

PATH OF NIRVANA

Vimala Thakar

THE PATH OF NIRVANA

**COMPILED AND EDITED BY
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VIMALA THAKAR

INDIA

VIMAL PRAKASHAN TRUST

1995

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6, Sunset Row House,
Gurukul Drive-in-Road,
Memnagar,
AHMEDABAD - 38 00 52
Gujarat, INDIA.

Printed in India by:
Navprabhat Printing Press
Gheekanta Gali
Ahmedabad

Typeset on Computer by
Print Aid
21/A, Anand Park,
Memnagar, Ahmedabad - 52
Phone - 745 48 08

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EGO
YOGA OF SILENCE

EDITOR'S NOTES

A group of Buddhist inquirers from Sri Lanka came to Dalhousie to have Satsang with Vimalaji. All of them were members of Sanatana Dharma Niketan studying the Buddhist Philosophy and trying to live Buddha's Dhamma.

They wanted to discuss many aspects of Buddhist philosophy with Vimalaji. This booklet is the result of those discussions.

Kaiser Irani

1

Shunyata Within Tathata Without

This is the first time in my life that I will be having an intimate encounter with the students of Dharma - the Buddhist dhamma. I cannot claim that I have studied the whole Buddhist philosophy or what you call Dhamma - the teachings of Buddha, as thoroughly or as deeply as I have done the Vedas or the Upanishads. As the dialogue, the communication between us develops, maybe I'll be able to understand more clearly and perhaps my communications may have some relevance to your requirements.

I have looked upon Gautam Buddha - Tathagata, as a revolutionary of his times. The Indian situation regarding theology, religion, religious practices was dominated by Upanishads in the time of Buddha; and he must have observed very closely, contemplated very deeply and probed into the Truth behind all the talk of the Upanishads, the Yagnas, the rituals and all those practices prevalent among the people. To me he was a giant explorer in the realm of human consciousness. He had wanted to find out the cause of suffering, the ways to eradicate DHUKHAM. Dukham nirvanam — the ways to eradicate the roots of suffering. Not to end suffering but to eradicate the roots of suffering and to open the gates of unconditional freedom for every human being — that is how I see Buddha through his teachings.

All his probing and his meditations under the Bodhi tree seem to have led him to the conclusion that the consciousness which we call the 'I' consciousness - ahamkara and mamakara did not have any substance. 'I' and 'mine', it is a dual consciousness - wherever there is the feeling of I-ness there is bound to be the extension of that feeling as mineness. You cannot separate 'I' and 'Mine', you cannot separate ahamkara from mamakara. It seems to me that he realised

that this 'I' and 'Mine', did not have any substance. They appeared to be real but they were unreal, in the sense that there was no essence, there was no substance behind them, behind the I-ness and mine-ness. A tremendous discovery 2500 years ago. I am not referring to the terms that he had used such as ANATTA - the non-existence of Atman. ANATMA - by that term, he was referring to the non-existence of 'I' as a separate entity, as a permanent entity. You call it Atman, you call it Soul - give it any name but he discovered 2500 years that such an entity did not exist.

SARVAM SHANIKAM - like the principle of ANATMA or ANATTA, his second discovery was of the ever changing nature of the phenomenal world. Our senses grasp objects, they appear real to us as the 'I' appears real to us, but this ever changing phenomenal world is as unreal as the 'I' and its ever changing desires, as the ever changing thoughts are unreal. He made the discovery of the unreality of the phenomenal world outside of you and the unreality of the whole structure that the field of the 'I' and 'mine' creates inside you. The thought - structure, the experiences, the values, the reactions, they are the inner sansara and are as vast if not more than the outer sansara. I'm using the word 'sansara'

in the Sanskrit sense - that which is constantly changing. SAMYAK SARATI ITI - every second it is changing, so how can you call it real? I am referring to this revolutionary discovery at the psychic level made by Buddha.

So people identify themselves with the inner 'I' and 'mine' thinking them to have a permanent identity or they identify with the sense-objects thinking them to be permanent and wanting to acquire them with the help of Desire - TRISHNA, perhaps they call it Tanna in Buddhist terminology. I only refer to the Sanskrit as my study goes back to Sanskrit language only. Therefore the relationship of desire with those objects is the cause of suffering - Klesha. Trishna as the cause of klesha, as the cause of dhukam, as the cause of suffering.

What is the master key to liberation or emancipation? This complete elimination of Trishna or desire. Desire is the motivation force, whether you wonder in your inner sansara of thoughts, wishes, experiences reactions, ideologies - the vast world that you have created inside, the motivation is desire, it can take the form of ambition, jealousy or anger but it is desire. The seed is desire -you want to do something, you want to change something. So whether it is

in the inner or outer world, the movement of desire is the root of suffering, and that desire, that root has to be eradicated completely from Chitta - from the consciousness.

These seem to be the important points of his teachings. As per my understanding, they are the teachings of an exceptionally rare quality of consciousness. Because Buddha is a consciousness, as Christ was a person and at the same time a symbol of consciousness. There is Buddha the person and at the same time a symbol of the consciousness - call it unconditioned, call it totally purified, call it liberated. After the passing away or even in the life time of such people those who listen to them - Shravakas cannot grasp the depth of the Teachings, because they are hearing it, while Buddha had perceived it. It was direct perception, not a vague feel like that of a mystic. It was a direct perception of the Reality of the inner and the outer (so called) world; that is why he could say SARVAM KSHANIKAM, SARVAM DUHKHAM, SARVAM ANITYAM. This is not a theory.

Those who look upon the teachings of Buddha as theories to be accepted or refuted, I think are not very fair to Buddha, or those who look upon teachings of Jesus like the Ten Command-

ments as theories are not very fair to Christ. They were communications in the purest possible words of the life within. Like the flower on the creeper is the expression of the life within, so Buddha's words, what they call his teachings are the flowers carrying all the beauty, the perfume, the scent, the purity of the inner life, of the inner perception.

The Hindus based their different sects on the Teachings of the Upanishads, some looked at it from one angle of duality some looked at it from another angle of non-duality - advaita. There were many sub-divisions of the teachings of the Upanishads, though the Upanishads were direct communications and not theories. In the same way the Mahayana, Hinayana and maybe other branches and sub-branches of Buddhism came into existence.

Buddha had seen the suffering caused by the theories among the Indians and as a revolutionary he got out of it, he got out of the whole network. It must have been a tremendous job for that sensitive young man to cut himself away, not only from the royal family and the palace - that is not important, that is a very secondary part of Buddha's life, but physically he had the fearlessness to cut himself completely away from

the network of those theories, dogmas, practices and rituals and what have you. One who wants to study the communications and teachings of Buddha will require that inner integrity, that inner courage to move away from the untruth wherever you find it, to let the unreal, the untruth to drop away. If you cling to the untruth, if you cling to the unreal then all your verbal propagation of the Truth becomes meaningless.

I would not concern myself about all the different branches or schools of Buddhism, whether in Thailand, Burma, Tibet, Sri Lanka, India - there may be different shades and different rituals. Some might have created a God out of Buddha, instead of looking at him as a consciousness which had freed itself of the roots of suffering. They might have created a God or Superbeing out of Buddha because for rituals you need deities, gods and goddesses and some people learn only from rituals. We are not here to reject anything — there may be a level of consciousness where the outer expressions like rituals helps the inner sustenance of the understanding - let them have it.

But Buddha had said ATMA DEEPO BHAVA, be a light unto yourself, he never said live by my light, he wanted every one to become

a light unto himself or herself, that is to say, live by your own inner perceptions, your own inner understanding. Take the help of the teachers but find out for yourself. Your direct perception will give you the strength and the integrity, you cannot borrow the light from other's or from other's lives.

Some of you have used the expression "practising Dhamma", "living Dhamma", that is why I'm saying it is quite a revolutionary task to live Buddha's Dharma. To live the Dhamma is not like temple worship where only rituals are involved, you may begin there but you have to proceed further.

For example I had mentioned earlier about his discovery, that no permanent entity like the atman, the soul, the 'I' existed, I call it the most revolutionary discovery. The psychologists of the 20th century have arrived at this discovery now. Psychology - the science, begins with the mind, it has now discovered that mind has no reality, that the individual mind has no reality, that there are only cerebral, neurological, chemical ways of behaviour fed into the body, but the 'I' is a myth, the existence of the 'I' and its having its continuity etc. is a myth. Whether in this life or after death, no entity like the 'I' exists within you,

So those who want to practise or live Buddha's teachings will have to probe into the movement of the mind and discover its unreality. I emphasise "Discover" not accept. Discover the unreality of that. We have to discover how its an imagination, its an illusion. We have to discover how this 'I' and the sense of 'Me-ness' the sense of 'My-ness' is a myth, an illusion and how the phenomenal world existing outside is also unreal. My eye has sight and energy, it reaches out of the body and then it gets a sensation out of the contact with that which is existing outside, you may call it a tree but the tree is a concept of the human mind. There is only life out there, the tree is a name given to that life, as Vimala or Barbara are names given to the life here. There is no Vimala or Barbara inside the body. The name is given there and by using the name frequently we feel that there is an object outside. The objectiveness of the so called material objects is again an illusion as the 'I' is an illusion. It is all a combination of earth, water, fire, air and space. - panch maha bhutas. It is all a combination of the panch maha bhutas which are constantly changing. If you say today it is a plant, sometime later it is no more a plant. Then was the plant unreal? Now it is a tree, then it is no more a tree it is wood. Was the tree unreal? It is a ques-

tion. So that which is changing all the time, it is something which cannot be trusted. It cannot be called real.

The panch mahabhutas, out of which the tree or stone or mountain are constituted are they real? And they say no, they say they have emerged out of the emptiness, out of the void of the space so the panch maha bhutas also have no substance of their own, they are parinama, they are the effects of or they emerge from the space. Then the emptiness of space is real and the trees and the mountain and the rivers - the names that we have given - they prove to be unreal.

You see it is very easy to talk about these things at the end of the 20th century, but Gautam Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree saw the unreality of the so called phenomenal world and he said if there is any reality it is SHUNYATA. They may call it TATHATA, the THATNESS, the suchness. Tathata is real but the objects are unreal. The shunyata, the void is real but the panch mahabhutas are also unreal, you may call them relatively real and absolutely real. Today in the 20th century we make categories like the levels of consciousness, we say relatively real or absolutely real, conditionally real or unconditionally

real, but he had only one word, he said **Shun-yata**.

There is no substance to all these so perhaps I could call it in your terminology PUDGALA **SHUNYATA**. Dharma shunyata and pudgala shunyata these are the two words used in ancient Buddhism. As far as the sanskrit literature goes they say it has no substance, we call it an object, we feel it is solid, but the solidity we feel is a creation of our mind.

This morning I am trying only to give you an idea of how I understand Buddhism, and if I have not understood correctly, you the students of Buddhism should correct me.

Shunyata is real. The void, the emptiness, the space is real, everything else, even what you call brahmanda - the cosmos, that is unreal. Your thoughts, your emotions, your experiences you feel are so real, but they are the effects - the parinama of something else. That which is a parinama is not real said Buddha, or atleast as I understand him to have said. That which is a parinama is not svabhava, that which is an effect is not svabhava, it does not exist by itself. It is only the emptiness of space that exists by itself. What name can you give to that void, to that emptiness of space? I call it ISNESS. But in Bud-

dhism there is a term SUCHNESS, THATNESS which could be called TATHATA.

Now, if the phenomenal world outside of us is unreal, in the sense that is not false but it is unreal, and the inner world, the whole psychological world - the thoughts, experiences is also unreal, than what remains? The outside world being unreal cannot bind us and the inner 'I' and 'mine' being unreal they also cannot bind us, then what binds? What is the bondage? From what do you want liberation? I think it is the movement of desire, which has to discontinue completely. The movement of desire is the movement from one unreality to another unreality. It is a meaningless exertion, so it is futile. And this desire never gets fulfilled completely, it never gets satisfied completely - you can give it power, wealth, everything that it seeks and after having given it the wealth, the prestige, the fame, the companionship it is still unfulfilled, it is a bottomless pit, it cannot be filled. To feel that you can satisfy your desire on the material level with material objects and on the psychological level with new thoughts and new ways of behaviour is a myth. Desire cannot be satisfied. In sanskrit language "Kama" is the word - kama and the movement of kama - kama gatti can never be satisfied, the movement of desire is destined to re-

main unfulfilled, unsatisfied, incomplete, you may give it the perfect thoughts and perfect objects, but something is missing.

So practising dhamma, living the teachings of Buddha has only one focus, to find out whether there is within oneself the movement of desire - physical, psychological, trans-psychological. Is there a desire for attaining god, liberation, transformation, wanting to be a Buddha? The movement to learn and discover is different from the movement of desire. No learning can take place if the movement of desire is there in myself, at any level. Please do see this.

It is a great joy to me to be talking to the children of Buddha, to be talking about dhamma. It is the first time in my life that I have the privilege to talk about Buddha, his teachings, and his communications. I am neither a Hindu , a Buddhist, a Christian. There is somethingness and somebodyness to the body, but inside there is nothingness, inside there is nobodyness.

It seems to me that all sadhana or to use your terms "practising dhamma" is to watch if the movement of desire discontinues. Not out of fear or rejection - you cannot reject that movement but to be watchful, to be aware. As long as the movement of desire is there learning and discov-

ery cannot take place. Learning gets inhibited by the acquisitiveness of the desire, desire wants to grab, grasp, to own, if not an object atleast an experience - I must have the experience of self-realisation, I must see god - it gives expression in various ways, but it is a clandestine movement of desire. Ending of desire is the beginning of dhamma.

Why do I say that? Because when that movement of desire discontinues and the understanding of the unreality of the inner world and the outer world takes place, what remains inside us is the emptiness of silence. Silence is the absence of the movement of desire. You cannot stop the thoughts by nourishing desire in a concealed way. You water the desire and you want to arrest, to stop and control the movement of thoughts and experiences, that can't happen. We can't play any games with truth, we cannot play games with fire. So it seems to me when the movement of desire gets discontinued there remains only the majesty of silence, call it void, that is the term used in Buddhism generally. The emptiness, the Monum, the shunyata - that is the real nature of life.

So there is Tathata outside and there is Shunyata inside. That becomes the substance of

living. Then you move in the inner and outer phenomenal world, you use the word 'I' and 'mine', you use the thoughts, you use your inheritance, you use the so called material objects, but there is no attachment to it, there is no identification with it, there is no desire for it. The whole complexion of life changes, the darkness of desire disappears and therefore the sting of attachment and identification drops away. There remains the splendour of the inner space, the inner silence, the void, the shunyata.

Living in Shunyata, living as shunyata - perhaps that is living the dhamma.

I have communicated very briefly what Vimala has understood about Buddha's Teachings and communications. We should not be concerned about becoming a Bodhi Sattva, Arhanta or becoming a Buddha - there is no becoming. We are Buddhas in essence all we have to do is to discover that there is no becoming. There is learning, there is perception and discovery through that perception. So Shunyata within and Tathata or suchness without.



2

Vimmuti

In continuation of what was said this morning I would like to mention that from the point of view of the Buddha perhaps there is nothing like cosmic consciousness because there is no cosmos. Cosmos is presumed by the Vedantins, the Rishis, the Sages of the Upanishads and in the modern world by the physicists. When one assumes that there is a cosmos and there is cosmic consciousness then as a corollary one has to assume that there is individual consciousness. For the Upanishadic sages there was the assumption of Brahman-the Supreme Intelligence or universal cosmic consciousness and then in the individual human form there was the Atman - same in the essence and quality but one per-

meated the macro - cosmos and the other permeated the micro-cosmos - this is the view of the Upanishads. I wonder if Buddha had accepted such a view? It seems to me, for him, there was only consciousness. It could be called chitam, the consciousness without vibrations. When the consciousness vibrates, the spanda which is the ancient word for it - the very movement of that vibration - the spanda, creates the duality of the subject and object, the duality of individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness. So this seems to be the basic ignorance or mool avidya having roots in our minds, in our consciousness. If we accept the existence of cosmic consciousness and individual consciousness, it may lead to what the Buddha would have called "avarana". Avarana" is that which covers up, so the urge to find out the truth would get covered up by the creation of a knowable entity called cosmic consciousness either knowable or experiencable. We may not use the word Brahman, Para Atman, Divinity etc. but brushing aside the words does not mean wiping out the concept behind them.

As I said in the morning Buddha was a revolutionary through and through and he must have known the Vedas and the Upanishads, so he did not accept the creation of a cosmic conscious-

ness - something knowable, something attainable, something achievable, something which an aspirant could aspire to become - that is the trap for the Vedic philosophy - "I am the Atman", "I am the Brahman". The urge to find out the truth gets covered up by such assumptions, presumptions and perhaps Buddha did not want it.

There is only consciousness either nispantha (without vibration) or spandha (with vibrations). When the presumption about unmanifest cosmic consciousness and unmanifest individual consciousness - the Brahma and the Atman - when these two concepts are completely and totally wiped out, then the desire to attain liberation, to attain transformation, to become brahmavid, to become emancipated will discontinue. Otherwise the desire to become emancipated or liberated becomes the greatest obstacle in the path for discovery of Truth. A very subtle avarana, the covering up through an imaginary something knowable or experienceable has to be got rid of in the very beginning, if the person wishes to understand the communications of Buddha.

As there is this Dravya avarana, there is also Klesha Avarana - i.e. the inquiry gets covered up by suffering that desire produces. Klesha is suffering. Avarana is getting covered up. We are looking at the dual nature of the root cause

of suffering. One was avidya - this presumption about an entity called Brahman, Para Atman or universal cosmic consciousness and individual consciousness. Once you create the one then the other point of duality gets created - it's a polarity - you create a duality in that presumption. So we have seen avidya - basic ignorance about the truth of your own nature and the nature of life around you, we have seen that. In this dual nature it is the second, which I call Klesha Avarana, this covering up by suffering which is due to Kama.

Avidya and Kama these are very important words for a student of Buddha's teachings. In Avidya you posit the cosmic consciousness, you posit the Brahma, etc. and in Kama you posit the duality of the phenomenal world, the manyness, unless you posit the manyness or plurality, desire will not, through your sense organs drag you towards the many forms, colours, variety of tastes etc. As the Brahman, the Atman is accepted in Avidya here the ego and the plurality of the phenomenal objects is accepted. First we accept them as solid objects then we super-impose upon them the plurality, then pushed and pulled around by desire we run after them - that causes suffering.

Avidya causes the basic, subtle most suffering - the urge to become, to get, to attain, to achieve leading to tension, struggle and an obsessive, compulsive effort. That is one kind of suffering and the other kind of suffering is because of the acceptance of the notion of plurality, diversity.

Buddha wanted us to see that the phenomenal world is unreal, it is constantly changing and it is a parinama - it has no substance of its own, it has no essence of its own, it is not the swabhava of life. Unless the unreality is seen, the klesha avarana - the second obstacle in the path of discovery, in the path of understanding the Truth, cannot be got rid of. Kama or the desire comes about only because of that presumption of diversity lying in the subconscious lying somewhere in our depth. That is why two things are required for elimination of avidya, one is the study of the teachings as they have come to us in their purity, in their integrity that is the theoretical part and secondly we have to discipline ourselves, discipline the sense organs. We have to discipline the outer sense organs, the inner sense organs, control their behaviour so that the avarana does not come, so that the inquiry does not get pushed into the background, does not get covered up.

Sadhana, discipline is for the elimination of avidya and kama.

If this is not understood clearly then we might misunderstand the word Nirvana which is tremendously significant word that Buddha has given. Nirvana is not mingling of the individual consciousness into some cosmic consciousness. Nirvana is not that the body dies and something in you continues and attains nirvana. That does not seem to be the implication of the words of Buddha, otherwise with the help of the word Nirvana we will create a illusion of continuity at the subtle level, an illusion of mingling, fusing at the highest level. These concepts are there in the philosophy of the Upanishads.

Though Buddha was not a nihilist he did not start from any presumptions at all. That is why I call him a revolutionary person. Sadhana was not for becoming enlightened, sadhana was not for acquiring anything, here or after, it was for vimukti - to use his word vimmuti. Vimukti is freedom from raga-dweshha- moha - the trinity. Plurality creates raga, if we do not get from the plurality what we want then dwesha is created. So raga-dweshha, moha. Freedom from these three could be called the real freedom, that is why this morning I said : cessation of the move-

ment of desire seems to be the content of the word Nirvana.

I wonder if all of you who are students of Buddha's teachings have noticed that he never made any positive affirmative statement about the Truth like the Vedantins make, like the Upanishads make. He never made any statement about the nature of truth. He has described the phenomenal world, he has described the nature of suffering, he has pointed out the roots of suffering and shown the way - the madhyam marg for inner purification and for outer purification. Purification of the sense organs, purification of the inner organs, inner senses, subtle senses. So it seems to me that it is quite a different approach to reality and sadhana then what we have inherited. To be an aspirant in the sense of Buddha's teachings is tremendously difficult, because you don't do anything to get anything for yourself, you as a self are non-existent. The world that you see is non-existent, so there is nothing to acquire, to get. Do you see the urge for finding out truth does not get support for getting anything for yourself? In the other paths of Sadhana they have many motivations, they have many incentives. Here, except the urge to find out the truth no incentive is possible. No affirmative statement, no categorical statement, no assertion about the nature of reality is there.

There atman is non-existent, the ego is non-existent, the phenomenal world is non-existent. You have to purify the instruments of perception, you have to purify the quality of chitta - the consciousness in you, so that it can remain without vibration, so that it can remain steady without creating a subject or imagining an object and without the movement either towards it or away from it. Words like "renunciation", "withdrawal" have no relevance to the teachings. While words like control, restraint, non-attachment, even non-detachment do. You see it is a razor's edge, no wonder that we find it difficult to live his teachings or in your terms "practising dhamma". Practising dhamma requires first clarity in perception, crystal clear clarity in understanding the meaning. We are potential Buddhas but we are not living in our Buddha hood. So atleast let us begin as Bodhi Sattvas, let the chitta have only one urge and this is to understand the truth. Then the chitta is free from avidya and from kama and can become a Bodhi Sattva. Sattva in Sanskrit also means consciousness not in the sense of rajas-tamas-sattva-not those three gunas, but sattva originally means satvam chitam.

So sadhana is for purification. One has to purify the perception. For that one has to purify the instruments of perception. At the beginning

of our sadhana we need discipline. Discipline is only a preparatory thing for the state of nirvana to express itself in our life. For the manifestation of nirvana all this preparatory discipline, preparatory purification is needed.

Now if that is sufficiently clear can we use the terms levels of consciousness. What do we mean by levels of consciousness? There is in this form, the biological and psychological inheritance - it is attached to the form. It is one of the unreal forms, it was born, it grows, it decays, it is going to die - it is a flux, even the cells of the body are not the same in 48 or 72 hours they change and every 7 years the character of every cell in your body has changed. So you are not what you were yesterday, you are not what you were 7 years ago. There is a flux as there is a flux out there in nature. But this body is a form as the tree has a form and you call it a mango tree or a banyan tree, in the same way with this form are attached what you call the sanskaras and you are an extension of your parents physically. So there is that inheritance, accepting that as the truth of your being you have added thoughts and experiences to it or have identified with it. So the culprit is accepting the identification with the form and not looking at it objectively. You can look at a tree, a mountain, a river ob-

jectively perhaps you may look at a another person objectively - but we cannot look at ourselves objectively, the identification comes in - I am the body, I am the thoughts, I am the experiences, I am the values, I am the likes, I am the dislikes. They are all in a stream, they are the stream in which this form has come up - if not like a bubble, like a wave. Like other unreal forms emerging and merging back, this has also come up and it has a duration. The trees have 500 years or 600 years duration, this form may have 100 years duration - as you count them, because all counting is man made. Just as we create the divinity, the brahman, the atman, we create time, we create space. Time and space are mental construct and we measure by them, then we create languages, etc. We have to live with this understanding that it has no ultimate reality, we have to play the game as the players play the game or in drama they enact for a few hours, here you have to play the game.

What I am trying to say is if the identification is accepted then there will be levels of consciousness. One level is the physical level and the impulses of the body, the impluses in the physical structure, like appetite, thirst, sex urge, sleep, urge for continuity, security - these are in the biological world. In the whole biological orbit

around you, you will see the same impulses and the same movement. If there is identification with those appetites, thirst, sex and sensory pleasure then the consciousness gets stuck up there, on that level. There are many millions or billions who have identified themselves with the sensory structure, with the sensory pleasure and the goal of life then is to enrich the sensory level - best food, best clothes, best houses to live in, sexual pleasure, partner for that pleasure etc, so that becomes the level of consciousness. Some people see the futility of that, they rise to a higher psychological level, then there is the identification with the thoughts and experiences and that identification again creates a level of consciousness.

One level of consciousness was identified with the body, the other is identified with the notion of 'I' it is very subtle because thoughts though they are matter they are subtler than the sense objects, they are subtler than your sense organs. First was non - moral, sub-moral, biological, existential level, second is the psychological, individualistic level, obsessed with the notion of a identity called the ego, the self, the me. The name is given to the body, the life in this body is not Vimala, the life in the body is neither male or female, it is neither Indian or Lankan. But we have accepted the authority of

all the identifications and therefore this level of consciousness becomes a separative consciousness-everything for the me. There it was everything for the body, for the security of the body at the cost of everything, money at the cost of everything - no values, that is why I called it sub-moral, nearly sub-human. We have the part of animality in us, human beings are animals they share animality with other non - human animals. We are human animals that level of animality is very predominant today, it knows no morality, no ethics. As ethics cannot be taught to animals ethics cannot be taught to this animality in us, it wants to do everything as per the push and pull of those impulses, the impulses are blind forces. The second level could be called ethical level, moral level but it has no spirituality in it.

So at the level of identification with the form and its associate animalities etc, there can be levels. Once the aspirant studying the teachings of Buddha has taken a decision that he wants to realise the inner Buddhahood concealed in him, that he only wants to be aware then there are no levels of consciousness. Realisation also is not a very harmonious word for Buddha's teachings, experiencing, becoming, realising perhaps they are not very relevant words there, so one who has come across the teachings of Buddha and feels the urge and decision is taken to

follow the path of nirvana then there are no levels of consciousness.

The preparatory disciplinary part of the teachings you might be knowing much better than I do - whether it is dana, whether it is sheela, whether it is maha maitri, maha karuna etc, but the discipline at the sensory level and also at the psychological level seems to be very necessary. Purification is a must. The perception gets reduced to bare cognition without any chemical, emotional attributes mingled up in it. I do not know how to say it, because I have never spoken about Buddha's teachings or my understanding of Buddha's teachings.

Nirvana is to be here and now, not after death but here and now. The Vimukti or emancipation from raga - dwesha, moha has to happen, has to occur here - they are the impurities that have to be eliminated.

In the Mahayana even this awareness of Buddhahood is not for one's own joy or bliss, it is for doing service for those who are suffering, it is for doing some good unto them to lessen their suffering, be helpful to them. The motivation not for enjoying your samadhis, your emancipations for yourself, that does not seem to be the motivation behind nirvana or pari nirvana. The ancient Buddhists had gone to the extent of say-

ing : that as long as there are people suffering in the world I will not be sitting somewhere enjoying the nirvana.

It's a very noble path, all self centered motivations have to drop away, self centered motivations related to physical world, to psychological world and if you call the spiritual world the trans-psychological then self-centered motivations in trans-psychological world have to drop away. No self centered motivation because the self does not exist, because it is unreal, it has no substance.

So the pudgal shunyata and dharma shunyata of the total phenomenal world have to be grasped very firmly. If we project substance, essence within us or outside of us, then suffering cannot be ended; it is only an emptiness of space, it is only shunyata — the void. Obviously the state of nirvana also has to be pudgal shunya and dharma shunya.

3

Maitri and Karuna

The laws of nature are common to all human beings as regards their physical bodies - getting born, growing up, youth, old age, dying - these are the laws of nature which cannot be violated by any human being, they are the laws that govern everything that has come in the focus of space and time. In the same way there are certain laws of causation that govern the psychological behaviour. Biological behaviour is governed by laws of nature and psychological behaviour is governed by the law of causation. The law of causation implies that there is a cause for every movement of yours, whether the movement is through the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, limbs - what you call volition. Unless you want

to, a word does not escape your mouth, unless there is a motivation within you, your physical movement does not take place - you may be conscious of the motivation, you may not be conscious of the motivation. Mindfulness is a discipline necessary for every student of Buddha's teachings.

It seems to me that we have to be mindful, to be conscious, to be aware of our physical behaviour and mental behaviour. The way you sit, stand, walk, look, the intonation, the accent, the pitch, the tone of voice when you speak - everything has a reason inside. You have to be mindful of that. That is what the Vipashyana meditation system teaches the students - to look at every sensation that takes place in the body, that take place in the mind. We are unmindful, inattentive, we have never looked at the sensations that take place in the body from the moment we are awake. What happens to the consciousness when your eyes look at an object or an individual? Is that looking, that perception clear or is it contaminated by your likes, dislikes, preferences, prejudices, by your memory of what that person has done or what you want that person to do for you? You want certain things done through the person, all these motivations can contaminate and pollute the act of perception.

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We are not even aware why we look at a person in a certain way. Maitri, the nectar of human life, maha maitri is not possible unless we learn to be mindful. Purification is not possible as long as you are not aware of the crowd of motivations lying inside you.

So my request would be to a handful of us who are sitting here in this room and to all the aspirants to the path of nirvana in general, my request would be to probe within and find out if one really wants to follow the path. You cannot afford the luxury of behaving as a ordinary person when you want to follow the path and of protecting yourself by saying : "I am an ordinary an person" and at the same time you cannot call yourself a sadhaka, a enquirer, an aspirant of the spiritual path - these two are incompatible. Do you want to move out of the category of ordinary people who love the sansara? They love not only the pleasures but sadistically they also love suffering - dukham - knowing that it gives pain, they love pain. There is a sadistic tinge in every human being which Freud had called death wish.

So one must ask oneself "Do I want to follow the path of nirvana? If yes then as you have made your choice, you have to follow that

path exclusively, without bothering to see what other people are doing with themselves or with you, how they behave with you, what they do to you. A sadhaka cannot afford the luxury of reacting to the misbehaviour of others.

What we do is, we claim to be sadhakas for some time of the day and claim to be ordinary people for some other times of the day, this inner contradiction must come to an end. They are lucky, they are blessed who choose the path of nirvana, they have moved out of the path which takes again and again to sansara, to suffering — that path you have left behind.

First of all, we have to find out if this choiceless decision for the path of nirvana is there or is not there. If it is there, then the learning begins, without that determination, without that sankalpa - a very sacred decision, as the ancient people would call it, the learning does not begin because the moment you have taken the decision you have changed. Unless you feel the perfume of the inner Buddhahood you cannot take that decision. We have not to become Buddhas we have to realise the Buddhahood that is concealed behind avidya and kama, the Buddhahood that is covered up by ignorance and desire. That covered up material has to be removed, to

be wiped out - that is the content of purification. So unless inwardly you feel the presence of Buddhahood in you, you will not be attracted to the path. Out of millions of people living on the planet few people have this urge or the sensitivity to feel the presence of the inner emancipated state, to feel the inner state of liberation which is already existing in them, like the musk deer that feels the perfume contained in its body - there are some in whom the grace of life has descended upon and can feel the presence of the inner emancipated state. So making the choice is already the beginning of the feel of Buddhahood within you. It is not an ordinary decision, it is very sacred decision.

Now supposing the decision has happened, one does not know why the urge is there, why that flame has suddenly awakened in the heart but it has awakened, now the preparatory stage begins. Preparatory stage of discipline for the purification of the sense organs - outer and inner, for the removal of the avaranas or covers that have concealed the inner truth. Like you peel the vegetables, this is a voluntary peeling of oneself. The wrong identifications have to be peeled off, the wrong habits have to be peeled away from us, they have to be dropped. So the preparatory stage of the discipline includes control.

Now let us take up the questions : Someone said that he or she gets very impatient, hasty, somebody said that anger comes up at certain times. Anger does not come up abruptly, all the raw material for the eruption is gathered over days, weeks and allowed to ferment in memory and some time it is bound to erupt and explode. Hastiness or impatience is a mental sickness. Anger, jealousy, greed, impatience are all mental sicknesses that result in an imbalance. That imbalance can be chronic. That imbalance can be occasional or that imbalance can be a habit, used as a shield for oneself in relationship.

This morning let us look at the habit of getting impatient, short-tempered, being always in a hurry. Let us look at the phenomenon, because jealousy, greed, anger, impatience, they are not yours or mine, they are aberrations in the cerebral behaviour, they are aberrations in the neuro-chemical behaviour of your whole being. they are very serious sicknesses which are not recognised as such. Generally people shield them by saying : "Oh, it is my nature, it is my habit, I live that way, that is my make-up." These are all sophisticated excuses and shallow arguments. As health is the nature of life, peace is the nature of consciousness, getting disturbed is an aberration, it is an imbalance which has some reason

lying somewhere within us. This fact must be recognised, at least by those who want to follow the path of Buddha's teachings, the path of Bodhi Sattva, the path of Nirvana, the path of Pari Nirvana.

First thing, we should understand is that the impatience or the hastiness expresses itself through the speech and then through the action. If I were suffering from impatience, first of all I would control my speech. Before I open my mouth, I would find out what I am going to say and what would be the effect of what I say on myself and on others. There would not be one unmindful verbal expression. I am the teacher, I am the student, now I start teaching myself discipline. The faculty of speech has to be educated, to speak out when necessary - to speak only what is necessary, not one word more, not one word less.

That is one part of the discipline or control, the other part is to find out why I am saying this, what is the motive behind what I am saying, what I am doing, Not just to be led by the pull or push of an impulse. If you allow yourself to move as victims of impulses then there will be imbalance. Anger is an impulse, lust is an impulse, impatience is an impulse which drags you, pushes

you, pulls you. Victims of impulses are in a very pathetic condition, because they don't mean intellectually what they say, and they contradict their own truth, they contradict their own being. So the second part of discipline would be to find out why do I say this, is it necessary, is it said at the right time? Right things done at wrong time, can be as devastating as wrong things done.

So finding out what I say, when I say, how I say - this is a kind of control, a kind of voluntary discipline, self control or self education.

The third part of educating the speech, is to speak only when necessary. When it is not necessary to speak relax into silence, observe silence as much of the day as possible. In waking consciousness most of the mischief is done by the habit of talking recklessly, thoughtlessly, superficially, in a shallow way. This waking consciousness is a very precarious time, so if I were in that position I would observe silence in a determined way for as much time as possible. I don't take a vow, because if you take a vow it is a kind of force, it is a kind of violence, I want to do things in a non violent way. Education cannot be forced, super-imposed or grafted upon a person, so I am not grafting things upon myself

- the student part of me. So I will say : "Look why not observe silence as far as possible and speak only when necessary, what is necessary and that too thoughtfully, mindfully"? It is a kind of meditation. Meditation of mindfulness at the speech level, so that I will never have to say : "I did not mean what I said" or "I wanted to say it, it was in my mind but I did not say it". People err on both sides, they don't say, express when expression is necessary and they hurriedly go into expression when it is not at all necessary, it happens to the physical movement, it happens to the verbal movement. So the control begins at the physical level and the verbal level to tame this habit of impatience or haste.

It is Vimala's observation as a person who knows a little about Ayurveda, that the person who is dominated by a pitta constitution (from vatta, pitta, kapha) i.e. when the physical structure is dominated by pitta, then the person is dominated by raja guna - (of rajas - sattava - tamas) the excess of pitta in the body provokes this raja guna which is constantly moving, moving on the physical, verbal, mental level. So if there is a habit of doing things hurriedly, hastily one should find out from an ayurveda expert and help the body to control the raja guna or the pitta - deficiency or excess both ways. Like thyroid if

it is deficient or excessive both ways it harms, in the same way to find out and help the body, so the nerves become steady. Pitta pradhan individuals have very unsteady nerves so we have to find out if the nerves, the neurological system is suffering from something and help it, so that the haste does not get in our actions, speech etc. Moreover if the person suffers from high blood pressure he / she is always impatient, this high blood pressure effects the nerves so they are never steady, generally the vaidya administer some ayurvedic tranquilizers which do not have any side effect. So the nerves must be steadied by the aspirant. The sadhaka, the student who wants to practice Buddhism cannot say " Oh but I have blood pressure and so it happens," We work to remove that, it can be removed, it can be cured, unless it is a very old chronic illness and you have allowed it to stay in the body, then it becomes incurable, then you have to control it, but I think steadying the nerves is the first step. After all consciousness is concerned with the movement of nerves. The spandha - the vibration, requires a very strong nervous system and so the steadiness of nerves is necessary.

So my second suggestions for helping the control which we were talking about is to help the body also by steadying the nerves.

Thirdly if you are very intelligent, if you are an exceptionally brilliant person brain wise, you have very little patience. A gifted person and a brilliant person they see things quickly, and the people around may not see those things as quickly. If a brilliant person sees in one minute the mediocre might even require half an hour, if a brilliant person with his psycho-physical structure can get things done in 5 minutes the other person may need 20 minutes. So the brilliant person, the capable person, a physically strong person has very little patience with the mediocre - that may also be one reason for the impatience. They want to gets things done quickly, want to do things quickly, the others do not do it, so he loses the patience - that also can happen. This is the sad plight of the brilliant people, the geniuses that I have seen in my life. They have no patience and therefore always in trouble in human relationships, left alone they do things marvelously but to live with others they are failures, complete failures and life is living in relationships, and relationships require the faculty of patience which is the perfume of inner space, otherwise you have to withdraw into some physical isolation and live like a recluse.

One requires the attitude of maitri, karuna, mudita, upeksha, we need maitri and karuna

both for controlling impatience. I say one has to awaken the attitude of maitri, it is again a part of discipline. Think about the other person, the good of the other person before you think of your own good, think about helping the others before you are helped, so do things not for yourself but for the good of others, Maha maitri has so many lovely nuances but I am not here to talk about all the implications. The mantra of maha maitri, maha karuna emphasised in Mahayana path of Buddhism is very beautiful.

So cultivate this attitude of maitri, if the maitri attitude is established and crystalised in you, then I don't think a person with maitri and karuna will ever be impatient or hasty because he knows the limitations of other people, because he knows their crookedness, their short comings, their conditioning, their stupidities. One has to live with all that, so cultivation of maitri and karuna are necessary for getting cured. You see, just saying that it is my habit, does not help us, we have to educate ourselves, it is a kind of discipline, it is preparation. Buddhahood has to be lived. To say : "I have realised that", means nothing - a flash and you have seen it, that does not mean anything. Buddhahood has to be lived and for living that razor sharp truth, you require the lubricating factor of maitri and karuna. They

do not allow that truth - that sharp perception to cut everytime, to cut you and others every time, it becomes tender with karuna, it gets enriched with maitri. There is not softness but tenderness, there is firmness and yet the concern and consideration for the other person never allows the person to be hasty or impatient with others and with yourself too, because people can be very impatient with themselves, they are very harsh judges of themselves - that also disappears. So it seems to me the first step is to recognise that it is a sickness.

Impatience is mental sickness, to be cured patiently step by step, helping the body, the speech and the mind. Education is for purification and enlightenment is the by-product of purification. There is enlightenment but it cannot express itself because the vehicle is not ready; it exists, it does not depend upon purification but its existence cannot manifest itself unless these impurities are removed.

Very few people realise that these are impurities to be washed out like toxins in the blood, they plead instead before their own intelligence, they say : "It is my habit, what can I do, I have been doing it since childhood, Oh my parents were like that, it is my inheritance." They plead

before their own intelligence when their intelligence scolds them from within. The inner voice says : "Why did you do that ? You have done something wrong or you have done something hurriedly", when their inner voice, their intelligence rebukes them from within, they want to even stop that voice by pleading with it, defending the wrong behaviour before the Intelligence, leave aside, before other people. They plead with themselves internally. When they plead and defend themselves and justify their behaviour to their own Intelligence, learning can never take place.

As long as this game of justifying your actions or words, your ways of behaviour - imbalanced ways of behaviour — is going on, the gentle voice of the inner conscience is stopped. Some people even strangle it, but that is a perversity. Most people i.e. 99 out of 100 spend the whole day justifying and defending their actions. So when it comes to other people pointing out their short comings the justification comes; not acknowledgement of the mistake but first comes justification, explanation and defence when they are cornered. Inside when the intelligence corners them, as there is no one to see them they justify; but when they are cornered by another person, then they have to acknowledge, which

they do grudgingly — not gracefully, not immediately, not willingly. So the learning does not take place. They feel compelled to grudgingly acknowledge that something wrong has been done, in a wrong way or at a wrong time - so the fault continues.

My dear friends this self-justification, self-defence before ones' own Intelligence has to stop. When it stops inwardly it will never happen outwardly. Because inwardly one is preoccupied with self-defence, what is happening in the inner field is bound to be reflected - if not in words-in your actions - in the outer - it is bound to be reflected. You cannot cheat life, you can deceive yourself but you cannot deceive life. Then it gets exposed and a person feels humiliated, is hurt and learning does not take place.

We are concerned with learning, whether someone else helps us to learn or whether the inner voice helps us to learn. The innocency of a small child is required for walking on this path; It is in this sense that the Christ had said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the meek or let the children come to me. By the word "meek", he did not mean gutless people or spineless people but humility to acknowledge, to accept ones'

weakness not out of compulsion but willingly to accept, then you are free of it.

It seems to me, like the control from outside, like helping the body by steadying the nerves, this third attitude of maitri and karuna is necessary. The fourth point is: never to defend when something wrong happens through my body, speech or even in thought. Thoughts may not be uttered by you but it affects your whole being. Thinking has its own odour - bad thoughts, ugly thoughts, sinful thoughts, ambitious thoughts, they make the texture of your being.

This self education, discipline, preparatory stage is so beautiful, it is not for gaining anything, it is a selfless activity, it is a purifying activity. Nothing purifies like education. Education that is willingly gone through. Education cannot be practiced, it is not something to be repeated, it has to be done from moment to moment. There is no code of conduct for that you have to prepare your own code of conduct, because if you are following the external ethical pattern, whether your mind likes it or not, then there can be a struggle, hypocrisy, self-deception but when you inwardly decide that I have to live maitri, karuna, I have to purify my whole being so that the Buddhahood with all splendor and glory shines through me there is no conflict. I am just a vehicle, what you call the body, the mind, the 'I' it

is the vehicle for the Buddhahood, the emancipated, liberated state to spread its splendour, like the lamp that does not keep the light for itself - when the glasses are clean, the lamp burns, the oil, the wick burns and spreads the light. In the same way the light of understanding in this lamp, that flame spreads the light for others so that others may end their suffering. The lamp, the candle never burns for itself, it gives the light to us. The lamp can give the light to us and we don't give the light to ourselves and to others - you see that is the pathetic condition of the human being, only because of avidya and kama i.e. because of ignorance about one's nature and desire. This desire also is because of avidya. There would be no kama or desire when the avidya is eliminated.

Have I answered your question?

Yesterday was the theory part of it, today we have seen the practical practising part of it.



4

Living the Dhamma

Once the Path of Nirvana is chosen willingly and its implications are appreciated and accepted intelligently, the preparation for the awakening of nirvana begins.

I have said that the path should be chosen willingly, because if it is chosen out of frustration, if it is chosen out of contempt for the world, if it is chosen out of ambition, then the teachings, the Truth cannot be perceived, cannot be grasped and cannot be contained in your being, in your consciousness. The choice of the path with full awareness of its implications is very necessary.

You keep the house you live in clean, in the same way the form - the body is the house, the transitory dwelling place for the consciousness - that house, that body has to be kept scrupulously clean, every part of it has to be cleansed everyday, attentively with care and concern.

An aspirant of dhamma has to regulate, moderate, control his relationship to food, to diet, to sleep, to sex, to exercise, to speech to everything. A scientific approach is developed and with mathematical precision the relationships are gone through and the intake through the sense organs are gone through, the sight, the audition, the smells, the touch to the body by other people - everything is taken care of.

We were talking of eliminating impurities and imbalances, so the discipline is to see that there is moderation, restraint and no excess in the behaviour of any of the sense organs.

How does one cleanse the consciousness? We will come to that presently, but let me while passing state simply, that solitude and silence, reviewing what has been done, co-relating it to the pilgrimage for nirvana are the cleansing factors. I began by saying that your body is the house, if you like you might call it a temple, but it is a dwelling place and in this dwelling place

your heart is the cave where solitude and silence can be lived. Cleanliness can be lived at the physical level and the mental cleanliness or purity which is silence and solitude can be lived at the psychological level, in the privacy of your own heart.

Those who want to live dhamma, will have to plan and organise the day - everyday because life is here and now, life is not in the tomorrows, it is here and now so one has to plan and organise the day. There is no steam roller of rules and regulations to be imposed upon us, one has to carve the path out of ones' own being. We are talking about the relatively real world and how we organise ourselves and our lives, so that the vertical pilgrimage, the ascent towards nirvana takes place

The person will see that out of the 24 hours, 8 hours could be allotted to rest, relaxation and sleep and say 12 hours are allotted for doing a job - paying the price for being in the body. You may have to do a job, live somewhere in a family relationship or organisation. So for earning a livelihood, taking care of the family etc. one may need 12 hours. If this allotment is done then the allotment of a minimum of 3 hours a day, if possible 4, but minimum 3 hours should be kept for

the pilgrimage, for the learning, for the preparatory disciplinary work. You can look at it any way, but this precision of minimum 3 hours out of 24-one eight is a requirement, because the pilgrimage is not for acquiring theories or knowledge about what Buddha communicated. Buddha's communication was not dry theory, it was no dogma, it was no sophisticated rationalisation, it was a sacred perception of truth which was put into words out of tremendous compassion.

Three hours a day will have to spent in the cave of the heart, that is to say in solitude and silence. It seems to me vitally necessary that a lover of dhamma would organise if not a room atleast a corner in his dwelling place which will be reserved for this self-education, this learning, this practising or living dhamma. That corner or room should not be used for any other purpose, so that the vibrational purity can be maintained. It cannot be maintained in the whole house, you may keep the house clean but the vibrational purity requires an attitude, an approach and all the members of the house may not have that approach, that attitude, that love for the truth, the urge for discovering the truth, for seeing the truth, for seeing their own Buddhahood. We cannot compel them to have it, so it is better that in our dwelling place we reserve if possible a

room or atleast somewhere a corner which you can shelter by some screen etc. clean it and prepare your asana - a comfortable place to sit, and if one likes one may have some insence or some light.

If one has a very weak mind, unsteady nerves one may take the support of the picture of Buddha - the form through which the truth came down to the humanity. Well I have no words, so I am saying "coming down", this is only a figurative way of saying it. You see the form in which Buddha lived was purified by a very great sacrifice. First the intellect was purified by studying deeply, by contemplation it was cleansed, the whole brain was equipped for the perception of truth, for the containing of truth. Study in which there is no acquisitive desire is a sacrifice. Then on the physical level, the turning away from the kingdom, from the family, from the palace etc. was a sacrifice, a oblation so gracefully, so spontaneously gone through. Not assuming airs of superiority, but just walking out, turning away in the nobility, the grandeur, the majesty of simplicity. Then the 48 days under the Bodhi tree and then the travelling. He was not very willing to communicate or call them teachings but then he accepted even that sacrifice and the communications took place. So what

we have got, is the sacred consumption of that sacrifice.

So the receptical of his teachings also should be equipped with a sense of sanctity, the room to be reserved only for that purpose of study, contemplation or meditation. Through out the day the body, the sense organs are exposed to contaminated surroundings, contaminated and polluted verbal expressions, glances thoughts, actions, reactions. So there should be a corner that is our place for retreat. Retreat is for de-conditioning - all the pollution and contamination has to be washed away, all irregularities have to be corrected, damages to be repaired - so you need a place for that.

In that place one spends time, it may not be possible to spend 3 hours at a stretch, they can be divided. Before you begin your days work and before you retire at night they could be divided as per the convenience, the profession, the occupation, all those things have to be taken into consideration. You spend 3 hours every day in this retreat and if possible once a week double the time, instead of 3 making it 6 hours, as far as possible spending time at a stretch 3 hours in the morning 3 hours in the evening or afternoon or night, what ever it is. Unless you dip

your body in a river or a lake or you pour water on your body, you rub it, your body cannot be wet in the same way unless you spend time and allow the waters of solitude and silence to wash your consciousness the cleansing cannot take place. The cleansing is not a idea, it has to be a fact - so that seems to be necessary.

We are now talking about living the dhamma. This is the preparatory part of discipline. Discipline is a way of living in which learning takes place spontaneously, effortlessly - that seems to be necessary.

If this point is clear may I request you to accompany me and look at the same thing from a slightly different angle. For the pilgrim of nirvana consciousness, socialisation has to be minimised to the extent it is possible. We are living in a mad neurotic society which has developed in each country a way of living which benumbs sensitivity, which provokes the flesh and makes it go for sensory pleasure. These are very strange times to live in, so one has to minimise socialisation. You have to do a job, you go there either by walking or public conveyance or taxi you have to associate yourself with others, be in a factory for 6 to 7 hours a day - that is the price you pay for using this abode which you call the

human body. That is inevitable, but there too, while you are there at the working place minimise the inter-action, keep it to the minimum, keep it to the bare necessity of the job, at the same time do not allow anyone to take advantage of your simplicity or modesty. People are apt to interpret the simple and modest straight forward behaviour as a sign of meekness or weakness. There should be the firmness of a rock, sharpness of the rays of the sun, gentleness of a saintly heart. So one should not allow any one to take advantage of our non-interfering, non-intervening style of living. We have no time to intervene in anyone's life, to criticise what they are doing, to be a judge of their lives, of what they are doing, we have enough work in our hands.

So for minimising socialisation there is the attitude of maitri and karuna, neither condemnation nor interference, nor intervention, nor the desire to give unasked for advice because you have understood something. If in a haste or out of impatience one tries to give advice to others it will be a half-baked thing, when the time comes the life exacts all the services from you. You are not yet a Bodhi Sattva, a Arahant, a Buddha, though the potential is there, you have not realised it as yet, the potential is not yet the factuality - the seed of the mango tree contains the whole

tree, there is the sprout, the sapling and yet the fruit has to ripen then you will get the juice — then you will attract the world towards you. The lotus must blossom fully before its scent can attract people from far away to enjoy it. We have to learn from that.

So in our working place also, there should be this austerity in our behaviour, I am not talking of Vairagya, I am talking of restraint, that is the sheel, it is a beautiful word for discipline and preparatory stage in dhamma, like Dana there is sheel, sheel-the character.

So the integrity of character must be felt also in the office. Not to be victimized by anyone and not to indulge where our actions are not necessary. We are only the witness, we see everything, we are available, but we take no initiative. The curtailing of socialisation, the minimising of socialisation requires this attitude of non interfering, non intervening, of being a witness. You see everything, you are not inattentive you are alert, if anyone asks you, you respond but on your own you take no initiative. Every initiative is an invitation for others either to demand or to command, either to depend upon you or to dictate terms to you. We have to steer clear of both these areas. In the 7 to 8 hours we have to

spend in a market place, in an office, in a factory, in an organisation or wherever, the behaviour of a sadhaka, of an aspirant, of a person who is practicing and living dhamma must be noticeable.

The behaviour of the ordinary person, expresses tremendous curiosity, they want to look into the private lives of persons, they want to probe into their motivations, interfere, intervene, assert. That is the path of sansara, and they inflict suffering upon themselves by their very initiatives, by their indulgences, criticisms, by their unwarranted and unwanted judgments. Suffering does not invade you, you inflict it upon yourselves, you create it. Mind is the creator of suffering, the source of dukham, and the ending of suffering is the beginning of meditation.

So wherever physical, verbal, mental interaction is necessary you go through it with a sense of responsibility, with a sense of restraint and with the magnificence of sheel. I am not here to talk of panch sheel, that also can be gone into. The character of the aspirant has to be built bit-by-bit everyday.

We have chosen the path because we have understood, atleast verbally, that the plurality of the phenomenal world is a myth, that the objec-

tiveness of the phenomenal world is a parinama, there is no substance of its own, it is a blending of panch mahabhutas and pancha mahabhutas again are a parinama; that is not their svabhav, that is not their own substance, that is not their own dharma, we have understood that. And we have understood that in the body there is no atma, soul etc. Because of this understanding we have chosen this path, it does not mean that the others will choose the path, so they will be enjoying, they will be following the path of pleasure, working for success in society etc. but a sadhaka, a student will feel enriched by their joy. I'm coming to the attitude of mudita. Maitri and Karuna we had seen this morning, Mudita and Upeksha we will look at now. These are the four jewels we have to look into.

To be happy to see another person healthy, to enjoy the joy of the other person, feel enriched by that joy - this is very important, because people who renounce life, those who accept celibacy can never appreciate the joys of the people who get married. They want to belittle it, they want to criticize it, if not condemn it, to assert their celibacy, their attitude gets distorted. But our understanding does not entitle us to prevent others from what they are doing. This attitude of mudita will sustain our mental health, our behaviour to-

wards others and they will not be afraid of us. There are some who have done tapas-whether it is a sanyasi, a brahmacharya or a tapasvi-those people withdraw from the world and other people get frightened of them, they feel a kind of distance, they feel a kind of gap between them and others. Karuna cannot be lived if our presence creates a gap, a dimensional difference, a hierarchical sense. If my presence creates that sense then how can we live maitri and karuna? They have not understood that it is unreal, you have understood it, but living your understanding does not mean belittling their small joys of life. The attitude of holier than thou, the attitude of self-righteousness, a feeling of superiority, a superiority complex it is very big sickness with the so called spiritual sadhakas in the world. The integrity of character, the perfume of the inner peace should be felt - that does not terrorise others but it creates a kind of respect while the holier than thou attitude does create a distance and a feeling of higher and lower.

It seems to me that karuna or maitri is a tremendous significant attitude to be cultivated and to educate ourselves in. The prince of mankind, the Buddha had the perfume of nobility in him, they say his presence had the perfume of lotus around him, they used to call his cottage

ghandha kuti, wherever he went he carried the perfume, maybe a figurative way of putting it, maybe they were exaggerating but I'm sure that the inner peace, the inner sheel, the inner karuna and maitri they have their scents and perfumes. Thoughts and emotions have odour, this also must have it's own perfume - innate, built in. When the maha maitri, the maha karuna the sheel dwell in your consciousness - in that subtle chitta, there must be the perfume.

So I was saying, one has to educate oneself, then there is an indifference or upkesha to the difficulties, to the obstacles, to the obstructions, to the reactions, to the misinterpretations by others. Upkesha is a very great power, it is a very great force. I do not remember in whose life the event took place but a Mahatma was passing through a village and people abused him. He neither looked this way or that way, when he arrived to the end of the village a couple of elders approached him and said : "Mahatmaji these youths have been abusing you, but you did not say a word". And he said : "I never accepted what they said like if you take a handful of stones and want to give it but I don't take them, in the same way I did not accept the abuse, it has not touched me, it has not been registered". That is Upkesha.

Even on the personal, physical level of suffering there can be upkesha. Whether it is on the physical plane or it is on the psychological level where the suffering is caused by somebody else's behaviour, there can be upkesha by yourself not reacting to it.

So the house to be cleansed, the cave to be prepared, the day to be organised and the preparatory discipline to be gone through, then you will be ready to receive the truth and live it right to the sensory level. People understand the truth and don't live it, they understand verbally, they don't realise verbal recognition of truth is not realisation of truth, realisation is a living event in the inter-action with life. At every level Truth has to be lived, then the Buddhahood is realised, and its lustre, its splendor throws its light on the whole world.

5

Buddham Sharanam Gachchami

Dharmam Sharanam Gachchami

Sangham Sharanam Gachchami

Siddhartha became Buddha due to his dedication to truth. Before he went to Bodh Gaya a number of Brahmin scholars had wanted to teach him, they had conversations with him, and very firmly though respectfully and with full modesty he told them that they were speaking out of the pages of books, of scriptures, Vedas, Upanishads, they were repeating like parrots. He was concerned with truth and not words. So he dedicated his life to the exploration of truth. Before he sat under the Bodhi tree, history says

that he proclaimed; "Now till the Truth is realised here do I sit, if the body drops dead I don't care". Do we have that dedication to truth when we choose the path.?

Buddham sharanam gachchami - "Sharanam gachchami" is translated as surrendering. To me the word talks about dedication - wholistic dedication - Not surrender as an act of will but an action which is the result, the natural consequence of the urge of the whole being. When we say sharanam gachchami we are proclaiming unto ourselves that I dedicate my whole life, at all levels of life, in every field of life, at every moment of life. I have seen that the word of Buddha shines like a jewel in the splendour of truth and therefore to the truth proclaimed by him I dedicate myself.

Dharmam sharanam gachchami the truth proclaimed by him, the path indicated by his life, and the guidelines provided by him - to his teachings I dedicate my life — not to the person of the Buddha - I respect, I love the person, the vehicle through which the proclamation has come. The form also is sacred - I love it, I respect it, but I love it and I respect it because of my love for the Truth, and as I have chosen the word of Buddha, the path shown by him, the

guidelines provided by him, I dedicate my life to living the teachings at the cost of everything, at the cost of physical life, at the cost of social life.

You know dedication is a very sacred thing it is like the lotus. The lotus grows in water soiled by clay, earth but no dirt touches it and it brings out for us the concealed perfume of the earth, water, fire, air so in the lotus of my heart I feel the same perfume which is pushing me towards the middle path shown by Buddha. Dharmam sharanam gachchami. Dharmam is the pure gyana - not verbal knowledge, verbal knowledge is sterile, dhamma is dynamic.

Buddha has shown the path of vimukti. Vimukti - total freedom. From what? From Raga-dwesa - attraction and repulsion towards the phenomenal world, towards the illusion of 'I', me, the self, the ego. And when all the attraction and identification with the phenomenal world and the non-existent identity with the ego comes to an end, there is that indescribable, majestic state of nirvana here and now.

Bhikshu is a person in whose consciousness the identification with the non-existent me, the non-existent plurality of phenomenal world has come to an end. So he has become a bhikshu, a monk he has no house anywhere. When

the cosmos itself is a super imposition of human mind, when the so called material objective plurality is an illusion, is unreal, where can the monk have the house? Even the body in which he lives is unreal, is unpredictable, its duration is unpredictable. So he is aniketa - a bhikshu who lives by bhiksha.

I wonder if you have seen that the meaning of the word "bhiksha" is grace. Not that you ask for it and something is given to you, it is not an inter-action in the field of duality, what ever comes your way is the grace of life - all is the grace of Buddha. If you like bhiksha is grace, prasad.

In the state of nirvana there is neither gain nor loss, whatever comes your way inwardly or outwardly is the grace of life, even the gyanam. The gyana is a grace, it is not your acquisition. Your inner-experiences if they happen, the latent dormant powers if they are awakened, they are not your possession because you do not exist, it is all grace, prasad which has come your way. If there is opposition, scandals, criticism, insults, humiliation, that also is prasad, that is bhiksha.

Till that state is attained one is a shravaka, so begin from the state of shravaka and grow into the state of monk - monkhood is a state of

consciousness. Wearing orange coloured robes, covering one shoulder or both shoulders - they are external symbols and they become meaningful, even the orange coloured robe becomes meaningful if inwardly there is that vimukti, there is that nirvana. Otherwise, you know among Buddhist sects there have been fights whether you cover one shoulder or two. What did Buddha means by that? Such secondary things are highlighted, there have been fights and different sects and schools have grown and the essence of dharma has been forgotten. Your friend is sharing with you the sorrow that she feels that the dynamism, the vitality of Buddhas teachings is nearly lost, it does not electrify the hearts of the people because in the robes, monks are many, but in the lotus of their heart, that jewel of dhamma has become very dim. It is covered by superstitions and beliefs, authoritarianism and so on.

Dharmam sharanam gachchami - in Buddha I have chosen the person, the vehicle, the phenomenon through which the Truth is proclaimed and then I dedicate to that Truth my whole life.

But the words have been twisted, have been distorted. For instance the word 'yana' in Mahayana or Hinayana, the word 'yana' has

been misused, abused. "Yana" means wheel. So you take a wheel and write the mantra on it and move it. Is that dharma chakra parivartana or is it a very expensive self deception? "Yana" means the path, it means the vehicle and the wheel. The word 'yana; in sanskrit has many meanings but I am just referring to two or three of them.

In Mahayana the supreme importance is given to dhamma, the rituals are not excluded, the prayers are not excluded but the emphasis is on the gyana. So Mahayana is superior, it is a path which is superior, when you take the help of mantras, tantras, rituals it is a longish path that you are taking, you may get stuck up, you may create an idol out of the Buddha, you may create a super god out of him, you will forget the dhamma and you will get stuck up in the form. Mahayana has saved, through madhyamkas, the sanctity of the teachings to a very great extent, it is not so much lost in the paraphenelia of ritualism.

I do not intend to take you along with me into commentaries of Nagarjuna, Ashwa Gosha, Vasu Gupta, Sariputra and others. If there are real aspirants they should study the teachings looking at them from different angles - not for

academic interest, but when you see the same truth from different angles and your understanding gets enriched, it acquires a new depth and new vitality.

Sangham sharanam gachchami. How does a sangh, a brotherhood come into existence? When like minded people who have chosen the same path and the same proclamation of truth through the same vehicle of the person, when they take that pilgrimage together a sangh comes about. It is beautiful. There is a very beautiful prefix concealed in word "sangh" and also "sangh vach" which means they go together properly, with the grandeur of propriety they walk together on the path of truth, on the path of nirvana. They see the same truth and they proclaim the same truth, their life is the vehicle for the proclamation of truth. Words are very feeble, the real communication is through their lives, they go together, they march together on the path of truth and they talk about the same truth wherever they might be. Because they have chosen the same path and have accepted the same truth and are partaking the pilgrimage together, their minds have become like an orchestra producing the same melody. Their minds are tuned together, They are tuned into the same truth. they may not have realised it but they have accepted

it, they are going towards it. Potentially there is the seed in the lotus of the heart, the light is already there. So their minds become tuned into one another and therefore that becomes a brotherhood. It is not a crowd of human beings but a brotherhood.

Why was sangha necessary at the time of the Buddha and even today? The majority of people are taken in by the phenomenal world, by the variety, they are attracted towards it and the contact with that plurality through the senses keeps them engaged life after life oscillating between pleasure and pain, between birth and death. Those few who have decided to dedicate their lives to the Truth require the warmth of togetherness in consciousness and also in life - not for forming a sect, not for dogmatic propaganda but for sharing - Truth cannot be propagated, it can be communicated, it can be shared through your presence. So sangha is meant to be as sacred as dhamma, it is the vehicle for the dhamma. When a person does it alone one may feel lonely, it may be too much to live in an anti-spiritual society so as a supportative measure this togetherness has an importance.

Buddham sharanam gachchami, dharmam sharanam gachchami, sangham sharanam gachchami.

They say the kali yuga - the present yuga, is the yuga of conflict, confrontation, bloodshed, violence and we have seen it. In the last 100 years, the twentieth century has been the bloodiest century in human history. So in kali yuga togetherness is the power and as Buddha has said "atma deepo bhava" be a light unto yourselves, do not accept my words because I say it, accept them when you see the truth of them. It is a non-authoritative togetherness, no hierarchy, no authority, it is a brotherhood. Some may be seniors, some may be juniors, they live together for the protection, they receive guidance from those who have gone before them or who are ahead of them. And even the lives of those who are ahead of others is fulfilled by that sharing, they are not obliging anyone, their lives are enriched by the sharing. A non-authoritative non-hierarchical brotherhood of enquirers, sadhakas who want to practice dhamma as you call it, live dhamma as I call it - that becomes a dynamo itself.

By coming here you have provided me with an opportunity to spend these few days with Buddha, I am with that consciousness.



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From the Book

Those who want to practise Buddha's teachings will have to probe into the movement of the mind and discover its unreality. We have to discover how the "I" and sense of "Me-ness" is a myth, an illusion and how the phenomenal world existing outside is also unreal.

People identify themselves with the inner "I" and "Mine" thinking them to have a permanent identity or they identify with the sense objects thinking them to be permanent and wanting to acquire them with the help of desire - Trishna. Trishna is the cause of klesha, the cause of suffering.

What is the master key to liberation or emancipation? This complete elimination of Trishna or Desire.

So practising Dhamma, living the teachings of Buddha has only one focus, to find out whether there is within oneself the movement of Desire.