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*Transforming Emotions (unedited transcript)*  
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### *Introduction and Refuge*

Okay, here we are again, to listen to Buddha's teachings. What for? Why? I can't believe it's because you like the sound of my voice because it's not that pleasant sometimes. So, there has to be a bigger reason, and that means it has to be because there's something *useful* here. So, you can think of it like cooking class; there has to be some tools you take away. If I just sat here all day praising cakes you'd be kind of bored, you know; you'd want me to give you something practical.

So, what you're going to hear, actually – every bit of it – is totally practical. It's a question of whether you want to put it into practice. But it *is* just practical. If it's not practical, it's a waste of time. So that's why, really, you should take notes – because unless you've got perfect memory, you won't remember all the things, you know? But we just think – we often don't realize that about what we're hearing when it's spiritual teachings. It's meant to be tools, you know, to take away with you. They say the ideal practitioner is a person who listens to the teachings, goes home and then meditates upon it until you get an experience of it. This would be the best. I'll test you on it the next time I see you. That would be the ideal.

Okay; so we're going to listen to this; take some tools away to use in our lives on our mind, because these are mental tools. Mental tools – tools to help you become less neurotic, less miserable, less depressed; more kind, more wise, et cetera, et cetera. That's the point. This is the point, okay?

So, we sing a little prayer reminding ourselves of our refuge in the Buddha – if we are Buddhist, if we think of ourselves as Buddhist; and the second part of it is reminding ourselves of our reason for doing this activity, which is the broader reason of wishing to use these tools so we can be of benefit to others.

*Sang gye chho da,m sang gye chog nam la  
Jang cho bar du dag nye kyab su chhi  
Dag gyi cho nem gyi pe so nam kyi  
Dro lag pen chhir sang gye dro par shog (3x)*

*(I go for refuge until I am enlightened  
To the Buddha, the dharma and the Sangha.  
By the merit I create by listening to the teachings,  
May I become a Buddha to benefit all sentient beings.)*

So, today it talks about transforming outrage and anger and the verse we're up to is more about – yeah – being the object of other people's anger.

'Whenever I see people who are wicked and overwhelmed by violent, negative actions  
I'll hold them as dear; as if I've found a precious treasure.'

So, the same old thing here, you know; in order to do this – in order to – such that when you see a person who is kind of out of their brain, you know, and is a real troublemaker – from a distance we don't mind troublemakers, as long as they're not making trouble to us. So, it's always the *close* troublemakers we don't like, isn't it, you know? Like the next door neighbor or the son or even your hubby, you know? The troublemakers in another country we don't care so much, you know; they don't affect us. But as usual here, it's not possible to deal with someone else's being a problem, you know, a difficulty; someone else being raging and angry – you can't deal with them until you've dealt with your own. This is so, so clear.

Are you okay down there? You've really got enough space? You alright? Okay; there's plenty of cushions here, darling; and there's space over here, if you want, down the side.

***Karma Plays a Huge Role in How We Deal with What Comes into Our Life;  
Your Mind is Yours 4:05***

So, I think it would be helpful – you know, we'll continue on from where we were before, the last, the previous day; the previous time we discussed the verses was about noticing the delusions in the mind when they arise. So, I think what I *did* want to talk about tonight is these delusions, but karma as well. To talk about how karma works, because this place, in Buddha's view of the world, of course – the imprints we come into this life with, the karmic imprints we come into the life *with*, which for the Buddha, is the total point – play a *huge* role in how we deal with our lives. I mean, we're so used to the idea, we're so used to the idea that we're made by our parents, right? This is what we think, even if we're Christians, we still think our mummy and daddy made us, right? We know that God gave us a soul; and if we're Buddhists, even if we might have heard about karma, we still are convinced that our parents made us. It's very deep in our being to take this as a deep truth, you know?

Buddha's strictly speaking, you know, strictly, accurate way of saying it, from the point of view of the Buddha, is 'your parents give you a body'. They do *not* give you a mind. They don't give you *tendencies*. They don't give you laziness and love and anger and being good at music and being good at, you know, lying or killing. They don't give you those; they're not in your genes. They're not in your DNA. It's a very straightforward point – which doesn't mean that our parents don't affect us; it's obvious they do.

But it's a really major point; if you're attempting to live as a Buddhist you've got to take this point on board. And we're very intellectually lazy, you know – we say, 'Oh, yeah, I'm a Buddhist. I like Buddhism.' But we kind of have all these old assumptions in our mind that we don't even bother questioning. We just act from them as if they were true. We are quite intellectually lazy, actually. We

might like Buddhism – you know, we come along, we hear Buddhism, we go, ‘Oh yeah, that sounds interesting.’ And part of the reason is because we’ve got some familiarity with it, the Buddha would suggest -- from past lives, which is how come we’ve even walked into this place. If we had no karmic imprints of Buddhism, you’d even hear the word ‘Buddha’, you’d go, ‘What?’ and then you’d go to the next topic, like football. It wouldn’t even occur to you to come here; it’d be the stupidest idea.

Like people next door here, for example; who probably you’ve never had a visit from, right? Would that be true? Unless they don’t like you, they may get mad at you or something? They don’t come to the classes, do they? There you go.

Center Director: They’re very devout Catholics...

Ven.: There you go; their lineage is more a Christian lineage – they’re very polite and they’re very nice and don’t mind the prayer flags and all these things... but they don’t have a connection with Buddhism. This – you know, if you were going to be sort of vaguely Buddhist, or even take Buddhism on board as your hypothesis, you’ve got to factor this in – it’s not just accidental; it’s not like *random* – you popped into a Buddhist center, or like good luck or bad luck or something, you know; not like that. We’ve got to really take this view on board because what we come into this world with is everything that we are in this life, you know – the shape we have, whether we have good health, whether we have bad health, whether we’re considered to be beautiful or ugly, whether people like us or don’t like us, whether we’re rich or poor; this is not just some random event that you’re just kind of plunked into Missoula by accident or you’re plunked into some rich family somewhere by accident, or indeed a poor one. This is just not the way Buddha sees it; so if you want to be serious about Buddhism -- you might not want to believe it yet, you don’t have to believe it; Buddha’s not asking us to believe anything. He’s asking us to consider the possibility. This is the way our mind needs to think about it.

So, part of our problem is we maybe do have what the Buddha would say is a ‘connection’ with Buddhism from having practiced it in the past; we hear Buddhism, we go, ‘Yeah, that sounds so familiar. Yeah, that sounds completely right.’ We – it’s like, you meet some people and you just know you’ve got this old relationship with them, and they feel like they’re old friends. We know this; we have these experiences.

***Our Feelings of Familiarity – Our Tendencies – Are from Past Habits***  
**8:10**

So, if we feel this way about Buddhism when we hear it, don’t think you’re so clever. I remember about reading about one white supremacist. When he was nineteen, when he first read Hitler, he was blissed out; just like you were when you first heard Buddhism. ‘Wow, it felt like coming home,’ he said. ‘Everything that I felt, he expressed it. This was the truth; I knew it was true.’

All that says is that he had those imprints in his mind already; he was already a fascist. From past habit with those views, he reads Hitler, and it just encourages

those views to ripen in his mind. So, that's all. He's familiar. How come Mozart was good at music? Because he had music imprints in his mind. How come *anything* is because of this reason.

So, the first hearing of Buddhism is because you've done it before. Okay – join the club – nothing special. Don't think you're special; everybody's a reincarnation of *somebody*, for the Buddha. It's not like it's special, you know – 'Oh wow, I must have heard this before...I sort of understand it.' Well, that's how come you understand anger and killing and lying and fishing! Nothing special, okay? It's just the way Buddha describes how come we are who we are, as opposed to thinking your mother and father made you this way.

Don't underestimate this; this is massive. Because then, you see, the stronger the imprints are, let's say, to fish – for example let's say you have a strong tendency - - from having killed in the past – to like to fish. The stronger that imprint is, the less likely it is that you'll ever think of doing anything opposite. And secondly, you'll always keep meeting conditions that enable you to keep fishing, you know? This is how it'll be, because that's what karma means. In other words, we come into this life with our own tendencies and then the conditions we get born into and the conditions we meet; even *they* are the result of our past actions.

We are the ones who set it up; don't think it's a random event. This is where Buddha's view is so insanely different, you know; it's not to be underestimated. And I'm not telling you it's right; I'm telling you what Buddha says. It's up to you to discover if it's right. Your call is to run with it – like I'm trying to do; run with it and take it as my view of life, take it as my hypothesis and work with it. This is what we're trying to do as Buddhists; this is the best way to put it. Not just blindly swallowing it or blindly rejecting it. We've got to think it through, you know. We've got to think it through. This is the point.

So, we come into this life with these various tendencies, whatever they might be. Now, indeed, aren't we fortunate that we came into this life – or that we have ripened tendencies that are called 'the wish to be a better person' or 'the wish not to lie, kill and steal', 'the wish to be a spiritual person' – this is pretty incredible; you should be blissed out about this. You should be really, really delighted. Don't just take it for granted; don't just think it's good luck or bad luck or, you know, 'well, I got born this way'. No, you worked incredibly hard, the Buddha would say, to be who you are right now.

### *We See It All as Self-Existent*

**11:09**

The point is about this; we can hear it intellectually if we study the Buddha's teachings, but we don't feel it. We don't feel it; and that's because – you know, we might *feel* a tendency to like Buddhism, but we don't appreciate it somehow because we see it as self-existent. We see everything as self-existent: 'Well, it's just the way it is, you know?' We don't see it as a dependent arising; meaning we don't see it as a result of all that hard work I did in the past; it's like we've lost our memories.

So, if we remember that it *is* the result of hard work – that morality and goodness and kindness – then we will appreciate it and feel enriched by it and – the crucial point – not just to sit back on our laurels, but to want to grow it more, just to grow it more. This is the main point, you know.

What's going on over here, some drama? Oh, I see. Okay.

So, okay; so, the problem – so like I said, first of all we are fortunate that we come into this life with good tendencies – how amazing! We should be so delighted and not just take them for granted. This is the thing. So, taking something for granted, you know, is what 'seeing something as self-existent' means. You just think, 'Oh, well, this is who I am. This is the way I was born.' And therefore we don't look at it freshly.

So what I'm getting at here is this: you know, we have lots of tendencies; we have lots of positive ones – how fortunate! But also, unfortunately – because we haven't purified our minds yet – we've also got lots of negative tendencies, you know; and so what happens is, we tend to take who we are as a given; and this is what Buddha means by 'grasping at the inherent self'. This is what he means. The experiential application of this philosophical concept is that we just plod along in life thinking that, 'Well, whatever comes up in my mind, this is who I am.' We might intellectually hear the Buddha's teaching that I am this because I've practiced it, but we tend to not *feel* that as the truth. We just *feel*, 'Oh, I'm just this kind of person. I like this. I don't want to kill. I do want to do this. I am angry.' Whatever it is, we take it as a given; we see it as kind of concrete. That's what Buddha means by 'grasping at things as self-existent', whatever it might be; whether it's the good you or the bad you. So therefore we just sit back and we just plod along and don't *grow* anything; it just becomes stultified, you know. We don't develop the goodness and we don't get rid of the badness; and eventually the goodness runs out, because badness – unfortunately – is a lot easier to follow, because the ego grasping – the name of the state of mind that grasps at the self as inherent, that grasps at *everything* as inherent; which for us seems so abstract – this really is what's running the show, completely right now.

### ***The Moment-to-Moment Job of Buddhism: 'Being Your Own Therapist'***

**14:26**

So, the thing to do then, is to look freshly at what we are; to look freshly, to look in a very objective way at our tendencies -- to know our minds well, in other words. This sounds really simple words. Anybody – a five year old could repeat these words. But I'm telling you, *until* we start doing this, you can sort of say we're not really being a Buddhist. This is what Lama Yeshe says when he means 'being your own therapist'. It sounds kind of cute, like a really good marketing ploy; and *it is* a really good marketing ploy, but it happens to be correct. And what that means is – and this is all I ever talk about when I come here; I feel like a fraud sometimes. I feel like I'm cheating you, telling you the same old thing every time. So you can tell me you're bored – that, you know, we have to sort of hear it in a more enlivened way; hear it in a kind of more bright way.

We've got to hear it freshly; because until you know your mind precisely – and I'm not kidding when I say the word 'precisely' – you see, this is a surprise to us, too: we know, if this were cooking class, you'd all have your pens and papers out; or your tape recorders. You'd all be taking down the recipes – because you know you don't have a very good memory, and you know you'd forget whether it was exactly one teaspoon or a half of a teaspoon. You know, if you're not precise, *you won't get the cake*. It's very simple. If this were mathematics class, you'd need to be precise. If this were music class, you'd need to be precise. Are we communicating here? But somehow, because we think it's 'spiritual', kind of anything goes, and we don't give the same value to words. You hear these Buddhist words, but we don't give them the same value, we don't see the necessity to be precise about it. In other words, if we don't know -- if you can't answer my questions now: What is the definition of 'attachment'? What is the definition of 'love'? What are the distinguishing characteristics between positive and negative states? If you can't answer precisely -- I'm sorry to be rude to you, it means you don't know. And if you don't know, then how can you distinguish one from the other? And how will you know what the antidotes are? Can you kind of hear the point I'm getting at?

So, if you want to apply the Buddha's tools here – and I'm not trying to be a bully here, I promise you. If you do want to apply the Buddha's tools, you need to know your mind; and you need to know *precisely* the components of your mind. And Buddha's psychology hasn't changed in two and a half thousand years, believe me. I would suggest that that would indicate it must work; and that's up to you to find out, you know?

So, in other words, in order to understand our mind, we have to understand what it is that causes suffering and what it is that causes happiness; because we all know intuitively we want happiness and don't want suffering – and this is the point of all the Buddha's teaching. The purpose is very simple, you know – to help us discover the potential we all have to be free of suffering and to be full of happiness. It's actually really simple; it's not complicated. The words are not complicated.

### ***Understanding Karma is Essential to Doing This Job***

**17:42**

So, in order to do this, we have to understand what karma is, because that's what determines what we came into this life with; and then in order to understand what we came into this life with, we have to understand the Buddha's teachings about the mind, because we have to *look into* what we came with. That's my job.

So, you come into the life *with* something as a result of certain actions; and then what you are – you have to learn to know what you are so you can then work with this thing called 'you' in a really skillful way and get rid of the causes of suffering and grow the causes of happiness. *This* is the job of being a Buddhist. *This* is the job of being a Buddhist. Okay?

So let's just remind ourselves of the nuts and bolts of karma, and the nuts and bolts of this mind; and then the thing I *want* to talk about tonight – if I get there,

hopefully I will – is how to *purify* karma, because that's one of the practices in this job of cleaning up who you are, you know – so that you remove the causes of suffering and grow the causes of happiness. Okay.

### *The Four Noble Truths*

**18:50**

So, if we look at the Four Noble Truths – one of the many ways of packaging Buddha's teachings, Buddha's philosophy, Buddha's views – the reference point for the Four Noble Truths is the idea of suffering. The third one is that Buddha's view, his assertion we can all be free of it – to be more precise, that there is a state of freedom from suffering – that's the meaning of the word 'nirvana', which is not a place like heaven, believe me. Speaking loosely, you could say that is a word that refers to the *mind* of a person who's done the job of removing the causes of suffering. It's a psychological state, very simply; because Buddha is dealing with the mind. That's his *thing*; that's his expertise. Buddha is a psychologist; that's a very simple way to put it. He just happens to have, as we've been discussing, a really radically and dramatically different view of what the mind is and what its potential is, okay?

So, if it is true that there is a state of freedom from suffering – and one wouldn't mind having a go at that, thank you very much – I'm very happy a person is confident enough to say that there is such a possibility; thank you Buddha, prepared to give you a go – so then, I need to know what suffering is, don't I? And, second – crucial – I need to know what causes it. The first one is 'what it is', the second is 'what are the causes', and the fourth one is 'how to do it'. So it's incredibly simple. The third one is, Buddha says, 'You know what, folks? You can, you know – your water can be free of pollution.' Wow! What a good idea; because until now, we assumed pollution was part of our water, you know; we just assumed water was polluted. Suddenly someone tells us there is the possibility to have pollution-free water! What a wonderful idea.

So, if that's true, you'd better know what pollution is, hadn't you? You better get your hands dirty. You better investigate the nature of the pollution, which is the first step; which is 'there is suffering', Buddha says. Here he rubs our noses into it and tells us precisely what it is; which, indeed, you need to know if you want to be free of it. If you can't define what – and again, the same thing; if I asked you 'please tell me what Buddha says suffering is', we'd all have different views.

So, if you don't even know how to call what the pollution is, and you certainly don't even know what clearly the causes are, how in the name of goodness can you free yourself of it? And it would be – if, again, this were pollution class, you'd have to know exactly what the pollution is, exactly its characteristics, you'd have to know exactly what caused it, and then you'd know the job to do to free the water of pollution. It's very simple; and again, we need to be precise. This is what we miss as Buddhists; we just think it's, sort of, *feelings* or something. I don't know quite what we think it is; but I think we don't think it needs to be *precise*. Are you with me, people? It's very simple actually. You've just got to go to school, learn a couple years of it, and then you've got to meditate for fifty years and then you'll get it. It takes time to internalize it, that's all; but

you've got to start with the words. This is the point. It's very simple. It's really very simple.

Well, actually, Lama Tsongkhapa says there are two main kinds of practitioners: there are those people who need to have a meditation experience of something and then they can articulate it, and then there are those who you start with the words and then you use the words like a recipe and then you get the experience from this. We all have both aspects and we need to cultivate both parts of us. Are you with me, people? Okay. So, here, we're doing the 'word' approach: hear the words first, memorize them, learn them and then slowly use them as the basis for thinking until eventually the penny drops. This is the idea.

### *The Two Main Causes of Suffering*

**22:42**

So, the causes of suffering, for the Buddha, are very simple. There's two; two main ones, and they're a bit depressing initially, because we don't like to think this, they're both inside you. Because *you* are the main cause of your suffering; guess what. Very simple. We don't like to hear these words; we like to pussyfoot around them, you know; kind of, 'It's not fair,' and, 'What do you mean?' and 'My mother did it and my father did it and God did it and I didn't ask to get born...' blah blah blah; and we shout and yell and stamp and we can't bear to hear these simple ideas; which is why we have to, again, take it on board as a hypothesis. Don't panic about it, okay? It won't give you a mental breakdown; it's only thoughts, alright? It's only thoughts, you know? It really is no drama; we just can't bear these thoughts. As soon as we sound attacked, we get upset, you know.

So, okay; there are two main causes of suffering, for the Buddha. There's the word called 'karma', which means 'action' – which implies 'reaction' – which is really another way of talking about cause and effect. A simple law – and the Buddha says it's a law that's natural, like gravity, like botany; it's just the way it is. He didn't make it up; Buddha did not invent it, he didn't create it. He didn't get a vision of it out of the sky. He didn't have a dream about it yesterday – not like that. He observed it. He has observed it to be so. So then, we have to find out if it is true – by doing what he says to see if we can observe it as well.

### *Karma: The Programming of Your Mind*

**24:13**

So, anyway, we take it on board right now as our hypothesis. So, the thing that sets you up to be who you are – as I said before – is your past actions; and really, the simplest way to talk about the word 'karma'; it's really just the movement of your mind – it's what your mind does. It's what your mind does. Karma is done by minds. In fact, the word 'intention' is synonymous with the word 'karma'. Intention -- every thought is an intention; and that's the meaning of karma. It's what your mind does. Another simple way to talk about the idea of karma is it's the programming of your mind. You all know perfectly well, if you go and study maths, you memorize maths. You become good at it. That's the meaning – the simplest meaning – of karma. You habituated your mind with a bunch of thoughts, haven't you? They're called mathematical thoughts. Are they not? It's

very simple, isn't it, really? It's just concepts, isn't it? They're concepts; and you've learned them, and you've put the laws together and you've made sense of those things and now you've got a head full of complicated mathematical thoughts. *That's the meaning of karma.* One way karma works is the habituation; it's what your mind does.

So, we understand this when it comes to music and maths and cooking but when it comes to morality stuff, we have a different set of rules. We think that's everybody else's fault somehow. 'Yes, I understand; I learned maths and it's my maths.' But why are you angry, Robina? 'Well, I'm not sure about that; that's somebody else's fault. Maths -- I worked really hard at it; anger -- that's because Dinae said this and Fred said that and Bob said this.'

But all Buddha's saying is that it's the same whether your head's full of maths, your head's full of anger, your head's full of love; it's because you've practiced it, baby. It's so simple it's *embarrassing*. Please hear me.

So we look into our mind and we see we've come with lots of tendencies, like I said. I can deduce, when I was a little girl, I can see -- looking at my behavior -- that I must have had a strong habit of practicing anger. I also had a strong -- my family tells me -- I was always very generous, apparently, as a little girl. I don't remember that part. So, I must have had a tendency towards generosity -- guess what -- from having practiced it before. So, this is why I'm saying we have to know ourselves well; we've come into this life not made by someone else, but *made by ourself*. And we can change this person into the most marvelous being.

So in order to know how you're going to *change*; you've got to know what you *are*, which means you've got to look at your mind. Very simple. That's why you've got to take this view that you've come programmed with the stuff you've practiced; then you've got to look into what it is in your mind; and you have to give names to these bits of your mind. And here, we're using Buddha's model of the mind, not Freud, not, you know, the latest findings of the medical system with ADID or this that or up down or bipolar or manic depression or whatever you want to call it, you know -- which we think are the real things and Buddhism's just this weird religious idea, you know -- even though we're Buddhists, we still buy much more into the medical system than we do into the Buddha's system of understanding our mind.

I think if Buddhism -- Buddha's psychology -- can lead you to remove from your mind all pollution altogether and cause you to become a totally enlightened being, I think it's probably got tools to help you get less depressed and less angry and less jealous. But we can't even connect this, we can't even see this, we can't even see this connection. We hear about Buddhism -- 'I'm a Buddhist, I do my mantras,' and then we have depression so we have to go to doctors for ten years, you know, because we can't make the connection that what Buddhism is, is a bunch of tools to help you know your mind -- help *you* know *your* mind. It's very simple, actually. But it takes us a while to hear this; it's quite fascinating, actually.

So, okay; we come into this like with a bunch of tendencies which is from having done them before, thought them before, said them before; you know, so that's the personality we've got. And then if we look into that personality – which is the job of knowing oneself, being our own therapist – that personality, that's our *mind*. So, we have to see what the status quo is; and then we refer that to the potential, and we're going to see there's a disconnect between what I am now and what I can become. Simple, you know?

So, Buddha's saying that mind – in its nature – is *clear*. Mind, or consciousness, in its nature is clear. *Don't mystify these words, please*. What Buddha means by that is: that mind -- that the negative states of mind, the ones we all know so well – anger, fears, jealousy, depression, anxiety – all these things we go to our therapist for – these are simply states of mind. They are not states of the body. The body impacts upon them, but they're not the body; they're mind; and they happen to be some of the voices of the main neurosis which is this sense of self, this neurotic sense of self. They're like the main voices of *that*. And these states of mind – all of which Buddha can call, broadly, *negative* states of mind; or, if you like, *neuroses* – are not at the core of our being, he says. This is a truly shocking statement, you know. No therapist in the universe would ever tell you that. No model of the mind in our culture has anything remotely like this. You'd be seen as an insane person if you suggested you could rid your mind of all voices of ego, all neuroses, all anger, all depression. This is Buddha's simple, simple, simple point.

So, by saying the mind is clear, he's meaning that this stuff *doesn't belong*. This stuff is in the mind – vivid; it runs the show right now – but it is not at the core of our being; that *goodness* – the positive states – they are what define us. This is the simplest way that Buddha says it. It's a very simple point; like I said, a five-year old can say this. And if we hear them properly, it's completely outrageous. It should so blow our minds; it should so *excite* us; it should so *inspire* us to want to know our minds because it's so remarkable what he's saying, psychologically speaking. Because who – *who* – wouldn't want to be not just – forget *free* of anger, depression, jealousy, fears – but even *less* fearful, angry, depressed, jealous; even just *less*. How remarkable! But this is what Buddha is saying. It's what Buddha's saying.

So, if it is true then that I came fully programmed into this life with the tendencies that are there; and if it is true, then I better get to know what those tendencies are – better look at myself in a very objective way so I can assess which of the states of mind are the ones that the Buddha would call negative – the pollution – and which are the ones that are called positive; and then what are their characteristics so I can do the hands-on job of changing my mind – of literally reconfiguring my mind in order to develop it into its marvelous potential.

### ***We Have To Go Way Past Feelings***

***31:45***

This is the *job* of being a Buddhist; this is the job of being your own therapist – and only you can do it. It doesn't mean you can't have *help* – we need help;

everything's interdependent – but *we* have to do the job. So in order to be able to do this job, you've got to be able to know the difference between a negative and a positive state; not just the 'feeling'. We all know the 'feelings' are different; we all know if you say, 'Oh, yes, I felt loving yesterday,' it was a sweet feeling; 'I felt jealous yesterday,' it was not a sweet feeling. I'm not worried about the feelings. We're like junkies for feelings right now; and about the only things we know is 'feelings'. We don't know where they come from; we can't express them; we can't define them; we can't unpack them; and we certainly don't know how to get rid of them; but we certainly feel them; we know them. But we have to go way past feelings; feelings are like the experience of a little baby; and we live for feelings. We are junkies for feelings and we judge everything in terms of feelings. If it feels good, we think it must be good. If it feels bad, we assume everything must be bad, but we don't know where else to go after that. So, we're scaredy-babies; as soon as a bad feeling comes, we have a panic attack. As soon as a good feeling comes, we become like a vampire and want more of it, you know? This is *attachment* and *aversion*.

But we have to go past all those feelings. We have to get clinical, analytical, precise, clear; and you do that through learning how to meditate, learning how to concentrate, learning Buddha's model of the mind and then applying that as your basis for interpreting what you see when you learn to meditate. It's a simple, practical job and it just takes time. It just takes time. You've got to be patient and humble and think long-term; but it is a *do-able* job. This is the point. Are we communicating so far? Okay.

So, the obstacle to this – the obstacle to doing this job is getting caught up in *who we think we are* based upon the habits we brought with us. Because ego – loosely speaking, ego – okay, because we're junkies for good feelings we will do *anything* to make the bad feelings go away;

you know, and keep having the nice feelings; like the baby with the pacifier, you know? So we need to be – in order to be our own therapist, we need to have the courage to be brave in the face of our own junk. We need to know how to interpret it so we don't have a panic attack, and want to run away from it – which is what we do, which is what is very deep inside us. So, the main obstacle is our own stuff in our own mind. The main obstacle to even knowing yourself *is* the stuff in your own mind; so it's kind of like a vicious circle, you know? So we've got to be so clear.

Okay; from the Buddha's point of view, in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, we're just not capable of just going straight into being our own therapist. Our mind just does not have enough power; so this is why – in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition – you do all these things that look like completely pure religion, even look like ritual. This is why people do prostrations. This is why people do water-bowl offerings. This is why people go off and do retreats. This is why people do mantras; this is why people visualize the Buddha. All of these things *are not the point of being a Buddhist*; they're not the purpose. They are tools you use to kind of prime your mind to be able to do the actual job of being your own therapist. Are you kind of getting my point?

If you wanted to play basketball – I go to basketball, let's say, and I see people keep getting the ball in the hoop, you get the idea, don't you, that basketball is all about getting the ball in the hoop, isn't it? You think if you get the biggest number of balls in the hoop, then you're a good basketballer. 'So, please, Michael Jordan' – he's probably a grandpa now, but he's the only one I can think of -- 'hey, Michael, hey man, show me how to get the ball in the hoop!' And what he will tell me is this: 'I want you to go away for ten years, Robina, and lose, you know, fifty pounds of weight and do lots of jogging and learn to eat this particular food and go to school and learn all the theories of basketball and learn to work on a team and learn to jog...' I'll say, 'No, you didn't hear me, Michael. *Show me how to get the ball in the hoop.*' And he'll repeat his answer. You kind of get my point? You can't just walk up to the thing and get the ball in every time. You've got to do a lot of work to do what looks like a really easy job to do.

Same here; it sounds – the words are easy: look at your mind, define what it is, is it this, what it is, therefore this, learn it, go to school, learn Buddha's psychology; wouldn't take long, I tell you. You could learn a lot of this in one year; a lot, in one year studying really hard. You'd get top marks in your Buddhist Psychology Exam, no doubt. That's the theory. They're the theories; you've got to have those first. But to actually apply it in the way the Buddha's saying, it takes an *immense* amount of inner work and inner struggle and humility and patience and a lot of the really good *virtuous* qualities; because without the virtues, without the effort, without humility you can't do the work. You just can't do it.

### ***The Role of Devotion***

#### ***37:16***

So, you've got to prime your mind – this is the Tibetan Buddhist view – prime your mind with all these other practices, you know. And even the one of devotion – which sounds so remote from psychology – Devotion? Psychology? What are you talking about? – but actually it's very true. If you look at the meaning of 'devotion' -- even devotion to your own mother, devotion to your baby – of course, it's attachment and all those things; but there's a heart-opening experience, isn't there? You know when you're in love with somebody; your heart feels very open. Are you getting my point here? That is a quality of devotion. The trouble is, most of our devotion now is mixed with bucket loads of attachment, so there's all this neediness implied and we end up destroying it. So devotion, say, in a spiritual practice – like when I was a Catholic, I had devotion for God – in Buddhist terms, you have devotion for the embodiment of the Buddha's qualities for you, who's called your guru, you know?

Now, this sounds very – so remote to us, so little to do with what I said before about learning about your own mind – but if you think about it, there's something really psychologically very sound about devotion. If we understand that the function of ego is to be very grasping, very isolated, very, kind of, on its own, very rigid, very 'me' – you understand what I'm saying – as soon as you connect with another person – even if it's with attachment – there's an element of devotion there; there's an element of openness to others, isn't there? And that is a very powerful quality. Are you hearing my point, people? Because we're not

isolated beings; we do have a human heart, and this human heart of ours needs to be moved.

So using that in a spiritual way and speaking in Tibetan Buddhist terms, devoting to a guru – you know, meeting various teachers and checking on their qualities and eventually making a decision that that is *your* guru – the word ‘guru’ in Sanskrit is a lovely word; it means ‘heavy with qualities’; we need a person like that in our lives. And I think if you look at football, you look at music; you look at *anybody* who’s really pursuing some art, whether football or music; they all have this devotion to their mentors. You get my point, people? You can all see the effect that has on a human mind. It’s because the natural tendency of ego is to be supremely arrogant, on its own, separate and therefore lonely and bereft and self-pity or pathetic or arrogant; isolated, you know? But when you open the heart, *it loosens the grip of ego*. Can you hear me, people? It’s a very powerful function. You know, you can’t force it; if you haven’t got a guru, you haven’t got a guru; but we can certainly think of this and understand the function of it. The function of it is to loosen the grip of this rigid, isolated, lonely, bereft, neurotic mind of ours, you know.

So, clearly, if you’re going to have devotion for somebody in a spiritual context, you better check very carefully that you choose the person who is worthy of your heart. I’m not kidding. There’s a lot of peanuts out there; and we’re very sentimental when it comes to spiritual. We’re pathetic, in fact; as long as it gives us a good feeling, we figure it must be cool, you know? Well, Hitler gave a lot of people a very good feeling, and look where he led them. And as Pabongkha Rinpoche says, you better choose your guru very carefully; you’re going to end up like them. Be careful, you know?

So, I’m just mentioning here, more than anything the function of that part of your mind – the function of devotion – is very tasty, is very meaningful; I’m not trying to be esoteric about it. Can you hear my point? It’s extremely powerful.

So, I’m just chatting away here, okay?

I want to go into karma now, but I want to ask you if you have any questions for me first, so far, up to where I’ve come. Do you have any questions?

### *The Two Causes of Suffering*

41:17

Q: Well, you said that the first cause of suffering – that there’s two causes of suffering, (unclear) and karma – you didn’t mention that...

Ven.: I know; I haven’t got there yet. I’ve just jumped a bit. I said that first, and I haven’t really gone into karma. I’ve got to describe karma; I’ve gone into the mind of it; okay, the second one is what I’ve been implying already; is the delusions in the mind; the neuroses, these negative states of mind that Buddha says we don’t need; that we can rid the mind of because they’re the cause of suffering.

So, the reason in the past that I've punched you in the nose is because I was angry. Anger's a delusion – the delusion is the basis, the neurotic – the voice of ego is the first main cause of suffering; and then my body and speech do the job of that state of mind, don't they? And that leaves the karmic imprint. So, karma and the delusions – you subsume them down into the one. The delusions are the main cause of all suffering. Do you understand?

So, in relation to those two, there are two main levels of practice. The first one – most urgent, as Lama Zopa says -- is to, in our daily life – having some awareness, based on getting some meditation skills, having *some* awareness of the mind, like I said before, of who you are; knowing what you brought into this world -- being totally watching like a hawk every second that you don't respond with delusion to the rubbish that comes at us throughout the day. This is your first level of practice: control your body and speech and mind, in other words – which is a massive job. Massive. Because then, all you do – every time someone badmouths you back, every time – okay. Every time you punch me, which is the result of my past karma – I get the punch, I get angry again, 'Who do you think you are punching me!' and I punch you right back. So we keep the whole ball rolling, you know?

So, the most immediate level of practice is to control my body and speech like a hawk; and then – of course – to control my mind so at least I don't sow more negative seeds during the day. You with me? The longer term practice, which we do, we need to do every day -- as Lama Zopa says, we're insane not to do it every day; and I'm going to talk about that tonight – is to purify the past karma that hasn't yet ripened; that we're just – I mean, we came into this life, Buddha says, fully programmed with whatever arises in our own self, our own being, our own personality; but not only that: we've got the programming from countless past lives, Buddha says. And these countless imprints, these seeds, these tendencies, this programming isn't manifest; and won't manifest in this life. But give it the time, and the conditions will ripen, and it will ripen as our future suffering. So we've got to pull those seeds out or at least weaken those seeds before they ripen as suffering.

So, the two levels of practice in relation to the delusions are we've got to watch our body and speech every moment and not respond with negativity, thus refraining from sewing more negative seeds and we've got to work on the negative seeds we've already planted that haven't yet ripened to avert them before they ripen. You with me? Okay. That's the two – essentially, your daily practice is consisting of these two things if you're a Buddhist. Minimal this. Minimal this: learning to watch your body and speech and learning to know what you've brought into this life, using Buddha's psychology to describe yourself to yourself, recognizing the difference between the negative and the positive states, learning some meditation techniques so that you can develop the skill of being your own therapist based upon listening to Buddha's model of the mind and then learning to work on yourself every day. Watching yourself like a hawk so you're not doing more negative actions and purifying the past negative karma. Minimal this; this is the wisdom wing – not even discussing compassion

yet, not even discussing helping others; this is the work of working on yourself. This is the work of putting yourself together; turning yourself into a marvelous person. This is the job of being a Buddhist; and again like I said, it's a precise job. It's a key, precise job that has certain components. Yes?

### *Distinguishing 'Intention' from 'Motivation'*

45:17

Q: In the interests of precision, when you say 'intention' and 'karma' are synonymous, can you please distinguish 'intention' for me from 'motivation'?

Ven.: Okay, I will. Exactly. 'Intention' is a commonly – it tends to imply a motivation as well, but a really helpful way to put it is this – so let's look into what's involved when we do an action; and Buddha's saying every microsecond we're doing an action with our mind, our body and our speech or any one of those. Are you with me? So, let's analyze what are the main components of an action that they would say would become a complete action and would bring the fully ripened result of a certain type of rebirth, okay? So use a simple example of an act of killing, okay?

So, let's say, okay -- I always use the same example -- let's say you have a mouse -- it's Tom, right? Let's say Tom has a mouse in his kitchen, and I have a mouse in my kitchen, and Dinae has a mouse in her kitchen. Let's say three examples, okay?

So, generally speaking, my mouse -- I'm going to kill a mouse, okay? In order for the action of killing that I will do -- in my case, or any of us -- there need to be four things in place in order for it to be what's called a 'complete action' which leaves a seed in the mind that if you don't pull it out, it will multiply and then ripen as many future suffering rebirths; because one seed will bring many fruits -- and it's exactly the same with a good action. A small good action will grow and multiply and then ripen as many virtuous lives. You with me?

So, in the case of my mouse in the kitchen, there have to be four things in place. There's got to be the intention to kill. So, intention here has the literal meaning of a mental decision: 'I will do it.' That's a simple meaning of the word 'intention': 'I will do it'; an intention to kill, okay? The second part: clearly there has to be a mouse there. The third is, I do the action; and the fourth is the mouse dies. Now, strictly speaking it dies before me. That's a complete action of killing. Okay. Now, let's break down the heading called 'intention'; and this is the way to put it, you know? There's various factors under that heading, and the main one is the motivation. Strictly speaking -- there's different ways to talk about it but this is the way to put it -- strictly speaking, 'intention' is merely 'I will kill a mouse'. But if we look at everybody who kills a mouse, for example, you just don't go -- I'll go to you, 'Why are you killing a mouse?' and you won't go, 'Oh, I don't know...' You won't do this, will you? You'll either go, 'Oh, because I don't like mice', which is the usual reason you want to kill a mouse, isn't it? You with me? It's called 'aversion' or 'anger'. Or you might like to have mouse for lunch; you really like eating mice -- so that's 'attachment', right? Because you kill the mouse because you want to eat its body; are you with me? Or it's ignorance: you think

killing mice will get you enlightened, or something. So there's only three – there's attachment, aversion or ignorance. There's no fourth – there's no fourth – there's variations of these. So they're the motivations. In other words, we put it 'reason behind the action'.

But what happens with us now; our intention to do things, right now, is so packed seamlessly with a motivation that we don't even realize we have one; and Buddha's saying, the reason we mostly do things now is either attachment or aversion. That's what everything we do is. We live according to attachment and aversion. So I – 'Oh, Tom, let's go and have some chocolate cake!' Believe me, honey, bodhicitta is not our reason. It arises in the mind because I feel my stomach is empty and I remember chocolate cake; my attachment gets excited, and then I'm bored, I want company; I ring you up – out of attachment – and then I drag you down to the chocolate cake shop.

We're being quite friendly to each other; no one's going to criticize us. But that was completely an action of wanting -- intention to eat chocolate cake. Why? Because of neediness. Attachment. Everything we do now – even moving in my chair – is because of attachment. Buddha says we are run by attachment now, so we could strictly speaking say, all the intentions we have are motivated by attachment, but they're packed together so tight we wouldn't even think there's anything separate there. You see what I'm saying? We can see this.

So, okay; my mouse – I intend to kill it. Why? Because 'how dare a mouse be on my kitchen', you know? It's called 'aversion', okay? Now, let's say, you've got a mouse – and this is just really looking at a very simplistic example, but broadly speaking, this is the way they talk about karma; and all this is doing is indicating the power of the motivation; and this is the Mahayana interpretation, now; because the Hinayana – we won't go into that. This is the Mahayana interpretation.

So, let's say you've got a mouse; and you see it, and you kill it and it dies. But I ask you your reason and you say, 'Oh, Robina, the poor mouse was suffering. Didn't you see? Its poor little legs were mangled and I had to take away its suffering so I killed it.' That's a possibility; we all do things like that. That's a very common thing in our world; it's called – lord knows, the euphemisms we have – 'putting it down' or something we say; it's called 'killing', okay? Let's be frank, for a start. You with me? But look at your reason; and this is a really important point. The motivation is really the meaning of what determines the karma that you create. Intention is karma; but the thing that propels your mind to *do* it and the quality of that motivation – that's what's really happening in your mind.

So you; you can say it's compassion. It was genuine compassion. You understand? Mine was genuine anger. So, that's the real karma we create. That's the real karma we create – the thing behind the intention. Now, as to whether you did actually help the mouse, that's another discussion. That's another element called 'wisdom', and that's another discussion. But just looking at the karma you create, we could say that your compassion means your karma was

actually positive. Now, Dinae might have a mouse in her kitchen and there she is washing the dishes and not seeing there's a mouse there and she stands back and she stomps on it; she didn't have any intention because she didn't see a mouse. If there's no intention, there's no motivation, right? If there's no intention, no karma. So you could say she didn't create any karma.

### *No Intention, No Karma*

51:53

Q: So, there's a ripening of karma but there's just not a ...

Ven.: Not for her. Not for her; for the mouse, yes. Not for her. The mouse had the karma to be killed, but she didn't have any – there was something there, but it was because -- the point I'm trying to get so strongly is, there's no intention, therefore no karma. If there's no intention, there can't be a motivation. So even – I remember Geshe Sopa saying even if a person doesn't want to kill, but they're forced to kill because they're being tortured or something –if they even don't want to kill, if they kill there's not the full karma of killing.

So, this is trying to -- there's more factors involved. Another factor under the heading of intention is whether or not it's habitual. Now, maybe she's a – let's say she's a killer. I'm not being horrible; let's say she shoots the bears and, you know, shoots the elks and kills the fish and let's say killing is part of her life. Even though *that* time she didn't intend to, because she's got a habit to kill, there could be some karma there; maybe even say. It's an old habit, very strong, you know? You could say this.

So, that's the one about karma now...this is why we have to look at our minds objectively, to see what it is we've come into this life with. So, I use the example of my friend whose little boy, from the time he saw the river, what he saw was fishing and he ran like a magnet. Now, there's no judgment here, it's just analyzing, you know, what you come into this life with.

So he saw fishing – we can deduce from his response, the moment he saw it, he saw it as super attractive. He saw it as really delicious. It excited him. It moved him. Now, his mother never liked fishing. She never liked fishing. She never liked fishing; she never went fishing. She didn't teach him fishing. But he – the second he met fishing he ran like a magnet and he spent the rest of his life being a professional fisherman.

So, that's why it is so crucial for us, in the Buddha's view, to look freshly, objectively at what we came into this world with; and not just take it for granted that because it feels good, it must be good. It's a very reasonable point, you understand. It's very reasonable. So you've got to have your – Buddha's basis, if you're thinking about Buddhism, his basic view of what is morality and what is not – and you look at yourself and you compare: 'Oh, well, I want to kill my father. Buddha says killing's not so cool...oh, okay, I better look at that.' Not just, 'Oh, I want to kill my father; it feels right.' And that's how we tend to think about morality. We tend to think if it feels it – that's how we think about intuition and instinct and these things; we really over exaggerate the power of

these things. All it means is you've got a tendency to do it. Excuse me, that's hardly a big deal. You understand what I'm saying here?

You've got to really have enough objectivity to go beyond your feelings and observe it and use – in this case, we're talking about Buddha's view of what is moral and what is not, and Buddha's checklist of morality is very simple; and this, by the way, is another interesting point. If I'm a Catholic – and I was – by definition, a sin was that which goes against the will of God. Now, if God is my creator, and God made the world, and God also made the laws of morality; then that is a very valid statement. I must do what God said because God said so.

Now, you look at what Buddha says is not cool; it's a bit similar to what Jesus says: don't kill, don't lie, don't steal – you get my point here. But the reason is fundamentally different. Buddha's view of what is morality is very straightforward; he says it's a conventional reality. You can prove it; just do some market research in this room. I'll go around and do a survey: 'Do you like being killed, Al?' 'Do you like being killed?' 'Do you like being shot?' 'Do you like being tortured?' 'Do you like being stolen from?' We'll all know the answers. So, Buddha says *that* is what makes something negative: the *mere fact that people don't like it*. It's a very interesting point. It's quite outrageous, actually. The mere fact – in other words, what harms others is defined as immorality for Buddha – not coming from 'on high', but coming from the experiences of sentient beings. Okay, it can get more complicated; people who are sadistic – people who are masochistic like being hit, okay? So we've got to keep it simple, you know?

Generally speaking, you observe the behavior of a dog: you'll deduce it doesn't like being stolen from, it doesn't like being cheated, it doesn't like being abused. Well, humans are the same. So that is what defines it as negative; which is a very interesting point. It's not because Buddha *says* so; he's merely a messenger, you know?

So, when you understand this, you look into your mind and you see what tendencies you come with. So, maybe you've got a strong tendency to lie; and because it's your tendency, it comes very naturally and therefore, you know, when you defend your right to do this and you try to hide it because people tell you it's wrong; but you feel kind of hurt because it feels natural to you. Well, the little fisherman felt the same. I'm not criticizing anybody; I'm just observing why we do things...

So the Buddha would suggest that killing is negative because it hurts sentient beings. I mean, I would think that's not too hard to prove, is it? Of course, if we have the materialist view about animals and fishes – that they don't have a soul, therefore they don't feel things the way we feel them; which is why mostly humans on this earth *do* kill something – we tend to think it's okay. No one's going to put you in jail if you kill a rabbit. But they'll certainly put you in jail if you kill a human; because we think it's okay to kill animals; it's okay to kill fish, you know?

But it's not okay to kill poodles. As long as it's not your attachment object; can you imagine if this little boy had attachment to killing poodles? He would have been in big trouble...but that's only because we are attached to poodles; you see my point? There's no real valid reason there; a poodle feels the same way as a fish. So...are we communicating here? Are we communicating?

So, we've just got to look at what Buddha says. Maybe Buddha's wrong; maybe fish don't suffer. You know? Check it out. It reminds me; a friend of mine in Australia – she'd was telling me, she'd been married to a fisherman. All her married life, she'd been helping him with his fishing business. Of course she did; she loved her husband, you know? They'd go fishing, they had the big fishing business, had many boats and all these things; and she used to go fishing just with her girlfriends sometimes. But she began to think about whether she should stop killing fish; she doesn't know why in this mind she began to think – maybe fish don't, you know, don't like it. So one day, she said, they were deep sea fishing and this certain kind of big fish that lives way deep down in the ocean, you get it up – and because you pull it up fast, it's a bit like divers; its guts kind of come out, you know? And then she said she'll never forget this: suddenly, there's this fish – she immediately thought it was the *wife* of this fish, or the girl – do fish have families? Do they live in partners? Well, anyway, this big fish; all she knows is this; she says she'll never forget it as long as she lives: suddenly this *other* big fish -- like the same kind -- came up, leapt into the water with its eyes and circled the boat trying to look in, you know? And she said, 'I never killed fish from that minute on.' It felt for her like it was the wife of this fish or something. Overwhelmed, there was nothing she could do to save the fish; its guts had come out; it had been destroyed, you know. And she stopped killing fish from that second, she said.

### *Karma and Delusions Work Perfectly Together*

**59:11**

So the point is this: this is how karma and delusions work so perfectly together. So, using the example of this fisherman – and he had – in fact, he had very many good qualities; he was a lovely human being – it wasn't like he was evil. Don't think – it's absurd to think this. He had one characteristic called fishing. He was kind, loving, generous, intelligent, loving; a beautiful human being. He had a tendency to kill, that's all; Buddha says, he'd killed in the past so he brought that habit with him; therefore didn't see it as bad because the world didn't see it as bad. If it had been poodles, like I said, he would have been in big trouble because everyone would have criticized him. He'd have to sneak around at night killing these poodles, you know? But the point is this, you know; this is a very interesting thing. This is the point. This is how they talk about it: you come into this world with your own tendencies, your own – all your own programming from *your own past habits*. No one made you, Buddha says; don't blame God, don't blame your parents. You brought your own tendencies with you from having done them before. So simple, Buddha says; okay, you've got to, you know, hypothesize this; it's a big, different point for us.

So, there's this fisherman coming into this life with a tendency to kill. When he's a very little boy, his mother said, he meets the environment called 'fishing'. It's

like it triggers a memory for him; instantly he sees it, he's blissed out, you know? Runs like a magnet. So what happens is the habit is there; he sees the conditions, he recognizes it – he doesn't *think* he recognizes it – and it looks really delicious to him. That's his attachment. So, attachment -- when it gets what it wants -- calls that thing 'good', you run towards it. You want to do it again and again.

So then he was set up to keep killing. And so, what happened was very interesting. His mother; she'd never liked the fishing, but she never said anything; she wasn't going to be rude to her beautiful boy, you know? But one time, she said, she went fishing with him; and she said she found it unbearable. So this is the point I'm trying to suggest here: there's this lovely boy – a nice human being – kills; was a professional fisherman from like the time he was thirteen until he dies, scuba diving when he was twenty nine. There he was, all the fish coming into his nets and everything, and because he's got a particular view of fishing, which is called 'good', what he's actually done is write a story in his mind – we all do this – about the fishing and about the fish. So he sees a certain scenario going on. His mother – because she doesn't have a tendency to kill, and therefore doesn't have attachment to fishing – all she sees is suffering fish. It's very evident to her; all she sees is fish flapping their bodies. And why are they flapping? Because they don't like it; they're not happy. It's obvious. The poor thing doesn't have a voice; it can't shout. It doesn't have legs so it can climb over the boat. The best it can do is flap its little body, isn't it? And it obviously is looking very distressed, if you look at its behavior. But if you're used to seeing this all the time, you don't think 'oh, the fish is suffering'; you just think 'that's what fish do'. Are you hearing my point here? So it's all a question of your view, what you're seeing, you know.

So she, because she didn't have attachment, and because she didn't have a tendency to kill, all she could see was the fish's suffering. So when we have attachment – you know, when you're really angry with somebody, and you're really hurt; you're really upset and you're really being mean to this person – you can't see the suffering you're causing them, can you – at all; because you're overwhelmed by your own suffering. You with me? You're overwhelmed by your own pain, your own neediness. It's only when you calm down that you feel bad about the suffering you caused. So when we're caught up in our own emotions, we are blind to seeing the harm we're doing to others. Are you with me, people? This is why we have to know our own mind! Because we'll just fall into the trap of our own emotions every single time, you know?

So in the Buddha's view, you can't just look at your mind without looking at karma; it's not possible. Of course, it is possible, but to get the really big picture, you've got to know what you came with, so that then you've got to take Buddha's view of the mind and look at yourself objectively. Really objectively; not just what it *feels* like, which is the only thing our therapists can think about, you know; what it feels like. And we look to our parents and the events out there to try and describe why you're *feeling* that. It's not enough, for the Buddha. It's just not enough. You've got to look in your own *mind* and identify precisely the negative states, and then look at what came *with* you; it's a very – it's like *clinical*; it's like you get the microscope of your mind onto your own mind, you know?

Then you can start to hear yourself. Then you can change yourself. *You* can heal *you*. Yes, you need tools and support; but *you* can heal *you*; this is what being a Buddhist means, you know. It takes time; we've got to be very patient. And you've got to be brave, because the irony of ego is that it's fear-based, and the irony of ego is therefore that we can't -- all we want is the fear to go away. All we want is the fear to go away, but the only way to understand it *is to go into it*. The only way to understand the fear and anger, depression, jealousy is to be clinical about it; understand the definition of it; what it is; and then through meditation and being your own therapist, you literally dive into it so you can listen to the voices, the conceptual stories that it is telling you. There's no other way; you've got to have courage to do it. You've got to have courage to do it.

All our methods are to help you avert it, make it go away, suffocate it; give the pills, make it stop, you know, because we can't bear the pain. But we need courage to go into the pain; and then when you go into it, it dissipates. There's no longer any fear. This is a fact.

So you've got to have, you know, a mind that's really primed to do this; which is why – if you say you are a Buddhist – you need to do your prostrations; you need to do your water-bowl offerings; you need to do your mantras; you need to take initiations; you need to do the deity practices; because all these prime your mind and purify you at a profoundly deep level that enables you easily to do the job of being your own therapist day-to-day. This is how it works. Are you with me, people? But it's up to you; I'm not trying to force any of you. I'm just telling you my own experience and how the teachers say.

I haven't gone into karma at all yet, really; and I haven't gone into how to purify it yet; there's still time. It's only ten past eight...any more questions? Yes?

### *Practicing – Developing the Skills to Be Your Own Therapist*

1:05:58

Q: When you're talking about observing the mind and what you're doing and what's happening, how do you actually do that? For example, you say 'go into it', so let's say, you find you're jealous. So, okay, you hear it, you know it, you see it, you feel it. What do you do with it?

Ven.: At that moment in time, if it's just – let's say – the first time, you can't do anything; there's nothing much. That's not the point. The time to work on it is not when it's happened; it's a bit late. But you've got to do the starting work. It's a bit like – the habit at the moment is jealousy, let's say. Let's just say that. It's our habit, it's been natural; we've known it since we're born and we've acted it out and we don't know where it comes from and we struggle with it a little bit...what I'm talking about here – the way to apply practice is you develop a meditation practice – this is all the components, the ideal scenario – you'd learn Buddha's model of the mind. You'd understand exactly what a negative state is, you'd learn the characteristics of it; you'd know what jealousy is and how it functions. You hear the definition of it. You'd have your concentration. You'd do a practice every day where you would learn to think about and understand it and *then* secondly what you're doing also in your meditation; you're developing

this very specific skill of being introspective: of stepping out of the mind and observing it clearly.

You're practicing that on your cushion such that when you do come to a situation, you've got a little bit more tools in your toolkit to enable you to grab your mind before it becomes fully blown jealousy. You grab it before it gets to the surface. Because right now, we've never looked at our minds – I'm not saying you haven't, but let's just say normally in our world we don't look at our feelings; we just take them as a given. If we've never looked at our minds in the past and we have no way of interpreting it, then there's nothing much we can do except struggle not to say it and try and make it pass. So, there's just more analysis that's needed, internally; on your cushion everyday that give you the skills to be more introspective; give you the skills to *step back* and to know about these things intellectually and then you bring those tools to bear into your life; and ideally, you're catching your mind -- we've got all these emotions; we only know them at the level of emotion, right? But they all are really – the underpinning of them are very elaborate conceptual stories that are very deeply ingrained in us. Jealousy is a very elaborate story; it's a series of interpretations of a certain event, isn't it? And that's what all the emotions are; so getting to hear them in that way first more and more in the daily practice gives us an ability to hear the conceptuality and the story growing before it bursts into life as a feeling. Are you with me? So, then you can argue with it conceptually.

The Buddha really is a cognitive therapist, but at quite a subtle level, you know. I'm not kidding. Does that make sense, what I'm saying, intellectually? But that's why it just takes time; because all the habits we're talking about that are so painful are profoundly ingrained. That's why they're so painful! I mean, let's face it. You know yourself, if any habit you have isn't a very strong habit, it's because you haven't practiced it that well. If you're not a very good driver, it's because you don't drive that often. If you don't really practice piano that often, you can't say it's a very ingrained habit, can you? So you stumble along and you do a little – therefore, there's not much of a feeling involved. When you've really got a very deep habit to play piano, you can go beyond the technicalities and you can get the pure experience of feeling, can't you? Well, look at the *feelings* of jealousy, the *feelings* of anger, the *feelings* of our strong negative tendencies; they're feelings because we've practiced them to perfection. You understand what I mean? That's why they're such strong feelings – because we've practiced these stories for so long, and we've – and again, we've come fully programmed with these stories. My mother did not have to teach me to be angry, believe me. I had it down; the *second* my attachment didn't get what it wanted, anger would rise, instantly; raging, kicking shouting, yelling.

That proved the Buddha's view that I had this strong story in my mind that it was outrageous that I didn't get what I wanted – because that's what anger comes from. You understand. Another one of my sisters didn't have strong anger; she'd kind of go – when she didn't get what she wanted, it'd sort of be like, 'Oh, drat...' and then she could change her mind, you know? We can deduce that she didn't practice anger very strongly; we can see this. So she was able to change on a dime, you know?

So the emotional component which is what we one-hundred-per-cent identify with as being real is only because we've practiced those things to perfection; so when we unpack that and unravel that and control the body and speech and then have this intelligent understanding of the workings of these feelings at the deeper, more conceptual level; then it's there that we can begin to unpack them and literally reconfigure the stories. Does this make sense? This is the practice.

So I can say – I'm not trying to show off or anything – I can say that over the years, the things that *would* have made me angry literally don't rise anger in me anymore because I truly interpret them differently now. I've changed the fundamental stories about things such that I don't get upset by things that once would have made me crazy, because I haven't just given up an emotion; I haven't just suppressed a feeling. I've reconfigured; so all the series of assumptions beneath anger, beneath attachment, beneath these delusions that Buddha says are these elaborate conceptual stories; all assumptions coming all the way down to the fundamental assumption of the self-existent 'I'. Are you hearing what I'm saying; what I mean here? It's quite a – I'm not trying to sound arrogant – sophisticated procedure of knowing your own mind, you know? And it just takes time. Because whatever we feel; we see it as a given. 'That's me,' we say, and we reinforce it.

I was, you know, emailing a friend recently and she's got *profound* depression; and completely freaks out, you know? And you can see – because depression is so strong, she hasn't seen her own mind. She is so terrified of it; all she wants it to do is go away, because she doesn't – we *all* don't have enough courage; when you're in the midst of that raging anger, who wants to look into it? All you want to do is make it go away. You don't want to look into it; it's too painful. You can feel all that raging jealousy; it's like knives in your heart, isn't it? You don't want to look into it – it's too, too painful. Or – if it's a strong attachment – why would you want to look into it, you know? If it makes you feel good, of course you want to look into it; you're very happy to keep following it! Am I communicating here? Any questions? I haven't really got much – I want to talk about – still more – any more questions?

### *The Deeper The Habit, The Stronger The Karma*

1:13:08

Q: You mentioned about karma being – actions being habitual and non-habitual...does that affect...

Ven.: Yeah, the stronger the habit; the deeper the karmic – I mean, obviously if you played piano really, really well that means it's a very deep habit; you'll play brilliant piano; it totally affects. The more habit, the better you are at it; whether it's killing or playing piano or being loving, the deeper the habit, the better it is. Do you understand my point? It goes without saying. And of course, indeed, one of the factors in the discussion with Tom – he used the example of killing – one is the motivation; that's a really big factor. The second one is whether you're habitual or not; the deeper the habit, the stronger the karma.

Now, I remember -- not even killing -- a friend of mine, actually -- another factor; familiarity with that activity in a general sense -- so one of my friends, an Australian guy, who is now a Buddhist monk; he was a member of one of the richest butcher families in Australia. He never killed anything; he didn't kill. But all his riches and all his MGs and his fancy life -- he used to have an MG, I remember, one of those nice sports cars -- all were on the back of the death of hundreds of thousands -- probably millions -- of sentient beings, you know. So, Lama Yeshe said to him, 'You never touch meat.' Do you understand? Because it wouldn't have been appropriate for him. I mean, I'm talking about very simple examples; there's many, many factors involved, you know?

When you talk about killing animals; there's so many factors involved, so many ways and approaches and -- if you get the nuts and bolts, if you're trying to use Buddhism in your life, if you get the nuts and bolts clear, and then you try to use it as the basis for determining your own actions and your own karma and your own mind, because it all -- nobody else is involved; because in Buddhism there's no concept of a judge or reward or punishment; there's nobody up there pulling the strings. Buddha says we create ourselves from our past lives; we come into this life fully programmed with whatever tendencies we've got; and whatever we do -- Buddha says karma's a natural law. No-one's judging us; no-one's rewarding us. It's a very shocking idea because we're so used to believing in this idea that someone else is doing it and judging me and rewarding me. The Buddha says there's no such thing. Karma's a natural law, you know? So, I mean, I'm just giving you Buddha's view; one doesn't have to believe it. You with me, people? So it's up to us, you know, to think about it; if we want to -- or not -- as the case may be.

I want to talk about how to purify karma -- there's still time, I can do that. Any more questions? Any more questions about things? Anything at all? Yes, darling?

### *Attachment to Practice*

**1:15:44**

Q: Can one become attached to their Buddhist practices?

Ven.: Of course you could. It won't last long, dear. Attachment is like a bubble. It goes up, you get all excited but you get bored after a while; so it wouldn't last. If it's attachment, it doesn't -- well, that's not quite true; because if it's attachment you keep doing it more and more...but with something like Buddhism -- because it's all about giving up attachment. If you're really doing that, it's not possible to be attached to it. It's impossible -- I mean, you're trying to give up the very thing you're attached to; it's impossible. Do you understand my point? It's impossible.

Q: I do. And I also people who get excited with something new, and take on a beginning meditation practice, let's say, and they get so much reward from that...

Ven.: That's right...

Q: ...that they inadvertently become attached...

Ven.: I'm very happy for them. I'm delighted for them. Better to be attached to something that'll help you, dear, than something that won't. So at least, if you get past that, and you maybe continue with it – it's like, if you're going to fall in love with somebody, please be attached to a nice person – not some creep who's going to rape you. Do you get my point? I mean, we've all got attachment, darling, that's just the way the world is; you've got to be very advanced before you get rid of it. So, better than nothing; start with attachment to something and then of course if it's totally only attachment – like, 'Excuse me, I'm trying to meditate...' you won't last long and you'll give it up; it'll be too boring for you. Believe me; you won't get any pleasure from it. Someone else? Something else, people? Yes, Tom, go...

### *Are Emotions Thought-Based?*

**1:17:15**

Q: Are emotions and feelings thought-based, or...

Ven.: Thought-based! All, everything for the Buddha comes down to thoughts; shockingly, surprisingly.

Q: I'm trying to think like when an emotion comes up, you know, or a feeling; we tend to think of those as different than thoughts...

Ven.: It is; because you're talking about the emotional level. You're talking about the physical feeling: the heart beating fast, that visceral feeling. This is feeling and it's only because...

Q: But it always comes with thoughts, though; I mean, it seems like there's always thoughts that come with it...

Ven.: But that's what I'm saying; but it is only the thoughts. What you really mean is thoughts come along with feelings...those angry thoughts come along with feelings. 'One and one is two' is also a thought; but there ain't much feeling there – because there's no vested interest in it. But angry feelings, jealous feelings, loving feelings, compassionate feelings; they're thoughts, they're literally a conceptual description of an event. But because they're habitual, the feeling is there as well. *The feeling indicates the habit*, that's all. Are you seeing what I'm saying?

Q: Yeah, but you know, you were talking about like the stories that we have underlying those, right, like, so even when these emotional visceral responses come up, this is because we've told ourselves those stories again and again...

Ven.: But darling, that's what I'm saying. You're just reiterating what I'm saying. That's the point. That's all you're doing. That is all anger, the wish to kill, lie, steal; that's all they are – they're just the habitual story that you've brought with you -- that is now pretty instinctive – that you are playing out; that causes things to appear that way.

Q: Alright; like we have shorthand, shorthand thoughts that are shorthand for the stories...

Ven.: Gosh, yes; because we've got it down to perfection. You've practiced them to perfection. So, everything that's attachment, for example, when you have a certain sensory experience; we think it's physical. It is physical, but that's just the symptom of the actual thing that's going on which is mental, which is the story that is deeply imprinted in the mind -- even attachment to the most intensely delicious looking person that causes the most powerful physical feelings. It's a big surprise to us to realize that so-called sexual attachment actually is -- it triggers the physical feeling but the attachment *is not the feeling*; because when you no longer like that girl -- when you think she's a creep -- believe me, you won't get the same feelings anymore. So, when your mind was describing her as delicious, as a beautiful person, as an elaborate conceptual story written in your mind, then it triggered very nice feelings in the body. The same girl a week later -- who bores you to tears now -- same body, same little breasts, same little cute face, whatever; nothing's changed about her, but your story is different now and so your body stays cold. So, it proves attachment is in the mind, completely in the mind. It's a story; but we can't hear it as a story because we're blinded by our physical feelings. We are junkies for feelings; and then we believe the feeling.

So, you know, you read about -- I remember reading about one guy; he's actually the arts writer for years in Time Magazine -- he's an Australian fellow called Robert Hughes -- I think he's retired now. But I remember reading about how he first went trout fishing; he said it was almost a cosmic experience. He was a passionate fisherman from that year on. So, the Buddha's explanation of that is that he came into this life with a strong, strong tendency to kill; such that it actually seemed almost -- you wouldn't even use a word like 'sexual' -- it was an intensely blissful experience when he first -- he'll never forget this experience of going trout fishing. So, he was completely addicted to fishing; he talked about how he cut the -- all these experiences. So that's how Buddha's describing everything we do, if it's attachment to it -- whether it's attachment to having sex, attachment to torture...

Now we don't like to think of torturers as being just ordinary people with attachment; we just think they're monsters who should be in hell; we don't like to think about them; but I remember reading about that guy -- what's his name? BTK? Bind, Torture, Kill? Remember him is Kansas or something? He's in prison now, because they don't have death row there. He, for thirty years, spent his life -- deeply in secret, of course, because it wouldn't have been approved of -- he had this whole, he had this incredible tendency to torture. And he had this elaborate -- like you know when you read all the -- you know, you see the CSI programs, they do all the profiles of all the torturers, they work out all these dramatic stories and they have this big drama -- you know yourself if you've got -- we've got little mild attachments like chocolate cake, for god's sake, you know? Can you imagine if you were attached to torture? Excuse me, I mean really, that would be most intense -- but you know how you think about something when it's not there? You imagine it -- let's say you like cooking. You think about cooking,

you think about buying the food, you go to buy the food, you come back; you think about it *all the time*.

You're in love with a person -- maybe that's not common for us anymore if you're old -- but you never stop thinking about the person; you understand what I'm saying.

Now, we think that's natural ordinary behavior; but that's the function of attachment -- when you think about the thing and you make up an elaborate story. Now, when it's really intense, like torture, can you imagine the stories in the poor minds of these guys? We don't like to think about that; we just think they're *evil*; the Buddha says that's just a strong habit like anything else.

This guy spent like thirty years -- and of course he had to do it in private, he had to get a girl, had to get a wife, had to get her husband, had to get whole families -- and he had this whole dramatic scenario of how he'd get them; he'd string them up, he'd get them to be incredibly fearful; he'd do the most hideous things...and that's how he got all his pleasures.

Now, it might sound a bit weird to us; but all Buddha says -- whether it's attachment to eating chocolate cake, attachment to killing a fish, attachment to, you know, torture; it's a question of degree, that's all. Attachment is an over-exaggeration of a certain event; that when it's extreme, you become obsessed with it. Do you understand? That's what attachment *is*. The attachment's the same; clearly the objects are different. No-one would think that being attached to money or attached to cake is the same as attachment to torture; the object is clearly different. But the Buddha says it's whatever you're familiar with; so we can see there are people in this world who are familiar with torture, familiar with killing, familiar with this, familiar with lying, familiar with stealing, familiar with having sex; whatever it might be. Attachment to it is because you've got the habit to do it.

So then this attachment, it makes you very excited; and you see it as good and you over-exaggerate it; you think about it all the time and you're dying to do it and of course it's impossible -- when it's very strong -- not to do it. This is how attachment works, you know. This is Buddha's view.

So we mostly have our little old boring habits, and the deepest -- this is like the gross level of attachment, where it really does function to harm others, you know. But attachment goes also to profoundly subtle levels; the attachment to being approved of by others being one of the deepest, the most primordial. But these other ones, I mean these are the grosser, grosser levels; and they're all dependent upon the karma. That's why to just try to go to your therapist and work out why we have this weird tendency to want to do this or that; Buddha says you'll never find the basis for it -- because it doesn't come from your parents.

You'll never find -- you'll never understand why Hitler -- if you just look into his mind; you've got to factor in karma as well because karma is what causes you to

*be* that person that you are; that you then start with; do you understand? That's Buddha's explanation; of course, it's a very different view, I know; I mean, I know most of us think our parents made us; and mostly we say we don't know why Hitler; we don't know why BTK; we don't know why the fisherman – the son of a mother who doesn't like fishing; why does he like fishing but she not – this kind of thing. Why Mozart? We in the west; we just say we don't know why; we have big questions; assuming there's no reason. It's just potluck, you know.

Q: So, if somebody has, you know, like you watch Oprah or something, and somebody has a passion to do something and they say that they were – that was what they were meant to do...

Ven.: It's the imprint; Hitler was meant to do what he did – you could say it this way. But the more strongly you're attached to it, the more it *feels* right; like that nineteen-year-old white supremacist -- it was like his destiny; that's how they talk. It's a habit.

Q: So if somebody's like a designer or they go to...

Ven.: Same thing, darling; same thing.

Q: But is that different than attachment?

Ven.: No – that's the whole point. It's attachment. There's also good things; you can be attached to doing bad things and you can be attached to doing good things, right? The attachment's the same; we've all got attachment, Buddha says; until we're quite highly realized. So even the good that we do now – of course it comes out of an incredible wish to benefit others; but there's got to be attachment to it as well – depending on the person, of course.

It's from *habit*; the habit of doing it in the past. The habit of doing it is why you want to do it again. Then attachment to it is what would then cause the problem. Do you see? So then the habit of doing it is simply from the habit of doing it – whether it's killing or helping others. It's the *habit* of doing it that is why you have the wish to do it again; and then attachment in the mix is then what causes the drama. Do you understand what I'm saying?

That's why I'm saying – the Buddha's view is that you've got to look at what you are – the status quo – 'What do I want to do? I like to kill people. Oh, I'd better look at that...' 'Do I like to like people? That's good...' You've got to check up, not just because – in other words, we tend to think 'I'm born this way, it's just the way it is'. We take it as self-existent, you know? The Buddha's saying, no, it's just a bunch of habits, that's all. It's a big assumption – I mean, we don't think this way; but this is what you need to bring in on board if we're Buddhists, you know. Don't have to...but we can try.

Q: Hard to wrap your mind around the difference between attachment and karma, in a way.

Ven.: No; only because you haven't studied it enough...

Q: Yeah...

*Programming Our Minds Every Second*

**1:28:04**

Ven.: Isn't it? Wouldn't you say that was true? So if you want to do it, you can ask Bob to kindly do some courses here, so you can learn the nuts and bolts of it.

So then, we didn't really talk about the actual topic itself -- which is anger -- here; violent, negative actions and suffering... Well, your anger -- the Buddha's saying really the day-to-day -- the bottom-line delusion -- okay; in the mind we've got positive states and negative ones, okay; and neutral -- there's no fourth category for the Buddha; it's a quite simple kind of model he's got; and the virtuous ones, the positive ones are kindness and love and compassion; empathy, patience; these are marvelous. These are the ones we know in ourself and we can tell those ones are why we are content. They are the source of why we are good to others; it's really clear. And so these are marvelous; but look at the other ones, too. We have attachment; and the deepest attachment -- and the two main ones day to day are attachment -- and then when it doesn't get what it wants -- that's what anger is. Anger is the response when attachment doesn't get what it wants and this attachment runs alongside all the good stuff and is the deepest delusion in our day-to-day life -- and it's like this default voice, this default assumption at a quite deep level -- this default assumption that I must get what I want.

So that's why you factor in the karmic imprints -- let's say of the little boy fishing. He had the wish to go fishing -- a very strong tendency -- and then the attachment to get what he wanted; he glommed that onto fishing.

My friend -- I always remember this one -- my friend Panov, this Greek boy, he told me that when he was six years old, he was walking down the street in Athens -- and this is about attachment, now -- there's the little boy who was a fisherman, and now this is my friend Panov, when he saw this poster of a naked lady on a cinema, he said, 'Mummy, why is my penis standing up?' Of course, his mummy was mortified; his Greek Orthodox mummy, you know -- and so Panov, he remembers the cinema lady cracked a joke about how he'd be a ladykiller; and basically my friend Panov, from the time he could remember was super-attached to having sex with girls. So, of course, he's considered normal, isn't he?

Now, another little boy -- I don't know if you've heard about 'furrries' -- I read in Vanity Fair years ago and I check them up; there was a CSI program about them -- they really do all their research as well -- this little boy, when he was six, he was at the sports and he didn't get turned on by the girls. He got turned on by the Mickey Mouse mascot. So of course as he grew up, he got very depressed because he liked animals; he got sexually turned on by animals.

Now all this is -- from the Buddhist point of view -- is, there's a little boy who is attracted to fishing; he mightn't have called it sexual but it was strong

attachment. He wanted what he wanted so he went fishing; he would have been distressed if he couldn't. Panov got turned on by girl shapes; well, this other boy got turned on by Mickey Mouse shapes, you know, because of his tendency of attraction to animals – pets and this type of thing, you know.

But, the Buddha says whatever you think, whatever you do, whatever you say leaves an imprint; or *programs* your mind. This is what Buddha says; we're really creating ourselves every second by whatever we see and do and say and think and feel. We're programming our own mind, you know? Are you with me, people? So, attachment is this over-exaggeration of the importance of some event or thing or activity because of familiarity with it. So then you put these two together; and of course he would have been distressed if he couldn't go fishing. Panov clearly would have been distressed – as he got a bit older – if he couldn't have had a girl, you know? The furry guy would have been distressed if he couldn't act out his attachments.

So there's the habit; then there's the attachment to it; the stronger the habit, the stronger the attachment – and therefore the more distress when you can't get it; which is aversion or depression; it depends on which way your mind goes.

Some people in my mode, in my life were more volatile when they didn't get what they wanted and I'd shout and yell. Other people go in, and get despairing and depressed; but it's the same state of mind. It's aversion to when attachment doesn't get what it wants.

So then you think, 'Well, what do you mean; what attachment? What was I attached to? Why am I depressed?' Well, if you think – the Buddha's saying that every second you're going through your life with this deep assumption that you must get what you want. So let's say you've got a really good heart; and let's say you look at the world and you see the suffering. Your really good heart wants there to be no suffering, but so does your attachment doesn't want suffering. So the attachment gets distressed because it's not getting what it wants; so it becomes depression. Do you understand what I'm saying? Can you hear that or not, people? Okay.

So, in my case, I didn't get depressed, I got angry. I'd shout and yell and go on demonstrations, you know? Some become despairing and panic-stricken, because their attachment wanted the world to be the way they wanted it. The goodness is there, too; of course it is. My – when I was out there being an old radical lefty, I wanted the world to be a better place; there is no doubt about it. But my attachment got very upset when it saw what it didn't want; that's what caused me to shout and yell and scream and get distressed and angry. Somebody else would see the world the way they didn't want it and when their attachment got distressed it turned into despair and depression. So, it depends on the person, you know, on your tendency. But attachment's the default mode – it's this voice that's there all the time at the level of assumption; and it's this frantic, panic-stricken, desperate need to get what I want every second.

So, it's quite a deep mental illness, Buddha says. We don't even give it a name in our culture; we just say it's being 'normal'. Do you understand? Okay.

So anger is the response when it doesn't get what it wants; and that's probably a thousand times a day. You know, we say 'irritated', 'annoyed', 'frustrated'; they're all polite words for anger, okay? We're doing it all the time. No wonder – and no wonder, if we never look at our minds – no wonder we get to having mental breakdowns by the time we're twenty. If you've never looked at this stuff, and you're living with it every day and not understanding it, no wonder we all go crazy; no wonder we have to go to therapists. No wonder we have to take pills – because we don't know what it is; we don't know how to deal with it; we think it's normal. We just think it's normal, you know? Buddha says it's painful mental suffering and it's breaking our hearts. Not to feel bad about it; not to feel guilty; that's absurd. Join the club, Buddha says; we're all in it, you know? Anything else? Eight forty; I've still time to do purification here. I don't want to try to squash a lot in tonight; I don't know... How many more days have we got? Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday – another six hours. Okay. Any more questions, people? Yes?

*It Doesn't Have to Be Labeled 'Buddhism'*

1:35:33

Q: So, let's say somebody who's not religious one way or another but decides that the secret to happiness is contentment; so whenever attachment arises for them, they come up with ideas like, well, I'll just compare myself to somebody in third world countries; so they condition their mind to be content...

Ven.: That's called 'practice'...

Q: So are they eliminating attachment there?

Ven.: Darling, it doesn't have to be called 'Buddhism'...if attachment's – if it's a natural law – Buddha is suggesting that this is the way the mind is. It's his view; it's not like a belief system he's dumping on top of what's there. He is saying this is the description of what's there. So, if there's a person who's got what's called 'attachment' but they might be called a 'communist' – I don't care – and they've got attachment but they've got a lot of patience and a lot of kindness and they overcome it; well, that's called 'practice'. If you're working on your mind, you're working on your mind. Morality is morality is morality.

Q: It's not like they're suppressing the attachment...

Ven.: They are doing it, though; they are doing it. You do it; you do it. You're not doing it; you're not doing it. If you're suppressing, you're suppressing; if you're not, you're not. It's actually what they're *doing*; you can't label it – if a person is working on their mind – listen; one of my sisters who doesn't like religion *at all* – and we talk about it, you know, and all I know is, ever since I've been a little girl, all I've ever thought about was the meaning of life and God and the universe and these things – as well as other things, of course – but Julie my sister; it never occurred to her even once. It just never did. But she's got

incredible morality in many ways; she's naturally honest, she's kind, she's given up eating any -- I mean, I'm ashamed, you know -- I'm a Buddhist and I still eat meat.

Julie was so overwhelmed by the suffering of one old fish that she heard about in Australia that used to be dragged out of the ocean at a hundred years old; she was so offended that she became a vegetarian, you know? Oh, god -- I was so moved by that. Then she -- for example -- she's very volatile -- all my family are; there are six girls and a boy and they're all speedy like me. My brother's quite peaceful in comparison; it's the six females that are kind of speedy, you know? Anyway, Julie -- when she -- like, I fly all the time on airplanes. I swear to you, if I ever had to get a middle seat -- and I'm only five feet tall -- I mean, of course I'd put up with it, but I'd do everything I bloody could -- excuse me -- to get a seat that's on the side or -- I wouldn't be ashamed about getting a good seat, you understand. But Julie says, 'I don't know; I just decide that's where I'm sitting and I'm happy. I think, 'Oh my god, Julie; I really admire you,' you know? That's called 'working on her mind', Tom. But she wouldn't call it Buddhist...

So we can deduce, using Buddha's view that she's come with a lot of good morality tendencies but she's completely sectarian; she doesn't believe in god; she doesn't even think about those things. But she's secular; a really good, moral person. I mean, it's just her tendencies. She can change her mind, she can put up with things -- I mean, she's got other qualities as well: angry and all these things -- but she's got this ability. Well, that's called -- that's a mental state; I really admire it. Do you understand? People have these tendencies; it's obvious. You don't have to be a Buddhist to be these things. Buddha's just running with this stuff, that's all. You know? That's all it is.

Another one of my sisters, too -- she's never eaten meat. And I said, 'Jan, why not?' I'd never thought to ask her; we'd never talked about it. And she said, 'Oh, I don't know; every time I see meat, I see a cow. How can I eat it?' Well, I couldn't believe it, you know? There's me, a Buddhist, supposedly; not killing things, but I go and eat meat... anyway, you understand. I mean, I don't kill anything; I don't think I've killed a living being in fifty years. Whatever, anyway -- that's my decision. What else? You, sweetheart, go on.

### *'Catch-and-Release'*

**1:39:18**

Q: I think you just kind of answered my question. But, I'm a fisherman, but I have a terrible aversion to killing; and I've taken a vow not to kill...

Ven.: But you say you're a fisherman?

Q: I'm a fisherman.

Ven.: But you said you took a vow not to kill...

Q: I did. I haven't killed a fish...

Ven.: But you said – you mean, you *were* a fisherman...

Q: Catch-and-release fisherman.

Ven.: Sorry, what?

Q: I don't keep them.

Ven.: I don't understand. What?

Q: I don't keep them. I let them go. It's called 'catch-and-release'.

Ven.: What?

Q: You catch the fish, you take it off the hook and then you put it back.

Ven.: Obviously it's common?

Q: It is here; it's really common.

Ven.: Do you know about that? This is very fascinating; stop for a second. Explain it to me; why do you go there?

Q: I don't know...

Ven.: There you go; karmic imprints, Buddha says. Habit. But you've got some other tendency in there along with – you must have been a Buddhist at some point that says 'don't kill – you've got these two conflicting things. You've got to keep fishing, but you chuck it back in...

Q: Well, my father used to...

Ven.: Fascinating...I've never heard of such a thing. I can't believe it. So, what's the pleasure?

Q: I don't know; I guess it's...

Ven.: What do you mean you don't know? It's your own mind! You've got to explain it to me. Okay...

Q: You said, you know, the story spoke to me because my father taught me how to fish. He hated the actual killing; he didn't like to kill the fish and clean them, you know, for everyone to eat; so he would always make *me* do that; and it would make me sick – like physically ill, like I would want to vomit and I remember when I got to the age of like thirteen and I finally had some will power, I told him I'm done doing this; I'm not going to do this anymore. And so I still love to fish and...

Ven.: But what do you love about it?

Q: I don't know; I tried... (Ven.) Drimay suggested stuff for me like removing hooks and not using hooks at all;

Ven.: Never mind all that; I'm just fascinated by what it is about it...so then this is where you've got to analyze; okay, forget what you should do; whatever you do I don't care. But most of the time, we say what we like to do; our answer will be the same: 'Oh, I don't know...' This is the Buddha's view where we're just brainwashed with habits, you know? We're just brainwashed with habits. I'm not criticizing; you can do what you like. I'm fascinated. I've never heard – I've never heard of such a thing.

Q: It is a challenge and it takes a certain amount of skill. And the fight... It's a conservation measure also.

Ven.: How can that conserve a fish if you catch it and release it?

Q: You can catch it again and again.

Ven.: I don't know this world at all, I'm fascinated. Amazing! Do you do the same with the deer and the elk? Do you release the elk, Harry? Do you hit it with an arrow and pull the arrow out and let it go?

Q: If I accidentally hurt one, I get, I mean, I get really, really upset...

Ven.: Do you put a hook in their mouths? They're hurt already, with a hook; but you don't mind that part?

Q: I think apparently whatever habit I have, I don't have – there's a disconnect there...but like I can't stand – I don't know, I just – I mean, since I took a vow, I haven't stepped on a bug...

Ven.: That's fascinating; at least you can say this much: you're making a karmic connection with all these fish. At least what you can do before you put them back in the water; you say a mantra, blow on it, and, honey, you try to lead all these sentient beings to enlightenment in the future but you're probably going to come – you know, there's the hook part; you've got the hook part...you've got to admit it's kind of weird, don't you? Very fascinating... wow, I can't believe it; how fascinating. Yes?

Q: My ten-year-old granddaughter who has a father who is from Montana; the family does fish. And I just got a very nice little DVD she did for school about a week she spent in the mountains at a lake and she believes that sometimes the fish won't bite the hook because they remember that they were caught another time; so they're not going to bite.

Ven.: There you go; that makes sense because fish are creatures of habit as well – they see the hook coming. So, you've got to be careful. Do you go fishing as well?

Q: Very little.

Ven.: Very little. Mostly the elk and the deer...very fascinating what we do. Anyway, there you go; maybe no purification tonight; just talking about this... There are two things to look at: what you come with, and you're using – so here, you know, It's up to you; you could use the communist view of what you are if you want to, but here we're using Buddha's view of assessing what you are and listing all your habits and your tendencies; and then you know, if you're trying to use Buddhism, you look at *his* view of what's good and what's bad and you try to assess this; and you have to compare. And then you decide, well, okay, let's have a look at this and then you make some decisions – it's up to you, you know. That's really what you're trying to do.

That'll do, I think. Any questions? Yes?

### ***'Mental Karma'***

**1:45:53**

Q: I think you've already answered this talking about habitual states of mind or habitual emotional states but sometimes I hear people talk about mental karma; and ...

Ven.: Of course there is; everything you do is a habit – mental, physical or verbal – isn't it?

Q: Well, I find it a little confusing in comparing to the completed karma you were talking about. But – so, is mental karma just referring to...

Ven.: What do you mean? Can you give me an example of it? When you say you've heard about mental karma, what do you mean then?

Q: Well, I just – I don't have an example, but I've just heard people distinguish...

Ven.: Well, then, you understand that karma ripens in four ways: the form you're born into – due to much strong morality, you, for example, as a result of morality, of goodness; that karma of goodness ripens at the time of your past life, programs your mind that then throws your consciousness into your new mummy's human womb – as opposed to a dog's womb in the back yard. Well, that's the result of morality, your first one. Then the second one is your tendencies in your mind. Well, that's your *mind*, that's mental, isn't it? That's mental, right? Your tendencies are mental: the tendency to have attachment, anger, pride, jealousy; kill, lie, steal, lust, love, hate are in your mind before your body and speech go anywhere. Well, that's called 'mental', isn't it?

Q: Uh-hum.

Ven.: Well, then, come on; what else is that but mental karma? That's what it is – your entire personality *is a bunch of mental habits* and then you express them with your body and speech. Then the third way karma ripens is the stuff that people do to you. Do you understand?

Q: Yes.

Ven.: Well, there you go; and the fourth one is the environmental karma; so 'mental' is obviously your habits, isn't it?

Q: And so, if you have thoughts – let's say for example, that you have thoughts about killing that you do not act on, but you are habituating your mind –

Ven.: If you fantasize about it every day; believe me, darling, it won't be long before your hand will do the job.

Q: So, mental karma would just be habituating your mind to certain patterns of thought...

Ven.: Which is what we're doing every day, isn't it? And that's why we've got to practice *not* following through with body and speech; so then we purify at the end of the day. Isn't it? That's right, exactly.

Q: I think what he's trying to get at, though, is if you have the thoughts...

Ven.: I thought he got there very nicely; I thought I answered it...

Q: ...and don't carry out the action...

Ven.: Jenna, I answered him already...

Q: ...it's still negative karma...

Ven.: He didn't ask that at all. You're asking that.

Q: Okay.

Ven.: So don't say he's trying to get at something; he got at what he wanted. You have got another point. So, what is your point, Jenna? Start again.

Q: It's still a negative action, negative karma that you've created if you have the thought but don't carry it out.

Ven.: Then you tell me – you answer the question based on what I've told you tonight.

Q: Well, I don't think so. I think ...

Ven.: So, what do you mean? What does 'karma' mean?

Q: Mental...

Ven.: What's 'karma' mean? So then you don't think that thinking angry thoughts will increase the thought to be more angry?

Q: Yes. I do.

Ven.: Then what are you... that's the answer, isn't it? It increases the tendency to be angry, isn't it? Very simple. *Is it not true?*

Q: Yes.

Ven.: I didn't say 'kill a person'; we're not discussing using your body and speech. We're not discussing an action called 'killing'; we're discussing an action in your mind. So, clearly, whatever you do in your mind is programming your mind. Every time you learn mathematics, you're programming your mind with mathematics. You might never write it down, dear; it's still programming your mind with those habits, is it not?

Q: Yes.

Ven.: Okay, then; eventually – believe me – your body will act it out one day. Because the mind gives rise to the body and speech, doesn't it? So, everything is a karma; *everything counts*. Every thought counts, is the point. Do you understand? Okay. Okay; yes?

### *Video Games*

**1:49:47**

Q: So, I've had this over many years with people about video games...

Ven.: Yeah...what's the discussion?

Q: If you're constantly killing in these like, really gory video games...

Ven.: What's the motivation in the mind? Anger?

Q: Fun.

Ven.: Fun? Just fun? Well, it's not so negative, is it, if it's just fun? Depends on the person's mind. I mean, you know, I remember reading about the Columbine boys -- those two kids; and one of their friends said, 'Excuse me; I've been watching the same videos. I don't want to go kill and torture people...'

So, it depends on the person, doesn't it? Some person's mind – you know, all the monks in Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu on Saturday after they have a day off; they couldn't wait to run to the main hall where they put on these crazy Hindi movies of violence and different dramas, you know? They love them. It's all a question of the mind; they're sort of fun, you know, like they said; it's just fun...it depends on a person's mind.

If you've got a tendency to torture, to lie, to kill, of course it's going to influence your mind. It's a question of – it's not to have a blanket fear of these things; but to know the mind of your child. So, if you've got a kid who's got a tendency to want to torture, please keep it away from the videos. Do you understand?

Obviously, *in general*, everything we see in the outside world has an impact upon us; and most people, we don't know how to work on our mind; that's why we get so affected. Isn't it? So, it's just a question of what's in the mind of the person. You can't blanket say – you know, it depends... I mean, I love – movies for me – give me James Bond any day, you know – over some boring old psychological drama or some weepy thing, you know? I can't bear them. I like James Bond but other violent movies I find disgusting...the energy is so gross. But James Bond is so clearly just fun, you know; of course it's violent; people dying – every second minute they're dying; but somehow it's not like – it doesn't feel like it makes your mind negative; not my mind, anyway. Maybe I'm just negative naturally; it depends on the person. It depends on the motive, the intention, what you're trying to do with it; many factors involved. Isn't it? Yeah.

I think it's time to go home. Food for thought; Okay, everybody; thank you so much.

Jang chub sem chhog rin po che  
Ma kye pa nam kye gyur chig  
Kye pa nam pa me pa yang  
Gong ne gong du phel war shog

May compassion grow and grow in the hearts of all. That'll do.

Transcribed by Fran McDermott