

THE REAL WAY  
TO  
AWAKENING



CHAO KHUN SOBHANA DHAMMASUDHI

# ***THE REAL WAY TO AWAKENING***

Being the talks delivered  
after meditation sessions at  
a Buddhist Temple in London

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by

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By the same author

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CHAO KHUN SOBHANA DHAMMASUDHI.

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## INTRODUCTION

Some may ask, why do we have to meditate at all? In answering we must recognize that meditation is the very heart of the Buddha's Teaching. The Noble Eightfold Path was not heard of before the Enlightenment, and the subsequent training of monks to similar fulfilment. But from that time onwards the Way of the Buddha offered a cure for all the ills of worldly life, and showed people how to face all vicissitudes with equanimity, and how to dwell in harmony with one another. This Eightfold group of principles falls naturally into three phases, which support each other, namely, Wisdom, Behaviour and Meditation. Until insight is developed wisdom is limited to our ability to discern right and wrong views, and right and wrong aims and intentions. To help guide us in daily affairs we have the Buddhist Precepts for right behaviour, or conduct in our speech, actions and manner of earning our living. The essential third phase of Buddhism is Insight Meditation, whereby we see for ourselves how true the teaching of the Buddha is. In this phase we recognize that there is need for periodical retreat, from the manifold disturbing influences that are so much a part of over crowded modern life. This does not mean that life nowadays is inferior to what it was in days gone by, but more comfortable standards and better physical health do not necessarily lead to peace of mind. Just as understanding improves when things are seen in a wider perspective, so does the human mind become more refined and free from tensions, by occasional withdrawal to a quiet environment? Present-day tensions frequently seek relief in one of two extremes, either physical violence of one kind or another or sensual indulgence. Meditation that is properly practised by the system of disciplined alertness as taught by the Buddha, brings not only relaxation to the body, but mental stability and calmness. The detached objectivity which many have experienced through such Insight Meditation, under a trained teacher, enables them to appreciate how much better prepared they become to face the problems of daily life, and how much better their health is, in both mind and body.

Another question that comes to mind is, why do people become more and more interested in meditation. The rapid growth of education in the last decade or so, with wider mass-communication through television, has caused many more people to realize that such trouble as worry, nervousness and even bodily complaints like indigestion, may be considerably eased by some kind of mind training. Often seekers for systems of mental culture, are only concerned with finding support for their pre-conceived notions of what is best for them, and for others. Their notions can sometimes be quite weird. However, any seeker who is courageous enough to resist wishful thinking does not spend long in following a system that demands blind faith in rules or rituals that promise ultimate salvation. This present age is too scientific in its methods of investigation to encourage gullibility, but the human personality still feels unsatisfied with either the crystallized beliefs of earlier generations, or the endless streams of information available through modern technology. Somewhere along the line people hear of Buddhism as some form of evergreen religion that possesses a core of teaching that is not outdated by any of the discoveries of science. Moreover, they get to know by reading or hearing talks, that despite some inevitable superstitions that have accompanied Buddhism over its twenty-five centuries of transmission through the Order of Monks, there is still a well-defined method of self-training which does not add to one's mental concepts and burdens of beliefs, but which teaches one how to put down these stifling mental loads, and find peace without losing touch with one's fellow men. The assurance given by Buddhism that we all have the capacity to undertake this training if we are sincere and determined enough, is indeed an attractive prospect, and my

lecture tours in Britain and on the Continent of Europe have revealed that there is a growing interest in meditation and an increasing need for meditation centres. To the modern mind there is simply no substitute for experience. Buddhism offers experience through Insight. There is no better way to spread the Dhamma or Teaching of the Buddha. Non-meditating scholars may try to explain the results of meditation, and those who are heavily conditioned by a religious background may be alarmed at the way Insight Meditation strips away all beliefs, but whoever wants to rise above self-delusion, makes a start and goes on to the end.

It is to be expected that doubts will arise from time to time regarding the value of meditation, and meditation centres to the community at large. As we have already seen, the benefits of a calm mind and a relaxing of one's tensions are one obvious advantage. Temporary retreat for strengthening one's powers of concentration and recollection may become more necessary as the population gets denser. There will be more distracting influences and more causes of friction for which drugs will be only a palliative, and sports only a temporary diversion. The root causes of all mundane troubles as the Buddha told his listeners, are always greed, hatred and delusion. Only by detached observation of these destructive forces are we able to let them die down. The permanent cure therefore, is through meditation for which centres of training are vital.

So the practical side of Buddhism is recognized as paramount in importance by the establishment of this new Centre (The Vipassana Centre at Beacon Hill, Hindhead, Surrey; which was opened on September 7th 1968.) which is officially open from today. Now we have the facilities for experiencing what we are told in talks at the Temple, in our Buddhist magazines, and what we may glean from our theoretical studies. It is sincerely hoped that the opportunities now available to Buddhists and their friends, to come and undertake training in Insight Meditation, will be welcomed and that the Buddha-Dhamma will thus spread from this Centre for the benefit of the many who yearn for a deeper understanding of life, -both within and around themselves. This is the way to peace of mind and the more widely it is known and practised, the greater will grow the much needed friendliness between individuals, families, communities and nations. There is frequent reference in international affairs to what is termed, a 'Free Society', but without freedom from greed, hatred and egotism, a Free Society remains only a delusion of the imagination. While these three unbalancing forces dominate our thoughts, words and deeds, neither we nor society can be truly free.

The Teaching of the Buddha contains the solution to all problems involving self-discipline and detachment from greed, hatred and self-delusion, but Insight Meditation has always been the only way to perceive both the problem, and the solution, for oneself. The Buddha used to tell his followers, ' Here is a tree (or other sheltered spot). Meditate now so that you will not be remorseful when the opportunity has passed and age or sickness overtakes you.'

## Chapter one

### INSIGHT AND PURIFICATION OF BEINGS

I should first like to speak about the purification of beings, and later we shall see why this is so closely connected with insight.

First of all, we should consider whether beings are impure, and why. We are human beings, and according to the Buddha, all beings need purification. Perhaps some of you would say however, that there is purity within and that you can come to this, if you become free from all defilements, from all the things that come from without. Perhaps the Buddha means to say that the mind, originally luminous, becomes defiled by the taints that come from outside it and intrude upon it. If we think deeply and carefully, we should probably find ourselves in agreement with that statement. If you have come into contact with the purity within, you can have conviction.

All beings are impure, because they are born according to the *kamma - vipaka*, the *kamma - formations* and tendencies accumulated in life. We are born as human beings, because we have accumulated both good and bad *kamma* in previous lives. If we become free from the process of accumulation, we shall not be born as human beings, or as any beings in the lower world. If anything at all, perhaps if we attain to the state of Non-Returning, we may be born in the pure abode of existence, which is a higher world, not a lower one, and we shall reach Nibbana there.

If we cannot trace previous lives, we should think about this life on Earth, whether we are impure, or already pure. We are conditioned beings having accumulated knowledge and beliefs. We have accumulated both wholesome and unwholesome states of mind, good and bad actions. We were brought up in certain circumstances, and our conditioning is in accordance with our background of training, family and education. Because of all this we are not pure, but subject to tendencies and formations. It is very important for us to be free from all those things; otherwise we cannot come to purity. In order to come to purity, we must have insight. Insight, or intuitive wisdom, is essential for the purification of beings.

The first stage is the purification of conduct, or *Sila*. By *Sila*, we mean two aspects of morality. The first is the morality necessary for enlightenment, for coming into contact with inner purity. The second aspect is morality of conduct in society. Although important, this is not as essential to the process of purification of mind as the first aspect. As we know, the important benefit of moral conduct is the freedom from remorse, anxiety and mental distress. If actions and speech are not pure, they disturb the mind, and prevent it from coming to peace. Everything accumulated in life is stored in the subconscious mind, and continues to exist at the unconscious levels of existence.

Usually in life, we are so occupied with other things that we are unaware of unconscious conflicts within the mind. But when we try to be quiet, as in meditation, this unconscious flow will begin to rise to the surface, into the conscious mind, and you will perceive them. If they are unpleasant sensations and images, they may disturb you very much and you will not wish to face them because, your aim in meditation may be to become calm and rested. But if the mind has accumulated unwholesome things, we cannot expect pleasant experiences to arise!

Clean living, in action and speech, is therefore the basic principle for the purification of mind.

It is very difficult to purify the mind if you do not understand the conditions associated with it, especially if tendencies and background are not understood. Even if you try very hard, it would take a very long time and perhaps be unsuccessful. According to the Buddhist teaching, we have to develop *jhana*, or mental absorption, and this is extremely hard work. But there is another way of coming to purification of mind: through *insight*, which is the path of awareness.

Insight is the real understanding of the false and the true, and is the only method that leads to Nibbana. As the Buddha said to the monks, when he saw a log of wood carried away by the River Ganges: 'If that log of wood is not caught up anywhere, and does not rot, it will reach the ocean.' It is the same with a being. If he or she does not get caught up in anything, and has purity of character, he or she will reach Nibbana, through insight. But to be able to acquire insight, it is very important for us to be awake and alert in all our activities, - not only of the physical body, but of the operation of the mind. This is the only way to understand ourselves. Without becoming aware of all the states of mind, and all its contents, both conscious and unconscious, it is not possible for insight to grow and illuminate things. We just grope for many things without understanding where to go. We may have an aim, but we do not know the direction. Insight is like light, showing the way to the Truth. We are not in the dark if we have insight, which is why the Buddha said: 'Be a lamp unto yourself'.

If we try to purify ourselves by various methods of training but without insight, we shall not be able to fulfil our aim. Whenever we understand, we have clarity, alertness and awakening within. At that moment the mind is pure, but it becomes defiled again immediately when unwholesome states arise and cloud the mind, and we are not aware of these states.

Unwholesome conditions flow on and on within the two types of superficial levels in the mind: the deep superficial level is called the unconscious, and the shallow superficial level is the conscious.

But Reality is beyond the superficial levels of existence. All the wholesome and unwholesome factors exist in the superficial levels, but they have the power to defile the mind because we lack awareness. If we meditate, that is, live fully in the present from moment to moment, we gain clarity; there is no confusion, no ignorance, no illusion. Then if anything comes up, we know it and understand it without being told. We are awake, and know what to do about these things. There is no question, when we actually understand. But we must maintain awareness as much as possible. That is why it is said in the scriptures that only the Arahant, the Perfected One, can be fully aware all the time and therefore be free from all defilements. Even though we are not enlightened yet, we can see the possibility of being liberated from all impurities and perhaps some of us will have success for a short time. But we do not yet have the power to control this and go into it. This power depends upon the intensification of awareness, and perhaps we are prevented from developing this because of our expectations. We desire an experience we have had before, and this can be a great obstacle to experiencing the truth.

The Buddhist way of life is very different from the way life is usually lived, but if we try to live in the world according to Buddhist teachings we can become free from all conditions. We become anxious because we expect too much and feel insecure. Some people think of meditation only in terms of sitting in a particular place at a particular time, but in fact



awareness can be practised at any moment, and should be practised during all activities. This is not possible because we *feel* it to be impossible, but if you can become aware of that feeling of impossibility you will see something wrong in the mind. When you see something wrong in yourself, and are really aware of it, then you can leave it and be free from it. This is a matter of practice, doing it constantly, again and again. But we must have a definite aim, to develop awareness. Although insight cannot be developed, in fact, it can be acquired in accordance with the degree of awareness. We are developing awareness, not insight.

According to Buddhism, insight is seeing in wisdom the truth as the truth, falsehood as falsehood, free from delusion and ignorance. This is not an ordinary perception of something, but an experiencing of the truth. You will notice that I say *experiencing*, not experience. This is because it is a process, and not a person having an experience. There is no object being experienced. It is experiencing itself, experiencing the truth at that moment.

Insight has two functions. The first is to penetrate the walls of ignorance in order to get to the truth, beyond opinions, views and knowledge. When these walls are pierced the truth reveals itself, it will shine forth. The second function is to cut off all impurities, and even wholesome states of mind, because in order to come into contact with purity a person must be free from dualistic concepts, such as good or bad. In the person who has realized the truth there is no merit or demerit. These concepts only exist on the psychological level of beings. Deeper than that they lose their distinction, and disappear in the experience of truth.

There may also be an idea that the *person* experiences the truth, and this idea of, 'self', will be cut off. We may feel afraid that we ourselves will be destroyed. Life in the world is usually concerned with the self: 'this is mine, this belongs to Me'. We are continually concerned with superficial things, and become anxious if the self is threatened. In fact, there is no individual to be destroyed, but the idea of the self, which **MUST** be cut off, otherwise the experiencing of truth will not occur.

Insight is not only important to spiritual life, but to all aspects of life. If we can live in the world with understanding, we can be free from misery and sorrow. We will see all unpleasant things that come to us, yet remain free from them because we understand them for what they are. Living with understanding is the highest aim in life, and this understanding does not require knowledge. You do not need to read many books, or listen to many lectures, but what you live you really live. In all activities there should be awareness and clear comprehension, and this is the only way to develop insight and to purify the being. It is reasonable and well within our capacity as human beings, to do this. All enlightened beings in the past have been humans who developed themselves according to this method, and we all have the potentiality for reaching the same level of purification.

September 15<sup>th</sup>. 1968

## Chapter Two

### ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION

For beginners the main problem is how to keep the mind under control. We have been trained in the way of thinking, reasoning about things, because we believe that by thinking, we will understand Reality by accumulating more and more information. But in meditation practice it is quite different, because we must not think but be aware of the thinking process. This is very different. If you think about meditation, think about the up and down movements, about feelings and about sensations, you are not meditating. You do not come to understand the operation of the mind, because you conform to the desire and to the states of mind. You will say that conformity is the way to get discipline because by keeping to the rules you will be under control.

But controlling power comes at any time you can look and act rightly. You can see that all the time we react to things according to ideas, views, opinions and knowledge accumulated in life. It is a very rare moment when we act directly, without conforming to ideas. When conforming you will say, 'The mind never comes to an end'. It is true but it depends upon the way you look at it. When you look at the mind with ideas, with knowledge, with views, you cannot see the ending of the mind. But if you look at it with full attention, without putting any views into it, leaving everything aside, opening the mind, opening yourself to see the mind and what is going on at that moment, - at the moment you look carefully and passively, - controlling power comes into being without making an effort to control the mind. This is because effort has come together with awareness, and with the power of understanding you can remove, or you can attain. This is the process of meditation.

Some people, who are advanced in meditation, will come to a state of peace at any time they sit in meditation. But there are two levels of peace, superficial peace, and deep peace. Superficial peace is the product of mind, the result of concentration, and by coming to such peace we cannot stay with it. If we cannot reach it again we get frustration, depression, suffering. You say, 'Oh, once I got into a state of peace but I cannot get into it any more. Why?' Then you think about your inability to get into a state of peace and as you think more and more the mind becomes confused. Then there is no self-control.

What is the difference between concentration and attention? The meaning of these words is very important. I should like you to put aside all your information and knowledge about attention and concentration, and then come with me, not to believe me, but to work with me. This way you will understand what I mean by these words.

Concentration is a translation of the Pali term 'samadhi', which literally means 'stability of mind', or 'stabilized mind'. A person tries to keep the mind on one point, on a particular object set before the mind. Suppose you are looking at the Buddha, trying to keep the mind on the Buddha, his face, his head and his whole body with all its parts, trying to remember them all. You look at him with open eyes, trying to memorize all of his body, and then close the eyes and see him even with the eyes closed. If you forget anything, you open the eyes again and look again, trying again to see the whole picture of the Buddha in your mind. You try and try to keep the mind on the image; that is the way of concentration.

But this is not yet deep concentration - it is superficial. Why is it superficial? Do you understand the meaning of superficiality? In superficiality there is dependence upon the object. Your mind cannot leave the set object. The moment you lose the object you feel sad, disappointed. That is dependence. When you are dependent, you are superficial. When you are independent, you come into the deep and you live with the free mind.

But there is also a deeper concentration - that of the state of the Jhanas, meditative absorptions. By entering into the first meditative absorption, your mind is fixed, but there are five mental states co-operating with the fixed mind: application of thought, investigative thinking, rapturous joy, happiness (peace) and unification or one-pointedness of mind in which the mind has become one-pointed with the object. These five mental states are co-operating closely with the fixed mind. Application of thought is something like directing the mind towards the object, not allowing the mind to run away and trying to lift it on to the object. There is a repeated effort to do this. Investigative thinking is something like going round the object in order to see the whole picture. Through investigation in the deeper sense, one becomes rapturous, happy and one with the object. Still you have the feeling, 'I am one with the object'; - 'I am' - is still working.

Then you come to the second stage of meditative absorption, in which the two mental states of application of thought and investigative thinking die away. There is only rapture, happiness, and one-pointedness. Deeper still you come to the third meditative absorption. Here there is no rapturous joy but there is happiness in the sense of peace with one-pointedness of mind operating. Rapture is a mental sensation which has a connection with physical sensation, but at this stage there is no physical sensation, --only mental sensation, which is happiness or peace. If you come to the fourth stage of meditative absorption you are free from both happiness and unhappiness. There is no physical or mental sensation but there is equanimity and mindfulness.

But the mind is still fixed on the object. You are indifferent, free from desire in the sense of suppression of desire, suppression of attachment, but there is still a refined attachment to the object unconsciously. Mindfulness is working with the object without understanding the whole process of the mind. From this stage, if wished, supernatural knowledge and power may be developed.

This is called concentration, according to the explanation of the Buddha, but mindfulness only really comes into being at the fourth stage of meditative absorption, though this method, and this stage, is rather difficult to achieve. After attaining freedom from attachment to equanimity you can come to Insight, but if you become tied to equanimity, which is a very peaceful state, you will stay enjoying the fourth stage of meditative absorption without wishing to come out of it.

What is the meaning of attention? Attention is the way of Insight, not the way of Samadhi. Insight means seeing the Truth in wisdom. Attention is the process of observing things carefully, closely and deeply. When you are giving attention to my talk, you are not concentrating your mind upon it because when using attention you can experience what is being said and can observe words and the method of the speaker.

In attention there is interest. You are interested in something with the sole purpose of understanding it. There is no desire, craving, or attachment, but there is awareness. When there is awareness, there is clear comprehension or understanding because they are linked together

all the time. Attention, awareness and understanding or comprehending, are the most important factors for developing insight into Reality. In attention there is love of doing, of hearing, of listening or of understanding. In this process, when you come to the quiet moment, you can see how unquiet you are and how much unnecessary energy you spend in your life. You can realize the false as the false in your life, and by doing so you can come to an understanding of the Truth as the Truth. Without realizing the false, you cannot realize the true. Otherwise one will only realize the idea of the Truth, not the Truth itself. This is very important. You cannot work with ideas in order to come to understanding. You must work with action, and attention is action-not reaction.

In this process of attention, as I said, awareness is present. When we are fully aware of mental states, or anything going on within, or outside us, we can see the reality of ourselves. You have a mirror with you all the time-the mirror of the mind. What is the mirror of the mind? Any object of awareness is the mirror of the mind. In attention, you do not look at the object as an object, but are aware of both the processes of the mind reacting to the object, and of the object itself. This is not a matter of concentration. Concentration can see only one thing--only the object, and not the processes of the mind reacting to it. In attention, which sees both together, you have a mirror, which shows how you respond to the object, and what is your relationship with objects, ideas, memories and views. All things can be observed without interpreting, without explaining the object or the process. You are looking at it with clarity and alertness, and then there is no dullness. When the mind is dull and cannot get what it wants it becomes confused. Or sometimes when it is caught up in something it gets stuck; it does not know which way to go, or how to move on, so it becomes frustrated and full. But in the process of attention there is always clarity and alertness - awakening - because the mind is open and you can gradually free yourself from the conditions, from the background of life.

Then you will find the new way. If it is the *real* way, (I call it the *new* because it has no connection with the *old*), it is always *new*. When you have understanding, there is no problem of how to deal with this or that, because understanding can tell you. There is no question at that stage, and you must not project the problem beforehand. You put the question, 'How can I act when I come to quietness?' But when you really arrive at quietness, such a question will not exist.

September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1968

## Chapter Three.

### THE POWER OF PASSIVE WATCHFULNESS

The topic for today, the Power of Passive Watchfulness, is in the series of talks on Satipatthana. In the practice of Satipatthana (Awareness, or Mindfulness) it is very important for the students of meditation to be silently and passively watching everything that is going on in the bodily processes, and in the mental processes. First, however, we should understand what we mean by *power*. There is power in achieving anything and when we come to spiritual matters we have psychic power, - a kind of magical power in itself. But what really is that power? We should understand the meaning of it. In the use of power there is compulsion. Suppose you are concentrated. When your mind is perfectly focused, or fixed on something, there is power at work in the mind. In the scientific field, when the rays of the sun are focused on one particular thing for some time, there is power of burning. Suppose you watch the sun for some time. Your eyes will be burned and that also is the effect of power. When you concentrate the mind, on some particular matter, or particular thing, you are developing the power to achieve what you want. If the mind is really concentrated it is sufficient to produce the power. Power provides compulsion, or the means of compulsion. It is always found in the field of thoroughness and achievement, material or spiritual. Likewise in the Dhamma, we sometimes think about the power we need to succeed in what we are attempting.

We are doing meditation now, and we want to succeed and achieve the so called result of meditation, and so there must be power, otherwise we cannot succeed. Similarly, the politicians want the power in their particular position, otherwise they cannot succeed in their job. They cannot remain at the top. In meditation you may want to be at the top - above other people too - and this is wrong, I think, because if you do want such power it is *emotion or delusion*, created in the mind itself. Still, we call it power. But what is the meaning or the real sense of power in the process of discovering the Truth? This power should be different from the general power we employ. This power itself is paradoxically powerless, because it is not power as we normally understand it. I should perhaps call it here 'creative energy', which could be the meaning of power. Creative energy, because energy is essential for Enlightenment. Creative energy plays a very important role in the process of meditation aimed at achieving Enlightenment, but in the process of achieving Enlightenment we must not create desire or craving because these oppose it as you can see from your practice. What is the main obstacle in meditation practice to meditation success? It is generally the desire for that success, the desire for achieving higher and higher levels of meditation. And in the desire for achieving something there is conflict, and in the conflict there is dukkha. Desire is the active cause of dukkha as we have learnt from Buddhism. Where there is desire there is conflict and then you have a harder task to undertake in the practice of meditation. On the one hand, you want to achieve higher levels of meditation, whilst on the other hand you are held back because you must fight against conflict within yourself, conflict caused by desire. Then many more difficulties arise in the process of your meditation. In the end you cannot meditate: the negative states have come into being. Then energy disappears. There is no power, no creative energy left in you, so you just want to give up. You may even want to run away from what you are doing. The mind becomes confused and muddled. There is no longer any clarity, no alertness, no awakening. Thus, power is important. But how can power come into being?

I have called it in the subject here 'the power of passive watchfulness'. Now we should see whether passive watchfulness can produce power, that is, creative energy. At the outset we have to understand the meaning of 'passive watchfulness'. Why is it so necessary for us to observe or watch things passively? This point must be clear to all of us. In the active process of doing anything there is an underlying *idea*; there is *thought coming into being*. Then you work on the idea, on thoughts rather than on the objective. You do not act when an idea looms up and instead you just react to what the idea tells you; in this process you push against yourself. This is not the right way to come into contact with reality, or to maintain peace within, because in this reactive process the personality, the idea of 'me', the idea of 'self', becomes very strong. And when the idea of self becomes very strong in you, then you expend a lot of energy, and therefore you feel tired. A state of inertia comes into being. This you will possibly experience for yourself. Hence the idea of self is the main obstacle to getting into a State of quietness, or to experiencing peace of mind. So, it is very important for us to be passive but alert in watching anything going on within us. All ideas of self must be put aside; the concept of 'I' must not come into play in this kind of practice. You must not be conscious of yourself doing meditation. This is a very important point because when you are conscious of yourself doing something it is not meditation but *thinking of meditation*, imagining something about to happen. You do not live fully in the present. In the Satipatthana Sutta, if we understand it rightly with regard to the breathing practice, we are taught to watch the breathing processes but not to control the breath. The Buddhist practice of focusing attention on breathing is very different from other practices because watchfulness is all that is to be applied to the exercise. You let the breath come in and go out naturally and normally, your function being to watch the events, - to watch passively without putting any idea, explanation or interpretation, to the breathing or to the breath. But by watching the breathing processes you can see when the breath is deep or long. You understand it and see it just as it is. When the breath is shallow or short you notice it and so on, whether the breathing in or the breathing out is long or short. If you watch carefully, closely and passively, you understand events for what they are. There is no question of *naming* ('this is a long breath', 'this is a short breath') and there is no intention to control the breath. If by controlling the breath, tranquillity or peace should come into being, that is only the result of mental creation because peace or tranquillity - imagined tranquillity - can be achieved by such a method of controlling but it is nevertheless a mind-product, not the unconditioned peace, the real tranquillity. Furthermore, if while observing the breathing processes, the sensation of calm or tranquillity comes into being, you can *notice that sensation*, because when the mind is silently watchful anything coming into contact with the mind-sense can be received and perceived very clearly and immediately. There is no question of *how* to perceive these things. This state of mind is very receptive, very clear and very alert. If anything comes into such a mind, perception is very sharp.

You can, therefore, directly understand the whole activity of the body through the breathing processes because the breathing processes or the up and down movements are a mirror as it were, in which you can become aware of these processes almost like looking at your face in a mirror.

Another consideration in regard to watchfulness occurs when you are watching television. What are you seeing in the television? You see the images, the pictures, appearing and you have the feelings that arise with watching; sometimes you feel very excited but you do not notice yourself. The pictures on television involve you and you are 'lost' in watching just

pictures. In other words, you do not see yourself, which is unfortunate because you do not observe your mind and mental states reacting to the pictures, or to whatever you are watching. Can this be called objective seeing? No! This is subjective seeing because you interpret the pictures according to your emotions of likes and dislikes. Hence it becomes subjective seeing or watching. But if you try to watch the television by using it as a meditational mirror to watch your mind, your mental states and your emotions, then-you can see the real 'you' in the process of watching television. You see not only the pictures but you are able to say 'how do I have enjoyment or amusement in watching television?' The 'I' will be very unhappy about all this, but if you succumb to the conditioning of the 'I' you can never see yourself as you really are. This is most important. You may say 'How can I have relaxation without a sense of "me" or without pleasure?' Relaxation can come by passively watching any object. The real relaxation of the mind and the body is in the state of passive watchfulness. Try it and see for yourself whether it is true. If you passively watch the mind (note, for example, how your mind reacts to my talking), you can see the whole picture of what 'you' are, but when the mind is completely in the state of passive watchfulness it becomes very silent. At the threshold of silence there is yet movement but whatever moves will do so silently, quietly and smoothly so that the state of mind or the state of clarity becomes wider and wider while consciousness becomes extensive. In Vipassana practice consciousness must become extensive, not contracting, because by extensive consciousness you can perceive reality in all its aspects.

How can the mind come to that state of stillness that is the aim of meditation? When the mind reveals itself to you, contemplate it by passively watching the mind. From the moment you watch the mind it tends to stop moving, but at the moment you lose your aim it starts moving again. Therefore your aim must be maintained. That is the right intention. Watch any state of mind, whether it be worry, anxiety, wandering, thinking, talking, - any condition of mind- watch carefully, closely, *without thinking about* it, without trying to control it and without interpreting any thought; because, this is very important, when you come to the deeper level of meditation. Naming is the main obstacle to coming to the deeper level because the moment you give identity to what you are watching, idea comes into being. Then you have to work with ideas again and you come back to the superficial level. You fail to remain deep down in the reality of what you are watching. In the deep state all concepts and all names or words must be given up completely so that the mind can remain silently watchful, and because of that, creative energy comes into being. All impurities can be cut off through the power of understanding, and the presence of creative energy. You can sense creative energy in the state of passive watchfulness, or in the state of stillness and complete tranquillity. So, this method should be remembered in our practice. I have observed many friends who come to do meditation under my guidance, and most of them have the same difficulties in entering into stillness and tranquillity, and are unable to achieve full understanding. The main stumbling block is, as I said earlier, the *desire to achieve*. If you understand Buddhism clearly I think you must agree with me that desire is the cause of suffering (dukkha) and dukkha embraces the mind, Mental states, feelings, body and bodily activities - all these things in one word including conflict. Conflict can manifest very clearly if desire arises. When desire arises it produces the concept of duality, wherein there is the watcher and the object being watched. There is separation within; and there is no harmony when there is division. Where there is no harmony there is no integration. Then there is no possibility of understanding reality, but all of this must be left to you to see for yourself.

In this series of talks I shall not go into the theory of the Teaching, but I shall try my best to convey to you the practical way of doing meditation. But if you do not try it, you cannot see the results, so until you do you must not imagine that it is beyond you.

September 29th 1968



## Chapter Four

### LOOKING AT AND GOING INTO THE PRESENT

If you have read the Satipatthana Sutta, you will not have found these words - even in translation. As I have said, I am not going to translate the Satipatthana Sutta, but in this series I wish to explain its practical side, and in my title for this talk I am referring to the practical side of the Sutta.

Looking at the present is essential in the practice of awareness or mindfulness, and to be able to do so is not easy. You can look at things with your eyes, but it is very difficult to look at feelings and thoughts because the intellect, knowledge and information, tell you that the mind cannot be seen - it is invisible, something abstract. Then you may say it is useless to look at the mind, because it cannot be seen with its ideas. Some people may say - 'Oh, you must develop the third eye in order to see the mind' - but I doubt whether you can do that! How can we look at the mind? The mind is the process of thinking, remembering. The moment you start to meditate, the moment you pay attention to physical movements, the mind starts wandering about. You may say - 'I must bring the mind back' - but when it is brought back, you must be able to look at it. This cannot be done with the naked eyes, but with awareness, full attention. The moment you look at it, the mind slows down; but if it is not, looked, at, it goes on and, on, roaming, and seeking, in order to perceive objects and satisfy its desires. The slowing down of the mind is very important when it is trying to be aware of itself. When you rush, you cannot understand yourself. You are confused, wanting to get this and that-without success. It is better to work quietly, consciously and knowingly. If you cannot slow down the mind you cannot meditate at all, and in order to slow it down you must look at it. When a thought comes, look at the thought. You may say - 'At the moment I look at it, the thought disappears'. Yes, but you must be able to know why it does, and how. If you keep on looking at the mind, you will understand the conditions working behind the mind. The mind is not a thing in itself, but a compound of mental states.

Why is the mind not quiet, not still? Because it is influenced and conditioned by many states associated with it. The most important states are desire and dullness (or delusion or confusion). These two states work in association with the mind most of the time. Why does the mind think? Because it cannot be satisfied with anything. Where there is no satisfaction, there is *Dukkha*. The mind seeks to satisfy itself with objects, but it cannot stay with them for long, and must seek another object. Thus it goes on, and on so one can say that desire is the root cause of dissatisfaction.

What can we do about it? Just look at that mind with its desire, and go into that process. If you will look at the thoughts, they may keep on coming and gradually die down. Let them come - don't worry. Let anything come. Your duty is just to look at it, see it for what it is. Don't do more than that at the first stage, and then you will see. If you worry about the wandering, hindering mind, you will create problems and add more confusion because the mind cannot solve itself. When you think, you try to control the mind and then get into more difficulty, frustration and disappointment. The mind is not really difficult if you understand its processes. It has nothing, and yet it is powerful if you are ignorant of it.

In order to reach insight, we have to look at the mind closely, carefully and passively-without naming it as 'conscious mind' or a mind of this or that state. This is interpreting the mind, not looking at it. It is only seen from one angle, not as a whole, if you are translating and explaining it. But if you become completely aware of the mind, you will see how it operates, how it searches for something and what is the main cause for its search for gratification and for pleasure. We have to understand what it is but must not apply knowledge. Theoretical knowledge is the main obstacle to the progress of meditation. This is why the Buddha said - 'Knowledge is the corruption of Insight'. You can see this. Knowledge is the process of the accumulation of ideas, gathered from this place or that, from this or that learned man, which is really a process of confusion. In meditation we do not use knowledge. Put it aside and meditation will become easier. Try to look at what is going on here and now within you, what is presenting itself to you, and how it comes to do this. When you keep looking at whatever arises, this is the present. When thinking about them, you are in memory or imagination - this is the past or the future. Memories and experience belong to the past, - imagination, speculation and projection belong to the future. The present is between the two, where there is no thinking. It is simply looking, passively, with full awareness, complete attention. Then we do not see things according to our ideas or interpretations, and we will have pure understanding or *Panna* - Wisdom.

When we talk about wisdom, you will think it is something to do with intellect whereas really it has no connection. Wisdom is pure understanding in the present, of reality in the here and now. It is impossible to accumulate it. Wisdom has the ability to see the truth as the truth, and the false as the false. Not only that - wisdom is capable of loving all beings without discrimination, and also has the ability to remove all forms of suffering. If these factors do not arise, it is not wisdom at all - it is only the intellect. Wisdom is developed through full awareness of the mind in the present.

The meaning of going into the present in the second stage of looking, is understood through the process of investigation - of full enquiry, without doubt. This enquiry is, in the sense of questing for reality, an investigation through the wish to understand reality, to see the whole basis of what is going on. When you continue to look at anything presenting itself to you, you can go into a state or thing gradually and more deeply, from the beginning to the end. But if you cannot continue to look at what is presenting itself, you cannot go into it more deeply. There is no question of *trying* to go into it more deeply. You just go on looking *at*, and then it goes more deeply by itself. So, if you like, you can tell yourself simply to continue to look *at*, with full attention, and then investigation will become deeper by itself. Also analysis, which I will talk about later on. Buddhist analysis is very different from analysis in Psychology. Many people oppose the idea of analysis, but it is necessary to understand what analysis really is and how it comes to be.

At this stage, we just try to understand how to look at the present, the things going on within us - emotions, thoughts, processes of mind, or physical processes, rising and falling. When we are able to look at anything immediately, there is no distraction and no exclusion.

Why are we suffering, frustrated and depressed? The most important factor in this question is how we look at things we come across in life. Suffering does not depend upon the things

themselves. You cannot blame the circumstances, the situations. If you know how to look at them, you are free without making comments or criticizing. If you follow the criticizing mind, you will be in trouble. But if you just look at things, whether pleasant or unpleasant, you can be free and will then know how to proceed and how to deal with problems, conflicts or anything that arises. Try to look passively, and you will understand. With understanding, all problems are resolved and you can live happily and positively.

October 6th 1968

## Chapter Five

### CONSTANT AWARENESS AND CLARITY OF ACTING

It is so beautiful, so wonderful to stay with peace and to have inner liberation, not only during a period of intensive meditation, but at any time, at any moment in life. But the question arises, how can we come to peace, to inner liberation

You should not concern yourself too much with this 'how', but should keep practising awareness, watchfulness, - then anything can come. If the mind is caught up in the 'how', the technique, then you will stay there, you cannot go any further, always thinking how, thinking about it, without doing it, acting upon it.

My topic for this talk in the series on Satipatthana is Constant Awareness and Clarity of Acting.

We have heard a lot about awareness, its meaning and function. I think some of us have understood, but for new comers I will speak of it now. Awareness, as I said in the second talk, is different from concentration, because in the popularly accepted sense concentration is a process of exclusion, of focusing the mind intensively upon a particular object, without concern for anything else.

In Insight Meditation practice, we also need concentration, but not as a form of exclusion. Instead, it means expansion and penetration. At a certain level of meditation, when the mind is tranquil, there occurs an expansion of consciousness, which many meditators have experienced. Recently, some of the meditators at the Centre experienced this expansion of consciousness to a degree that they had never had before, and I had not spoken to them about it before, - it came to them spontaneously.

It is not a matter of knowledge or information, but of experiencing reality. That kind of concentration is what is required for the progress of Insight, because it is connected with Awareness. Awareness is the process of looking with full attention, and if this continues it becomes a looking into the nature of things. It is not a question of making an effort, even a conscious effort, to look into the true nature of an object, but it comes spontaneously from the process of awareness itself. That is why looking at anything with complete attention is very important in the development of awareness.

Up to a certain stage in meditation, we have difficulty in purely and passively looking at physical and mental processes rising and falling, acknowledging and understanding them, because the mind tries to Interpret and explain anything that comes to it. The mind is still active, and knowledge accumulated during our life comes to play a very active role at this level of consciousness. This is why patience is so important. Some people suffer very much in meditation, and are in great psychological pain, but this should be allowed to come. The mind attempts to run off, to seek satisfaction, and yet is never satisfied. Then psychological suffering arises, and that is a fact. Acknowledge the fact, and let it remain a fact, while continuing with your meditation. Thus you do not add more suffering, and you can then be free. These are not just words: everyone is able to work in this way. It is a good moment for you to understand your own reality when you are in psychological pain. It is not a matter of optimism. But it is a

good moment because you can see yourself, how you are suffering, and how stupid you are to do so. You can see it, you can understand it, like looking at your face in a mirror. This can come when you are constantly aware of the conditioning process of yourself.

Constant awareness seems a rather passive thing compared with active life, but in reality it is active and creative. In meditation you sit quietly, keeping a constant awareness of what is going on here and now. Your memories and thoughts are like an unceasing stream running on and on, all the time, and your duty is just to watch them. You don't try to recall them, - they come to you. Let them come. Let them flow. Do not try to do anything with them. If you try and control them you will be in trouble. The best way is to be aware of them, understand them for what they are, and see how they come, how they operate within you, and how the mind reacts to them. Thus you do not only see one thing, but a process. This is different from concentration, and through this you can get clarity, alertness and awakening. The mind is not dull. If the mind becomes dull, be aware of dullness. The mind is dull when it wants something, it has desire to acquire something. But at the moment the state of dullness is watched, the mind can manage to be aware of its own process, and then become clear.

When you have constant awareness with regard to seeing, touching, tasting, smelling, hearing and thinking, you can understand yourself, and understand your relationship with ideas, emotions and sensations. Then you will be able to come to communion with Reality. Why should we come into communion with Reality? Because through this one can attain inner liberation, one has integration within. All of us have problems of disintegration within, and disharmony. We try to change things outwardly, change our ways of speaking and behaving, adjust ourselves to situations outwardly. But we do not try to change the complicated and careless things within us. The outer changes do not bring the change of heart, and superficial change brings more suffering in the end, because the mind clings to results and to targets. There is no Self - transformation within.

By meditation, without making efforts to change, the inward change comes about gradually and the problems of outward change and adjustment disappear. With understanding you can act, you can live, and everything you do will become appropriate and right. Meditation changes inner qualities because through it arises the understanding of falseness and unreality, which leads to the understanding of truth and reality.

Without realizing the false, the untrue, the disharmony and disintegration within, you cannot come to communion with Reality, to understanding the Truth.

What is the real meaning of communion? Perhaps this sounds religious, or rather, superstitious, because our minds have been trained to think of this as being with something that exists independently. In Christianity, communion with God is spoken of. In Buddhism, it is said that one comes into communion with Dhamma, with the Truth. The words are not of such importance; it is the understanding of their meaning, which should concern us. What is God? Dhamma? Truth? If you understand, then the word will be meaningful. If you do not, the word is meaningless.

In order to come into communion with Truth, *Clarity of Action* is necessary. If we act with clarity of understanding, we come into communications with Truth every time. When you are

walking, you walk with clarity of perception, and of consciousness; when you are speaking, you speak with clarity of mind and a definite direction; when you are listening, you have clarity about your aim. Why are you listening? In order to discover something new? Your aim should be clear, that it is the intent to understand. Otherwise anything that is agreeable to your own background will be accepted by you. 'Oh, this speaker is fine!' And when you hear something which conflicts with your own opinions, you suffer, and say, 'This speaker is not at all good if you listen with the intent to understand there will be no contradiction,

I think it is important for us, this Clarity of Action, when we have a discussion, what is our aim. As the Buddha said when his followers were gathered together, there are two things to be done, One discusses the Dhamma, but one is also silent, At the time of the Buddha, the monks would come together in the evenings and discuss the Dhamma, not to show off their knowledge or just to express themselves superficially, but to find out the truth of what they were discussing. And this is the proper aim of Dhammasakaccha, or discussion about the Dhamma. If such discussion is superficial you are strengthening self-interest, self-engrossing activities and the idea of self. With this strong in you, there is no time for understanding the Dhamma. You will be faced with all forms of delusion and ignorance. The self is the obstacle to the understanding of truth. Things are seen only as the self thinks they are.

What is the self? We must understand what it is. I should like to use only one word here: *desire*. (This is according to what the Buddha said in the Dhammapada, "Through many a birth I wandered in the cycle of existence, seeking but not finding, the builder of the house, (desire). Sorrow full it is to be born again and again. Oh house-builder! You have been seen. You shall build no house again. All your rafters are broken. Your ridgepole is shattered. My consciousness has reached the unconditioned and I have gone beyond all the forms of desire." Verses 153-4). The self seems to know many things because it craves for them in this life. But Clarity of Action is the way to come to the end of self, because in such action there is no object and no subject. Self is therefore not at work.

Action is different from activity. In action, there is no idea, but clarity of consciousness, full awareness. In action there is no activity of self, no illusion. That is why the Buddha said, 'What has been seen is just seeing; what has been heard is just hearing; what has been thought is just thinking'. This is very deep, and through Clarity of Action it may be understood.

Because the self prevents you from understanding the truth, there is activity of self instead of action. Any activity in life arises through ideas. Ideas come first, then the organization of activities. When activities occur which are not successfully in accordance with ideas, then you suffer. When you cling to ideas of achievement, suffering is the result. The best thing is to do things with clarity and alertness. Then liberation comes, and you are in communion with Reality. This is only a phrase, but without words we cannot communicate. In communion itself, there are no words to describe it. Truth has no description, and we talk only about the Truth. Sometimes experienced people find difficulty in trying to express the truth they have seen, because what is said is not what is experienced. At the moment you are with Truth, there are no words.

October 13th 1968

## Chapter Six

### INSIGHT AND DETACHMENT

This system of Buddhist meditation is called Insight Meditation. I think those of you who have been practising it will know what Insight is, but sometimes this word is misleading because it has different meanings according to our background of understanding, or accumulation of knowledge. Although it is necessary for me to talk about the meaning of Insight, please do not think that this will be just another definition to add to the ones you already have. Leave aside all the meanings you have accumulated, otherwise you will not understand the meaning according to the Buddhist concept of the word.

The real meaning of Insight is, the seeing, in wisdom, of the Truth as the Truth. When you see things with the naked eye, your vision of them is not blocked. Similarly, if you see the Truth in wisdom, there is no doubt, no confusion, and no illusion. There is perfect awareness, alertness and clarity. Otherwise there is no seeing, but imagining and speculating.

In that kind of seeing there is no seer, no consciousness of a person-who-sees, no separate entity that sees. This is very important. If you think you see, then it is not real seeing - only perception, and in perception there is the perceiver and the object perceived, so it cannot always be trusted because perception may be distorted and perverted according to the unconscious conditions or mental states associated with the seeing.

We can understand the two functions of Insight. The first one is penetration, piercing the walls of ignorance. If you cannot penetrate the walls of ignorance, you cannot see Reality. It is like the blind man touching an elephant, unable to know it completely. Penetration is a very important function of Insight because this is the way towards rooting out our ignorance, and without it, ignorance can never be removed.

The second function is that of cutting off. Insight cuts off impurities, defilements and all unwholesome states of mind. But there is no person who destroys. Unwholesome states are cut off by the function of Insight.

In order to come to complete realization of Truth, these two functions of Insight are essential, and they should go hand in hand.

Concerning the function of cutting off, people are afraid of doing themselves harm, and especially, of harming the 'self'. But if you understand that no self exists as a separate entity, then there will be no fear of harm. What we cut off is the idea of self; otherwise we become trapped in this concept. Ideas and concepts are the main obstacles to the understanding of Reality.

Insight has different levels, and we may distinguish three, First, The Insight of the Supreme Buddha, - the Fully Enlightened One, - the One who has discovered the Truth by himself. This level is called the Sabbannutananan, the Insight into the All, or the All Seeing. This means the Buddha has developed perfection in all its aspects and can therefore see all things very clearly and perfectly.

The second level of Insight belongs to the Silent Buddha who can attain Enlightenment through his own efforts and intelligence but lacks that quality which is required for teaching people. His Insight is deep enough to cut off all impurities and penetrate into Reality as the Supreme Buddha did but he cannot explain clearly what he has seen, what he has understood, because his Insight lacks the quality of a Teacher.

The third level is the Insight belonging to disciples, the followers of the Buddha. Those who attain to Enlightenment can see the Truth as the Truth clearly, but not as clearly as the Buddha understands it. This is due to the perfection required for Enlightenment, which makes the Buddha's understanding deeper than that of his followers, if you can imagine this. In the history of the Buddha, one of his disciples, whose name was Sariputta, was the disciple of great wisdom and many people compared him with the Buddha. But his understanding was not equal to that of the Buddha, even though it came very near to it.

Should anyone of us attain to Enlightenment it will be confined to that level attained by the Buddha's followers because we are on the path taught by the Buddha. We accumulate knowledge. We do not go into direct discovery, or devote ourselves completely to meditation, without asking for instruction, or advice from anyone else. That is why our Insight is weak compared with that of the Buddha. But this does not matter.

What matters is to come to the understanding of Reality and to attain to Enlightenment. That is the essential thing. Now the question arises, how can Insight come to be? Insight comes to be when Awareness or Mindfulness is fully established. In fact, we do not aim to develop Insight, but Awareness, Watchfulness, which is the factor that must lead to Insight. If you are fully aware of your mental states and all contents of the mind, you understand them for what they are. You realize why it is this, why it is that, how this comes into being, how that passes away. You can see both the appearing and disappearing of all phenomena, whether physical or mental.

The only way to do this is to establish Awareness. The moment you are fully aware of what is going on now, you will understand the reality of that thing or that process. Nobody can tell you about this reality. That is why Enlightenment is something to be attained for yourself. You cannot be told because Insight has its full meaning within itself. It is not remembering, not thinking, not perceiving, but experiencing.

It is difficult for us to be aware of ourselves. What is the main difficulty? The self, the 'I am'. This is the main obstacle to the practice of Awareness. At the beginning stage of meditation, you say 'I am meditating. I am being aware of this'. 'I' means the self, which always interferes with the practice. But when Awareness becomes full and complete, the self disappears. In the self there is desire, expectation, speculation, imagination, thinking. The self is a bundle of all these things and is the chief hindrance to the practice of Awareness.

It is very important for us to understand the process of the self, the process of 'you', and of 'me'. When you understand the process of your thinking, feeling, existing, then your Awareness will become very strong. If you get the feeling of being lost, or ashamed that you have done something wrong, then there is no Awareness, only emotion that arises and dominates you. But when you apply Awareness to this emotion, you can have controlling power. Such Awareness leads to Insight, and on to Reality. In meditation practice, therefore, it is important not to be carried away by the 'self'.



Now let us turn to the question of *Detachment*.

We are always attached to something in life, because we are afraid of not having security, or a permanent refuge in life. We therefore attach ourselves to what we have, or to what we want to have. To many people, Detachment appears to be a negative state, but in fact it is attachment that is negative. Why? Because when you are attached to something, the mind is really in a negative state of not wanting to understand Reality. It wishes to hold on to possessions or qualities. This is not creative. But when you are detached, especially from pleasant or unpleasant feelings, and from all active states of mind, you are truly creative because you understand what to do and how to do it. This is Clarity of Understanding, not just knowing that 'this should be done, this way or that way', because that is concerned with technique and life's experiences.

A detached mind, born of understanding Reality in which there is full capacity to *do*, is a creative mind. It is free and can work correctly. The attached mind brings trouble to others, as well as yourself, and is a harmful thing, whereas Detachment can harm no one, - the mind is liberated and free from all deceptions. The Buddha said, "Of all conditioned and non-conditioned things, Detachment is the best". Try to do things with a detached, free mind, and you will see whether you are creative or not. To work with the acquisitive mind is very different from working with the detached mind. If you do not get what you want, you need not lose your state of being. You need not become the victim of what you want to get. You can remain calm, peaceful and steady. This inner equilibrium is the most positive state and through it we can live happily. Do not worry about achieving things. If you have Detachment - liberation within, - everything can be achieved. It is not a state of laziness or inertia, in which nothing can be done, but a profoundly creative state in which everything can be done.

October 20th 1968

## Chapter Seven

### UNDERSTANDING THE CONDITIONING PROCESS

One of the important things in meditation practice is to be free from anxiety of any kind, even anxiety with regard to time. If you just try to do your best without thinking about time, you can work much better. You will say it is very difficult to do anything without anxiety, but we should be aware of anxiety whenever it comes, and later you will become free from it. So long as you know, 'This is the robber', he will not harm you. If you do not know the robber, it will be harmful.

In meditation you should be able to observe the arising and falling away of the breathing process. As it is said in the Satipatthana Sutta, the Discourse on Mindfulness, with any object being observed the meditator must be able to see its origination and dissolution, and the appearing and disappearing of the object and the subject. By seeing this, he will be able to know, 'This exists momentarily'. This event goes on all the time in life. Physical processes have the nature of coming into being and passing away from moment to moment, as well as states of mind or mental contents, no matter whether you are aware of them or not. This is a fact, and when we see it, we will come to the understanding of truth and freedom.

Why does the body, or the mind, continue to exist. Is it possible for them to come to an end? We may say that the body will come to an end when it is very old and cannot carry on its functions. But is it possible for the mind to come to an end? Stopping mental processes is very difficult, and many people believe that it is not possible to do so. But this is not a matter of believing or disbelieving, but of seeing for oneself. It is not helpful to hold an opinion. Believing and disbelieving have no meaning in truth, only on the psychological level of existence. Clear seeing, or directly realizing the fact, is the meaningful thing in life. Then meditation will not be the method for running away from the facts, or from living, but will be the real living. Meditation is part and parcel of life, and cannot be separated from it. But we have not fully learnt the principles.

In fact, however, you have meditated many times in life. The real meditation has no form, no system. Buddhist meditation is not a system, but a way of living, or it is better to say, a way of doing. The Buddha never gave any techniques for developing meditation or training the mind, but he gave instructions about how to train ourselves. The 'how', of the Buddha is not a technique. He simply stated that you must be aware of the body, the feelings and other mental states, and of phenomena. You have to do it directly, without relying on techniques. If anyone asked me for them, I should find it difficult to give them. But when one realizes one's own hindrances, one will be able to meditate. The best advice is to keep on training ourselves in awareness practice, day by day, night by night, and then everything can come. Don't worry about your difficulties and obstructions. There are problems everywhere, but all those must be comprehended. If we can approach the conflicts in the right way, we will find a solution.

But we must understand our conditions. How many things condition you in life? Do you want to exist? Do you want to become something else? Or do you want to remain the same person? The process of becoming, and of continuity, is what we call life. Without it there is no existence. Also there is no non-existence. The process of becoming continues to function

within us, and then we live, we exist. The breathing process rises and falls every moment without ceasing. If it stops, we say that we die. But there is a possibility of going beyond the perception of breathing processes without dying. It is the concept of 'I', which disappears, and the contact with Reality comes to be. In that contact, the concepts of death and life have no meaning. It may be called 'dying within' because we die to memories, thoughts, feelings and perceptions. 'I' is not the truth, but a concept, which only exists in the mind. This is why you can go beyond it, beyond the process of becoming and continuity.

So long as there is the process of becoming and continuity, there is craving for existence, - for becoming, and there is attachment. You cling to life and do not want to die. Craving and attachment come into being because of contact and feelings. In fact, life in general is a contact. We come into contact with many events, and life is a series of experienced events. Without events there is no life. And so long as the process of becoming is conditioned by craving, attachment, feeling and contact, the body must go on, and the mind, and mental states, must go on. But when the process of becoming ceases, there is no more forming, and there is a complete cessation of conditions. This is called *Nibbana*. *Nibbana* can be found when you break through the process of becoming, and the continuity, or the vicious circle of life.

The process of becoming and continuity ties beings to *Samsara*, the cycle of existence. We have to be born and die again and again in this Wheel of Life, and in fact this happens every moment but because we do not attend to this process, we do not see or understand it. Our mind is engaged instead, in many activities in the world out side, so that we forget the world within. In the practice of the breathing exercise, watching the rising and falling of the abdomen, we must be able to see very clearly that this is a physical process of rising and of falling, and this is a mental process of knowing. That is the first step of insight, in which one becomes able to distinguish the mind from the body, and analytical knowledge arises, overcoming false ideas. False ideas or views cannot be overcome without the first step of insight.

If one only knows these processes theoretically, without seeing them for oneself, the knowledge acquired cannot help a person to be sure of the truth. Such study begins in certainty and ends in confusion, because information is merely accumulated through the senses. But in meditation one actually sees the physical processes, and the mental processes, and the relationships between them from moment to moment. Without mental processes, the physical processes cannot exist, and without physical processes the mental processes cannot function. From this insight we can come to another step: the realization of conditionality. How are these processes interconnected? And what is the cause of their continuation. This must be seen in meditation, and at this step in insight you will have a glimpse into the conditionality of things. You will realize through your own seeing that you are a conditioned being, and also a *conditioning* being.

With the realization of the real state of oneself, one will know how to be free from conditions and all unnecessary things. If they are necessary, one understands how to deal with them. With the understanding of conditionality, one sees how to live with conditions, whether pleasant or unpleasant. The capacity to live with any conditions in life is the only way towards more complete understanding of the truth, and of oneself. We must not try to escape from life, but to go into the details, with the ability to live with anything in life. When you have this ability, you have freedom because you understand what you are and what you should be. Without

understanding the conditioning process, one cannot live calmly or happily when frustrations and troubles come. One loses balance, and becomes upset. One may know that one should not be upset, but one cannot help it - it just occurs. This is no excuse I think. We must be able to do something with what is unpleasant or unhappy, otherwise life becomes meaningless. We must try to make life meaningful.

Two things are important to bear in mind. The first is understanding, or clarity of perceiving anything with which we come into contact. The second is freedom, or liberation, in the sense of not being caught up or conditioned by anything. The only way to achieve these things is through constant awareness, with enough courage to see everything that is in us, whether pleasant or otherwise. We must not expect to see only what is good or beautiful in life. You should tell yourself to be brave enough to face everything unpleasant in your life. With this decision, you will not become so upset when you come across these things. Expectation and anxiety is the cause of misery in life. When you acknowledge this, you can be free. Keeping full awareness, you can experience everything, whether material things, or the feelings within you, or other people's actions, or ideas and opinions which conflict with your own. You will see them arise and pass away, all the time. They arise because of conditions, and then disappear. When you see the nature of arising and ceasing in everything, the mind will be liberated by understanding the conditioning processes - both within (your own processes) and without (the other's processes).

October 27th 1968

## Chapter Eight.

### THE FIVE SENSE FACULTIES AND FEELINGS

The five sense-faculties are the body of Insight Meditation. They are all in us, and may be experienced at any time, so they should be understood very clearly and precisely. The Buddha said in the Samyutta Nikaya: 'The followers of the Dhamma, the followers of the Buddha's teaching, must understand the Five Faculties as they really are.' You have to understand their arising, and coming into being, their passing away and disappearing, the satisfaction or suffering in them, and the freedom from them. Without freedom from them it is impossible for anybody to abide in peace, or to attain to the truth of Enlightenment.

What are these Five Faculties? They are the faculties of Ease, Discomfort, Joy, Grief and Indifference, and first we have to analyse them. As you know, the Buddha is Master of Analysis, or Vibhajjavadin, and usually the teaching starts with analytical knowledge, and only after that comes to integration, or insight.

The faculties of Ease and Discomfort are bodily. When we experience things through the five physical senses, namely; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, we have either bodily ease and happiness, or bodily discomfort, pain and unhappiness.

The faculties of Joy and Grief refer to mental ease, happiness and bliss, and mental unhappiness and suffering. These are experienced through mental contact, because we contact thoughts, or the world of ideation, through the mind, which in Buddhism is called the sixth sense.

The last one is the faculty of Indifference. This may be experienced both through the five physical senses and through mental contact. Then we come to the analysis of these Five Faculties in terms of feelings. The faculties of Ease and Joy are regarded as the pleasant feelings; the faculties of Discomfort and Grief as the unpleasant feelings. And the neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling is the faculty of Indifference. Thus you have three feelings from these Five Faculties.

What then is the difference between Faculties and feelings? Faculty in Pali is 'indriya', which means 'The Chief' or 'The Lord'. The Faculties of Ease and Discomfort, as we have seen, arise through the physical senses only; the Faculties of Joy and Grief, only through the mind. (Thus, for example, the faculty of Ease could not arise through the mind, nor could the faculty of Joy arise through the body.) Feeling, on the other hand, means experiencing the contact between any of the six senses and their objects. So we could say the hand might have contact with an external object, from which could come a pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent feeling, and through this the faculty of Ease, Discomfort, or Indifference would arise. This faculty would be called 'Faculty as Chief, or Lord of the Senses.

When one is fully aware of the feelings, one sees and knows clearly whether they are pleasant, painful or neither. Through developed awareness, one understands how feelings arise and how they disappear, and sees them as they truly are at the moment of their occurrence. Now, how does a feeling arise? To find the answer to this question we should investigate the process of

seeing. As to this process of seeing - we know there is the eye, there is the object, and also there is a consciousness of the object. Then there is impact on the eye, and feeling arises, or we say we experience vision. Any time we see, or when seeing arises, we must understand the whole process of seeing. We must be able to analyse that - this is the eye, this is the visible object, this is consciousness, this is impact on the eye and feeling arises, or, we say, we experience vision. If you do not stop at feeling, then sorrows, anxieties, torments, disappointments and so on will arise. Because of feeling, - craving, clinging and ignorance will play a very active role; but if you stop at feeling, at sensing, then you will not experience any form of suffering or misery. Thus one becomes steadfast, maintaining perfect equilibrium, neither excited nor depressed. This is the way to the mastery of the feelings.

In Buddhism, everything may be examined according to the Four Noble Truths. Thus to study anything in life you must firstly know what it is, secondly how it comes to be, thirdly how it passes away and fourthly what is the practice leading to its passing away. These are the Four Noble Truths, which should be understood at the same time, not at different times; you have to understand one thing in four ways. That is why the Buddha said that, when we realize Nibbana, the Four Noble Truths are comprehended all together, at the same time, like the rising of the sun, which simultaneously disperses dark, and gives light. When we understand the Four Noble Truths, we understand the whole truth. This truth can be realized in daily life because you are already fully equipped with everything - the only thing necessary is to have the right means for it to be realized, or understood. There is no need to wait for Enlightenment by sitting in meditation at the Temple, or somewhere else. You can realize Nibbana at any time. Firstly, we will consider the faculty of Discomfort, because it is always experienced in life. When discomfort arises, you must be aware: 'This is bodily discomfort'. This is the first step, - to acknowledge it as it is. Then there is the question: 'How did it arise' Nothing can arise without conditions, causes, constituent parts and reasons. Thirdly, you understand that discomfort disappears, or passes away from moment to moment. Finally, if you maintain awareness of all this, remaining indifferent, or equanimous, towards discomfort, because you have understood it as it is, then you can be aloof from evil conditions, from unwholesome states of mind, and from all disturbing things. This is the fourth step. Thus there are present the factors of meditation: application of thought and investigation, and then through these, follow rapture, delight, joy and serenity, or concentration of mind. Now you can be free from the faculty of Discomfort!

When you practise further, you can remove the faculty of Grief through cultivating rapture and delight, and (because Grief is very closely connected with the activity of mind) by calming down the application of thought and investigation. Later we progress to the removal of the faculties of Ease and Joy. Because we usually like happiness, we do not want to be free from it, but in Buddhism we are taught to be free from happiness also, not to cling to it, for if you are attached to anything you cannot come to perfect peace. And the way to remove happiness is to detach from rapture, joy and delight, becoming disinterested and remaining alert. This is very important. What is the meaning of disinterested? It is to remain equanimous, indifferent and neutral towards all things. We must not be interested in anything apart from the object set before the mind, and even to that object we must not be attached, we must not cling. We notice it but remain free from interest, and then we become free from happiness. Perhaps we feel it, and acknowledge, 'that is happiness, and then we are free from it.

Even the faculty of Indifference has to be transcended. We free ourselves from everything in Buddhism! In order to have perfect peace we have to be free from Indifference, because this can cause pleasure and pain later on. In order to transcend Indifference it is very important to pass beyond the stage of, 'neither perception nor non-perception', and attain to the cessation of perception and feeling. In maintaining equilibrium, equanimity can arise - the equanimity of utter purity. When you experience this you will see that it is not happiness or peace, as we understand it in daily life. It is quite different, but we have no words to give it, so we call it perfect happiness or perfect peace. This is the highest state of meditation practice and spiritual attainment. When you come to this state, perception and feeling have completely ceased. You do not cease or die; you still live, and consciousness still functions, very smoothly and gently, but you cannot perceive it because there is no perception; you cannot feel it because feeling has 'cooled'. And by the attainment to the cessation of perception and feeling you are completely free from the faculty of Indifference. That is the highest peace. This is our way - the way of awareness and insight. Through their practice you can understand all the Five Faculties, and free yourself from attachment to anyone of them, because you come to know them as they are. Awareness and insight grow together at the same time, and through insight all things are integrated. At the highest peak of attainment, you overcome all things and come to oneness. Oneness is allness, because it is the state of perfection. This is not allness in the sense of all things collected in ordinary life, but rather that all things come to perfection, and you are completely perfect at that unique moment.

November 3rd 1968

## Chapter Nine

### THE STILLING OF THE MIND

Experiences in meditation are not the same to all meditators, because everyone has his own kamma, and experiences will be in accordance with kamma, with what has been accumulated in life. We must not expect the same experiences as others, but when one has come to the realization of truth, one will have the same understanding. However, the same understanding will have different expressions, because the way in which people express themselves depends upon their experience, the background of their life. When you use language, you conform to certain patterns of life and of society, and then the ways of expressing truth are different. That is why the Buddha gave the warning that we must not get stuck in words. Language is a poor means for describing truth. The word is not the truth, and if you think it is, you come to a superficial level. You just see a word and take it as the truth. Even religious people do this. Therefore we should be careful to distinguish the truth from the words.

Regarding the stilling of the mind, I should like to ask you to see whether the mind can be quiet, and how it comes to stillness. If it cannot, what is the reason? We have to find this out. You should not try to get this knowledge from books, or from other people. The best way is to see the truth for oneself.

What is the mind? We are not looking for an intellectual knowledge of this. Every one of us has mind, but what is it? We speak about the Western mind, the Eastern mind; and perhaps if there were human beings on Mars there would be another mind!

The mind is a concept, a collective term for both consciousness and mental states, including perceptions, feelings, tendencies, unconscious as well as conscious. This is the mind.

Superficially speaking, the mind is the product of time, of education, training, experiences, of kamma-viplika, the law of action and reaction, cause and result. Each individual has a different mind because of the law of kamma, the accumulation of life's experiences. Mental contents are accumulated in life, as well as different aspects of mind. But the mind always has the same functions of recognizing, perceiving, understanding, thinking, which are universal to all forms of mind.

These functions are conditioned by different tendencies or states, depending on the background, education, status, and age, of the person concerned. That is why the mind of the child is different from that of the adult. The child is not conscious of his own patterns, because he depends upon the atmosphere of his parents' minds, and others who are with him. Even adults are often unconscious of their own mental contents, because they lack away of becoming conscious of them. We cannot come to peace because the mind is so conditioned that it cannot be free.

When you are listening, your mind is still conditioned to some extent, by your knowledge and beliefs, and by thinking processes. It is not free to understand. It always moves, seeking for something else. It always interprets, looking for explanations. There is no quietness for such a mind. Is there an end to searching, No. The mind wants satisfaction, gratification. Yet it remains unsatisfied by anything it comes across. It is enslaved by desire, craving and thirst. That is why there is no peace.



It is very important in the meditation practice, for all of us to be aware from moment to moment. Unless the mind is aware of itself, it cannot come to stillness. Again we have this word 'awareness'. Some people say that they are aware. But you should make sure whether you are actually aware, or whether you think you are aware. This is very important. Sometimes we deceive ourselves that we are aware, when we are really thinking. In awareness, there is no thinking, but complete attention is given to the process, or object. Then there is wholeness in the process or object of which you are aware, there is comprehension, and there is understanding. In waking life, when you give full attention to anything you understand what it is. But when the attention is weak, or only part attention is given, you cannot comprehend what a thing is, or how it comes to be. To be able to be aware of anything, one must give it full attention.

You may then ask, who is being aware. So long as there is self-consciousness, consciousness of the subject, then there is no awareness in the real sense. Real awareness has no subject. How does the subject come to be? Through the connections of unconscious contents in the world of the mind. We look at things subjectively because we have ego consciousness. At first the ego is the object of consciousness. Later, when it becomes more complex, it has energy to work within itself, and then it begins to complicate many things, and the 'I', or subject, becomes more dominant. You can observe how children come to understand things in their lives. At first, he thinks of himself as a third person - that is, the ego is the object of consciousness. As he grows up, he speaks of himself as the first person, and gradually the ego becomes powerful. It is important to be free from the ego, because the ego is not real but something created by mental contents. That is why, the moment we come to stillness, ego consciousness drops away. There is neither subject nor object - only peace remains, and the truth shines forth. We then see that ego is the product of connections with unconscious mental contents, and is not real.

In awareness of the mind, firstly we must understand by what the mind is conditioned. All consciousness has one or two states arising together: It cannot arise by itself, - without mental states. That is why the Buddha said (referring to consciousness) 'When the mind is lustful or with attachment, hatred, delusion, or confusion, one must know the mind itself and the states arising with it'. Without full awareness, you do not know and cannot imagine the real state of mind, because you know only the symptoms, the mental states. These are symptoms of disease, which bring about frustration and unhappiness if there is attachment to them.

People ask, 'what can we do when we know that the mind has attachment?' If you are fully aware of the mind with its attachment, you will know what to do with it. Do not try to project or obtain the answer before you know it. When you know, you will understand. There is no question. When you are fully aware of confusion of mind, then you will know how to deal with this confusion. In fact, you do not do anything with it - just be fully aware of it, and gradually the mind becomes clear. If you look for an answer, you are playing with ideas, and distractions control you. If this happens, then you must know, 'The mind is distracted, this is only the distracting mind'.

One should know the conditions for a distracted mind. Why is the mind distracted? What is the cause? When the mind becomes fully concentrated, one must be fully aware of that too. One must see clearly how the mind comes to concentration. When the mind becomes liberated, expanded, you have to know why. There is enlargement of the mind, not in the sense of size

but of perceiving and understanding. The mind becomes open when it is free from conditions. When the mind is enlightened, one must be able to know, otherwise you cannot understand whether you are enlightened or not. You will not then need confirmation from others that you are enlightened. If you do, this means that you are still in doubt and not yet enlightened! For he who is enlightened there is no doubt.

The mind is big, but not so big. It is within us, and we can deal with it through the development of true awareness. The practice of meditation is to be aware, from moment to moment, seeing anything that arises or goes on within us. This is the only way to come into contact with the unconscious contents of mind. These, as we know, cause many problems in life. People may be able to appear to carry on life smoothly, but this is superficial as within the mind there are psychic disturbances. Material things may provide comfort and satisfaction in life, yet you are not happy. You imagine or pretend you are happy, but you are not really so. If there are unconscious psychic disturbances at the source of your problems, it might appear that to become conscious of these would lead to unhappiness. But this is a projection of ideas before one has actually become aware of these disturbances. In truth, full awareness of unconscious disturbances makes one able to erase them. They are cut off by understanding, by wisdom.

Wisdom will take away all disturbances. Fear may arise because you do not understand, and there is ignorance in the mind. Ignorance always causes fear. You have fear because of illusion, because of ego consciousness. When you have gone beyond the region of the ego, there is no fear. Insecurity is caused by ego symptoms. With warmth of heart, you feel secure and then can work happily, and live the peaceful life.

In Buddhism, there is the Third Degree of Knowledge, which is the knowledge acquired through development or meditation. This knowledge comes from the understanding of all unconscious contents, the cause of problems. This does not mean that all unconscious contents are disturbances. There are creative as well as destructive unconscious contents within us. When we come fully into contact with these, we can remove what we do not want, and cultivate what is good. When what is good has been fully developed, we must be free from it. You are then free from both the good and the bad - you are a free person, a free being. That is why in the Enlightened Ones, especially the Arahant's or Perfected One's, there is no bhavanga, no process of becoming, no continuity of conditioned consciousness in which are contained many unconscious elements. In the perfected person, who has complete awareness every moment, no unconscious contents remain, no continuity of becoming. Only on attainment of that point of enlightenment does the continuity of patterned existence, of unconscious contents, cease in the person.

We know very little about ourselves. We know about the body, about the five aggregates of material forces, feelings, perceptions, tendencies and consciousness, but what are the unconscious contents - the accumulated elements that are still within us? If we cannot get full understanding of these, enlightenment cannot be attained. That is why enlightenment is within, not without. You cannot seek enlightenment under a tree, or in the forest. To find it within you, you need a quiet place; it is true, and a good friend. A meditation instructor is called a good friend - one who does not impose anything on you, but who will help you along the way. When the mind is still, you understand all these things. You cannot get this knowledge from books, but from a quiet mind - a mind free from all conditions.

November 10th 1968

## Chapter Ten

### ANALYTICAL KNOWLEDGE

As I said in the previous talks, the first step of insight is analytical knowledge, which means the understanding of the physical processes, and of the mental processes. This is quite clear according to the Buddhist teaching. We cannot say that things exist, or that nothing exists, because there is always the coming into being, and the passing away, the appearance and disappearance. But we seem to see continuity of appearance, or disappearance, and therefore we say 'this exists'. We may also say this according to our perceptions. Perceptual knowledge is the knowledge of comparison, of recognizing similarity. You can observe this clearly in your meditation. If you cannot perceive it, your insight is not developed, and you have to practise more and more, in order to become aware of the coming and going of physical and mental processes.

This first step of insight is essential in order to understand life, because life is not an entity. It is a living and moving process. Sometimes we call it a process of becoming, or a process of continuity. Life is a collective term for processes. We cannot touch life as an entity existing within us. Even what we call mind is not an entity. Can you touch the mind? Even in deep meditation you still see variation going on, in the initial silence, in the beginning prelude to stillness. But you cannot see any mover; there is no mover to be perceived. Therefore Buddhism says there is no entity. False ideas of self produce the major wrong outlook on life for all people. What is a 'self'? Does it exist as a separate entity? Can you discover it in meditation, or in your experience? You know you are Mr. this, or Mrs. that, because people call you so, and your name has been told you by your parents. You accept such concepts, but the real, 'you', might be different from Mr this or Mrs that. What is the real you? What you are and what you should be are different things. That is why we have contradictions and conflicts. When you know what you really are, there is no conflict.

How can we know what we really are if we do not meditate? To meditate is not just to sit quietly, doing nothing and hoping for the best - that is just thinking about meditation. To meditate is to put an end to mere hope. You must not expect anything, or hope for anything; otherwise you will fail to meditate. Hopes and expectations are among the main obstacles to the progress of insight in spiritual life. Can we live without our hopes? Yes we can live very happily and quite successfully in life. If you create hope, you may not always get what you hope for or expect. It is better to live life to the full in the present, from moment to moment. You may have plans for your life, but they must be flexible. They should not be too fixed or definite, because all things are changeable. You must be able to adapt, able to bend without breaking, because things will continue to change in the phenomenal world.

These are not just words, but something to live with. I think there is evidence for saying that most people do not really live - they just exist. We exist in the world, the world of business and the world of religion, and are confused by existing in so many worlds of experience. We meet with vicissitudes in life. We are disturbed, unhappy, or pleased with things experienced in life. Such is existence. But living is different from existence. In living, one is alive to all the circumstances of life. You cannot be so alive if you do not accept the facts of changing life, with their falseness and unreality.

To *live* is to have full awareness of things all the time, because by being aware and mindful one has freedom, clarity, alertness and wakefulness. Anything that comes into your ken, you understand for what it is, and this leads you to understand what you are. Then you can deal with everything peacefully, happily, *because your inner world is purified and free from disturbances*. There is equilibrium within, and happiness, *without attachment* to happiness. If you become attached to peace, you are no longer at peace, but diverted somewhere else, thinking about peace.

Analytical knowledge is the way to freedom with regard to external events. External things or experiences, if we analyse them into their aspects of coming and going, arising and passing away, then all things seen as passing events lead us to freedom from attachment. But if we cannot analyse physical and mental changes or experiences in life, then we cannot achieve clarity and are instead bound to satisfactions, pleasures, or unhappiness and sorrow. It is not wise to be bound to anything common to life. It is wise to be free. This does not mean that you may have nothing pleasurable in life. Actually, you can have everything that is not harmful, either to yourself or to other people. The essential thing is *liberation within*. In this way you can serenely observe discomfort, or ease, or anything going on in the internal or external world.

In meditation, analytical knowledge is very useful when the mind is slack, because when attaining to some stages of meditation a slackened state of mind arises, before passing into peace and tranquillity. When such a person sits in meditation, peace comes and then one gets stuck, as it were, and the mind does not want to go any further. 'I am peaceful now'. The mind has become lazy and slack before it has reached the end. What is one to do? The only thing to do is to investigate, looking into the nature of such peace, or slackened state of mind. When one starts to look into this slackness, the power of analysis comes into being and the peace is analysed into whether it is real peace, or just a creation of mind; deep peace or superficial peace. When you start investigating with intention to understand the slackened state of mind that state disappears and clarity comes. You can then go deeper and deeper into the state of peace, which is a different state of peace from what you experienced before. In this way you will not get stuck, you will not be blocked.

Analytical knowledge is essential in deep meditation, but I use the word, 'knowledge', in the sense of understanding through spontaneous analysis of mind and body, Nama-Rupa. Deeper still, analytical knowledge can give full conviction regarding the *idea* of self. Without it you cannot analyse the *idea*. You can obtain analytical information through books, texts and studies, but it is of a superficial kind. The analytical knowledge that is acquired through insight, through meditation practice, is much deeper, and this kind was emphasised by the Buddha himself. The Buddha never urged the monks or lay followers to try to analyse things merely through the intellect. He said 'Meditate, Bhikkhus, and investigate the true nature of things.' Then you will really have analytical knowledge.

From our experiences in meditation we can say definitely that the analytical knowledge acquired through insight, is the real kind for removing the false idea of self, which is the main thing to be removed before it is possible to attain enlightenment. Enlightenment cannot come while one has the wrong idea of self. On attaining the first glimpse of enlightenment the idea of self is removed and so is attachment to ceremonies and rituals. Sceptical doubt is also removed. Hence, by gaining *analytical knowledge*, one can remove the idea of self, and be free from

attachment to rituals and ceremonies, but not remain free from doubt. One must develop another step of insight, which is called insight into *conditioned genesis*. On attaining that stage of insight, doubt is removed completely. It is not essential to learn about the self before experiencing the reality within us. If you do not understand whether there is a self, or whether there is not, just leave it and get on with your meditation work of awareness - practice. Then you will understand. Do not worry about the question and become disturbed unnecessarily.

In Buddhist analytical knowledge we have to analyse ourselves into Five Aggregates. Intelligent people can see the Five Aggregates clearly in meditation. But all people can at least see the physical and mental processes, or (what the Scriptures call) Namaupa. It should be understood here that the Buddha talked about the Five Aggregates to intelligent people only, whereas to people in general he talked about mind and body. Anyone can analyse oneself into physical and mental processes, recognizing that this is mind or this is body, without great difficulty. But to analyse oneself into the Five Aggregates requires penetrating intelligence. The Five Aggregates were clearly analysed by the Buddha, and the great disciples. We can understand the physical body, its functions and activities. Feelings, perceptions, mental formations (habit tendencies or impulses) and consciousness, complete the Five Aggregates, which are called the, 'self', according to conventional concepts, although not according to ultimate truth. Without these five, there is no notion of self. When we analyse the supposed self into these Five Aggregates, we cannot find a controlling self in any one of the five. Why? Because each one of the Five Aggregates has the nature of arising and passing away continuously. In meditation practice, as the Buddha emphasizes in the Satipatthana Sutta, one must know, 'This is body; this is physical movement; how this comes into being and how it passes away'. One has to understand three things with regard to each aggregate: what it is, how it comes to be or what its origin is, and how it dies away or ceases. If one cannot observe these three things, one does not understand that aggregate.

When a feeling arises, we have to notice whether it is pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, and how it comes into being, by trying to understand the conditions giving rise to it. Without full awareness it cannot be understood. In looking at how it passes away, we try to realize the nature of all things, - that they too, have the habit of ceasing. Events cannot exist forever; they must cease. This ceasing is the nature of all things. Things or events have a moment-to-moment existence. There is no unchanging, everlasting thing, and this fact should be directly realized by yourself. Anyone can achieve this for it is not difficult, but one must be free from the influence of all kinds of second-hand knowledge in order to understand it. As long as the mind is conditioned by supplied information, by beliefs and the ephemeral background of life, it cannot be understood. One must open the mind, let it expand and see anew, completely, so as to understand.

You need to analyse each aggregate into three phases of, what it is, how it arises, and how it passes away, in the true spirit of Satipatthana, or detached awareness, and in this way you will understand yourself. This is because you yourself are no different from the physical and mental processes, including consciousness, which you are analysing. What are you, apart from this? The Five Aggregates embrace all things comprising *you*, and, 'you', arise only through the combination of these five. Without one of them you would not be called 'you', but something else.

November 17<sup>th</sup> 1968

## Chapter Eleven

### RECOGNIZING HINDRANCES

To be able to see one's own hindrances or obstacles to meditation practice is very important. What is the main obstruction to meditation? I think this should be recognized first. If we can say it in one word, it must be SELF - nothing more than that. Self is the main obstacle to any progress, especially spiritual progress. You will say that in material progress, the more you have the more you will become. But this is progress in the sense of non - progress, because it will produce envy, jealousy and suffering.

Is it possible to work without self? Perhaps you will say no, this is not possible, because the self looks for something in return. When we speak of the self, we talk about achievement, success, advancement or progress, because all these things are the aim of the self. In meditation we say 'I am meditating. I want to be peaceful, I desire stillness. But you are then working for the self, and this cannot lead to peace. Sometimes, when you come to quietness for a short period, you are satisfied with this experience and become attached to it, holding on to it. Next time you sit, you expect another such experience to occur, and when it does not, you feel depressed and unhappy. This is because you are working for the self. Is this wise or unwise?

To be free from the self is essential for a full life. In fact, we can live without self, happily and peacefully, still doing work and taking part in social life, and we understand what we are doing. Such understanding can free you from all attachment and suffering.

You will remember that I have always said that a good moment for meditation is the moment you are in a state of suffering. I have said this many times before. In the moment of suffering, *you can see the self reacting to a situation*, and thus awareness becomes strong. With fully developed awareness, trouble has no meaning, and happiness has no meaning, because only freedom is meaningful, and then there is Inner liberation.

How can we come to this state of inner liberation? We must clear away all hindrances, but not by making aggressive efforts to clear them away. If this is attempted without understanding, without awareness fully developed, we shall merely have more problems, and more hindrances. According to Buddhism, there are two ways of removing obstacles. One is the way of entering into meditative absorption, the Jhana state wherein you can be free from hindrances, but these are only suppressed, not rooted out. They will arise again when you come out of the meditative absorption. The second way is by understanding them clearly *at the moment* they come. *This is the way of insight*. If you read the Satipatthana Sutta very carefully, you will learn about this. That Sutta was given to the monks by the Buddha through his own experience. Everyone can have personal experience of this just as the Buddha had.

In this Sutta five hindrances are mentioned and, although there may be more, these five will cover them. The first hindrance to meditation progress is sense-desire. This means the seeking of gratification or enjoyment through imagination, thinking, or by conversing within. Any satisfaction or pleasure gained through the senses, especially the *mind - sense*, plays a very active role in life, even more so in meditation. When you start to meditate, the mind seeks happiness and peace, wanting to enjoy the spiritual life and the inner world. This is sense-

desire, and it can be clearly observed in meditation. But the nature of the superficial mind is that it is never satisfied with anything. Therefore the search goes on forever, unless you remove this hindrance of sense-desire. The way to remove it is through watching it at the moment it comes, at the very moment the mind wanders and seeks anything. Spot it and look at it closely and carefully. The moment you do this, it will stop and you will say 'I see nothing'. The mind stops and deceives you, so you must look very carefully at the *disappearance* of that mind. Then dullness will gradually disappear and clarity will come. Then there is alertness, awakening, when you can see some of the conditions behind that mind.

It is very important that we do not try to look at only one thing; in this system of meditation we must see the whole process of an event. This is not a state of distraction, but a state of lucidity. No single thing happens in life. When we talk about the mind we do not only mean the mind but many conditions and states connected with it. When you say 'I know the wandering mind', it is only memory since you do not see the whole process of it. To understand is to experience the truth, not merely to remember because of what you were taught.

I do not agree with those who say 'I must name the things that are happening', because as soon as you try to name, you become engaged in concepts and you begin to work on ideas. But if you just look at what is happening within you, *with clarity of mind and alertness, but without trying to give names*, you can see things clearly. As soon as you try to give names, a little dullness arises because of the concept. The name does not matter, as long as you look at it. You know what is going on, and there is no need to label it, or to repeat words. This is important.

The second hindrance is ill will, repugnance, or hatred. This refers to the violent mind, the agitated states within. We must be able to recognize violence within us, and why we do things violently. The violent state within is driving us all the time. Hatred and violence are forms of harmful consciousness. Sometimes you have memories of someone doing something unpleasant to you, and you cannot forgive that person because memory intervenes and you want revenge. The self becomes very strong at that moment. What shall we do, Focus attention on that state, apply full awareness to it, and discover why the mind wants revenge, why it is violent. Through understanding violent states, you know what to do about them. The way of insight is first to look at, and to see, to be fully aware of what is going on and how it comes about, how it operates and how it fades away. You have to comprehend all these things through keen awareness and with clarity, without projection and without the thinking process. The thinking process is the main obstacle to the awareness of reality, because it is a limited pattern in itself. Being aware of things in order to understand them for what they are is action without ideas, dullness, or confusion. The mind is always clear and free, and only such a mind can approach reality.

Another hindrance is the condition of sloth and torpor, or sleepiness. For the first few days during a period of intensive meditation, people at the meditation centre have difficulty about tiredness. Sometimes we have to distinguish whether it is physical or mental fatigue. The hindrance here does not refer to physical fatigue, but to mental laziness, when the mind is in a state of inertia. It does not want to work, and makes you think 'I am very tired', the 'I' is very sleepy. We have to look at the state of fatigue, and see whether it is mental or physical. The first step of insight is distinguishing the mind from the body, the mental process from the physical process. Tiredness can be a physical condition, but we have to see whether or not it is

so, by observing it. When you understand it, tiredness disappears. For myself, when I feel tired and meditate, the physical tiredness disappears quickly and I become alert. This is very natural in meditation. That is why I ask many friends to distinguish the two processes very clearly. It is not a matter of acquiring knowledge - you do not need any information - you just watch closely and clearly and then you understand.

Restlessness and worry make a rather difficult hindrance, because only by attaining to Arahatsip, the final stage of realization, can this hindrance be removed. The moment you pay attention to restlessness and worry they disappear. Why is the mind restless? Why is it worried? Because you lack peace. Restlessness can be compared to dust blown up and scattered in many directions. In meditation, many things within us that have been accumulated in life rise up and people tend to run away because they do not want to review the vicious circle of life. It is good when disturbing things arise, for you can then observe and distinguish them clearly. Everything accumulated in life must be brought to the surface for you to understand; otherwise you cannot come to the full realization of truth.

It may be that someone will have many disturbing 'feelings' arising at this stage, and if he or she is not strong, not brave, there will be a wish to escape quickly. This is natural in meditation; it is also natural in daily life. But in daily life you do not notice it so much because you are busy with outward things, so inner disturbances can remain unconscious. You can say that the outward things appear to be going on quite smoothly and that you are happy with them. But if inner disturbances are working strongly within you, you cannot have peace.

We must not try to rest content with sensate values or superficial values concerning things. We must observe within and contemplate all the disturbing things within us. You do not need to seek them. If they do not reveal themselves to you, do not look for them! You certainly must not create them, because the mind *can* create all these things. You may say 'I listened to the Chao Khun's talk about inner disturbances, and now I must watch out for them.' These things happen, but not to everyone. It depends upon your kamma, the tendencies accumulated in your life. This is not something which comes from outside. What we call 'Mara' in Buddhism, the 'Evil One', is not something outside yourself - it is within. Mara is useful to spiritual progress. Without Mara, the Buddha would not have attained to enlightenment. When the Buddha was tempted by Mara, what he said is very interesting. He said, 'Mara! I know you. You cannot do anything with me.' He was a little frightened when he was strongly tempted the night before his enlightenment. That is why you see the other hand coming out from the meditation posture. But when the Buddha knew: 'This is Mara', he went on with his meditation and attained to enlightenment. So we should not regard Mara as something that is obstructing spiritual progress. Unpleasant situations in life can be taken as instruments for spiritual progress. It all depends upon your understanding, upon the way you look at things. This is the Buddhist way.

The last hindrance is sceptical or defensive doubt. Doubt is easy to overcome. It arises when the mind is confused. The moment you have doubt, sit still and examine the doubtful mind. Gradually it will become clearer. Then doubt disappears. Do not think about the subject, and do not try to find the answer. The answer will reveal itself *when the mind is quiet*. The answer is already in the subject of doubt. When you look for an answer, you create ideas to explain something. That is no answer. A mental creation is not the way to solve problems on the Way to Enlightenment.

November 24th 1968



## Chapter Twelve

### IMPACT THROUGH THE SENSES

As human beings, we are fully equipped with sense organs, which enable us to communicate with both the world outside and the world within. Awareness of the presence of these senses is essential to the practice of Buddhist meditation. One should know that Buddhist meditation is not only sitting quietly, but practising to be aware of all the things we come across and experience in life. Whenever we use one of the senses, we have to be aware of doing so, full awareness of any sense being in fact meditation practice. How can we be aware of seeing if we just sit with closed eyes? How can we be aware of hearing? Perhaps there will be sounds during the period of meditation, but it is most important to be able to listen to things in life.

Hence, Buddhist meditation is always concerned *with* life, and not with running away from life. You do not have to retire from the world or go into a monastery. You can live in the world and do meditation through observing the senses. In this way, Awareness will be maintained and increased. I am calling this talk '*Impact Through the Senses*' because the essential thing in the practice with regard to the sense organs of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and thinking is to be aware of the bond, or 'fetter', that arises through any of the senses when there is conscious contact. That is vital.

First of all, we should be aware there is an internal sense organ, there is an external object, and then there is contact between the two. Because consciousness is present when the external and the internal come into contact, an impression arises. Then you may have a 'fetter' (Samyojana), a 'defilement' that binds you to what you are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling or thinking. Your attention is caught.

This teaching regarding the senses was not formed as a theory but came into Buddhism through the Buddha's *observation and awareness*. The Buddha was aware not only of external things but also of internal processes. If we are fully aware of the sense of seeing, for example, we perceive no more than the eye - sensitivity, the visible form, consciousness, contact and attention. This is quite a deep analysis through meditation, but you need to refrain from theoretical knowledge in order to analyse the senses. The only requirement on the practical side for you to meet is to give *full attention* to them.

When your full attention is given to hearing, you have the intention to understand, - not only the sound object heard but also the subject who is hearing, with all the conditions and states of that subject, or of anything arising because of hearing. Awareness is very necessary for understanding and acquiring analytical knowledge by way of the senses. When you give full attention to the senses, they become tranquil because there is no distraction and no exclusion, but there is wholeness of understanding and complete awareness.

In this process, there is no self who hears or sees. Nobody can prove that there is a self as an entity being aware of seeing and hearing. There may, however, be wholeness of seeing and hearing. The idea of self is one of the fetters that tie us to the lower (sense) world. The 'self', so called for short, is Sakkaya - Ditthi. 'Ditthi' here means false idea, false view. (Wherever there is 'Ditthi' without 'Samma.' before it, it means false view, everywhere in the Buddhist

scriptures.) When 'Ditthi' comes together with 'Samma.' (perfect, consummate, or right) it means full understanding: Samma - Ditthi is the Buddhist understanding, or clear comprehension of truth. The self can be an idea, or view, or subject, and refers to oneself as a person who sees or hears. This is clear to our common sense, but it is still on a superficial level of existence in a conceptual world, not in reality, because reality is without concepts or names.

When you hear, or see, or touch, if there is a very strong feeling of, 'I am hearing, I am seeing, I am touching', at that particular moment it is very important for you to be aware of this, 'I am', how 'I am' operates - *not to be 'I am', but to be aware of - 'I am'*. This is meditation. When you become 'I am', you identify yourself with the 'I' and then you have no power to see, no power to understand, because self-control or controlling power has been lost. Then 'I am' becomes very powerful, dominating you so that you interpret, create, like, dislike and many other things. But the moment you are aware of the 'I' operating and reacting, you have controlling power over seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and thinking. This is why it is so important for us to be free from self-identification, but such is impossible without detached awareness. We always identify ourselves with the subject or the object, but mostly with the subject, the self, the 'I'. This fetter may arise with any of the senses, and in fact it always arises.

Apart from the false notion of self, you may also have doubt. When you are hearing a talk for example, you may have uncertainty, and a state of indecisiveness may arise in the mind. At that moment you should be aware of your doubt. Perhaps it is the speaker who causes the uncertainty, or it may be because of your own background. If you remain aware of doubt you will not be carried away. You can be still and independent. If you are dependent, you are always carried away. People are also tied to the world of the senses by attachment to ceremonies, rituals and events of that kind, believing that these will guide them to Nibbana, or satisfy their desires. If you are attached to any ceremony, then without it you will be unhappy, and thus you are bound to the lower world.

Hence you should be aware of your being attached to ceremonies and rituals.

Two other psychological fetters are rather dominant in people's lives: these are desire for sensorial pleasures, and ill will, repugnance, or hatred. When you see, hear, touch, taste, smell or think of the things you like, or which satisfy your mind, you desire attachment and have a desire for these things. Or, if you come across unpleasant or undesirable situations, you first have the feeling of dislike, perhaps ill will, then repugnance, anger and even hatred. Because they cannot give you satisfaction, they disappoint and dismay you. You become frustrated and unhappy. If you are fully aware of all these mental states arising through the senses, you can develop tranquillity. The Buddha said, 'You must train yourself to be tranquil in the mind and in the senses', and the one who has achieved enlightenment is always described as one who has tranquillity of the senses. But, without full awareness of the senses there can be no tranquillity.

You may ask, 'How can we have pleasure and happiness in life if we are always aware of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and thinking?'

What do you mean by happiness? What kind of happiness do you want? Changing happiness? Passing events? If you want these things you do not need to practise awareness, but you will

suffer from troubles and unhappiness when the happy conditions change. This is a fact. And then you will say, 'I am now unhappy'. Happiness, in the true sense, is the stilling of mental formations. When there is no more concept forming, then there is happiness. As soon as there is mental creating, there is no real happiness. We must not be deceived by passing events, or fleeting happiness. This is truly important.

Deeper still, if you have the more refined attainments of meditation or spiritual life, you may be bound to the 'higher' world, the world of deep meditation if you like. The fetters still arise in the mind, for those who attain to high spiritual levels. For instance, a person who attains to meditative absorptions, the states of Jhana, may be attached to the fine psychic world, or fine objects in intense meditation. Sometimes when you come across beautiful or marvellous things in meditation, you want to stay with them, and this is a form of attachment arising. When you become attached, you remain there and cannot go any further because you are tied to that object, to that state of attainment. Sometimes, there is no mental object as a form, but something extremely subtle and profound, a formless thing. This is very wonderful, but without full awareness you will become attached to it and stay there. Every time you sit in meditation, you will come as far as that state and remain with it. 'Oh, I had a wonderful experience today!' You are proud of your attainment. That is also a 'fetter'.

Three more fetters bind us to the higher world: the restless mind, spiritual pride and ignorance. The restless mind also binds us to the lower world. It is very difficult to remove unless one attains to the final stage of enlightenment, - Nibbana. So you should not worry about the restless mind when you are beginners, or intermediate meditators. The thinking mind is ever restless, but why worry about it and make it more so. Your duty is to be aware of restlessness. When the mind becomes restless, you must observe it and understand why. It is because the mind is seeking for satisfaction, for more pleasure for itself, or because of something else. We have to see the reason, the conditions of the restless mind. When watched, the mind becomes quiet. When you are not aware of it, it will carry you away to the far distance through imagination and daydreaming.

Then there is spiritual pride, or pride at any level. Pride may lie in a sense of comparison: you should not compare yourself with others, superior or inferior or equal. There need be no comparison at all. The pride of comparison may be compared to a sandbank. Would you like to be only a sandbank, or something better? Are you going to build a house on sand, or on rock? Some people who attain to a high level of spiritual life still have spiritual pride, which is the main obstacle to their further progress. If one still has pride, such a person has not yet achieved full enlightenment. Spiritual attainment, however high it is, is within the field of mental creation, not the transcendental state of *achievement*.

The fetter of ignorance is that of, not understanding the truth, that of, dullness of mind, or it is a sense of confusion, or of delusion. This does not mean lack of information. One may have quite a lot of knowledge and yet still have perceptual ignorance operating strongly. Such a person's mind is clouded by his idea of self. He thinks that he himself is the criterion, and he is under the influence of self - reference. He does not see clearly. Ignorance is the final fetter to be removed. When you are aware of your ignorance with regard to seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and thinking, then you will be free from it. There is no more confusion. Without confusion there is clarity, awakening and alertness. These all belong to full understanding, the opposite of ignorance.

We should therefore be aware of all these fetters as they arise through the senses, so that full awareness is established at the *sense - doors*. Then we shall have peace, understanding and insight. It is worthwhile seeing, if we see with full awareness; it is worthwhile hearing, if we hear with full awareness. This is something to live with. Meditation is living indeed. It is not apart from life. Real life *is* meditation, the timeless living with complete joy and bliss.

December 1st 1968

## Chapter Thirteen

### FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTORS

Enlightenment factors are very important in meditation. If one of them is missing, enlightenment cannot be achieved. The Buddha said that by practising awareness, or mindfulness, all the factors of enlightenment will be fulfilled, and I shall discuss this. Also I should like you to try and experience some of these factors with me.

The meditation that we practise is called Insight Meditation, which is founded on awareness. The objects for this awareness are the body and bodily activities, feelings, mental states and mental contents. All these are within us, and we do not have to look beyond the experiences and faculties that we already have.

Bodily activities include breathing, walking, eating, resting, listening, talking, and so on. And we have feelings, which are pleasant, unpleasant, or neither. We have the mind with all its mental states. When we perceive anything through the senses of hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling, or thinking, all the conditions of the mind come into operation. Mental phenomena continually appear, not only in sitting practice of meditation, but also in daily life, and we must be fully aware of them, seeing them as they are. This is the chief instruction in awareness.

All students of meditation should be aware of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, These are, Mindfulness, Investigation of Truth, Energy, Rapturous Joy, Tranquillity, Concentration and Equanimity. You must know whether they are in you or not - understanding the arising of anyone of them. When they are present, you have to know whether they are fully developed, or are being developed.

The first thing is to know whether you have anyone of the Seven Factors. Secondly, you have to know the existence, or arising, of anyone of the factors. The third step is to know the full development and complete perfection of the Seven Factors. At this stage, there is enlightenment. This is not difficult to talk about, but there will be difficulties in reaching it. This difficulty always exists on the psychological level of being. But is it wise to be under the influence of this psychological level? Or would you like to go beyond it? It is up to you.

The first factor of enlightenment is mindfulness. What is mindfulness? It is the faculty of constantly looking at what ever arises, which leads to the ability to see the nature of anything you observe. In such awareness, complete attention is given to the object or the process, with a passive watchfulness, which looks into their reality. This brings about clarity and alertness, and the mind can be aware of anything even of itself, or its own processes. But the moment it is carried away, or run by desires, or by any form of attachment, it becomes dull and confused. Then there is no tranquillity, no calmness, so that bewilderment arises.

With mindfulness, you have a mirror with you, so that you see not only the object or process, but also yourself reacting to it. By seeing yourself reflected, you can get self-knowledge, which leads to the understanding of the false, and of the true. You can see purity and impurity, beauty and ugliness within you, and when you come to understand reality, you can see beauty in ugliness, purity in impurity. There is no difference in reality. The difference is created by the

mind, and by the way we look with preconceived ideas, training and background. Everything is relatively good and relatively bad, relatively true and relatively false. Who can state that anything is absolutely good? It appears good according to the angle from which you look at it, and others may disagree with the opinion. Good and bad are only concepts, and we have to go beyond concepts in order to achieve the understanding of truth. Otherwise the mind is clouded by attitudes and views, and ignorance is a powerful but unconscious factor.

When complete awareness is attained, there is no observer, and all ideas and opinions are no longer in the field - they are put aside because there is no 'self' at work. The moment such a self comes to be, interpretations and explanations arise so that work is done in ideas, not action. Awareness is the means of removing all conditions of background, and should be used on all occasions. The Buddha said that awareness is beneficial with everything in life, because it gives the true picture of anything you come across.

The second factor is the Investigation of Truth, which is the process of making an enquiry into what is. You may think that this concerns thinking, not meditation, but this is not so. It is the questing for truth, and this plays a very active role in the achievement of enlightenment. There is a real intention to understand what is, and when you do this, you understand how it comes to be, and how it manifests itself. You also understand the cessation of what is, and the way leading to that cessation. In the process of making enquiry, no views on the subject should be put in the way. Doubt is put aside and there is just the intention to understand. At the moment of enquiry, you leave doubt alone; otherwise you are working on a basis of rejection or acceptance, of a theory, and of the activities of the self. Without comment or interpretation, there is purity of investigation, which is not thinking. The moment thought arises, the mind becomes distracted and what is real cannot be understood. Thinking is very shallow, and when it disappears, reality appears.

What is reality? There is no definition, because the mind is limited and cannot define the unlimited, the indefinable. If you do not use the second factor of investigation, you will just sit quietly enjoying thoughts and memories which run on, and on, in the mind. If they flow very strongly, or become unpleasant, you may become frightened, but with awareness you can understand them, and your fear.

The third factor, which is Energy, is essential. In meditation you do not waste energy but cultivate it. How? With regard to physical energy, you can cultivate this through the walking exercises, which are shown to meditators in Insight Practice. You do not learn to walk, but you learn to cultivate mindfulness and energy. When energy has been stored, then you sit with the body still and quiet. There will be no complaints from the body whose organs can function rightly.

Concerning mental energy, this is wasted when you are thinking or become emotionally disturbed or depressed. In the practice of mindfulness there is full awareness of all states arising, and in this case, energy is stored instead of wasted. As awareness becomes more steady, energy becomes more powerful and creative. If the mind becomes lazy or inert during meditation, you understand this indolence as a hindrance to spiritual progress, and you can detach from it, and store up energy again.

The fourth factor, of Rapturous Joy, may be directed by thinking because the first sensation of

joy, which is caused by physical factors, may bring into operation the application of thought. But with awareness you are not carried away, but direct the mind towards the object, or process. This is not a distraction but a direction of thought, lifting the mind to the object. When the mind is sluggish, the investigation of truth, energy and rapturous joy are important factors, and it is not right to cultivate the final three factors of tranquillity - concentration and equanimity - at that particular stage because when the mind has become slack it needs the former factors which bring more energy with them.

When the mind becomes elated, then tranquillity, concentration and equanimity should be applied. Concentration arises from calmness, and freedom from confusion. This is clearly stated in the Samyutta Nikaya, one of the collections of the Buddha's teachings. Tranquillity is a strong basis for the growth of insight. In a state of elation the mind can become confused and get stuck. You are happy, and the mind says you should not do anything more - you are all right. Then you cannot make any further progress.

Tranquillity does not only mean calmness of the physical body. In the Buddhist scriptures there is mentioned, kaya - passaddhi, or tranquillity of the body, but kaya or assemblage, here refers to feelings, perceptions, and mental formations. When these become calm, tranquillity will be achieved and the body will be under control. There is composure, steadiness and stability of feelings, perceptions, mental formations and mind or consciousness.

What about Equanimity? This is a state of unattached watchfulness, or unbroken attentiveness - not a state of indifference or neutrality. As a factor for enlightenment, it has a close connection with mindfulness, and refers to the detached mind, the detached state of consciousness, in the sense of liberation. At this stage the mind is free. The meditator does not care for results or progress because these mean nothing at that instant, just as not smoking means nothing to a person that does not smoke because that person has already achieved the not - smoking. Once you have achieved freedom, it no longer means anything. If the mind is not free and it is under the influence of desires and mental states, you will be attached to progress and then pride, or the 'I' conceit', arises to become a fetter.

You must become aware of these Seven Factors of Enlightenment, not only in group and private meditation but also in daily life, in your daily experiences. You can cultivate them at any time. When the Buddha spoke of these Seven Factors, he did not mean that they only appear during intensive meditation. He said that wherever one is, one should be aware of them - in any circumstances. Then you will understand what you have got within you and develop it.

December 8th 1968

## Chapter Fourteen

### SELF-DISCOVERY AND THE REALIZATION OF THE TRUTH

The self is very strong as a feeling, in all people, but through the process of analysis during meditation, we come to understand that there is no self to be found. Through the thought, and projection of the mind, the belief in a self is created. Otherwise people cannot believe that they will be reborn. Who is being reborn? Is it necessary to have a self for rebirth? Or can the process of rebirth itself take on rebirth? This is a deep question, and the Buddha did not concern himself with the discussion of unthinkable questions. The questioner does not really understand his own question, and therefore answering is a waste of time.

The best approach is to try and understand the process of rebirth from moment to moment. In that process of becoming and continuity, is there a self? The teaching of rebirth may appear wrong, but this is only because people do not understand it. If you understand the truth of it, there is no right nor wrong, but there is perfection of the teaching. One should not claim anything through faith, or through superficial confidence in the path, or the teaching, or experiences, because the desire to assert something is the activity of the self, the supposed-to-be-self.

The meaning of self - discovery, does not mean the uncovering of an entity existing in a being, but the full understanding of oneself, complete understanding of the Five Aggregates, which are combined for Existence and Becoming. When we have discovered ourselves, we understand what is the best and the worst, what ought to be done and not done. Such a person discovers his own qualities, and those of others.

The great problem for unenlightened people is the problem of self. We waste time, thinking about ourselves, and doing many things in order to strengthen the self, and its activities. Thus we never come to the understanding of truth, but experience sorrow, misery, suffering, pleasure, pain and joy. All are passing events, changing conditions.

The realization of truth must be achieved through self - discovery, which is linked very closely with it. Here the truth refers to the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism. I should like to talk about these with you, in relation to Satipatthana, or insight meditation practice. I shall not go into details, as you will have read about them in books, and have heard about them from many people. But how can we realize the Four Noble Truths in meditation. Without fully realizing them, enlightenment cannot be achieved. As the Buddha said, the realization of them is like the rising of the sun, dispersing darkness and giving light at the same moment. The Four Noble Truths are realized at one and the same time, not separately. You cannot say that on one day you will realize the First Noble Truth of Suffering, the next day the Second, the following day the Third and the fourth day the Fourth. That is not realization, but the process of memory, - you are just trying to recall what you have read and have been taught.

The mindfulness of the Four Noble Truths is dhammanu - passanna, or awareness of mental contents. It is through awareness that we understand the Four Noble Truths completely. Meditators who have come to this understanding may not be able to express it to others, because the ability to explain is a different thing from the ability to experience truth.



The First Noble Truth is *dukkha*, or suffering. What is *dukkha*? In the process of watching the up and down movements of the body, you will see the appearance and disappearance of bodily activities, and this belongs to the Noble Truth of *dukkha*. The appearance of physical movement gives the conditions for its disappearance, and this continues on into appearing. This is the process of continuity, or becoming, which never stops. Within it you can see impermanence, which may give rise to a feeling of suffering because the process of appearing and disappearing never ceases. This may frighten you during meditation, and then you must be aware of this fear. Awareness must be applied to everything that arises, - this is essential. You can watch the appearance and disappearance of feelings, perceptions, tendencies, consciousness, or any mental and physical phenomena that are there. Unless you do this, awareness is not being practised but only thinking, which can never bring about the real understanding of truth. It is only the projection of mind, which is delusion and not reality.

When your awareness becomes strong, you will see three phases of anything: its coming into being, its existing or prevailing and its ceasing. This applies to all phenomena and processes, and belongs to *dukkha*.

What is the Second Noble Truth, the arising of *dukkha*? Why does it come to be? There must be a cause, a condition working behind the appearing, disappearing and continuity. This cause is desire, or craving, which is the Second Noble Truth in Buddhism. If you have no desire, you cannot continue to be, cannot exist.

This may confuse you, because you will ask, - 'Then how do enlightened people exist, if they have no desire?' When I said there is no desire, no continuity, I meant that the feeling of 'I' ceases to exist. But the Five Aggregates still continue, so that physical existence continues so long as the Aggregates still have a function to carry out. When you see the appearance, and disappearance of phenomena, you usually have the feeling 'I exist. I am watching this, I am aware of this.' 'I am' plays a very active role, and then you can see that desire is still working. But the moment you lose the feeling of 'I am', or 'I' at all, desire disappears.

At that moment can be seen the Third Noble Truth, because all the conditioned processes become still, and there is no activity of the self. This is the cessation of *dukkha*. This is *Nibbana*. *Nibbana* is here, in the discovery of yourself. And at that particular moment, realization of truth has been achieved, and the person who attains to it understands what it is. You may have heard *Nibbana* described as 'extinction without remainder'. This is the extinction of all conditioned states. There is no more movement, forming, or creating. There is no mind moving, or looking at anything.

And what is the Path to this? What is the Fourth Noble Truth? Awareness itself is the Path, in which there is concentration and effort. When the Path is fully developed, there is no feeling of effort, concentration, or of being aware. There is stillness of all processes, even of any vibration, and you have complete understanding (*samma - ditthi*) of the Four Noble Truths. When understanding is right and perfect, all things will be right and perfect.

Right understanding cannot be obtained from books, or from speakers, but from seeing the truth for yourself through meditation. You may remember things that have been written in books you have read, or spoken by people you have heard, but this is knowledge, not *samma* –

ditthi. At the beginning, knowledge may inspire you to obtain samma - ditthi in meditation, but it must be practical knowledge, not just conceptual. Once you have right understanding, intention is maintained.

In meditation, if you observe your mental activities properly, you can see the searching for satisfaction, in enjoyment, in imagination and in speculation, which belongs to the Second Noble Truth, the arising of *dukkha*. This is the activity of desire and attachment. You have to watch this activity very clearly and deeply in meditation, otherwise the Four Noble Truths will not be realized. Do not try to remember what they are. If you have no concepts of them in your mind, you may not be able to explain them, but you can see them for what they are. Afterwards, you will be able to find words to express them, should you wish to do so. If not, just keep them to yourself.

But you can explain to those who ask you how to realize the Four Noble Truths for themselves, because that is the function of compassion, and universal love, - the flow of wisdom. If you have not had much experience of meditation you may not believe that the flow of wisdom goes on deep within us. Why can we not see it? Because the mind has so many objects in the world, in waking life, which it is occupied in perceiving and thinking about. The moment it becomes quiet, the flow of wisdom appears, which can allow you to speak the truth. It is not a thinking process, because this has disappeared and does not arise as long as the mind remains still.

December 15th 1968

## Chapter Fifteen

### COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING HERE AND NOW

This talk will be on the difference between intellectual understanding, and the real understanding of the Dhamma.

Complete understanding, here and now, is the highest result of meditation practice. Everyone must be able to attain to this. As it is said in the Satipatthana Sutta, if, in the practise of mindfulness, you have failed to gain complete understanding, here and now, you will not attain to Non - Returning. You will return to the lower states of life, the coming and going, the cycle of birth and death.

How can complete understanding come? Before talking about that we should make clear the process of gaining knowledge in general. What is its basis? Belief is the basis of gaining knowledge--whether scientific, religious or philosophical. All are based on belief in different forms. The rules and logic arise, because of my belief. I accumulate knowledge because I believe it is true and useful. It makes me happy and I continue to accumulate it. I am a conditioned man. If I am a scientist, I am conditioned by science. If I am a psychologist I am conditioned by psychology and so on. If I am a Buddhist I am conditioned by the Buddhist religion and traditions.

What is the real thing? You must open the mind to see. The process of gaining knowledge based on belief is called, *anubodha*, in Pali, meaning 'understanding accordingly'. You understand things according to your conditioning, training, background, and upbringing, which form patterns of thinking. You can see the picture of, 'knowing accordingly', based on accumulating experiences, so I will not go into the details.

Is there a completion to 'knowing accordingly'? No. If you were reborn a hundred times, and tried to complete this kind of knowing, you would not be able to. You may have many degrees in many subjects but you will not be able to claim that you have completed 'knowing accordingly'. There are many things you do not understand. Life is not very long - eighty or ninety years perhaps - and in order to complete life we need more than this. But if you are wise you need only a few days depending upon your degree of wisdom.

Complete understanding is absolutely free from beliefs and ideas. Complete understanding means, to see the whole, not just the part, and to uncover the covered. In that state there is no confusion, no self - deception, no ignorance or delusion.

If there is any uncertainty or doubt, it is not complete. This does not mean that one has to understand everything in the world because 'everything in the world' is just concepts, speculations and beliefs, built up by people of different traditions. It is really a tie to try and understand all things. But it is essential to have complete understanding of truth - the truth of living, of communication, of relationships, of human existence and of yourself. There is no more to understand. You can live and act rightly, perfectly. Perhaps right action is against some traditions and beliefs in some cases, but these traditions and beliefs are not necessarily 'true'. They may be logically true, or traditionally true, but in complete understanding the concepts of true and false, good and bad, do not arise. There is no polarity, but only wholeness. There is no comparison because that belongs to relative knowledge.

'Here and now' means from moment to moment. If there is complete understanding from moment to moment in living, you will not be deceived by anything. You can be master of all tendencies and mental states, with peace and happiness at any time, free from frustration and disquiet. No misery comes and no disappointment. Because of complete understanding, you can see unpleasantness and sorrowful situations, but you yourself do not suffer.

The question arises, if you do not suffer, how can you understand suffering. Yes, you suffer first before coming to understanding. You suffer many things in life, and know what suffering is. Before coming to full enlightenment, everyone experiences unhappiness. Then, when you are enlightened, you have compassion for suffering beings, and understand them. Because of your understanding you know how to act in situations, and how to help people.

Before coming to understanding we speculate, 'What happens to a person who attains to enlightenment?' There is a projection into the future, in this question. But such thoughts do not occur to the enlightened person, only to the unenlightened. The right way is not to ask such questions, but to come to it, and see the truth for yourself. Otherwise you will not be convinced, but may become more confused by answers to your questions. Sometimes even enlightened people cannot show reality to others without causing confusion. That is why in many cases the Buddha remained silent in the face of questions. He did not wish to add more confusion to the confused. People who ask questions are to some extent confused, otherwise they would not ask questions at all!

But how can we manage without any questions? In some cases it is good to ask questions, but it must be with the aim to understand, -not just asking questions without wanting to understand. If you know that your question really relates to what is beyond your understanding, leave it alone, and return to it later on. Many times the Buddha said, 'Your question has gone beyond yourself', and this stopped people pursuing the subject merely theoretically. We should only ask questions in order to gain right understanding. Or we should not ask questions, but try to understand through our observation, awareness and watchfulness. You can put the questions to yourself, and when the mind becomes still, understanding springs up and gives you the real picture.

It is important for us to try and see the truth for ourselves during daily life, not just during the period of sitting in meditation. Enlightenment can be obtained in daily affairs and activities, with the eyes open. In sitting meditation we close the eyes and we may say, 'I have seen the truth', but one needs to be able to see the truth with the eyes open as well. Otherwise enlightenment has not really been attained. If it seems to be there only when the eyes are closed, then it would only be for those who retire from the world. But enlightenment is for everyone, in every walk of life, if one knows how to gain it, how to live with it, in complete understanding here and now, at any moment, in any experience, with any activity in life.

How can this complete understanding here and now, come to be? Only by full awareness and constant watchfulness. There is no other way, no miracle, and no knowledge, which can bring it. If you can have constant awareness of all activities, both of the physical body, and of the mind, in relation to experiences and the world outside, you will be able to see the truth internally and externally. The truth within us, and in the world outside us, is the same. With constant awareness and clarity of acting, we can maintain complete understanding, here and now.

'Here and now' does not refer to place or time, but a single moment, which is unique, unrepresentable and unutterable. We live for twenty - four hours a day from moment to moment, for fifty - two weeks a year from moment to moment, and at every moment, complete understanding may be there, which would mean living without ideas, and without speculation. You may doubt that you could live in that way if you are afraid of losing your patterns of living. Fear is your obstacle because there is identification with the 'self'. You must be free from self-activities, and from the fear created by the self.

However high the degree of your concentration, complete understanding here and now, does not arise unless there is insight. There are many levels, according to the levels of awareness, which are attained, so we should press on with awareness and the practice of mindfulness.

December 22nd 1968

## Chapter Sixteen

### BRINGING MEDITATION INTO LIFE

While teaching college students in the United States in January, I had the strong impression that it is through meditation practice, that the Teaching of the Buddha can be understood more easily and clearly. This is in accordance with the Buddha's own advice: 'Come and see for yourself'. How can you see if you do not come to it, if you do not put it to the test, and see how it works, you cannot judge it.

It is important that we do not take the Dhamma for granted, but put it into practice intelligently. As the Buddha said, the fool cannot understand the Dhamma. Scholars think they have to study all the scriptures of Buddhism, but there is not enough time for that. And it is not necessary, because what the scriptures say is already *within yourself*. If you understand yourself completely, you will understand everything in the Dhamma. The Buddha was not a philosopher, nor a thinker, but a man of experience, who attained Enlightenment through his own efforts and intelligence, not through the scriptures. Within us all, there is the potentiality for becoming enlightened beings. We do not need to search for the realization of Truth anywhere else but in ourselves.

We should not try to define the meaning of meditation, but to understand it through our practice. As you know, through meditation the being is purified, the mind is purged and the Truth is discovered. The central thing is to practise Awareness, or Mindfulness, and then we shall understand what meditation is, and how it works in our lives.

'Bringing meditation into life' has two meanings: firstly, applying meditation in daily practice; and secondly, making it alive, or lively. Some people think of meditation in terms of something holy, or lofty, beyond ordinary life, and only concerning an inner world. But meditation must enter life in all its aspects; otherwise it is of very little meaning. If you sit quietly for a time, and then follow your daily activities without any reference to meditation, you will not see any benefit. You will not be able to face situations or circumstances in a new way. You will continue to apply the old ways; the old patterns of living to all situations, and meditation will do nothing important for your life. What do we want from meditation practice? We want to be able to face problems and conflicts calmly, confidently and intelligently. But without connecting meditation with life, we cannot do this.

We have to consider what life is. We can say that it is a series of events, day by day and night by night, some good and some bad. Sometimes we are troubled, sometimes happy. And this has gone on since our childhood. All events are passing things, and they go on and on according to the Law of Conditionality, the Law of Cause and Effect. Life may also be regarded as a dynamic process, moving from moment to moment. Perhaps a deeper meaning of life would be *wholeness of being*.

How can one apply meditation to a series of events which we encounter through our fancies, environment, circumstances, community, nation and so on? It is not so difficult, yet it is not very easy: it is something to be practised. We must bring *awareness* to everything: communication with other people, thinking, expressing ourselves, and all our reactions to our

circumstances. We certainly have sufficient objects for meditation! As you become more and more aware of everything, both outside, and inside yourself, you will see what you are, and can continue to understand what you are, and what you are doing. Usually, people cease to practise awareness when they encounter unpleasant experiences. They try to blame the situation, or other people, and never look at themselves. This is a kind of prejudice from which everybody suffers. But if instead we remain aware, we shall understand the conditions that come into operation, and underlie all problems. This does not mean we are hunting for the solution of problems. If we look for solutions, there is a formulation of theories, ideas, and goals. But the real solution lies within the problem itself. Nowadays many people with problems have to go to a psychiatrist, but why can you not analyse yourself if you have the means to do so. With a calm mind, you can look into the problem with detachment, and the solution will be found. The creation of many of our problems is through stupidity, but awareness will dissolve the source of these problems.

In life there are two types of people: pro - life and anti - life. The first tries to gain all the pleasure they can in the experiences of life, and take an active part in it. The second has a negative attitude, and may be apathetic, creating more problems for himself than the first type. You may say that enjoying pleasures or material happiness is against the teaching of the Buddha, but with awareness, reactions to pleasure are noted and pleasure seeking is transcended. If, instead of noting pleasure, you attempt to keep away and resist it, you may become an anti - life type of person, which is the other extreme. Whichever type you are, you must simply be aware of your real being, and your reactions to life's experiences.

One of my students in the United States told me that she tried to apply awareness to dancing. She became aware of her physical movements, and saw the mind reacting to them. This is the kind of thing you might like to try. Many people dismiss the idea of bringing meditation to mundane activities, thinking that something holy is being put to the service of something worldly. But we cannot isolate the two things. If meditators withdraw and become remote from society, they are in danger of developing a sense of superiority that strengthens their sense of ego, and they can become estranged from others.

The meaning of life concerns relationship. Life is a contact between the senses, or internal organs, and their corresponding objects. We cannot live without this contact. Even if alone, there is still the process of thinking and ideation within us. And when we come to peace and stillness in meditation, we are in contact with these things. Even in the 'higher meditation', the Buddha has said we are in contact with Nibbana.

We will understand the dynamic aspect of living best if we do not fall into any extremes in thinking, feeling, and acting. Above all, we should understand the change and impermanence underlying the whole of life. This is something that concerns everybody, because people seek something permanent in life, and yet there is no such thing. All things are in the process of flux and flow, and we can learn to live with impermanence knowing that this is the nature of all experiences. Otherwise there will be suffering.

This particularly applies to the states that arise during the practice of meditation. When impermanence is clearly understood, patience can be exercised during all experiences in meditation, and in life. Painful states can be steadily noted, beautiful experiences will not trap

the mind, and 'advanced levels' will not lead to conceit, if the meditator understands that nothing is permanent. This awareness can be brought into life, so that one is no longer attached to objects and events, or caught up in the illusion of ego. Then life and meditation become one.

February 23rd, 1969



## Chapter Seventeen

### LOOKING BEYOND

As you know, meditating is not different from living from moment to moment, with full attention given to life, to things going on in our lives. In intensive meditation, you will find it easier to be aware of the meditation object, and the inner processes going on. In external life it is more difficult to be aware, to give attention to things and to yourself, because the mind is occupied by, and concerned with, many activities.

It has no quiet moment to see and to be aware, and that is why we are sometimes troubled.

If meditation is worth practising, it must be useful to life in all its aspects. Intensive periods of meditation can help us apply it to daily life, because during those periods we increase awareness, and train ourselves to live in the present from moment to moment.

In life there are two factors which play a very important role: these are the *conscious* and *unconscious* contents of the mind. The conscious contents are more easily perceived, but it is still difficult to be completely aware of them, because of preoccupation with preconceived ideas.

You may have noticed how we take things in. Suppose we come across a person or a situation that is unpleasant, and there is contact with it, perhaps through the eyes and ears. A feeling arises, but there is not full awareness of the feeling because you jump into thinking processes. What we *feel* is actually more important than *what we think* about a person or a situation, because we *unconsciously absorb* what we feel.

Suppose there is a feeling of dislike for something. This is taken into you, and the effect is to increase it although it is unconscious. This is why it is so important to be aware of your reactions at the time, whether pleasant or unpleasant.

It is not possible to, '*look beyond*', without being aware of the immediate present. Usually people perceive objects but are not aware of their feelings. The mind tries to interpret objects, explaining them in various ways, with the feelings running on unconsciously. We look out of ourselves towards something else, 'over there', but this is not looking beyond. Looking beyond is different from looking out, because it refers to going into the details of the object, into its heart. You do not only look at what you are conscious of, but deeper down into the unconscious, latent within you. In this way you can be aware of your reactions, and the latent causes and conditions of your feelings. This is a deep form of meditation practice in daily life. If you can look beyond in this way, you will understand the unconscious aspects of yourself very clearly. You may see that there is *fear* within you, - you are afraid of losing something, or of not getting what you want, or of failing in meditation. The first thing is to *look at* fear, in order to see it as fear. This is superficial to begin with, but if you continue to see fear as it is, you will be able to look beyond this conscious fear into *what is working behind* the fear, because that is what is important. The fear is only the symptom of what lies behind it. You may say that fear is very powerful in your life, but we are not good doctors unless we can see into the causes, into the real conditions of the disease. You are your own doctor, looking beyond the conscious into the unconscious contents which give rise to fear. What is it? Why are you afraid?

Why does fear arise in you? Is it because of your new experience? Or because of your attachment? Or your desire? You should find out, and then you can see the reality of fear. Many people can realize this in meditation.

But fear plays a very active part in our lives. Its main cause, I think, is ego consciousness, - the clinging to the idea of self without understanding what the self really is. Buddhism denies that there is a permanent entity in a person, or a being, but does not reject personality or individuality, as an impermanent dynamic process. People can become extreme in their views if they do not understand the doctrine of No - Self. This doctrine denies the existence of a permanent self in anything anywhere. Even Nibbana, the highest peace, is not an entity, because it is beyond existence and non-existence. It is a matter of our ability to get within it, to see it for ourselves.

If you look beyond, you can understand things very deeply. You can understand yourself as a being, "in the sense of a combination of aggregates. At first your understanding will be conditioned by what you have read and heard, but if you go deeper into your being, seeing all the aspects of yourself, you will understand what you mean when you say, 'This is myself'. Then you will realize that language is the obstacle, the hindrance to understanding reality. You have to look beyond language, beyond words. Is it possible for us to do that? I think it must be, because we build up language in order to express our ideas, and if *we go beyond ideas we do not need words*.

If you can see the reality in every thought, every feeling, every idea, every emotion, you are liberated. But without seeing your reactions, you will not be able to understand the truth behind them. As we know, when there is action, then there is a reaction, - this is a natural law that can be applied to any being. If you are sitting alone you may say that you cannot react because there is nothing to react to. But do you think that is true? No. You react to your feelings, ideas, thoughts and emotions at every moment. You should be able to see how you get on with these reactions. Are you friendly with them? Or do you hate them? This is a reaction too. You have to see your *relationship* with your ideas, and so on. This is meditation, and it can be quite enjoyable. Firstly we look *at*, in order to see what it *is*, and then we look beyond, in order to understand the operation of processes, and our reactions to them. That is why the Buddha said: 'One should dwell, being aware of everything that is happening or going on, from moment to moment.' To *dwell* means to actually live life, every moment, in *full awareness*.

What is yourself, apart from reactions and relationships? Is there anything apart from these? What is you? When we understand this, there are no problems in living, and we cease to create them. Looking beyond is very important for mental health, and for understanding reality in everything. Reality can be seen from moment to moment in everything you come across, and the moment you understand this reality, there is love. In that love there is no idea, no belief. In love you feel in the totality of other beings or things, without any feeling of separation. This is called *metta*, the sensation of being in totality with anything without discrimination. This cannot be experienced without understanding reality. You may ask, 'What is reality?' but there is no definition. The undefined cannot be defined. If you try to define it you are wrong, you are putting false ideas to it. Yet it can be perceived and understood. It can be discovered.

The other thing I should talk to you about is the awareness of the outward and the awareness of

the inward. People think there is a difference between these things, but do you think there is? I do not see any difference. Supposing a chair is the outward thing, and you are aware of it. At the moment you are truly aware of the chair it is no longer a chair, because the concept of chair disappears and you see its inward aspect. You may say that when you are aware of the inner processes within you, you are no longer aware of the things in the world, and that is true to some extent. But what is the world? It is a concept, created by the mind. *What you are, the world is.* You have views about the world because of your attitude and tendencies. It may seem a terrible place to live in, but what makes you say so. Is it because objectively it is a terrible place, or is it because of tendencies within you making you react in certain ways. There is no difference between the outward and the inward, because the inward tries to explain the outward, and the outward becomes something seen by the inward. When you are aware of something in the phenomenal world, you can look at your reactions to it, and thus you can see both together, - until you come to realize, - no inward and no outward, being completely free from concepts and language.

Great thinkers and philosophers try to define reality, but this is in response to ideas, views and theories. We are not trying to formulate such things, because there is no end to this. But there is an end if we discover the truth for ourselves, without interpretations. Also we should not try to seek confirmation from someone we believe is advanced. This does not mean you should not talk about it with a sincere mind, but it should not be done with the idea of discussion of concepts.

Looking beyond, one goes more and more deeply into the crux of the matter, and this should be done with everything you come across, including your own mental processes. This is the real meditation. To begin with, you need intensive periods of meditation in a quiet place, but later it can be applied to the whole of life. I feel that meditation will work for everybody who comes across it, and in all of us there is the hope of living in harmony, in a peaceful world, having the right attitude towards the world and towards ourselves.

March 9th, 1969

## Chapter Eighteen

### OBJECTIVE SEEING

Objective seeing has a close connection with insight meditation, because when insight arises one sees things as they are. This is one of the functions in Buddhism. But we should understand what we mean by objective seeing. Perhaps we think that the thing we perceive really exists on its own, or it exists in the perception because there is recognition, and there is the object, or it exists in relation to the subject: there is the 'I', and the 'it'. When you relate yourself to something, and then you say 'there is a thing that exists'. This involves many problems, but I will not go into them because that is the function of philosophy.

In our meditation practice we have the primary object on which to meditate: the rising and falling of the breathing. We try to watch the rising and falling processes within the body. At the first stage of meditation we have the feeling of subject, that is you who are meditating and you who are observing. Then the rising and falling becomes the object, or we can say that the mind is watching this. There are subject - object processes going on all the time in meditation, and by observing them you can see them changing. Sometimes the rising and falling becomes deeper, sometimes shallower; sometimes it disappears for a moment.

But if we have the consciousness of a self (subject) watching these processes, we do not see them objectively, because we are interpreting them, and superimposing ideas upon what is being observed. What we are seeing is the relationship between our minds and the processes being observed. If we can lose the idea of ourselves doing something, and apply full awareness to what is going on, there will be objective perception of things as they are. There is no, 'person', at work, but there is passive, full attention. Later, as the attention becomes more steady and complete, the object, which is the rising and falling of the breathing, will become very even. If there is full awareness, one can remain, 'there', aware of stillness and peace. In language, we say that this peace becomes the object of our awareness, but in truth there is no *object* of pure awareness. It may be described as awareness being aware of itself, but in fact there is no object of awareness. There is no *duality*, and awareness becomes complete. Alertness, awakening, clarity, is there with the awareness.

If the rising and falling of the breathing processes disappear, you may feel you are lost, because the mind wants to hold on to something and creates the feeling of being lost. The mind then searches for an object, and you come up to a more superficial level. But when you understand what is happening, and continue to go more deeply into disappearance, into awareness itself, then you can remain completely still, and the mind will stay quiet. Then reality will be understood.

Objective seeing refers to the perception of the truth in a Buddhist sense, not separating the subject from the object, but in a more objective sense we can say it is to see a feeling as a feeling, a thought as a thought, a flower as a flower. If, and only if, we do not put ideas to the object we are observing, not interpreting the feeling, or thought or flower, and without saying 'I am feeling this', and so on, this means objective seeing. Then meditation has a power in itself. If pain arises during meditation, you may say, 'It becomes stronger and stronger when I look at

it, - I cannot get rid of it. ' We have to see whether we are looking at pain objectively, or in relation to ourselves as a subject who is feeling pain. So long as there is, 'you', or 'me', in the feeling, pain may not disappear, but may become stronger. The voice of the ego says, 'you must do something about this pain. You cannot meditate on it.' There is a desire to get rid of pain, and this is the whole cause of stronger pain, because when you wish to remove something, it resists. The best thing is to look at it, and see it as it is, because *full understanding* of it will cause it to disappear spontaneously. It is simple, but not so easy to do. I do not say we do not have the ability to do it, because we have, but we have to try.

Objective seeing is essential in meditation. Sometimes you may feel frightened, or lost at some stage. What should we do? We should remain objective and passive, looking at the feeling of being frightened. We do not say, 'I am frightened', but just look at what is there. There is something unconscious, which we were not aware of before, but if we look at it, it is nothing and we can pass on, and go deeper. We have to maintain our aim.

Fear is the main thing in our lives, so of course it will come to disturb us in meditation when we go deeper. Look at fear, passively, without saying 'I am afraid of this'. If there is the feeling of 'I am', look at the *reaction* of the 'I am' to fear. There is nothing wrong, so you will overcome fear and you will see that it is quite easy. But we have to discover our hindrances first, before going beyond them.

Only awareness can bring about objective seeing, not only in meditation but also in life. If you are fully aware, you can see things objectively. I shall tell you about different parts of awareness, so that you can distinguish them. The first is awareness of surroundings, including your relations and friends. This is similar to sensitivity to everything, whether they are in good order or not. If one becomes sensitive, one knows what to do, and how to do it. This is superficial but essential, because we need to be careful and considerate in order not to create unhappiness. You are fully awake to what is going on, and not sleepy and inobservant. Most of the time we are not awake, even though our eyes are open! There is so much confusion in the mind that our perception is dull.

The second part of awareness is being aware of our reactions, and relationships to people, ideas and things. These are extremely important in life. When we come across people of different status, for example, somebody distinguished, how do we behave? Or maybe we meet a gardener. What is our reaction to him? The same applies to ideas. You can build a heaven on earth, but what is your relationship to your thoughts? In this part of awareness, one has to watch one's reactions to everything. It is like carrying a mirror with you, which reflects everything, whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly. In Zen Buddhism this is called the Wisdom of the Mirror. When you understand your reactions, a change must come to be, without making efforts to change yourself. If we try and change our habits through effort, we find it very difficult because we have lived with them for many years. But with the mirror, a change of heart gradually takes place, and this is the fundamental thing.

The third part of awareness is to be aware of one's own conditioning. That is to see the conditions behind our thoughts and feelings. All our thoughts are conditioned by tendencies, traditions, beliefs, knowledge and memorized information. Why do we feel very heavy

sometimes, so that we can hardly move? It is because the mind is so burdened with unnecessary things. When a man reaches enlightenment he can be said to have *unburdened* himself. The burden here refers to all conditioned things. When the mind understands the conditioning process within itself, it will become quiet, and there is a moment of sudden enlightenment, or Satori, according to Zen terminology. Satori is not the actual enlightenment, but the beginning.

If you are not aware of conditioning factors, you will not know how much is created by yourself. This third part of awareness is quite deep. But the deepest is the fourth part, called the awareness of stillness. There is no person who is aware, and no object of awareness, - but there is pure awareness. This is the awareness of complete *non-occurrence*, - no existence and non-existence. You have gone beyond the region of mind, and have come to the real state of your being. This is very deep, and is not just words. It is the living Dhamma. If we work towards this, we will attain it.

Meditation embraces the whole of life, and we are not apart from it. Awareness can be applied to all aspects of living, and then you can lead the real life, with freedom within, coming into contact with the wholeness of being in every single and unique moment. In that very moment, there is no representation; and it cannot be uttered.

March 23rd 1969.

## Chapter Nineteen

### MEDITATION AND ACTION

The Buddhist aim of life is to be free from dogmas and traditions of any kind. It is to approach life anew, and to unfold and renew the consciousness of human beings. I think all religions are spiritual movements, which are directed towards the final goal and fundamental aim of life. We have different traditions in the West and in the East. These different beliefs come into being because of the different Ways we were brought up. We are, more or less, conditioned by the traditions, beliefs and background of life. But to reach the universal religious mind I believe we seek the same goal, which is peace, happiness and the complete unification of being.

In following the path, perhaps we may be restricted by our beliefs and traditions, by dogmas and assertions. The important thing for all of us is to be free. We should investigate the reality of the beliefs and traditions we follow. The reality of words and language should also be investigated. We should not get stuck in words, as most people do, because this leads us nowhere. We have arguments, and impose many ideas on this subject, and by doing this we do not actually follow the path. This wastes time and energy. Energy is very essential to achieving the goal. We need it not only for spiritual development, but also for an active life.

If you read about the Buddha's history, you will see how he found truth and reality by freeing himself from all traditions and beliefs. He went out with an open mind to see for himself the whole meaning of life. He learnt to study and practise the old systems taught in his time under two distinguished teachers. He followed the instructions to the end, but realized that it did not lead to the goal, or the actual enlightenment that he wanted. Then he left his teachers, and went on searching for truth by himself. In the end he attained full enlightenment, and so became an example to show us the way.

We are human beings, and should be free to enquire and seek for enlightenment. Peace and enlightenment must be found within us, not outside us. If we look within and see everything that is there, then enlightenment will come. I like the theme 'Meditation and Action' very much, not only because it is agreeable to the work I have been doing, but because it is very essential for all human beings living in the world.

Let us first talk about meditation. Perhaps people have different concepts or definitions of the word. As I said earlier, we must not get stuck in words, but go beyond the word, which is only a symbol of the truth. We have to look into the real meaning, or the inward content, of the word, and put it into action. If we do this, then we will see what reality is. Our meditation is something like the process of discovering the truth. We can be free, and such a mind can discover the extraordinary thing in life.

To Buddhists the concept of meditation is mental culture, or the full development of the mind. I think to all of us the mind is a very important thing, a thing to be realized. When we realize the mind, it means we understand all aspects, or processes, - the operations and reactions, of the mind. When we find the truth, we can be free from the ordinary petty mind, which is the main obstacle to the realization of the truth. We have to reach the unconditioned mind, the mind that is luminous and illuminating, that is, the enlightened mind.

The Buddha always said, 'Meditate brethren. Do not be sloth full; do not be remorseful later.' This was the only advice given to all his monks and followers in his time. This statement can be found in all the Buddhist scriptures. So we can see that the meaning of meditation is to be free from sloth and remorse, and therefore to be fully awake and totally alert.

What is the meaning of being sloth full? Sloth is a hindrance to spiritual progress. A person who is sloth full is asleep. Such a person does not wake up fully. There is no alertness and no awakening. Perhaps such a person would be conditioned by many things. His mind is heavily burdened with knowledge, beliefs and traditions - things of that nature. A conditioned man is asleep. He is a man who is always in sleep, even when he thinks he is awake. His waking consciousness is already dead because there is no liveliness in such consciousness. Then to be free is to meditate, which is to be completely awake, and to live fully in the present, from moment to moment.

Also the Buddha said, 'Dwell, being aware of what is going on, here and now.' When we are continually being aware of what is going on within us, we are completely free from time anxiety. Time is only a concept; only a moment of thought because when we are actually in the process of doing, of acting without ideas, then there is no time. There is no anxiety and no worry. It is then that you have understanding. You have alertness every moment and this is most important in meditation. In another sense we say that to meditate is to be fully born.

In the Buddhist traditions we have the concept of rebirth. In fact rebirth is only the process of becoming - not the being. So long as we have rebirth it means that we are not fully born. We need to be fully born so as to have complete awareness, or perfect mindfulness. Now awareness is only the technique in Buddhism to help us to meditate. Without awareness, there is no meditation. In true Buddhist meditation there is no image for us to meditate on. By practising awareness we have all the objects. We have to be silently watchful and passively observing things that are going on within us, - the thoughts, memories and reactions.

Most of the time we react; we do not act. We react because we conform to ideas, to knowledge and to the emotions. Then the mind always reacts to what presents itself to it. Now it is possible to understand the reactions of the mind. By understanding the contents of the mind we can come to freedom, or to inner liberation, which is the goal of meditation.

Let us talk about action. The rule of action, to me, is spontaneity. This means *immediate doing* without conforming to ideas. Action is different from activity because activity comes into being because of ideas. We have ideas first and then we organize things accordingly. This is activity. In action we have complete awareness at that particular moment in which we really act. There is no idea, no knowledge, and no belief coming to intervene. You are very free and act very rightly, with inner liberation.

So meditation is not different from action, if we do learn how to act. When we learn to meditate we learn how to act, not how to react. The action does not mean anything but action itself. It is beyond description, and there is no need for any meaning to be there. Then complete awareness is the only way leading to the fulfilment of meditation, since, in this process of awareness, you are completely attentive to anything you do. You have understanding and love. You have selflessness because the idea of self is not at work. This means there is no conformity. You have a complete sense of identity, without being influenced or conditioned by external things or inner influences.



Now we must be free from the past and the future. You may say how can we live if we are free from the past and the future? Living is very different from existing. It is very easy to exist but very difficult to live. This is because to live, one must be very lively.

It is not so easy to free oneself from the past. The past refers to experiences and memories. When you try to sit quietly, then the memories come. The mind wanders and you say, 'this is terrible. I cannot sit still; I cannot meditate'. Now what shall we do at this moment? We should look at the 'I' that says, 'I cannot meditate'. We should watch how the 'I' reacts to what is presenting itself to it at that particular moment.

The 'I' is always an obstacle to action because it reacts all the time. When you look at the 'I' and watch it passively and attentively, then the 'I' will come to quietness. Then you can meditate if you know how too. It is not so difficult. When you come to stillness, or a quiet moment, you can sense the creative energy that is working in the depth of your being. This creative energy is what we call spiritual power. With this power we can radiate loving - kindness, loving thoughts or any other qualities of the heart to our friends and all beings. This is not so difficult.

I think if all of us can meditate from moment to moment, - that is, to live fully in the present with full awareness, the picture of the world will be changed. The picture of the world cannot be changed as long as the individuals do not change themselves. We are the creators of the world. We can create a tense atmosphere, or a loving atmosphere, in our society. It is entirely up to us - not to anyone else.

April 27th 1969

## Chapter Twenty

### BEYOND INTELLECT

Before going into this subject, I should like to clarify the meaning of *being attentive* and of the state of distraction. Some people think that if you are just attentive you may be distracted because the mind is not fully concentrated. You often have many objects claiming your attention. What is the meaning of distraction, And of attentiveness. In the state of distraction, there must be a thinking process going on. If the mind does not think, does not project, does not imagine, then there is no distraction. But the mind always thinks, projects and imagines, and the process itself is the state of distraction. When thinking about something, you may believe that there is concentration, but in fact *there is no true concentration in the thinking mind*. If you are really attentive there is no distraction because your whole being is given to what is going on, and you are not lost in *thinking* about it. When you are giving your whole being to my talk, you are engaged in listening, noticing and experiencing *what* is being talked about.

But the difficulty is that we cannot give our whole being to anything completely. We give part of our attention while part is elsewhere, so that attentiveness is not steady. Can you give your whole being to whatever you are doing in the present? If you can, then there is no problem. But if not, problems always arise.

In the process of the intellect, there is thinking, projecting and imagining. What is the meaning of intellect? Intellect gives the ability to reason. In human beings there are two important elements - imagination and reason - which cause contradictions and problems in human existence, yet without them man could not exist. Have you ever thought why we have so many conflicts within us, and so many ideas? We are very fond of having ideas and expressing them. Why is that?

Man has to learn to live with his problems, as he cannot go beyond them, or dissolve them completely, because of the effect of his imagination, the images he has built up, and the ideals he holds. Man may have an image of God, of a Supreme Being, or of the Buddha. All images come from the imagination of man because there is a lack of certainty, of security, and of harmony within man. He is full of contradictions and inner conflicts, and he creates things to gratify his own emotions. Yet imagination need not always be detrimental. It can be creative and productive if it is balanced with understanding. Creative imagination can maintain a *sense* of identity in man that gives him outward security, because imagination has a very close connection with faith. But there is still no conviction in imagination. That is why you can see, when you progress to another stage in your development, that you have the feeling of fear, because you are not convinced about what you have done, or what lies beyond the progress you have made. So you are afraid or at least, some excitement arises which has a connection with fear, if you observe it carefully. There is a fear of not fully knowing, of not understanding what is happening. Thus, imagination is one element with which man has to contend.

But there is another element, that of reason. By reasoning we try to see things clearly according to our logical thinking. If what we come across is agreeable to the pattern of our thinking, or can be proved logically, we accept it. As man, we are responsible for what we do, and we also

have to prove things to others through reason. When, however, we encounter something that is beyond our reason, we become confused and return to the conceptual process of thinking. This often makes the confusion worse because we try to break through by both reasoning and imagining. Imagination has no capacity to clarify, so more confusion is produced. Hence contradictions and conflicts go on. I regard this as the process of intellect. Intellect seeks clarity on what is talked about, and people raise questions in order to find answers. But this leads to conceptual thinking and intellectual understanding, which can never really satisfy because important questions go beyond the ability of the intellect to investigate and solve. Sometimes questions are formed through speculations of mind, which have no corresponding reality, and again we are thrown into conflict and perplexity. The intellect can produce questions and speculations about truth, but never the perception of truth itself. At the culmination of intellect there is the perception of a glimpse of truth but it cannot go beyond that.

Therefore we cannot rely upon, or be satisfied by, the intellect alone because we need what lies beyond it. You may perhaps have observed how human beings, through intellect, try to achieve freedom. We may succeed in achieving freedom from some things but not freedom to be wholly ourselves, perfectly alone. Are you free to be perfectly alert without the interference of thought? Very few achieve such freedom to be themselves. Instead we are changing every moment according to the influence of a thought, an ideal society, the community or religion. We are not free but moulded and conditioned by memories, thoughts, experiences and acquired knowledge. In order to survive as man, we have to submit ourselves to something or to somebody. There is this submission in the process of existence. We have to submit ourselves to society, to a certain group of people such as the family, or friends. So there is general conformity in order to exist. But if we are cleverer than other people we want to dominate and to have power over the community. This need to dominate arises with the imagination. By submission and domination we cannot be either independent or free. We depend on other people around us. If you are 'on top' you depend on friends and colleagues, and on others to support and accept you. If you are, 'under', others you depend upon those in authority, and on traditional patterns and rules accepted by the group, so again there is no freedom.

How can we solve our problems? Not by submission or domination because the final result of these is either to be defeated or let down. What really is the main problem in this question? I think it is *separateness* within us. Perhaps Buddhists forget the principle of impartial love, of *metta*, in solving the problem of human existence. Through such love we retain a sense of individuality yet at the same time, we are one with other people and events. This is a state of harmony in which one can be oneself, and yet share the whole life of the community.

Unpossessive love is the ability to abandon oneself completely. That is to be free from self-interest, and this leads to the ability to be totally in sympathy with all beings. If we have real love within us, we do not need a particular object to love. The object is not so important as the love itself. If you attach significance to the object, whether a person or a thing that you love, then you are lost. This is attachment, not love. With true, boundless love, one loves other people as much as one's family and friends. Otherwise there is just attachment to wife, husband, child or friend, and not love. If one loves because of the satisfaction and benefits gained through the object, the loss of the object will bring misery. You are not sorrowful for the object, but feel lost without it, lacking security, satisfaction or companionship. Misery is therefore felt because of selfish ideas, not simply through the loss of something or somebody.

How can we develop such love? It is essential for solving our problems. To achieve *metta* is not to conform to the idea, 'I must love all beings, all things'. By repeating this, can love come to be? I doubt it very much because that involves the process of thinking and the repetition of an idea. It touches only the superficial level of existence. The conflicts inside us however, are very deep. Love must be found in the heart, not in the mind. If it is there in the heart, it will emerge through verbal expressions and actions as well as in thoughts. In everyone there is love, or loving-kindness as a state of being, if one can find it. We can then act with love, speak with love and think with love. Love will come out in the form of art, - the art of living, communicating, listening, or in any action. You are creative, yet without wanting any result, when you act with loving kindness. There is no wish for personal advancement, but there is endeavour with the whole of one's being in order to complete the work. Your thinking is full of love so that there is no room for ideas. You can be anything and everything, yet no fixed thing. You do not obey desires and temptations, but are free from any impurity. This is the art of living and in this way, things come to you.

You may ask how to take responsibility for your family, for your life, in the future. If you have true love in your heart, there is care and responsibility because love includes all the virtues of mankind. There is no room for evil. So you should not worry about taking responsibility for yourself, or others, or for the future. What is the future? It is speculation, the projection of mind, which also involves the past. But if you live in the present, free from past and future, there is no projection. You are really *living* and are therefore happy, finding creative energy within you. This is the whole answer to solving the problems of human existence and it cannot be achieved by the intellect. It is only at the end of intellect that there can be found the principle of unity, harmony, security, certainty, or love. If all of us loved impartially, there would be trust without suspicion or tension - a perfect society. We have to find out for ourselves what lies beyond the intellect, and then to share this understanding. Love cannot be 'practised', but it can be found. When it is found, life can be lived correctly and the practice of life will be radically changed. So try to be free from discursive thinking and you will then find selfless love. There is tremendous energy within selfless love. It has everything.

I explained a little to you, before meditating, about taking energy to watchfulness. As you probably know, energy is one of the factors for enlightenment. Without it, enlightenment cannot be achieved. Also in life, we can see that if there is no energy we cannot work - we cannot live.

If we know how to use energy we shall not become tired or depressed. When you use energy in the wrong way, in the wrong direction, you become tired. You can also notice this in meditation. When too much energy goes into discursive thinking, the mind becomes more and more restless and you go with the mind. Thus the energy becomes dissipated and you become tired, thinking that it is useless to sit in meditation; it is a waste of time, and something 'practical' should be done instead. There is an urge to stop and do something else instead of meditating. This is one example of using energy in the wrong direction. When you meditate you should use energy in the direction of meditation, and not in the direction of the intellect. This is because meditation is beyond intellect. Intellect cannot understand what meditation really is. It can understand *ideas* about meditation, but these ideas are not meditation itself. This is very important. We think it is meditation but it is not so. Ideas belong to the intellect

but meditation is something that lies beyond it. We cannot reach meditation through the operation of the intellect. But if you know how to go beyond the intellect through meditation, it becomes simple to watch the intellect carefully, closely and deeply. When your awareness becomes perfect, there is no room for intellect to step in. You are perfectly full of awareness and the intellect cannot operate. Then we come to something else that is unthinkable because thinking belongs to the intellect. This is why meditation is not the same as the idea of meditation.

When we give energy to something, as with the mind, that thing acquires more and more energy to work within itself. So we lose energy for what we need to do. In meditation, the main thing for us is to be aware, to be watchful every moment. This is the way of meditation so we must give more and more energy to watching. Then awareness will have sufficient energy to work within itself. This can lead you deeper and deeper into the heart of meditation. Then everything can be done simply, easily, spontaneously, so that there is no tiredness, no boredom. Boredom comes because you expect something to happen and when it does not you feel frustrated and depressed.

You can see very clearly the difference between the thinking process, and *being* in complete attention, in watchfulness. The thinking process involves expectation, desire for results, pleasure, satisfaction, as well as dissatisfaction, pain, frustration and depression when you do not find fulfilment. In the intellect there are negative as well as positive things and there is no possibility of dissolving the dichotomy. That is why there is confusion and doubt. The intellect, tries hard to solve the problem, but within itself it has not the ability to do so. Instead it brings complications and complexities. If you are really meditating there is no confusion, no pleasure or pain, but joy and bliss, because in actual meditation you have complete liberation within. Dichotomy cannot arise because there is no room for it.

When we observe properly we can see all the aspects of intellect operating within us. Why is there a concept of duality? The reason is because this is the way the intellect tries to solve the biggest problem of human beings. Firstly we had harmony with Nature. This was cut off as we grew up, being moulded and conditioned by society, knowledge, beliefs, and all the experiences accumulated in life. When we were in harmony we were not aware of that harmony because awareness was not built up. We lived instinctively. When you are aware of yourself, and see that there is no harmony, you want to reach it again. But it is not possible to do this in the former way. We have to do something else in order to come to harmony, or to integration. This cannot be done by returning to the original state. We cannot succeed through the intellect so there must be something else for us to walk on in order to reach integration and equilibrium. Without it one cannot reach perfect maturity within oneself.

Intellect is not helpful in meditation. This is because we have to be free from the thinking process, from the conditioning process. Therefore the intellect is a hindrance to meditation. You might think you would like to meditate for a week at the Vipassana Centre, for instance. For the first few days you may think your energy is all being lost and that you cannot go any further. So there is much suffering. Meditation brings such misery that you want to give it up. But is meditation itself miserable? Or is it that you think it is a miserable thing, a terrible thing? How can you know that? You have to observe your reaction to meditation. Then you will see something wrong somewhere in your mind. Intellect always interferes with the matter. As I

said, in the intellect there are two main factors - reasoning and imagination. But in meditation we can use neither of these. If we count the terms involved in meditation, we have watchfulness, awareness and attention. These three are essential in meditation. In fact they are inseparable. Where there is attention there is awareness and there is watchfulness. Because one is watching, being aware and being attentive, the mind gradually becomes clear, awake, receptive and sensitive to everything, including its own activities. Such a mind cannot be discovered through the field of the intellect but through meditation only. If you watch everything in life you will become a very sensitive person. At the first stage of sensitivity, you may suffer because you see misery within yourself, and in the world. Everything may seem terrible, but this is really superficial because it is connected with the emotional centre. If you *watch* these feelings about suffering, the mind will become clearer and more alert and you will go beyond the obsessions of the feeling.

In this way we can say that ceasing to react is the beginning of action. How can you cease to react? In only one way - by watchfulness, awareness, complete attention. Then instead of reacting you are watching reaction. Suppose you are in group meditation and some person comes in late. You may be disturbed because your mind does not want to lose its quietness. As a result you react to this situation by feeling angry or disappointed. But if you watch that reaction you do not lose the aim of meditation. If instead you are *actually* disturbed then you are not meditating. Meditation can be practised with any situation in life. If we know this we understand how to meditate. But to discover this capacity to meditate takes some time. This is because we are so conditioned, so heavily burdened with many things. Unless our burden becomes less we cannot meditate properly.

In meditation, as I have always said, we must not expect, or hope for, any result, because achievement is the goal of desire, the way of the intellect. When you work with desire for achievement, you will have more and more difficulties and if you succeed you may be attached to the result. This is because such a result is in the field of mental creation. In the field of mental creation, there is attachment. Even if you are equanimous, you are attached to the state of equanimity. But in actual meditation there is no attachment whatsoever because you come to beauty, to freedom, to goodness within.

Talking about beauty, we may have two forms - superficial and deep beauty. Both are useful to life. Superficial beauty is useful to life in general, because beauty is an art in living, an art in life. We require tidiness, cleanliness of body, clothes, and surroundings. We need orderliness, good manners. Even the beauty of punctuality is very essential in our lives. So if you have a sense of beauty in all your activities you can have a sense of joy, of bliss and peace, because beauty cannot be entirely separate from peace. But are we really sensitive to all these forms of beauty in life? Sensitive to our way of living, talking and acting? If you are, you can see the beauty of it all. You can feel peaceful and joyful.

But even in this beauty, there is still attachment, and desire to repeat the experience and of keeping it. Although it need not be bad to experience this kind of beauty, the profound beauty is that of purity within. When you come into contact with this, there is great energy and a sense of bliss and meaning in life. This beauty is not that of the senses, but of the truth. In that state there is no dichotomy. You are not separate from beauty, and beauty is not separate from you. You are integral. And beauty cannot be separated from love and understanding. Take the

example of a flower. When you really are completely in watchfulness of a flower, you can see the quiet smile of the flower. Then for a short moment, the subject, 'you', is completely lost, and the flower is no different from you. There is perception of beauty, of the 'quiet smile'. Intellect would say to this that it is not possible because there must be separateness between you and a flower. You are a human being and a flower is a flower. In this way the intellect holds back the understanding, rejecting and reacting to this. This is why we need the experience of getting *into* it. This is the only way. If we cannot do this, we are still working with ideas, not action. Ideas are reactions, not actions.

How does an idea come to be? If you watch the mind and see how it creates an idea, you will see that there is contact in the world of ideation, with memory, concepts, imagination and projection. So when the mind projects something in relation to previous knowledge within itself, the ideas arise. 'An idea has come to be'. But this idea is not action. All the time, the intellect tries hard to make ideas into actions. But it cannot succeed because there is conflict in the gap between idea and action, or between the ideas themselves. Conflict lies very deeply in the mind and beauty, love and understanding cannot be achieved. But the moment you really understand reality in your mind, you can no longer separate goodness from beauty, or beauty from love. The moment you deeply feel goodness within yourself, you can perceive beauty and love and understanding. In that state there is no attachment, no desire. Desire exists in the thinking process, memories, and responses. When you have gone beyond all these things, there is no desire. There is complete freedom there, and the subject - object relationship is not there either.

All these things are not outside ourselves. They are not within reach of the intellect. We should keep in mind that intellect is not at all useful except at a certain level of living. We cannot reject it entirely, and have to use it for some purposes, such as the use of factual knowledge in earning our living, and so on. But we must not rely on it, or think it is the end. If we think this, we cannot come to full perfection in life. However if we use intellect in clarifying what we are going to do, this attitude will lead to real action, which will bring the completion in life. The practice of meditation is the way that leads to this. The way of meditation is the means, while actual meditation is the end itself. We are learning to meditate, until we come to meditation, - to actual meditation. While we are learning we will find the same situation as in life. There is failure and achievement, if you like to think in these terms. In fact there is only doing your best. You do it with watchfulness, clarity of consciousness, understanding and full awareness. Thus doing your best, will lead you to the goal, as long as you remain totally aware of whatever you are doing, -approaching everything with a sincere mind, and not just taking it as something to play with because you have nothing else to occupy you. This attitude cannot bring the understanding of meditation. But the meditation, which lies beyond the intellect, will come into being only when there is no meditator, and no object being meditated on.

May 18th & 25th 1969

## Chapter Twenty one

### IN SEARCH OF ESSENCE

You will find it easy to meditate if you just keep awake and watch; it will also be quite a pleasant and emotionally balanced experience. Some people tell me they find it difficult to meditate because there are so many interruptions and distractions. Why is this so? You may perhaps dwell on the notion of experiencing something, or of avoiding something. This brings distraction, because the mind is concerned with results and with aims. If so, you are working with ideas, not action. Whenever you do not silently watch, there will be difficulties.

We should not complicate meditation. Meditation is basically simple, although you will probably say it is not so simple! The mind conceives something complex because it distorts the event, and does not want to see the truth. That is the whole trouble. When you are sitting in meditation and feel physically uncomfortable, you feel the urge to change and to move, instead of *watching the discomfort*. You turn away from the present; away from what is there, presenting itself to you. So you habitually never know the present, the reality of what is actually going on. If you watch the feeling of discomfort, you can observe how the mind is seeking comfort. If it does not seek it, there is no conformity to the desire for comfort: Or to put it another way, when the mind does not seek for so - called happiness, it does not turn away from the present. If you always conform to the desire for comfort, you will never understand the reality of discomfort or of suffering. When man is not actually aware of suffering, there can be no transformation towards enlightenment.

We live according to various related conditions, and continually exist under the 'law of conditionality'. If you train yourself to watch whatever comes to your attention, then the mind will cease to obstruct reality. We always tend to run away from life, and from what we are, seeking for something to replace what we do not like, and this running away, or *repression*, is the cause of more and more suffering in life. In fact, happiness is found when suffering comes to an end; but how does suffering come to an end? The simple and effective way is to watch it, in order to notice all its aspects. Ask yourself why it is that you suffer at all. What is the reason for experiencing discomfort, frustration, depression and other negative things in life? There must be something wrong, somewhere in the mind. When suffering arises, ask '*who* is suffering?' So long as there is a sufferer, there will be suffering; but when the sufferer unites with suffering, the reality of suffering is seen and everything disappears *except watchfulness itself*, which is complete awareness of reality. Then there is no sufferer, but 'you' can still see suffering going on very deeply. Then, finally, suffering disappears, and peace, joy, bliss and tranquillity arise.

Most of us overlook such simplicity and wish to find systematic techniques to escape from suffering, even in its mild form of dissatisfaction. We search and search for away to do this, but never come to the end. Life on this Earth is not long enough to do so if we take this path. We may think we can find the real essence of our life through searching, endlessly searching, but by far the best way is to *look at* what is already happening, moment by moment, until natural awareness develops, free from thought digressions.



All of us are searching for something. What is the real aim of this search? I suggest to you that it is *essence*. How can we find essence, and what is it? I think we should understand what we are aiming at, what we are looking for. If what we want to achieve is not clear, there will be no end to searching. What is the essence of life? Where is it? It is very difficult to define essence because when we give a definition to something that is truly undefinable, it means that we try to limit the unlimited and therefore we again obscure reality. Yet even if we do not give it a definition, we should understand it. Essence must be something uncreated, unconditioned, completely free, even free from liberation, because some forms of freedom are conditioned by ideas and laws, such as time. This is the case in temporary liberation, or when freedom only comes in a certain place or situation. Therefore it is not the essence we seek because that essence is free from all conditions, influences or patterns. It is complete in itself alone, and such a 'thing' cannot have any connections to bind it.

Is such essence possible for us to find? It sounds so far away, so lofty. The conditioned mind thinks it is difficult to achieve and says, 'Nonsense, there is no such thing'. But in order to know the essence of reality the mind must be free to let it be perceived, and to abide in stillness.

We may say that the essence of life is the perfection of morality, living according to moral precepts laid down by our society so that we completely conform to everything accepted in our society. But such morality is still in the field of self-engrossing activities, because when we feel morally good, we strengthen the ego, the feeling of being superior, purer and cleaner than other people whom we look down upon as being 'immoral'. We may dislike, if not actually hate them. Thus there is a division between oneself as 'morally good' and others, who are regarded as 'morally bad'. So the perfection of morality still lies within the conditions of life, and it is not essence.

Then there is also perfection of concentration, in one who seeks 'high' spiritual attainment. Once again, there is the feeling of distinction, of being spiritually advanced, which is sometimes present unconsciously. This is under the command of, 'self', which is thought to influence the concentration of mind. However, such concentration needs special conditions, such as a certain environment or time, and it is not flexible. You are not therefore completely free in your concentration because there is the attempt to isolate the self from something else, to exclude things. Highly concentrated people often experience great misery in life, because the mind is rigid and proud in its idea of its own perfection. Such a person thinks, 'I am superior', yet is aware of frustration and depression, and so becomes confused and disappointed. This cannot be essence.

Concerning perfection of insight knowledge, you may think that this must be essence because it would entail your being completely yourself. But it requires practice and time to develop, or at least some means of communicating with it and applying it. So within the perfect state of insight knowledge, there is still the need to express it in the situations you encounter. So however perfect it is, it is conditioned by events and by time. Since it can also give rise to feelings of superiority, it is not essence.

So what is real essence? It must be the timeless, non-spatial freedom, or liberation, called in Pali, *Asamayavi - mokkha*. Without it, we shall hold views and opinions and obstruct ourselves, unable to go further, taking the real as the unreal, the unreal as the real and confuse the

essential with the inessential. By coming to conclusions on a subject, we become stagnant and do not move; we try to hold on to what we have because we have shut our minds already. We do not want to know anything else and, if anything arises which conflicts with our position, we reject it immediately as being 'not right', thus building reasons to support our established viewpoint. Such reasons are in the field of ignorance, confusion and self delusion. The best way to find reality is to observe attentively, without clinging to any ideas. We can then look at life consciously and wisely, without mental conditioning. Such a mind is capable of understanding reality, that is, of knowing essence.

Have you ever thought why some people's ideas have so much influence on others? If you think in only one direction, you become very concentrated and strong, and cannot easily be moved. Why is that? Buddhism would say it is because of attachment to one idea or system of thought. Such attachment is misleading in life: you are not really awake, alert and aware, but are carrying things with you mentally, which prevent your seeing things freshly. Reality is always new, and has no particular form. It certainly cannot be seen when we are clinging to something else. The Buddha, after telling his monks about the sixty-two theories of Indian philosophy, said, 'Although the Tathagata has understood all these systems clearly, he does not cling to any of them'. Through freedom from all such attachments, he discovered the Truth. This was a remarkable thing about the Buddha: he was always free from all he knew! But we are not. You can try to prove things to others, but it is far better to point out the way in which others can discover things for themselves. You must be free from your own views and ideas; otherwise others will not understand you and will say, 'this is only your own opinion. You have been brought up to believe in these things, but we do not agree.' There is then a gap between you and others, which means that communication is not established. The other obstacle to true communication is language, because we try to use words to confine Truth, instead of merely as symbols for it. We must not try to remain content with words or to live on them, to feed on them, as it were. Instead, we must penetrate into their reality, their inward content; otherwise we stop at an image. We cannot see the Buddha if we remain with his image; we shall not see, 'God', if we cling to his image, believing it to be, 'God'. In order to know, 'God', we must come into communion with, 'Him'; in order to know Reality, we have to communicate with it directly. So long as we carry around *ideas* about it, we cannot go into it itself.

Consequently, we need to re-educate ourselves continually, learning from every event in life as it arises. Life is a perpetual process of learning. What do we mean by education? It is not a question of gaining degrees, but a means of bringing out that which is already within us. Usually we acquire knowledge, and ways of thinking, only to become filled with a chaotic and complicated mixture. Real education needs a great deal of patience, in order to bring out what is there. Then we can apply it consciously in life. Otherwise, what is taken in becomes rotten, and we never use the potential within us, - the capacity for action and happiness in life. Education can take place every moment in life, provided that we learn from suffering, pleasure and all that comes to us. Life consists of all things, so that if we remain alert and aware, we shall not miss the chance to learn at every moment. In this way, we learn to *unlearn* our conditioned preconceptions until we become the Unlearned (Unattached) or Perfected One, who lives in timeless, non-spatial freedom. Such liberation is within, yet also without, because in Essence, there is no difference. There is only One-ness, with each in all and all in each.

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