individuality can co-exist with Universality. So man, living as an individual being can still find within himself the real 'I', the real Kingdom of Heaven and thereby, though having individual limitations can live in that silence, that peace, that joy of the Universe.

So Shankara could have seen the rope and the snake simultaneously. For what differentiation is there between the snake and the rope? Shankara looked at the surface value. Now Shankara was supposed to be one of India's greatest philosophers. He saw the surface value. Of course this analogy was used in the description of illusion, in the description of Maya. I'm using it in a totally different way. Shankara saw the surface value firstly, the object as a snake and then thereafter, with a certain kind of realisation, he saw it as a rope. And because he saw the surface value of things with his little ego self, he started in forming judgements, and his discriminatory powers told him what it was all about. But, the question is this, if he had to dive deeper within the snake or the rope and saw the essence there, he would find the unified state of life, for even the rope has life. Every atom is a universe unto itself with millions of electrons or what-have-you's swirling around the nucleus.

Everything is alive. There is nothing that is dead. Anything which you think is mundane, is alive. Things which you think are inanimate, really is animate, for death can never exist. Only life has existence. Things that seem inanimate might be existing in a much grosser form. Like a stone, you say the stone is dead, yet when the stone is analysed, you will find the whole universe is within the stone forever rotating and revolving all the time. And that very motion is created by that very Life Force, by that judge, by that Universal Power, by that Divine Energy. That Divine Energy is in the stone. How can we call the stone, say that the stone is dead? It is alive, if we can see the life in it. Shankara saw the surface value of the snake and the rope, but if he had seen deeper, he'd have seen life in the rope, and life in the snake and seeing life in either of his perceptions, he would have found - it is the same life that exists in the rope and in the snake, in a different form. But the essence is the same. And when he had discovered the essence is the same, he would have not judged. There discrimination ends.

So, powers of discrimination are useful, they are a necessary tool in man's evolution, for without discrimination man would not be man, he would be an animal. The only difference is that man can think and he can reason, he can discriminate. That makes him a man. So, he has reached one rung higher than the animal, one step further in the path of evolution. Therefore he's a man and he uses mostly, the left hemisphere of his brain. What we are trying to do, is to awaken the right hemisphere that contains all the intuitive qualities that are inherent within man. In other words, we can, through Spiritual Practices, attain that force, that power whereby we could intuit, in a sense of knowingness, we know.

The boy asked his girl friend 'You say you love me, why do you love me?' So, she says, 'You're handsome, you're nice looking, you're gentle, so kind, so all those things'. Immediately this man, this boy had some wisdom, he said, 'You really don't love me. You only love the surface that is me. You have perceived my looks, you like the way I walk, I talk, I do this, I do that. But as soon as your analysis has come into play, you have stopped loving me, for your love for me is at a low level. It is at the level of the mind. That is the love you have for me. The love I want is from the level of the heart that knows no analysis.' Because as soon as you start analysing love, love ceases. It becomes a mental function rather than a heart function.

So to repeat again, by meditational and spiritual practices we open up that area within us, that vast area within us, we open it, so that it's power, in the form of that intangible quality called love could infiltrate, could permeate, could come through the thinking sector of the brain. So we use the brain as an organ. Now there is a certain amount of co-ordination between the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. There has to be or else man cannot exist. But although there being co-ordination, the fullest, or the proper amount of energy is not flowing through. That means the co-ordination is not complete. So, through meditation, we awaken this area within us which interprets itself through the right hemisphere of the brain, meaning that very subtle intangible quality assumes a grosser form to be able to transmit itself through an organ, so that the inner self of man can be expressed through his grosser physical self. That is the process.

So, when that inner self of man starts filtering through and starts permeating the discriminatory level of the brain then it stops judging. It does not judge. What it does is accepts. I love you, therefore I accept you. I accept you, therefore I love you. We can turn and twist Descartes into pieces. Any students of philosophy here? Well I haven't studied either, so you're in good company. I only talk of experience and what I've learned through this process of evolution.

So, now discrimination is necessary to live a life usefully or perhaps the other way round, but if that discrimination is empowered with the other quality of the heart, where the mind and the heart could join hands, life could become so much richer, richer to the extent where the individual can experience and live the universal, and the whole universe could be contained within that one grain of sand. Blake has said, to experience eternity in an hour, but he was slightly mistaken, experience eternity in a moment, here and now. That is the experience. That is the goal of life man has to strive for and eventually everyone must and that is what is called Self Realisation, God Realisation, Cosmic Consciousness, Unity Consciousness, all kinds of consciousnesses, that is the process. But what we are interested in here and now is worldly

consciousness, where the discriminatory powers are used, and used in such a way where we do not judge. My discrimination tells me that John is a bad man, he committed so many vile acts, he did this and he did that and he did that, and he even stole the candy from the baby's mouth. My discrimination tells me that. I weigh the pros and cons and I start judging. And my judgement is this, that John, or Jack or whoever, you name it, is a bad person, is not a good person. I am not entitled to judge, because how good am I? And if a judgement has to be passed, then what am I using? What instrument am I using to judge?

Now my perception or conception of the other person, is it not just a reflection of my own mind? I see hatred in you, is it perhaps a hatred of myself in my own mind? I see you to be a thief, is it perhaps that I within myself am a thief? Is it not just a reflection of my own personality, my own mind, my own my own past which I am projecting on someone else? Yet I have failed to understand the motivation of the person's act. What is the truth behind any action? The truth behind any action is motivation. Yes. I would slap a child, what is the motive behind it? Is the motive to hurt the child? Or is the motive to teach the child, for slapping that child is hurting me more than what it hurts the child? And yet the observer would see, oh, he has slapped the child. How cruel he is? So who am I to judge the inner motivations that underlies the act. Therefore, judge ye not. Do unto others as you would expect to be done unto thyself. Judge not others so that you be judged, which is great principle, but it is also supplementary to discrimination. Now, how to improve our powers of discrimination, that is the question, what do they say in America? Sixty-Four Thousand-Dollar question. Nirmilla comes from America. Yes.

Proper discrimination can only come about by expanded awareness. I walk through a little street of Derby and it might seem a dirty street to me, buildings are old and drab and brown and grey specially on a wet day, it still looks more drabber. But sometimes I wonder why they don't paint these houses in bright colours in these dull days, I'm just wondering, it's no judgement! Yes. Now I see the street to be drab but taking a drive over the moors, how beautiful that little town looked down there. Because I had a vaster view from that height, how lovely it seemed. If I was an artist I would ask the driver to stop and I'd paint a picture. How beautiful, why? Because we are looking at it from a wider perspective, from a greater height and all the heights are within ourselves. So, because our vision is limited being in that little street, we would only see some old dirty buildings and some dirt lying around but reaching a certain height you'd see the entirety of it. You see the panoramic view of it and how beautiful it seems?

So, to be able to exercise one's discrimination in the proper and right way, one has to have a developed awareness. And by developing awareness, it is synonymous as saying, expanding the ego self, for without expansion of the ego self,

awareness cannot develop. And when our awareness is developed to a certain extent, then we look at things not from one angle only, we have a view of all the angles. If I stand outside this building, I will only see that wall, but if I can climb up higher enough, I will see the building as a whole. And when I see the building as a whole, it will help me not to pass judgements. Because I see only the one wall, I say, 'Oh, it's this, it's that, it's that.' But if I can stand high up within myself, my whole perspective of life changes. And that is what meditation and spiritual practices do in practical living because a million pounds in weight of philosophy is not worth one single ounce of practice.

So what we have to do is take the highest philosophies of the world, the basis of all religions as our Symbol points out and find the basis, the basic truth behind all the concepts that exist in the world. And that is what we stand for. And to be able to understand the basis of these concepts, we have to develop our awareness. And how to develop the awareness is by meditation and spiritual practices. And when our awareness is developed, our discrimination becomes fine, it assumes a far finer value and having a panoramic view, it will stop us from making judgements. So here the power of discrimination will help you in the precept, judge ye not that ye be judged. So here the oppositeness disappears and oneness comes about. Polarity is gone and we have reached the centre. For what is polarity actually? Polarity is a seesaw, that's all up and down, up and down. But when we reach the centre, it remains still.

So, by spiritual practices, we are coming together, the two selves of ourself, of the thinking mind and the intuitive self, the rational mind and the feeling-intuitive mind is combining joining hands. And when they really do join hands, to put it simpler, mind and heart join hands, then we come to the centre of ourselves. And at the centre, there is no imbalance, there's no up and there's no down, it just is. And you're centred. What is to judge? Then what can you judge? There's no polarity. It is the polarity of things that wants to make you judge, because once you're up, you'll judge it differently, and once your down on the see-saw, you'll have a different view of it altogether. So your own thoughts, your own discrimination will make you see these same object differently depending where you are standing. So, discrimination on its own, the power of rationalisation is not totally reliable. That little extra inner quality has to be added to the reasoning faculty. And that is where science falls down. Theirs is a pure mechanical judgement. They want, as I said to someone the other day who was having a talk with me, that science can never capture the essence in a test tube, because they do not realise that the essence in a test tube is the same essence as the test tube. So, here polarity ceases, here all duality ceases, because the basis of discrimination is duality and the wonderful instrument of discrimination can be used to proceed from duality to unity. From diversity to unity. So everything in life can be used usefully, beneficially. Now what do we mean by benefit?

Integrated manner where mind, heart and spirit functions as a totality, as oneness, that is what we want. Sometimes people come with arguments, 'Is there a God, or this that or the other?' I say, that you find out for yourself. But what I would like you to do, is to live a life in such a way, where there's great joy and happiness. Did Jesus not say 'Be of good cheer'? Find that, find that essence and by finding that essence, finding that harmony, you will stop asking that question 'Is there a God?' Your question is automatically answered for that beautiful harmony is divinity itself. But man's mind's wrongly used. With discrimination, now discrimination is like a knife you give it to a Teddy Boy, he'll hurt someone, give it to a surgeon, and he'll save someone's life with an operation. So discrimination can work both ways. But what men mostly does is he fragments, he uses the knife to cut, to dissect, instead of bringing it to a wholeness.

So discrimination used in the right way can lead man to his real inner self. Now discrimination is also, according to Shankara, the basis of Jnana Yoga, which means the Yoga of knowledge, where you use discrimination, you study various philosophies and you always end up by saying, 'Neti, neti, neti. Not this, not this, not this'. You find one answer and then as you study the answer, half a dozen other questions will crop up. And when you find the answer to those half a dozen questions, another dozen will crop up. Where does one end? Because here we are functioning with only a part of ourselves, and not in totality. So with discrimination every conception or perception we have we come to the stage where we say, 'Not this, not this, not this'. We discard and take on another thought, another philosophy and when that too reaches its end and we discard that. And like that it goes on and on and on until the man gets tired of discriminating.

That is the purpose of Jnana Yoga. That is the purpose of Zen, a certain form of Zen where you throw discrimination to the winds, because you have now reached beyond discrimination and in a region of no mind, in a region where you just know and that is not knowledge, that is wisdom. Knowledge is something which is acquired. Any person can acquire knowledge. You read, you read, you read and if you have a good retentive mind, good memory, you can be a living encyclopaedia. Anyone can achieve that. That's acquired knowledge. What we want is that inner knowingness which is wisdom. Good. Now when a person has, or achieves a certain amount of wisdom in life then harmony starts growing within him. The mind, body spirit functions as a totality, for wisdom can never dawn if there is no totality. So as totality increases, as the integration increases, wisdom increases. And that is the quality that man could acquire, by, - acquire, is the wrong word - but, could dawn upon man through his spiritual practices which aims towards integrating oneself into a wholeness and that you experience as love, as light, as joy, as bliss. Indescribable, ineffable. To be experienced.

So here discrimination cannot give you the experience. Discrimination reaches a point where it yearns for experience and after all the discrimination of Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of knowledge ceases. You get tired. You throw it all to winds and then devotion begins within you. Then something surges up, a yearning surges up within you spontaneously that you want to become one with something that is higher than you, greater than you, and there starts the beginning of that fountain of joy. For that yearning itself is joy. The attaining must be just as joyful as attainment. So when, after all the discrimination and all the wrong judgements we have made because of the misuse of this gift of discrimination, we too have to reach a stage where we throw discrimination to one side and then the heart starts opening up wanting to merge away. Into what the mind will ask, what as I to merge away into? But the heart will reply, who cares? Who cares that I'm going to merge away into, but I know what I'm experiencing, I'm experiencing joy. I'm experiencing bliss. I'm experiencing the power of that infinite energy. So mind shut up, go home. You see. So that's the stage and love expands and grows. It is very easy to say 'Judge ye not that ye be judged'.

It's so simple to say, but so difficult to do, because you can only stop judging if you can really love. Love never judges, it just loves. It just is. Then when that mergence takes place you just are and then you know the true meaning of that injunction, 'I am that I am'. So beautifully said, 'I am that I am' or in Sanskrit it is said, 'Brahmas Me'. I and Brahma are one. I and my Father are one. That is the mergence. That is the joy. That is the end and aim and yet the beginning of real life. That is life. Ah beautiful, beautiful. I'm not rising up am I? (General laughter) Even to talk about it. We are not talking of it, we're only talking about it and even that sends up surges of energies through the body so that even the ends of your toes and fingers tingle. Only talking about it. And as we progress through meditational practices, you experience it. That is the idea.

Man must experience what life is all about, what Divinity is all about. Man must experience it and all the philosophies and all the discriminations cannot touch it, can not touch it. It's like explaining colour to a person that's born blind. You can explain him all the constituents of what makes blue and how you could mix yellow and blue to make green and all kinds of things like that. You can explain the beauty of a flower and what its fragrance is like, but you have to smell it to know it. Yes, you can explain, analyse in the laboratory you know all the chemical components of sugar, but what do we know of sugar if we don't taste the sweetness. For sugar is there for the sweetness and not for laboratory examination. You see?

So that is where discrimination plays its part and how discrimination too must be discarded at a stage where love and devotion grows. Now to some people discrimination or the power of the intellect or rationalisation is not necessary.

They start from Bhakti Yoga, where there is a total love and devotion and surrender to Divinity. It's a short cut. Yes. But pleasant one too. It's just a surrender to Divinity and you say, 'Thy will be done, not mine'. What can my mind tell me and this little ego orientated little thing-a-bob. Do you see? I was giving an example, an analogy on the Teachers' Course and there's a lot of new people I might as well repeat it. See what the mind tries and do and the heart tries to do are two different things.

There was a chap he used to go to this Café every day and he used to order a tin of Coca-Cola in cans. And he went there and sat down and took out his tin opener, opened the can he drank his soft drink Coke. He did the same the next day and the day thereafter. He was a regular customer at the shop. And so a few weeks passed and the Shopkeeper was watching him and the Shopkeeper just could not stand it anymore that day. He might have had a row with his wife or who knows. But that day he thought to himself I must ask this chap, you know this is going too far. He takes a can and uses a can opener to drink the soft drink. So he says, 'Sir, excuse me but do you know what that ring is there for on the can?' So this chap says, 'Yes, I know what the ring is there for it's for people who haven't got can openers'. (General laughter) I told the story on the last Course to illustrate how far the mind can reach. And man is forever trying to you know open his lid with a can opener, when the real opener is in-built within man. The real opener is in-built in the can and we don't need outside can openers.

Good. That's about an hour okay. Fine. Good. Do you want to carry on, I don't mind? Okay one hour is enough. I know people have been travelling long distances to get here. Do have a good rest, tomorrow we'll start working a little deeper into subjects. Much deeper. So tonight, if you have the time which you will have I'm sure, prepare some questions, write them down. Good. We can have a fine week together. It's going to be beautiful. Yes. Namaste.

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