# There Is No Reason for Being!

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 54:08

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sambhuddhassa Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sambhuddhassa Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sambhuddhassa*

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-enlightened one.

On one of the Tuesday evenings, one of the people who came along told us this tale of a six-year-old child who was playing a game and then suddenly said to her mother, "There's no reason for being," and then went back playing. Six years old. So this being, she must have heard her parents talk about it or friends about the meaning of life and all that. And it must have worked on her mind. She must have understood what she was saying because how can you come out with something like that without having some inkling, some feel for what you actually mean?

And the interesting thing is that, of course, she was playing. So the thing about play is that you do it for yourself. You don't do it for any other reason. You don't play Monopoly to make yourself famous. I mean, a game is just a game. I know that we put a lot of things on games these days, like football—it's become an industry. But when a child plays a game, or when we ourselves play a game with a child, we're just playing a game. It doesn't have any objective apart from just playing the game. And therefore, all your attention is in just that doing.

I think the second quality is, of course, it's very joyful. It's a happy thing to do, playing a game, playing cards. And I think as adults we might have things like hobbies, which don't particularly have any reason beyond themselves. They're just something you like to do. They don't have any aim or objective beyond just that doing. And usually, a person would say that they enjoy their hobby. It wouldn't make sense to have a hobby that you didn't enjoy. So if you cook, for instance, if you like cooking, you do it just for the pleasure of it. And then you might share it with friends. And you might lose a few friends, but it's a joyful occasion. It's something that you've enjoyed doing.

So this little girl, she's playing with "there's no reason for being." So it depends, of course, what we mean by reason. If we mean by reason that there's something outside the game, something outside we're doing, we're aiming at some future result, some end point that we're moving towards, then that puts a pressure, doesn't it? It puts a pressure on what you're doing now, because what you're doing now is not in itself entire and whole. The action is not completed until some future event arises. So these professional games, these footballers and tennis players, sure, they play the game, but it's not just a game, is it? There's something else. There's an ambition about it. There's the climbing up the ladder of success. There's the money. So the game itself now doesn't have that immediate sense of perfect joy that a game might have

for a child. It's got a pressure on it now.

Now as opposed to this word being, we've got this other word becoming. And the word in the Pali for that is *bhāva*, to become. So when the Buddha describes this process of becoming, he really describes it quite clearly in the Dependent Origination, which is what we'll chant tomorrow, the sequence of mental events. And somewhere in that process of play, which ends around about the age of seven or so, when we lose that immediate innocence of life, and thought comes in, and thought launches us out into some future. We've lived long enough to imagine a future. How futuristic can a child of three be? What does it mean to a child of three to say that in two months' time there'll be Christmas? They don't live that long to understand what two months is, really. It's an imaginative thing. But for us, having lived so long, we begin to project, don't we? We know where we're going. We've got an idea of time. It's all blocked out for us. So now somewhere in that process, something goes wrong.

Now as opposed to that, as opposed to that going wrong and living for some future event, you have the Buddha or the enlightened ones who don't do that, but they're still living in time. They know what two months is. They also have a clear idea of time. But somehow they don't suffer. Somehow they don't get this comeback which is in the process of becoming.

In the law of *kamma*, when Buddhism talks about *kamma*, it talks about two types of *kamma*: *kusala* and *a kusala*. So this translates as wholesome and unwholesome actions, virtuous and unvirtuous actions, skillful and unskillful actions. That's how you can translate it. But interestingly enough, when they try to describe or when they try to find a word for an enlightened person doing an action, they use another word, *kriya*, which is translated in a funny way as functional, functional action. So there's something distinctive between somebody who is fully liberated and somebody who isn't. It's a sharp line. It's not as though it's a progression. You either are liberated or you're not. You might be a little bit liberated, but you're not fully liberated. There's always that peculiar way of looking at things which causes some form of dissatisfaction.

So what is it that goes wrong within that process which causes us to become rather than to be? So when the Buddha is deciding to teach, that comes out of just the desire to share the goodness that he's discovered. It's a natural thing. They say in Zen, for instance, that out of wisdom, compassion arises naturally, love arises naturally. And there's some teachers in Zen that won't touch practices like loving-kindness. It's off the path. You want to get to the enlightenment, to the awakening, and then everything else just happens naturally.

So when the Buddha was awakened and this natural desire came to teach, he thought, well, who could he teach? And having understood or come to know that his two teachers, those were his first people he thought he might help, were dead, he then walks to find his other five companions, those who had told him he'd gone soft and they didn't want to know him anymore because he'd had this rice pudding. And he walks from where he becomes enlightened, where he becomes awakened in Bodh Gaya, he walks all the

way to Sarnath. Now I've got this figure of 400 miles, but I don't think that's quite right, but it's a heck of a long way anyway. It's five hours on the train. So it's quite a long way. So he's off, and he has to ask. It's not as though people have got mobiles in those days. He'll find out where they are.

And then he begins to teach. Throughout his career as a teacher, when somebody comes to him who doesn't accept what he's saying, like there's an occasion when this fellow called Dandapani, which means stick in hand, must have been a nickname, comes and asks him what he teaches, and the Buddha says what he teaches, and he goes away clicking his tongue, shaking his head, "a lot of rubbish." In fact, there's a lovely incident when he starts off on the teaching to find his five companions and he comes across an ascetic who sees a certain glow around him, a certain brightness. And he says, "My, you're bright. Who's your teacher?" And he launches into this self-panegyric about him saying, "I am the fully enlightened one. I don't need to teach lots of stuff." And the guy says, "Oh, right, OK," and wanders off. And I think that was an early lesson that that's not what you do if you're going to teach.

When people don't accept his teaching, he's not saddened by it, he's not upset by it. And yet when people do accept his teachings, he's joyful. And when he describes the Buddha heart, when he describes how he experiences *Nibbāna* as this present experience, he talks about it being contented and with it happy. Contented and with it happy. And those four limitless, love, compassion, joy, equanimity, but especially the first three, which is about relationship—love, compassion and joy—those contain, as it were, in their various shades, the way the Buddha heart actually responds to the world. And if he's on his own, if he's quiet, or an enlightened person's quiet, they just fall into this state of equanimity.

So you get the sense that somebody who's awakened is living very much in the present moment, doesn't have any particular aim. He's just responding from that wisdom point to a given situation now, without any care for future results. Even when he goes to begin his teaching and men and women approach him to join him, he doesn't seem to have any particular idea of where the order is going. He's just following the general customs of ascetics in those days. And it's only as things go wrong, as certain monks and nuns make mistakes or do something wrong, that he produces a rule. And in the end, by the end of his life, he's produced all these rules and it rests on a particular platform of understanding. That's what you would call an institution. An institution is a given reason, some platform, and then you build up a rule around it to give it some legal solidity. Even say marriage, that's an institution. Marriage just between two people, so there's a basic understanding and then there are rules, spoken or unspoken, which maintain that particular relationship.

And he ends up with that. Not that he had any specific idea as to where it was going, but by the end of his life he can look back and think, well, what's been produced or what's happened is good. He talks about the four sanghas or the four assemblies: monks and nuns, laywomen and laymen. But that happened naturally. He didn't seem to have gone out particularly to establish that. It just happened as he's walking around and people join him.

So you get the sense of spontaneity rather than knee-jerk reactions or some preconditioned idea as to where he's going. So that's another quality of play—it's spontaneous. A child is very spontaneous. Perhaps we can talk about a sense of just being in the moment, moving from one moment to the next, responding to it with wisdom, without any sense of some future success and failure—all that's out the window—without any sense of gain, riches or anything like that, without any sense of power, wanting to control. He didn't particularly want to control monks and nuns. He just wanted to set up a situation where eventually all they could do was meditate and study the Dharma. That's the two duties that he put to the monks. And he set up certain institutions for lay people by taking refuge in the five precepts and general guidelines.

So there's no sense of him wanting to be rich, to be powerful, to be successful in any sense. He's not driven by some future aim. And he's not worried about being famous. There's no hint in the scriptures that he gets upset if people don't recognize him. In fact, there's a point there where a monk or somebody enters into a small congregation of monks and they ask, "Well, which one is the Bhagavā?" So he hasn't got a special hat on, or three stripes on his shoulders. He's just an ordinary person. He just looks like—he doesn't try to lift himself above others.

All these are manifesting a relationship. That's what they're doing. They're manifesting a relationship with what happens, a relationship with time, a relationship with their life. The question of "What am I supposed to be doing?" or "Where am I supposed to be going?" or "Why am I here?" "Who am I?" See, all those questions have disappeared. There is just this moment of this relationship and this response, coming from the point of wisdom. In that moment there's that complete openness to it, because there's nothing negative within the person, something that has to be hidden or repressed—some little dislike or guilt or whatever, the usual gamut of human misery. Because there's nothing there, there's that ability just to be completely open to the situation. And whatever the situation presents, there's just coming out from the heart of wisdom.

When it comes to certain incidents like the woman who comes crazed with grief because she's lost her child, her dead. She's got this idea that these ascetics are magic, have some mystical powers. And in her grief-stricken situation, the Buddha is able to realize that to give her the straight teaching is just going to send her off berserk. He gives a little trick to come to realize the way life is. So he sends it off, doesn't he, to find a mustard seed. So mustard seeds are a million a penny. But he says, "You must get it from a house where there's not been any death." So off she goes, desperate, knocking on doors. "I must have a mustard seed. Well, of course. Anybody died? Of course." And by the end of a certain sequence of hours, there comes this dawning that death is part of life. It just happens. That's the way it is. So she comes back more balanced of mind. And then she's open to the teachings. And as all these stories go, she enters the order and becomes fully awakened.

So he's able to respond easily to people because he's not coming from a fixed place, a fixed point, a presumption, a view, an opinion. This idea of being totally receptive means that you've got to come from

the ability to receive different perspectives and bring them into your general way of seeing things. A perspective suggests that you're not holding on to it. You recognize that there are other perspectives, that you're prepared to have your perspective widened or broadened or somehow changed because you hear other people's views, their perspectives. But the word opinion gives us the idea that, well, this is right, nobody else is wrong. It immediately closes you off, immediately shuts you off. It makes the relationship difficult. You're immediately in contradiction with somebody else who has a different opinion.

So when somebody comes to the Buddha and asks him to give a teaching, he never goes into his teaching. He always says, "Well, what do you think?" And then the person says what they think. And then he undermines their position. Bit of a trick, really, I suppose. And then when they're completely floored and completely lost, he says, "Well, now this is the truth." And off he goes. But he doesn't seem to have been that person who said, "Well, look, if you come to me, this is what it is. If you don't accept it, go away." He's prepared to try and understand where that person's coming from, and in so doing, to show that maybe they haven't got it quite right. And then there's an openness to the Dharma. Then there's a subtleness, there's a malleability in that person's mind, and that's when he offers the Dharma.

So we can see that just in general all these qualities are about being very present, like a child is with play. There's nothing being deposited onto this present moment either by way of some past opinion, some view that we've held onto from the past and that we must see this present moment through. There's no launching of this present moment into some future successful result. So it remains just entire and whole in itself. And you're moving through time in these little blocks. But you're not coming from nowhere. That's the point. The Buddha's not coming from a blank sheet. He's coming from a specific way of relating to the world, which brings with it a specific understanding.

So now as opposed to that, you've got this becoming, which is generally speaking what we do. This becoming. What's the core of the becoming? How do these opinions and views and futures and fame and riches and power—from where do they spring? Around what do they coagulate? What are they an expression of? So this is what the Buddha refers to as the self. And the self isn't a thing. It's not that you can point to it or pick it up or say what it is. It's a relationship. It's a relationship.

So it's a mistake that we make, which is completely understandable. It's not as though it's a culpable mistake. We're not supposed to go beating ourselves around the head because we made this mistake, because we come from a point of not knowing.

There's a film called Zenoir, and there's a nice little passage in that where the master is asked by this person, "What happens when you die?" And he says, "Don't know." And then he says, "Why don't you know?" He says, "I'm not dead yet." It's creating, it's recognising that what we've done is we've made a presumption, we've fallen into some sort of what the Buddha called a delusion. And a delusion, by definition, is something that you don't know you're deluded about, or else you wouldn't be deluded.

So there we are, this little bundle of flesh and bones. And what do we know? What do we know? And then

society comes at us with definitions, gives us a name. Parents tell us this and tell us that. We pick up the history, we get a language. Everything's dumped on us. So is it any wonder that we should end up thinking, well, this is what I am. And this is what I am. I am English. I am a teacher. I am. I am. This am business. This I with its definition, with its being, you might say, with its sense of self in all those definitions that we have about who we are and what we are.

So once we've cornered ourselves, once we've gathered all these definitions about ourselves, you can see how it becomes an imprisonment. And you get these wonderful statements like, the one I love is, "If I did that, that wouldn't be me. If I thought that, that wouldn't be me." And it's a sort of—you can feel the clampness of that. It's like something that's so tight about who I am.

Now this who I am produces a doing. You walk into life with who I am and you start doing something. So very simply, if you say I am a teacher, then you have to teach. But this teaching now isn't like the Buddha's teaching where he's just in relationship. It falls back on a definition. It falls back on who I am. So if I lose my job, who am I? Then I get the depression. I mean, losing your job is bad enough to lose the income. That's bad enough. But then to lose a definition of yourself, well, that's an identity crisis. You might go around saying, "Well, I was a teacher," which is a bit of a downer.

But that business of identity creates a whole psychology of what we mean by an attachment. Now, of course, it goes deeper than that because at the deepest level we think we're humans. I am a human being. That's a pretty general statement most people on earth would agree with. I am a human being. But when you say, "I am a human being," what do you mean? Are you the body?

If you say, "Well, I am the body, I am this body," how long are you this body for? When you talk about this body, I think every—I don't know, I read it somewhere, but every atom is exchanged in your body something like every few days or something. It's quite remarkable how quickly the body is changing. The cornea on your eye changes every week. I know that for sure because the optician told me, and I believe the optician.

If you go into the biology of certain parts of your body, you'll be quite amazed how they're not actually in unison. Bits are falling off without you knowing. Bits take time to fall off. A bone, I think, takes about three months to renew itself. So even now, you walked into that door with this body, but it isn't this body anymore. It's moved on. It's changed.

So this idea of a self, it has something static about it, it has something solid. This is what I am. But when we investigate the body, we find this am-ness can't be static. And if it's moving, if it's changing, then which am I? Am I the body that I was born with, or this body, or the future body? So the sense of I begins to corrupt, it begins to fall apart.

But if I say I am the body, you can imagine—well, we know, don't we? We know the suffering of I am the body. It comes out when you fall sick, when somebody close to you dies. Then you know, oh, well, if that

body went that way, probably mine will follow in the same way. And we all dread the moment when the doctor will tell you you've got six weeks to go. That's not a laughing matter, is it?

So this sense of self, this identity with the body, manifests when the body moves into danger. And that fear that we have, that real fear of death, of dying, of severe illness, of being crippled, of losing our minds, Alzheimer's—all that fear is the measure of that delusion.

See, when the Buddha died, he was in pain. He had gastroenteritis or some sort. He would have been in pain. But by how it's come down to us, he's just lying on his side. And there's even still that desire to make sure that he's said everything. He asks, "Are there any more questions?" And when there are no more questions, he says, "Well, all compounded things arise and pass away. Work diligently for your liberation." And off he goes.

What will be our last words? Why me? What will be our last thoughts? Will they be as equanimous as that? As easy? Will we let go as easy as that? So the reason we can't let go as easy as that is because it's what I think I am. I'm losing a bit of me.

You think about your emotional life. That's changed, hasn't it? That's constantly changing, probably faster than the body's changing. All these intentions we make, all these, the way that we create this inner life within ourselves, all the depressions and anxieties, etc. And the happinesses, the loves and all those, the joys of life. They seem to come and go, don't they? And even more fleeting is thought. So which thought are you? And would you want to go back to being a three-year-old, the three-year-old's thoughts?

So when we begin to investigate this self, this I am, this I am—and you finish it off, I am, I think therefore I am, I feel therefore I am, I walk around therefore I am, I brush my teeth therefore I am. When you investigate that as something solid, entire, whole unto itself, it begins to crumble, doesn't it? It begins to crumble.

But we find that when we're in that state, what it makes us do is to hold on to the present moment tightly or make sure this present moment has some sort of sense to this ongoing feeling of self and it creates this future. You've got to be going somewhere. What's the point of just being here if you're not going somewhere? What's the point of meditating if you're not going to get some results? That's a hard one, isn't it? You've all come here for some result. Very disappointing.

And this self, this becoming, this process of being me all the time, me all the time, is driven by this desire to be happy. That's what we want, isn't it? To be happy, for heaven's sake. I don't want to be rich, I just want to be happy. So being driven by this want to be happy, I've got to manipulate, I've got to actually struggle against the way things are to make me happy because my happiness is defined by what's made me happy in the past. If crumpets and cocoa have made me happy on Thursday, then next Thursday I've got to have crumpets and cocoa. I won't be happy. Simple as that. So I begin to try and manipulate the future.

Now when we say the future, that's not some abstract idea. That means people. I've got to manipulate you to make me happy. If you get in my way, I've got to manipulate you. I've got to play around with you. If an object gets in my way, I kick it out. I burn it. I get rid of it.

I mean, we have these ideologies, don't we? When a group of people take on a similar idea, you get these vast ideologies. Christianity, communism, capitalism. And you can see what it does. It destroys people because they all have to fit into this future idea, this thing that's created only in somebody's head. And if you don't fit in, well, you get shot.

So this self has a way of collecting other selves to support the idea this self has. And then you have a movement. Oh my goodness. That's what happens to religions, isn't it? From the first inspiration, it becomes locked into a series of beliefs and attitudes and then it becomes a movement. And it loses that original spontaneity. And every so often a teacher comes along and reforms it and you get that burst of energy again. But often it will just solidify into rites and rituals, customs. Rules and regulations.

I mean, Jesus, with the Jewish tradition, "Sabbath was not made for—what is it—man was not made for the Sabbath, Sabbath was made for man." That's what he's saying, these rules and regulations are not there to bind us.

So all these problems that we come across, all these conflicts, all the emotional turmoil, all of that, it all falls back on this I am.

Now, that's the crucial importance of *vipassanā* meditation or these other forms, in other forms of Buddhism like Zen, Zazen or Dzogchen. It's all about getting down to that root level of the problem.

Now, I often quote every evening, I quote this business of those who are mindful are in the presence of *Nibbāna*, in the vicinity of *Nibbāna*. So what do we mean by that? Well, when you sit still, and so you've steadied the body and stilled the body, and you've found this observation post within yourself, and you've become an observer within yourself, a feeler, an experiencer, and you're looking into the so-called self, this body, this psychophysical complex organism—that's a very different position from "I am the body," isn't it? Because you're saying, "There's the body."

I mean, when somebody has a headache, they say, "I have a headache, I am ill." But here, suddenly from this position, you're looking at the knee, you're feeling the knee, and you're saying, "Well, there's pain." There's somehow a separation, there's a gap has appeared between this knowing and what it knows. And that gap is a loss of self. It's a loss of a relationship. It's no longer my knee, my pain. It is, there's pain.

When you have an emotion come up, depression comes up, or joy, or some sort of excitement, or this dullness and lethargy—see, normally you'd say, "I am tired." And that's good enough reason to go to bed. "I am depressed," and that's a good enough reason to go to bed. Lots of amazing good reasons to go to bed, but here you can't. If I go to bed, no, I'll be very upset. You have to say, "Oh, there's dullness. There's dullness in the head. It feels like porridge. And there's tiredness in the body."

But somehow this "there is" has made whatever knows, that which knows, separate itself from—it's formed a new relationship with it. It's not me. It's not mine. There is this. It's just like a property that you've sold or a car that you used to have that you've sold. You have a very different relationship to it, don't you? It's not yours anymore. It's somebody else's. The fact that all the pipes burst, well, you're very compassionate, but it's not your problem anymore, is it? But if it's your house, your car, it's very upsetting if things go wrong.

So can you see that if we can develop a relationship with the body where this is the body, not me, not mine, when things go wrong, why should fear arise? It's not me, it's not mine. Why should I get depressed? It's not me, it's not mine.

Emotions, you see, we find out that they're just these volitional conditionings. That's a sort of translation of the word *saṅkhāra*. They're just conditionings. A mental conditioning. What is it? What is an emotion? What is it before you give it a name?

So here you are, you're meditating and this feeling comes up. And you can see it's not a physical feeling like pain or pleasure. It's a mental feeling. It's more of a subtle sort of energy. And as you look into it, you say, "Oh, that feels like depression or feels like anxiety or it feels like joy, feels like excitement." But to do that, you must have separated yourself. To investigate something, you've got to be outside it. If you want to look at cells, you've got to find an instrument and you're looking at it. If you want to look up in the sky, you've got to get an instrument and you've got to look at it. You can't be the star. You can't get lost in some sort of romantic emotion if you want to study the star.

So here, in order to find out what an emotion is, we've had to separate from it. And that separation, that distinction, is a loss of self because you're not saying, "I am depressed." You're saying, "There is depression." You're not saying, "I am excited." "There's excitement."

And we can take this as far as thoughts and images. When you get into a really good quiet state, you can see a thought coming. You see an image beginning to grow. Sometimes a thought passes through your mind like a neon light. And when you have those sorts of experiences, you know, well, I didn't think that. It just arose and passed away.

So, very slowly, through the practice of *vipassanā*, we are distinguishing, we're finding out that, well, this is not what I am, this is not me, not mine. And that process, of course, leads us backwards. This is the unfortunate thing. You don't know where you're going. It leads us backwards to the knowledge of who I am. That's the koan. That's the big question, as I understand it anyway, of Korean Zen. It's just that. Who am I?

And it's the moment after you've asked the question which is the potential moment. After that the mind rushes in to tell you who you are and what you are. But just to hang on in there, who am I? And that moment of not knowing has all the potential of breaking that essential delusion that hangs around the

word I.

So from the Buddha's teaching, this becoming, this constant becoming me, this arising out of one moment into the next, is the fundamental problem that is creating this wrong relationship with the world. And it puts us into a conflict with it. Whether it's a subtle conflict or a major conflict, it doesn't matter. It's always a conflict. Because we're always trying to manipulate things to fit in with this sense of me.

Now when that goes, there's a whole new relationship. Now there is no future. There's no past. You're not coming from a fixed position. You're not going to a fixed position. Our ability will be to be completely receptive, without any sieve, without any separation of what we don't want, what we don't like. And in that, there's that very open communication.

And in that open, immediate communication, whether it be with a person or with an animal or with just nature, with a tree, just an openness to a tree, to a leaf, there's that sense of just being here in a very total way, for no other reason than just to be here. And with it there arises just a natural joy. This is what the Buddha says, just a natural joy. That contentment is that being with the moment, not wanting anything more than what the moment is giving us. And the happiness comes out of the response to that moment. Contentment and happiness.

So that's where we're going. And we should be happier. That's what we mean by hope as opposed to expectation. Hope is the knowledge, that inner knowledge, that inner feeling, that intuitive understanding that there's an end to suffering. There's an end to that wrong sort of relationship. And what the *vipassanā* practice is doing is making us see that, yeah, there's a possibility of an end to this. It doesn't make it any easier, but it does lift the practice a bit to know that there is an end to suffering.

See, becoming has to have this objective.

Becoming has to have this expectancy, which is slightly different. Making a distinction between hope and expectation. Hope is a fundamental position to life, that life is good. It has meaning. There is a reason for suffering. And the reason for suffering is this wrong relationship. And that once the wrong relationship is corrected, happiness, perfect peace, all that arises.

Expectation would want to put a date on it. The expectation would want to achieve it. But what we realize in the meditation is that it's not achievable by you. That's another thing that you recognize, isn't it? That it happens. Once you find yourself in that position, the heart begins to purify itself. You don't have to do anything. It's like the body heals itself.

You can't have a spiritual insight. You can't say, well, I'm going to sit down now and I'm going to have a spiritual insight. You can't do it. You can have an intellectual insight. You can think about something. You can have an aesthetic insight. You can set yourself a task to understand something aesthetically or that way. But you can't make yourself have an insight. In fact, you might argue that when it comes to certain problems, even insights of that nature are beyond the self. You know, scientists will talk about how the

answer just came. They'll go to sleep. They'll sleep on an answer, and then they wake up with it. Who thought that one out?

So how do we bring ourselves, how do we begin to train ourselves in daily life to get this sense of being rather than becoming? And the trick there is to really get your intentions right. So when you're eating, you're just eating to nourish the body. You're not asking for it to make you happy. It's as simple as that. If you're asking for it to make you happy, then you've formed a different relationship with food. But if the food is there just as medicine for the body, what's the problem? The fact that it tastes nice is a plus, a little gift.

When you want to help somebody, make sure that your intention is right, that you're just doing it for that person, you're just doing it out of the goodness of heart, that there's no subliminal reasons for doing it, that you want your kitchen decorated too and that you expect them to come along and do it, things like that.

When you do whatever job you do to get it right, that you're doing it as a service, of course there's pay. And of course there's hopefully the enjoyment of the job. But those are to be seen as merit. We have this idea in Buddhism of merit. You get merit, you get something added on because of your good heart. So the merit of doing your job is you get a wage and you get a certain joy out of it. But that's not why you're doing it. The reason we should be doing work is out of a service. You're doing it for the benefit of the other.

It doesn't get rid of the idea of ambition. You don't have to not be ambitious because you've decided to live the spiritual life. But your attitude is, well, these are the talents I've got and I can see that a job, I could do that job, so I'll offer these talents as a service. So if you find that somebody else got the job, there's not that disappointment. Because it was an offering. It's like, you know, you give a present. I mean, if you give a present and the person says, well, it's all right, no, I don't want it. You shouldn't feel bad about it, should you? You only feel bad about it because there's some ego, there's some self involved in the giving of the present. It's like they've not accepted you. You've been rejected. So you feel dejected.

So in terms of our meditation, we're trying to make this distinction as to what is me and what is not me. And mainly the technique is to see not me, not me, not mine, not me, not mine. And then when we go out into daily life to see, to be aware of any selfish, any self-centered intention.

Now you've got to be careful here. There's a difference between selfishness and self-regard, self-care. I mean sometimes you've got to look after yourself. But in terms of what you're doing, you're doing it with the right attitude for the benefit of the other.

So there are three positions. You do things for your own benefit, you do things for the benefit of the other, and you do things both for your own benefit and the benefit of the other. That's how the Buddha states it. And then you see the result. Not the result out there, because you never know what happens when you do something out there. But you see the result inside. Has it caused attachment? Has it caused

disappointment? If anything negative comes up from an action, then you know there's something crept in there.

So let's presume that that little girl who said there's no reason for being is already there. She might be fully and completely liberated. You never know. So I can only hope my words have been of some assistance. May you be liberated sooner rather than later.

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