

THE PAINS, PLEASURES, AND PITFALLS OF MAYA

GURURAJ: ... professor was giving a talk, last talk before the final examinations, and he said, "I hope all you students are ready and have studied hard because the examination papers are now at the printers. Have you got any questions?" So one bright lad stands up and asks, "Which printer?" [Laughter]
Good. What shall we talk about tonight?

VOICE: Our earthly love may be but maya, and the pitfalls and mishaps may be part of a script that we ourselves have written so we may grow, but sometimes the pain, both our own and others, is intense. How best can we combine our limited understanding of karma, compassion and love?

GURURAJ: Beautiful. Who says this world is maya? Who asks that question? Who says there are pains and pleasures? Who asks that question? How do we know that we are bound and in bondage to various things? Who asks that question? Now, the only part of you that could ask that question is your ego self. So, when we said that all this is maya, then maya is asking the question. The illusion is asking an illusory question. So, if the illusion asks a question about pain and pleasure, then that pain and pleasure must be an illusion too. Do you see? And yet, within the scheme of things, man feels that pain and pleasure. Now which part of him really feels painful or pleasurable and as I've said in many talks that you have to have the polarities. You could never expect to have pleasure without pain. You must have the ups and you must have the downs. Like our analogy of the waves of the ocean up and down and up and down. And, like that, it goes on for eternity.

Maya can only be conceived of when one transcends the ego values of life, or when one transcends the mind for mind is the greatest maya. Maya is the mind and maya exists in the mind. So what does one transcend? One transcends the mind, in all its various gradations of relativity. So once one transcends relativity, one lands in the realms of the Absolute which is non-questioning. The Absolute does not question, for the Absolute exists within itself, and when one really learns to exist within oneself in that Absolute value, then there is no question, there is no questioner, and there is no answer. But yet, within the realms of what we know as daily living, what we know as daily life, we are subjected to this law of opposites, and karma is a fallacy. Karma is a fallacy in the realms of the Absolute, but a reality in the realms of relativity. Now, while we are bound, while we are in bondage, while we are in bondage in this relative form of existence, what is the way out? How can we just have pleasure only and no pain? How can we have heat only and no cold? Is there a way out? Can this be possible? I say yes, it is possible by a co-existence between the relative and the Absolute, for they do

co exist, and not only co exist in separateness, but one forms an integral part of the other. So maya, or illusion, is also a facet of the Absolute. And, the illusionary value, or the non reality of it, is only because it is a superimposition upon which is real. So here, there are two factors we have to deal with: one is reality, and the other is that which is superimposed upon it.

Now if reality, or Absolute, is eternal, then the superimposition has to be eternal too. The fragrance of the flower will last as long as the flower exists. And that flower of the Absolute is forever existent. And so, that which is superimposed must always exist too, so you will always remain in maya. Maya is a reality in the relative form of life.

Now, what transcends the mind? What transcends the illusion? What transcends the ego, which is synonymous with the mind? What transcends that? Is there an outside factor that makes the mind transcend itself? No. The mind can only transcend itself by itself. Now we have said that the mind has various gradations from the grosser to the subtler levels to the subtlest of relativity which we call the superconscious area of the mind. And yet it is still bound in maya. Even the superconscious level is still ruled by the three gunas: tamas, rajas, and sattva. But in the lower level of the mind, the conscious mind as we know it is forever changing and fluctuating between these three qualities: tamas, darkness; and sattva at the other end, light; and the activating force between tamas, darkness, and sattva, light, is rajas. Rajas sets things into motion. Now, the greater the motion, the more rajastic we are, the more is there a conflict between tamas and sattva, the greater conflict between darkness and light. So, where do we start? We start with rajas and try to slow down that motion contained in rajas, or the activating force.

How do we do that? How do we slow down the activating force? For if this force has been brought to a lower pace, it will naturally bring about a greater combination between tamas and sattva. Now sattva being of a far more subtler substance and therefore more powerful than tamas, or darkness, it overshadows the darkness. And yet, in it's overpowering the darkness, darkness does not disappear. While these lights are burning here, we think darkness is not there. But darkness is there; darkness is the other side of light. For without darkness, light cannot exist, and without light, darkness cannot exist. It is like a little lamp that gives light to the whole room, but under the lamp, the little ghee lamp, there is this darkness.

So, when the mind is led to the wick and the oil that empowers life, when the wick of life and living is made bigger, then more would there be light, and you do not recognize or feel the little dark patch under the lamp. Not that it becomes non existent, for you are still bound within the laws of karma and the laws of polarity. But, by doing that, the emphasis shifts and the emphasis is on the light.

When we look at the little oil lamp, we do not notice the darkness that is under the lamp, because our mind is always led to the area of light. The mind is led to the area of light. Now, that is what we mean by emphasis. So, by putting the

emphasis on the right place, the darkness would not be noticed. Yet the darkness is still there. And as long as you are bound in this physical body or even after dropping the physical body and existing in the subtle body those three qualities will still remain functioning, but in a more subtle state. The grosser body functions in a grosser state, while the subtle body functions in a subtle state.

Now, what do we mean by transcendent transcending the mind? There is no reality in that. You cannot transcend the mind. You have teachers going around all over and saying, "transcend the mind." No, you cannot do it, for as soon as the mind is transcended, your mind will disintegrate. And therefore its grosser counterpart, the body too will disintegrate. It will disperse, go back to its original elements. And yet, we cannot do that while having this body.

So then, what do we do? We know that we are faced with these three factors of darkness, light, and that which activates darkness and that which activates light. What can we do? We can only bring the mind to a state of equilibrium. We can only bring the mind to a state of balance, and that is not transcending the mind. Many people have the false idea of transcending the mind and the mind becomes totally without thought. That never happens. The mind is never devoid of thought, but the consciousness of thought can be made to disappear. The consciousness, the waking consciousness of thought can be made to disappear as it disappears in dreamless sleep. But the sub-conscious level of the mind is forever working. So the best that man can do in the circumstances is to bring a balance between these three qualities. And they are qualities, because they belong to the relative field of existence. Because beyond that the Absolute is without quality, without

attributes, without quantity, larger than the largest, as I would say, smaller than the smallest.

So what is the ability of man at his present state of evolution? If you go into nirvikalpa samadhi which is not going beyond the mind, but bringing the mind into total equilibrium between these three qualities then when it is in total equilibrium, it comes to a standstill. But yet in full motion, like the analogy I use of the top: fully spinning at high speed, but it seems to stand still. And when it stands still in that equilibrium, then you are not conscious of the motion that is there, and that is the samadhi, or meditation, which becomes without attributes: a total balance. And wherever there is total balance, then all attributes merge into each other. And when they merge into each other, they disappear momentarily from your consciousness. For if you are in nirvikalpa samadhi for more than 21 days, as Ramakrishna has said many times, you will just disintegrate.

So the process of meditation and spiritual practices is to bring about this equilibrium within the mind, and these three gunas as we have mentioned tamas, rajas, and sattva are forever operating in everything. In everything, not only in our minds, not only in our bodies, but every atom is governed by that. Scientists have put names to it: electrons, protons, photons, and all the kind of tons. But basically it is that that subtle energy which is the manifestation of the Manifestor,

and it will forever keep on manifesting itself and the motion will go on and on and on. We call it maya, or illusion, because it is not stationary. It is forever changing. Today it is this, and tomorrow, if sattva dominates, it will be something else. If rajas dominates, it's something else, and if tamas, or darkness, dominates, it assumes a different form. So, the reality of manifestation are these three qualities, but by the intermixing of these three qualities and having particular domination of a particular quality, it is given a different name and a different form. And that very conception of name and form is the illusion.

For everything in essence is but that one. Whatever is happening in this table, in this chair, in this flower, is exactly what is happening within you. But we call this a table, we call this a chair, we call that a man, we call that a woman. Now, when this balance is reached in our minds through our spiritual practices, then we feel we understand, we know, we realize that's the better word we realize the oneness that exists in everything around us. And with that realization, we find peace. We find an identification that the three gunas operating within me are the same three gunas operating at different rates of vibration in everything that exists within the relative form of existence.

So, no man ever transcends his mind. You become mindless. This has been a fallacy propagated by certain Eastern philosophies. And Vedanta, for example, reaches the point where it gives the Absolute qualities: absolute existence, absolute bliss, absolute knowledge. Those are qualities, and that could never be applied to the Absolute. It can only be applied to the superconscious level of the mind. Now, the trick and secret is this, is to be able to burrow through this mud and this dirt of experiences and samskaras to reach that state of superconsciousness where sattva is dominant, and sattva is light, or the conveyor of light. The clear window through which maximum light of the Absolute shines through. And calling the Absolute "light" is also just for the sake of language, for language is limited. As soon as you call it light, you're adding a quality to it. Because light is a quality. Light is also a mixture of certain material elements, mixture of certain matter in a very fine form.

When you inhale, when you feel the fragrance, smell the fragrance of this flower, what are you smelling? You're smelling the particles of this flower in a fine form. So you are inhaling the flower. For there is no difference between the flower and the fragrance. The fragrance exists, but in a much more subtler form. So like that, so like that. When we train our minds, through spiritual practices, to reach the subtlest level of the mind, we gain consciousness of what maya is all about. Then we find that everything in existence is identical. There is no separation, and separation begins by giving it name and form. And by giving any substance name and form, an attachment is developed. And that attachment is maya.

Mother loves the son. Or mother loves a daughter. Nothing wrong in that communication. Nothing wrong at all. The love is there, but the attachment is maya. For who is mother, who is father, who is son, who is daughter? In it's essence,

there is no mother, no father, no son, no daughter, no wife, no husband. Nothing. It is just a formulation and reformulation, through the intermixing of this fine matter in so called separated entities. Now our senses, the average human senses, are not refined enough to see that there is no separation at all. For with you sitting there and I sitting here, you think we were apart. No. There are millions and millions of atoms that are connecting every part of my being to every part of your being. So, that is why people talk and say, "Oh, the vibrations feel so good here in this room." What is it in reality? When people are one pointed in thought, such as listening to a satsang, when the mind is somewhat combined in the words that are spoken, the vibratory rate increases by the attention you are giving to the thought, because all thought processes subjected to its particular understanding or capacity to understand still combines. And then when we leave a satsang, we feel some upliftment. All these so called individualized vibrations are set at a higher rate. A higher vibratory factor comes into play, and because of this combining of the so called individual vibrations, we feel that finer level more, and that is why we feel uplifted. We feel a greater joy.

So that is why, when a true teacher speaks, it is not only the words that are important. That's fine for the mind, for man must have some understanding of the subtler laws of nature. But the very vibrations that a true teacher releases, that emanates from him, is the factor that helps to combine all the other vibrations together into that one mode. And it is so simple to understand, for one flower smells sweeter than another. So, the realized man is the flower that gives off a far more fragrant scent. That's all that happens. But these are subtle laws of nature which the mind cannot fully comprehend, but it can be experienced.

Now as we progress uplifting our vibratory rate, as we progress in that and as we become slowly and gradually stabilized in a higher vibratory rate, then we could feel the higher vibratory rate of everything around us. We experience it. But this experience is still of the mind the mind at a different, subtler level. Now, when these experiences are gained, then we have the perception that maya exists, and maya does not exist. Then we enter the realm of the paradox, for everything that the conscious mind can understand will forever be paradoxical. Paradoxes within paradoxes, cycles within cycles, circles within circles. So, by spiritual practices what we achieve is this, that we heighten our rate of vibration to reach the superconscious level of the mind that vibrates at a million times more higher level than the ordinary conscious mind. The ordinary conscious mind knows of the pleasures and the pains, because all pleasures are gross, and all pains are gross. And the conscious mind recognizes these, and the conscious mind feels it, not the heart. For all these things are emotions and where do emotions come from? Emotions exist in the mind, nowhere else. When you feel sad, what is activated in you? Your mind is activated in sadness. When you feel happy, what is activated in you? The mind. But in the happiness, remember, a greater amount of sattva is there. When you feel sad, a greater amount of tamas, or darkness, is there.

So once we gain control through meditation and bring about a stillness, not an annihilation, but a stillness in the rajastic quality of the mind, then a greater combination occurs. The obstruction of that motion of rajas is stilled, so that the passage becomes clearer, and the light infiltrates the light of the superconscious mind. The vibratory factor, the subtle vibratory factor of the superconscious mind enters the conscious mind and it feels in a good mood. That's the key word. For happiness and unhappiness is none else but a mood, and no moods are lasting. All moods are dependent upon external factors. There is no mood that could ever be created within yourself by itself. It could be an external factor that happened last week, last month, a year ago, two years ago. And that memory is activated, recreating that particular mood. And because the mind contains these impressions, it can be activated.

Some of you sit down in the evening and watch a beautiful sunset. What is happening? Can your eyes really see the sunset? No. It's just an instrument. It transmits impulses to various cells, to the real organ behind the eyes. And that organ cannot evaluate. That organ further sends on the message, the impulses, to a finer level called the intellect. And the intellect starts evaluating. And the intellect sends on the message further to that storehouse of memory. The intellect is only but an evaluator sends message of that sunset to that storehouse of memory that is within the mind and goes through the pigeonholes and pulls out a similar experience to find the intellect evaluating that experience and trying to coordinate it with the experience you are having now. Or what your eyes are seeing, not perceiving, but seeing.

And yet, it might turn out that it was all so beautiful the sunset when you met your beloved. Then your emotions are stirred pleurably. It might also be that at such and such a time of that beautiful sunset you might have had a quarrel with your beloved. You don't only quarrel at night or in the morning, you quarrel in the most beautiful gardens of the world in sunrises and sunsets. And that might be stirred up. So it's the same energy, dependent upon the evaluating factor in the mind that produces in you the same sensation of pleasure or pain.

So, emotion is just a quality of the mind. Emotion is just association of an idea, be it auditory, be it visual, be it olfactory, taste, seeing, smelling, touching. Man touches a woman that he loves, or a woman touches a man that she loves. What happens? What happens there? Certain pleasurable feelings go through him and it reaches the memory box. Right back it goes through many, many lifetimes not necessarily with that person but with the experiences that you have had. The experience of propagating, the experience of copulation, and the so called "pleasurable moments" it might have produced. These are then reactivated and lovemaking occurs. Do you see? Now, when this equilibrium is gained, one knows what is attaching and what is non attaching, what is binding and what is non binding. And the very discrimination that has to be developed is this factor: will I be bound by this action, good or bad? Or will I remain unbound? Will I be affected or not affected? Will I be attached or not attached? Now, as a person keeps on touching the levels of sattva, as

a person keeps on touching the levels of the superconscious mind, greater and greater non attachment occurs. Where you allow the conscious mind and the subconscious mind to function in the world, for it is the nature of man to allow these various levels of the mind to function; but with that deeper sense that one draws from the deeper layers of the mind, one becomes non attached. For all these experiences of pain and pleasure, all this karma and the laws of karma, the cause and effect, is all only in the mind. And cause and effect is always in the conscious and the various layers of the subconscious mind.

So, the subconscious mind will draw back into these pigeonholes of various kinds of experiences that are there. The impressions are there, which we can call samskaras, and associate them with what is happening here and now. If you can think back, if you can go back to the superconscious level of your mind, you will find that these very words I'm speaking now, at this very moment, in the very inflection or intonation of voice, you have heard me saying it before. So what does this mean? That you can go back into timelessness. It is not governed by Wednesday night at 8:00. It is eternal. So, we can reach that area.

Now, the purpose of life is not to find pleasure or pain. The purpose of life is to find joy, which is neither pain or pleasure. Where does this joy reside? For joy too is in the realms of relativity. That is what the Vedantists talk about that absolute bliss. There can never be absolute bliss, there can never be absolute existence. There can never be absolute knowledge. For they are still functions of the finest level of the relative mind that man can reach. And that is all that you have to go to. For reaching that, you have reached the personal God that is forever resident in you. And yet, just behind that layer is the Absolute, and from the Absolute or the impersonal God, the personal god also becomes maya. For that too is a dream. For the first manifestation was in the form of mind. And that mind is none else but dream. So here, we are dreaming away wakefully or in sleep, it's just one continuous process. But while the dream is lasting, it is real. And how to combat that reality which we are facing, that is the problem. And that is by creating that equilibrium, or integration, of the various layers of the mind: conscious, subconscious, and the superconscious. And the body falls in it's own place. There is nothing to be concerned about. [END SIDE ONE] There is nothing to be concerned about at all. For all these layers of the mind, which is nothing else but a compilation of thought, impression, and experiences translates itself into the body.

So, is the toothache so important, or the mental ache so important? A child having a toothache I've said this before if you get his mind engrossed in something else, it will forget the toothache. Grownups too. Grownups also have pain somewhere, a backache or something. But if the mind is led away or engrossed in something else, that backache will disappear. Perhaps, in most cases temporarily, for control of the mind, or proper functioning of the mind has yet not been gained. Because the mind cannot be controlled. The more you try to control the mind, the more uncontrollable it

becomes. So what do we do? We become observers of the lower layers of the mind. And, by becoming observers of the functionings of the conscious and the subconscious layers of the mind, we do not feel the intensity of the pleasures and neither the intensity of the pain. A joy will permeate all these various layers of the mind. And when we can become non attached to the happenings in the world around us our environment we dwell in this joy of the superconscious level of the mind. Forget the Absolute. It is a neutral energy that can be used in whichever way we want to use it. For once the superconscious layer of the mind is reached, that energy, that Absolute energy will always be flowing through. And the cleaner the window, the more the faucet is opened, the more the water will come through. So the opening matters. When you drive a car, the more you press the accelerator that's action, that's karma. The more you open the jets in the carburetor, the more petrol flows through, and greater speed comes about.

So that is the secret of life. But, to recognize these things, to be so in flow with nature, where the things become so natural. Nothing seems unnatural. Everything is just but a happening within this process of the three gunas, which is matter, and this matter is the condensation of one energy. And matter assumes different forms. Like a sculptor, he can take a piece of marble and sculpt a beautiful statue of Apollo or of anything else. Like Mark Twain, he was visiting a sculptor one day, and the sculptor pointed out the bust of a beautiful woman curling her hair. A real beautiful Italian art. So the sculptor asks Mark Twain, your great American humorist, "What do you think of this?" So Mark Twain looks at it for a moment, and he says, "It's not natural." So the sculptor was amazed, because it was a beautiful piece of art. So he says, "Why do you think it is not natural?" And he says, "Look, if it was natural, the woman's mouth should have been full of hairpins!" She was curling her hair.

So, to find total naturalness in every happening, to find total naturalness that it is a happening, it is good. All karma is binding, so let me, through my meditation and spiritual practices, reach that level, reach that layer, where I can observe from that level of the mind that all is well. All that is happening has to happen by the patterns that we ourselves have set. But that does not mean that we have to go through the kind of suffering that we go through. If you observe, if you become the observer, whatever happens will never leave a sting upon you. It will never leave a deep scar, and that is how the emotion of the rajstic side of life becomes more still stiller and stiller and stiller. Do you see the process?

So, that means we reach realizations. Realizations upon realizations upon realizations, a little bit at a time. A little realization dawns today, another greater realization dawns tomorrow, and like that it goes on, until the ocean is filled with those little drops of rain. The river is filled, and the water just moves along in it's own motion, reaching the Absolute, the river of the relative, merging away in the Absolute; the relativity does not remain anymore, only the Absolute remains. The absoluteness of... heaven! Those are the words they use heaven and hell. You get out of hell and into heaven.

You know you had this chap, Wendell Phillips. Now he was a great fighter for emancipation of the slaves. He was an abolitionist. And one day he fell in a group of church ministers, and they were talking. So one recognized him. He says, "You are Mr. Wendell Phillips, aren't you?" He says, "Yes," "The great abolitionist?" He says, "Yes." He says, "Look, why don't you, instead of preaching abolition and emancipation and all these things here, why don't you go down to Kentucky and preach it there?" So, Mr. Phillips says, "And you're a minister, I take it to be?" And he says, "Yes, I am a minister." "And your job is to save souls from hell, is that true?" And he says, "Yes." "Then why don't you go there?" Do you see? It is all here and now. Hell and heaven is what we make it to be. Once we become observers, we become acceptors. The sense of possession has no grip over us anymore. "Does he love me," or "does she love me" remains no worry, no problem. It is just there. Does he love me, or does she love me does that matter? But do I love... her? That matters.

Yes, I think we've done more than an hour. Many of you have been traveling some distances, so do have a good rest tonight....

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