Preliminaries, Regarding Voice, Movement, and Gesture (Part 1)

Rob Burbea · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Rob Burbea · 1:42:17

Hello everyone.

There are a few things I would like to offer as I'm making these recordings. Usually I would probably have waited a little longer—first, to gather a little more material around these topics, and second, to hope that I felt a little bit more capable physically and mentally. But despite the difficulties, I think it's probably wiser not to wait and just take this window of opportunity as it presents itself right now, as I don't know what the future will bring.

So I wanted to offer a few things, and really they're mostly exercises—that's the way I'm thinking about them. Like etudes, or exercises, or preliminaries, if you know that word used in Tibetan Buddhist circles: preliminary exercises, preliminary trainings, preliminary requirements, preliminary developments.

Of course, there's something a little strange about beginning to put out and accrue a set of preliminary exercises however many years we are into unfolding the soul-making teachings. But the teachings have grown very organically, and as we grow, we recognize: ah, this is needed, that's needed, this is what we need to add here. So it doesn't matter anyway.

I'd like to offer some what we might call preliminaries—some exercises. Primarily, these exercises involve and center around movement and gesture, so the physical body and movement and gesture, or the bodily experience of movement and gesture, and voice. Movement, gesture and voice.

Woven into that, I'd like to include some thoughts and teachings about soul, about personhood and about human being—anthropology, if you like—because it's very much woven into the way we're thinking about all this.

So preliminary, at this stage of development of the organic growth of the teachings. This is a beginning, and whatever I will offer in these talks is a beginning that can hopefully be developed. It should be developed. It will naturally evoke, suggest, and elicit development. And hopefully that development will be very discerning, congruent, sensitive, appropriate, and intelligent.

Movement, gesture, voice. These are huge areas. We can add all kinds of things willy-nilly just because we like them or we have a history there, or they make us feel good, or whatever. But hopefully, these kinds of exercises can be added to and can be developed naturally. As is the way of soul-making, things that get swept up into the soul-making dynamic will develop—they have to develop.

So this is a beginning. Hopefully they will be developed and grow and become more sophisticated, wider, further, deeper, more varied.

Actually, it's not even a complete beginning, because I have offered—and many of you will already know—other teachings that focus on movement, gesture, voice, and so forth. So in a way, what we're going to say in these talks adds to that thread that's already there. In fact, through other talks, through other exercises I've given out in the past, through instructions and guided meditations from the past—however long it is, five or six years.

I had a quick look earlier today and I remember there were a couple of talks called "Voice, Movement and the Possibilities of Soul"—guided meditations, exercises, instructions. There's something called "Movement of Devotion," if I remember, and a couple of versions of that. Perhaps that may have been the first one, though I think I started it all too subtly, too difficultly for a first teaching. So as I said, the teachings are growing organically rather than in any linear way. They're presented over the years in ways where the chronological order of presentation doesn't necessarily match how one would unfold the soul-making dharma if one was starting from zero. It doesn't match that at all.

So there's that "Movement of Devotion." There are even things like guided meditations we did—"Hearing All Sounds as Mantra," "A Dual Line World," those kinds of things we've done where there's a lot going on. There's a lot of instructions going out. I'm asking people in the room to chant and move and do this and that and interact with each other. And while they're doing that, I may have been giving instructions, throwing them into the space at the same time.

Very understandably, if a lot of those instructions didn't get well absorbed or taken on, if that kind of practice didn't get built on and repeated, if the principles hidden in those instructions—in the mix of this very complex, intensive social situation of guided meditation and new experiences—if the understanding of the principles underlying and girding the instructions were not drawn out and capitalized upon and made clear, of course that's very understandable.

Similarly, in rituals and ceremonies that we've done and played with, there are often background instructions thrown in. But there's so much going on in the choreography and the sociality and interactions of that whole larger situation that it would be very surprising if those were taken on board as instructions in a way that one would actually build on them, or even recognize that there was anything there to build on or extract. So all that's completely understandable.

Even recently, in the last few months, I remember in one of those online seminars—I can't remember what it was called, but it was something to do with engagement and activism—I remember just saying something about the energy body and devotion, throwing something out and intending it really as a set of meditation instructions.

But I was way too quick. Way too quick in explaining that and expecting people to actually hear, "Oh, this

is a set of instructions. And I can take this and practice it and do it a lot like I do my breath meditation a lot." So I didn't set it up that way. I didn't take the time that way, just because there's a million other things to talk about, or it seems to me there always is, so I'm always in a rush.

And similarly on the jhāna retreat, actually at some point—it might even have been in the opening talk—I did guide people very briefly through a meditation with body and devotion and energy body. But again, how many people will actually take that out and extract it and capitalize on it and repeat it, isolate it and repeat it as something, as a practice, as a set of instructions that are developable, remains to be seen.

Anyway. So a beginning here that will be developed, but actually not really a beginning because it ties in with other threads that we've put out in all these different talks.

In a way, following on from what I've just said, there's an implication which here I'm going to draw out now. One could, if one gets really interested in this stuff, go back to all those talks and listen again and listen to what's being said in the background and those instructions that one might miss, and take the material out, extract it. Write it down. Make a set of instructions. Start practicing it.

So there's an invitation there. Of course, that's much more work for you as a listener or as a saṅgha than if I just offer these instructions there and it's a separate thing and all you have to do is press play and follow the instructions. But there's the invitation.

So, why this area? I'm going to explain more why this area around movement, gesture and voice. I'm going to explain more later as we go on. But it's very much connected with this idea of preliminaries and what's necessary, what's required to, if we use a certain analogy, to be able to fly in soul-making practice—to really be able to soar on the air currents and glide easily and gracefully and freely, to wheel around and cartwheel and maneuver. A lot is required.

And sometimes the pieces that are required, they're really obvious, like, well, two wings are required, whatever that analogy might be in soul-making dharma. We need these really big structural pieces. But other times what's required may not be obvious at all.

So in this beautiful bird's anatomy, there may be a tiny little bone somewhere that just connects, for instance, this part of this bone in the neck, let's say, to a bone, a particular bone in the wings—a tiny little bone in the muscles, or a tiny little muscle. It doesn't seem that significant, but take it away, and maybe the bird can even still fly a little bit, but what its freedom of movement, its ease, its gracefulness, its security—severely curtailed there.

So to be able to fly, we need all kinds of things, some of which are obvious, and some of which are less obvious. There are some trainings which are really obvious, and some trainings which are really less obvious. And some which are obviously very central, and some which are really not. We don't actually notice them at first. So it might be something like that, as an analogy. Not central, but indispensable, really, in the long run, to really have that freedom—the freedom to fly in soul-making practice, and the

whole range of soul-making practice, and the whole potential range of soul-making practice.

Or, you know, like an airplane—similar, same analogy. You look: oh, it needs its engine, it needs its propellers or whatever they are, wings, of course, it needs this and that. But maybe there's just one bolt somewhere, and it's just a tiny little piece, but if it's missing, it's a big deal. Maybe you only notice it when you're trying to do a certain thing, like, I don't know, land, or turn around, or whatever it is. So that kind of thing.

The soul-making dynamic, it should be clear to you by now from past teachings, will eventually expand because of the way that psychologos dynamic works. It will expand, and it will expand to include within itself, to involve within its dynamic, within its creativity and discovery—it will expand to include every aspect of our being and every aspect of our life. Even more aspects than we even realize exist now. "I didn't even know I had that aspect to my being or that aspect to my life." And then it starts to come to be involved, to be ensouled, to be involved in the soul-making dynamic.

So just so, as the soul-making dynamic expands, it should, it wants naturally to start including movement, gesture and voice. And these areas—movement, gesture, voice—can also be particular areas where our relationship to them is also, without us even realizing it, a little bit blocked. We're blocking something there. We're holding back something there. So the soul-making dynamic doesn't naturally flow in to open them further. It doesn't actually manage to quite reach them. And we don't quite realize it. I'm going to expand on this later.

So there are a number of reasons for this particular focus on movement, gesture, and voice right now. But again, by way of introduction—a slightly long introduction before we get to the material—I want to say something about listening. And it connects with something I mentioned just now.

I think often when I'm teaching, I probably go too fast. I speak very quickly, and for me it feels like there's so much to say, so much to put in a talk. There's so much I want to share and convey, and time is limited in all kinds of ways. But often I'm aware that I go very fast.

Occasionally a person says to me, "Oh, I heard your talks. It's mostly repetition." But when I hear back about what they're thinking and how they're practicing, it's clear that they've actually missed a lot. They're not hearing many of the details. So I actually think the opposite is true—I'm going too fast rather than lingering and repeating.

What I often don't do is stop and give you an exercise, give you homework—especially if I'm recording like I am now, alone at home. On retreat, you can sometimes slow things down, feel what's happening in the room and what's appropriate for what people need there. But often I don't stop and isolate something, extract it and point it out: "This is a set of instructions—one, two, three, four, five. Do that." I don't set it up, give it a name, make it a thing. And again, it's just not very skillful teaching to expect people to do that work themselves. Partly naively, a part of me was expecting that, or has been in the past. But I think it's

naive.

So time is still limited, and I'm going to try to do exactly that—give you exercises to do, and so forth. But still, when you listen to this set of talks, when you listen to talks that have already been given—maybe by me, maybe by another teacher—is it possible to think about listening more actively? Actually, there might be a job for you, or several jobs for you to do as a listener.

One of them might be for you to actively extract meditations and exercises from what's being said. What would it be to listen to a talk—even maybe a talk you've listened to before but haven't listened to with those kinds of ears on? Instead of just sitting and hearing it, being touched by it, or getting the ideas, what would it be to actually put on the hat of that particular job? You're actively extracting meditations and exercises. That's number one.

Number two: is it possible to actively extract larger principles? Sometimes these are even less obvious. Of course, sometimes I'll linger extensively on a larger principle, explaining something and why it's important, what the concept is, how it all fits together, even why it's important in our history—all kinds of things. But sometimes not, or to differing degrees.

So what would it be for you as a listener also to listen at times with the hat on of extracting larger principles? These are sometimes less obvious, and they'll be especially less obvious if I don't even bother to explain why we're doing this or that in a certain ritual or ceremony that we've just made up and maybe will only do once. Of course, that's not going to be obvious. But there are reasons—why we choose to do this, why I said that, why all of it. And so that takes quite a lot of intelligence, perhaps, to listen that way and try to extract those larger principles.

So, two possibilities for listening at different times. Number one: extracting meditation possibilities and exercises. Number two: extracting larger principles, which may be more or less explicit. Just like the exercises, I may make a very light suggestion—maybe explicit, but I just touch on it so quickly. It may just be implicit in what I'm saying.

So there's an invitation. Maybe think about doing that sometimes. Experiment with that kind of listening.

I taught a recent retreat at Gaia House on the theme of the jhānas, jhāna practice. And one of the things I mentioned there was about inertia—our inertia as practitioners, as students of the Dharma, but also as human beings. I would have, had there been more time, spent much longer really exploring that theme of inertia, really asking people to inquire into where inertia operates for them—how and where and in what ways does inertia operate in the way they relate to their practice, in the way that they practice, in the way that they listen, what they practice and how they practice, all that.

To me there's a huge, really important inquiry there. But I just mentioned it on the retreat and sort of pulled back from giving people too much to do, even though we had three and a half weeks. It still felt like it would be a bit much. But in my mind it felt actually really, really important.

Recently, still on this theme of listening, Nick and Sarah were listening to some talks together. As people sometimes do, they decided they would listen and then spontaneously ask each other, "Can I press pause for a second?" They would pause and say, "Should we just do that practice he just mentioned?" Sometimes it wasn't even when there was an actual guided meditation—I might have just been implying a practice or mentioning it in passing.

So they were really listening in quite a different way, and being together enabled them to listen like this. They got into a mode of listening where they were pressing pause quite frequently—to stop and actually discuss something they'd just heard, to question something, or if one person didn't quite understand. Sometimes questioning, "That can't be right," or whatever arose. A two-hour talk—I have no idea how long it ended up taking them to listen to. But it certainly sounded like they were having a lot of fun doing it that way. Maybe it was more fun, I don't know. Maybe other times it's much more fun listening on your own, straight through without interruption. Maybe they were digesting more, assimilating more.

So there's a question here. We can have active listening modes, if we call that active listening, as well as receptive listening—just letting it come in without interrupting, without stopping to turn the soil. But what is it to till the soil, to till the soul? It will need tilling at some point, the soil of the soul. Whether that's while I'm listening or afterward, at some point it needs that. And that cannot happen without you being active, without you taking some kind of initiative and responsibility and making choices and being intelligent. Listening on the tip of your toes or at the edge of your seat, as I think I said on a recent retreat.

Similar goes for reading. Some people, unfortunately—a surprising amount of people—make it clear that they read *Seeing That Frees* without doing any of the practices or without really spending much time at all on any of the practices. To my mind, it's like, how much can you hope to really get out of it? There's not enough working of the soil. And even reading it too quickly—that particular book is very dense. There's a lot there. Why that word? What does it mean? What does it imply? What does it suggest about my practice? What does it suggest about what I'm thinking and how what's being written might be a little bit different, or even a lot different, from what I'm actually thinking?

So anyway, just this question about inertia—in this case an inertia about how we practice, also an inertia about how we listen. We get stuck in certain modes of listening, certain modes of reading. And it takes a bit of work to push ourselves out of that particular groove or rut that we're in. It's inertia. In physics, it takes work to overcome, it takes force to overcome.

Again, there can be an inertia regarding what we hear, what we read. Without even realizing it, we actually end up hearing and reading what we already think we know. I'm literally chopping off, shaving off, just not hearing or seeing what doesn't actually fit into what I think I already know. So I end up reading something that's in fact quite different, quite challenging to what I already know, but I think I've just read something that completely confirms it, or just says what I already know in different words.

So there are all kinds of possibilities here for energizing and bringing some oomph and electricity and fire

and soul—really more soul—into our listening and reading. All kinds of possibilities.

There's also the question—and this is related to what I've just said—when we're listening and reading, we can't help but have a process, usually unconscious, where we're determining or trying to determine, judging the significance of this or that thing we're hearing right now. Here's a talk that's an hour or two hours long: this part's not that significant, now that part's significant. Or here's something I'm reading, whatever. This, I think, is just natural to the way we need to listen as human beings—to structure, to make sense of what we're listening to or reading. What is the significance of this? How much significance does it have?

Some of what we're going to explore in this series—however long it ends up being—some of these exercises will probably not seem that significant. I'm going to say that right now. They probably won't seem that significant, but it's a bit like that tiny bone at the bird's shoulder that connects the wing—one little bone and small filaments of muscle connecting to another bone in the chest. It doesn't seem that significant. Or that single bolt in the airplane.

Some of these exercises won't seem that significant. We can tend to think, especially with soul-making practice, imaginal practice, that if there's an image—especially if I get a clear image and a clear sense of the image—that's significant. But if I'm just doing something and there's no real movement or gesturing or voice, no real image, it may not seem that significant.

Something can seem to have more impact, and it can certainly seem more to the point of what imaginal practice is, obviously. If there is an image and we're impacted, it can seem that that's more significant, but in the long run it may not be. You might get lots of "wow, image"—you've definitely felt impacted and affected and it was beautiful—but in the long run it may not be that significant.

Just the fact that we talk about imaginal practice—well, obviously images must be significant. Well, it may or may not be, relatively speaking. Sometimes it's hard to be that wisely discerning in assessing what actually is significant and what is its significance. It's hard for us. All this is very normal.

I think I remember at some point using the phrase "structural listening"—I can't remember how often or even when, but it feels like a long time ago. Can we listen to a dharma talk structurally or read a book structurally? Seeing the whole structurally? This capacity is very, very rare—the ability to listen for the larger structure of ideas, the way it all hangs together, the progress of ideas, the larger conceptual framework.

What would it be to actually develop that capacity? That's a training. That's a big deal. So it's very rare. What would it be to listen or read for and from the whole conceptual framework? I'm listening or reading to get a sense of what the whole conceptual framework is. And then when I think I have that, I'm listening from the perspective of the whole conceptual framework.

That listening from an understanding of the whole conceptual framework—holding it there—frames my

listening. Whether it's soul-making dharma, that conceptual framework, whether it's emptiness or mainstream dharma, whatever it is, that frames my listening and creates a kind of meta-view from which I can then discern with intelligence. It helps me discern the relative significance and the relative place of this or that thing I'm hearing, or this or that instruction, or even this or that word I'm hearing or reading right now.

This is hard. Or rather, it's very rare. It's rare for someone to have that as normally the way they go about things. It does exist, but it's very rare. It can be trained.

Listen, read for and from the whole conceptual framework. In the end, it ends up being a lot less work to do things that way, because things are ordered. The very conceptual framework tells me where things belong and informs me about what I might do in practice at any moment. It suggests and tells me how ideas fit together, so they're not just random—here's another idea, here's another idea, here's another one. I don't just have this pile of stuff to sort through, random objects, most of which maybe look a little interesting or glistening or curious. Instead, I have this big structure where they fit together and I can understand where things are.

Because I understand where things are and how they work, I can find them a lot easier. Things make sense. They're more accessible. I can make choices a lot easier, a lot more intuitively eventually, and a lot more intelligently, a lot more helpfully.

Even just now, up to this point, we've thrown out this idea about inertia and this question: actually taking on this inquiry—where is the inertia for me in relation to dharma practice? How and what I practice in relationship to how and what I study or hear or how I listen. Where is the inertia?

And how does that inertia balance with a need for steadiness? I actually need to stay with something for a while, yet I can get too entrenched in something. So all this inquiry into inertia—now I would say that this inquiry into inertia, even though we're not really going into it at the moment, again I'm postponing it or just mentioning it...

I don't know if I'll ever get back to it. I would actually say that inquiry into inertia is more important as a teaching, as an area of investigation. Structurally it's more important—at the meta level, it's more important than anything else I might say in this set of talks about movement and gesture or any other topic.

A similar dynamic arose on the recent jhana retreat. We talked about all these different techniques—where you can move between this jhana and that, how you can do this and that. All really important material. Great. But what I think was much more important for most people—and if it wasn't during those three and a half weeks, it will be at some point, or will have been at some point—much more important than all those little bits of really valuable technique, was the whole relationship with desire.

Jhana practice is a goal-oriented practice. I need desire because I'm moving toward something. I want to

achieve whatever it is—the third jhana or whatever. This is what I'm aiming for. I have an aim. I need to put in effort and I need desire. And then the whole question arises—the whole area of questions around difficulties, around complications, around my relationship with desire, my relationship with goals, my relationship with effort. All that comes up.

How much there is to explore there. Much more important in the long run to really open that up, to understand oneself within that territory, to liberate oneself in relationship to desire—being able to sustain a desire, a deep desire, and move toward a goal without getting completely tied up in knots.

First of all, it's important because I'm going to need that capacity to do the jhana practice. As much as I need to hear this little tip or technique for moving between one jhana and another, I'm also going to bump into—I can't help but move in—the domain of my desires and the difficulties of my desires. So I'm going to need that understanding for jhana practice.

And it's a subject that pertains to any other practice I do—pretty much any dharma practice I engage with—and loads of situations outside my meditation practice. It pertains to my life. Structurally, it's a much, much more important issue, an area of investigation and concern, and possibility of freedom in the broader sense—much broader freedom than just technique, or this piece of technique.

So again, even here, I mentioned inertia tonight. Even that inquiry is structurally more important than anything else, even though these other pieces are, as I said, really important.

There's a lot here, but I'm just... this is all by way of introduction. A little bit more introduction, actually, if you can stand it.

As I said, I will hopefully unfold more about the why of these exercises—why I'm offering them now, why I'm emphasizing them now. That will, as the talks unfold and the instructions unfold, hopefully include more about the why.

But just to say right now: of course, the why of these exercises is related to the why of practice in general. It has to be, right? Of course. The larger question of why I'm practicing informs the smaller question of why these exercises—why practice these exercises, why might they be important?

So the why of these exercises is related to the bigger why of why practice. Why am I practicing? It has to be, of course. Just think that through if it's not obvious.

And that, of course, is intimately related to what we've been calling the fantasy of the path—the fantasy of the goal of the path, the fantasy of awakening, the fantasy of the self on the path, or fantasies plural.

So the why of these exercises—the reasons why we're addressing, focusing, emphasizing, filling them out now, opening them out now—is related to the why of practice and the fantasies of practice, path, awakening, self as practitioner, self on the path.

Most of you will have heard me talk about, sort of emphasize, how crucial this is—this why. Why am I practicing? What's my idea of why I'm practicing? And what's my image or fantasy of practice, of path, of where it's leading, and of myself on the path?

Those ideas and those images and fantasies will always have consequences—major, major consequences. Consequences at every level of our dharma practice, actually at every level of our life. Our ideas about why we practice and our fantasies of path, goal, self, awakening, etc., will have massive consequences, certainly in our practice, at every level of our practice, and also beyond our practice in the rest of our life.

And one of the questions is: A, do we realize it? Second question is: do we realize that these ideas and fantasies can be limiting? They can also be nonsensical. So we can end up with a sort of conglomerate of ideas and fantasies about the why of practice and what practice is and where we're going that actually don't really make sense together. They're not very coherent. They're also limited. That's possible. That's very, very possible.

They will always have consequences. The question is, do we want to unlimit them if they're limited in an unhelpful way? Do we want them to be coherent and to make sense if they don't actually make sense once we start looking at them and questioning them and prodding them a bit—which often we don't. Often practitioners don't really. We've talked about all this before in other talks. There will always be consequences. We have to realize that.

I remember teaching in another country, this is quite some years ago now. And I was talking with a woman—I can't remember the context. I don't think it was in an interview. It was either before or after the retreat or some other situation. And she said to me, or to a group of us, "My husband doesn't need to meditate." She was probably in her late 60s then, is my guess, and I'm assuming her husband was a similar age.

"My husband doesn't need to meditate." And I don't know if she elaborated on that. Certainly my ears pricked up at that point. What she then said made it clear that what she meant is he's already calm—he's already a very steady character and calm. And of course, implicit in that was her view that calmness and steadiness was the point and the goal of meditation. And that's why she was coming to retreat, and that's why her husband didn't need to, because he was already calm and steady.

The situation wasn't such that I was in the teacher role at that point, or I can't remember exactly, but it didn't seem appropriate for me to ask a question in response or probe that a little more. But to me, it was very clear that she was holding a very limited idea of what she was there for on retreat, what she hoped to get from meditation, what meditation was for. And this was, in fact, borne out by other interactions I had with her and things that I saw.

Now, that's fine if that's her view or if that's her thoroughly investigated view, and that's where she arrives at, freely and independently: "This is all I want meditation to be. I know there's this option, that

option, that option, that option, that option as well, but I actually just want it to be calm and steady because I've looked at my life and looked at everything else and all the other things. Either I can get them elsewhere—I can understand the emptiness of awareness elsewhere, which is highly unlikely of course, or some other kind of freedom I can get, whatever it is. Or they're just not things I'm interested in."

But my sense was that she hadn't actually thoroughly opened up that inquiry. And so there was this quite small area delineated for the range and the purpose of meditation and retreat and all that. And you could also pick that up in other ways in terms of her responses and reactions to teachings that went beyond that.

Now, it could have been something else. She or someone else could have said it, you know, maybe not calm and steady. They could have replaced it by, "Oh, he, she, they have so much patience. They don't need to meditate. They're just so patient." Or "They have just unshakable metta and compassion. They just seem to love everyone, and it's just not shakable. Someone can be really difficult or whatever, and they're just always kind. They don't need to meditate." Or "They have incredible equanimity. This or that happens and they're just really steady." "They're just naturally mindful. You know, I forget this and I forget that. They're just naturally mindful." Or even, "They don't experience the self. I've talked to them and they don't actually experience the self. And they only experience this sort of flow of moments or whatever it is that they would explain." Et cetera, et cetera.

It could be anything. We could put anything there. "They don't need to meditate because..."—fill it with whatever you want.

But compare that to saying something like, "My husband doesn't need to make art, doesn't need to make music," or if they're an artist or a musician, "doesn't need..." If they're a scientific researcher, if we look at some of these other fantasies that we've talked about, fantasies of the past, "They don't need to do scientific research anymore. Or ever." Or the fantasy of the lover...

They don't need what? They don't need to make love. They don't need to spend time with their beloved. They don't need to expand or let expand, support the expansion of the range of landscapes and soul territories that one moves through and in with one's lover, creates and discovers with one's lover.

To compare it to saying something like that—don't need to meditate because they don't need to make art. They don't need to make music, they don't need to do scientific research, or any more scientific research, or they don't need to be in love anymore, and be in love, and do in love, and be together in love, in relationship anymore.

That need—to one who feels the need in the beauty of those needs, maybe for some people they only really relate to the in-love one, I don't know, but for me certainly, a scientific researcher, the artist, making music, meaning composing music, improvising music, whatever it is—to one who feels that need, feels the depth of that need, and the infinite depth of that need, those needs, and the beauty of those needs. The inexhaustibility of those needs, the mystery of those needs.

Those kinds of needs are not needs that there is really an end to. Not if you're really called that way. If the soul is called, if the soul is on fire. You don't think, "Oh, I get to the point where I don't need to do any more scientific research. I don't need to write any more music or whatever it is. I don't need to..." They're not—there's no end to that and you wouldn't want there to be an end to it because if there's an end to it, something has died and it's not about reaching an end.

It's not about achieving calmness, or "I've just discovered, imagine some, you know, I've just discovered this in physics. Great, okay, I think I'm done now. That's all I wanted to know." That's not how that kind of deep curiosity works. What person has written, "You know, I wrote one song, I wrote one piece of music, or I had that time improvising there, I took a solo or whatever it was, and I don't think I need to do it anymore." That's not how it works.

It's insatiable. It's bottomless. It's not even ours. It's calling us from a distance that is beyond us. It is not ours and it's ours. It's infinitely far away and it's the most intimate thing. It's not something that there is an end to. It's not something we would want there to be an end to. It comes out of love, out of beauty, out of eros and delight, out of soul, out of curiosity, out of the depths of our being, just as can the intention for meditation practice come out of love, of beauty, of eros, delight, soul, curiosity, depth—rather than "I want to be steady like my husband is steady, or calmer, or whatever." Or even "I want to experience this thing where I don't have a self and there's just a sort of flow of moments."

Why stop there? Why stop there? Gosh, there's so much more than that. Wonderful as that might be.

And of course, if you're listening to this and you're just really caught up in dukkha, it seems like it has no... nothing. But dukkha, of course, we're going to want the calmness. And we've talked about this before. But once you've reached, let's say, even that place where there's just this kind of open self, or there's just an open sense of awareness, and—I'll put this in strong inverted commas—"no self," why stop there? Why stop there? Honestly, it would be like Einstein saying, "I've done my special theory of relativity, I think I'll stop there." Or Beethoven saying, "Yeah, I wrote my second symphony, I think that's it now." It doesn't make sense.

We're talking about allowing a desire to come from a different place, recognizing that a desire comes from a different place. And this very much has to do, again, with who we are as human beings. It's mine and it's not mine. It comes from an infinite distance, an infinite beyond, and it's the most intimate thing. And it's beautiful. The desire itself is beautiful, so we wouldn't want it to end.

And yes, along with that very desire, it brings difficulties. It brings frustrations, exasperations, challenges. We feel we're stuck at different points. It burns. It hurts. There's disappointment. There's all that, along with the beauty and the joys and the gifts and the creations, discoveries of it all.

So the why of these exercises is related to the why—why am I practicing?—has to be related to that in the larger sense. And that is related to my fantasy of the self and the path.

All of this is tied together. What ideas, what images do I have that are operating? How helpful are they? How limiting are they? How much sense do they even make? How coherent are they? They will have consequences.

I remember talking to people from very different dharma backgrounds than this woman I described, who had been trained from the beginning in a presentation of the dharma that didn't actually present much more than that basic framework. So that's what she had been taught the dharma was.

In these very different dharma scenes, with different teachings, sometimes people get caught up in certain ideas about what they're doing, certain fantasies. There's the idea that because the dharma has to do with liberation and freedom, it therefore has to do with not struggling. And if we're into something called non-duality, then we should just drop the struggle right now. Don't struggle in meditation. Don't struggle at all. Don't even struggle to stay awake. Just don't struggle.

This idea often goes together with narrow conceptions of non-duality. Don't deal with concepts. Just don't be conceptual. Drop the whole conceptual thing. It's easier, simpler, less struggle, more spiritual, because non-conceptuality and spirituality go together, right?

Out of all this comes a kind of mode of practicing, effectively a technique—although one tries to think of it as not a technique, because one isn't struggling or supposedly not struggling, not doing, not thinking. And it's non-dual. The idea is that it's open, but it actually ends up being very closed, because we've cut off a bunch of possibilities.

No struggling in any way at all, no thinking. But you have to think, you have to conceive. The only little bit of conceiving you're allowed is that conceiving isn't allowed, and you should try to be non-dualistic. Whatever that means.

What this also means, if we link it to other fantasies, is that there can be very little art, because there's very little doing. There's a shrinking of options, a shrinking of the possibilities for creation and discovery. It's not this infinite range and expanding playground of creation, discovery, of artistic possibilities. Practice just ends up being almost like one thing. In all this rhetoric and these convincing ideas and images about openness and liberation, it actually ends up being quite narrow—just doing the same thing over and over. It's one thing, and it's not really leading anywhere except to the same thing over and over. So what's supposed to be open ends up being actually quite closed, closing possibilities, closing the possibility of art in the largest sense.

When we come to soul-making dharma—and we've said this and emphasized it—we could pick other dharma areas like emptiness or whatever, but let's just say soul-making dharma. It requires so much by way of bases, of stepping stones, of prerequisites, preliminaries. It's so sophisticated and subtle, so wide and so deep. So many dimensions and aspects of our being are involved and demanded. Demands are made from them, requiring a lot of sophistication and subtlety and ability and facility in all these different

areas.

One could say it's pretty elitist. And actually, I would agree. I think it is elitist in that sense. I'm not sure what the etymology of "elitist" is—it has to do with choosing—but it is elitist in the sense that, well, let me put it the other way around.

Picking up the music analogy a little bit, maybe a better image, a better way of thinking about what we're doing when we're teaching soul-making dharma practice—we could even teach jhana practice or whatever—is different from the usual ways we frame practice. Typically we say this is to do with liberation from suffering, or at least reducing suffering. And as such, as a teaching about the reduction of suffering, reduction of stress, it's for everyone and available to everyone. Therefore we want teachings that anyone can apply, anyone can understand, and it's really important that they're accessible in that way.

There's a kind of legacy we get from the Four Noble Truths, which is that this is basically for reducing suffering—if we water it down a little bit and just say reducing suffering. Of course, it's a wonderful legacy we get from the Four Noble Truths, so rich and brilliant as a teaching, and so powerful. I've talked about that lots before. But it's actually a mixed blessing, this legacy. It has a shadow side, and I've talked about that as well.

Particularly it has a shadow side when in this day and age we start to actually question: what does a reduction in suffering actually mean, and what does it look like, and how noticeable is it at different levels?

When we've done away with the universality of belief—there is no more universal agreement that the end of suffering means the ending of rebirth—what exactly do we mean by ending suffering? I've explored all this before. But despite the massive confusion that surrounds these questions, we still want to understand: what actually do we mean by the third noble truth? And by implication, the first noble truth, and then of course the second and fourth, but principally the first and the third. What do we mean by suffering? What do we mean by ending suffering?

In the swamp of confusion that has emerged from dropping this universality of understanding—whether it's a Theravada universality, a Mahayana universality, or whatever—coupled with the notion that because dharma is about reducing suffering, it somehow needs to apply equally to everyone and be accessible to all, this model brings with it all kinds of issues and problems, its own stumbling blocks and limitations.

Sometimes, more recently, I've been thinking: why not just conceive the whole thing like music school or art school? We teach all levels at this music school or art school—from beginners who have never put their lips to a recorder, never banged on a drum with their fingers, never even shook a rattle. We teach all levels, from that beginner level all the way up, and there's actually no end to it. There's no point where we

stop. This music school can just keep going.

But we understand that only some of the people who want to take up music and come to learn and play and develop and practice will have that really deep desire to play at the highest, deepest, freest levels. Of course, only some people have this. In that sense, it's elitist. But if "elite" is etymologically related to "elect" and "choose," then it's your choice—your choice how far you want to go.

Everyone will be challenged by something within that whole range of what's possible in practice and development, but it's your choice. Your choice about what you desire and how far you want to go and how much you want to develop. So yes, it's elitist—what's the problem with being elitist? It's elitist in the same way that music school is elitist. It's not refusing anyone entry. It's just saying that if you want to do that advanced thing, then you need to do this foundational work first, because otherwise you won't be able to do that. But we can teach you this, and after you do that, then let's talk about the other thing if that's what you really want.

We're hampered and tied to thinking about words like liberation and ending suffering or reducing suffering, and there are all kinds of accretions that go with that, particularly around non-elitism and accessibility and the idea that "it's for everyone." Sometimes it might be simpler to change the analogy.

I want to extend this musical analogy, though it gets a little limited here and has clear limitations like any analogy. Since music is something I have a history with, I know that whole area. I was a different kind of musician at different times—a composer, but before that a jazz musician. I studied jazz and worked to develop the art of improvising on the guitar in different jazz idioms, something I was completely dedicated to and put enormous energy into.

When you're learning to improvise jazz guitar, you've got many different skills and arts within one thing. It's not one thing—it's many, many different abilities. And it's open-ended, infinite in its possibilities. Sometimes, when you really get into all this and give yourself to it, there's a sudden growth of ability—of what you can do, what you can play or create or improvise. And you're not even quite sure how that sudden jump of level happened.

Of course it comes out of love—loving what you're doing and loving that whole area and loving the music. It comes out of listening, listening with love and listening with eros to other musicians and music you love. It comes out of playing, and it definitely comes out of practicing. So it emerges from all four of these things. But it's not necessarily the case that I practiced X and then I was able to do X. Sometimes it is, of course, but not always.

Sometimes I practiced X and then eventually I was able to do X. Great, so now I can do X. It's added to my playground. It's added to the freedom that I have to create and discover musically in the moment. But other times I don't practice X, and somehow I'm able to do X in some way I don't even understand how it happened.

Probably more often than not, however, I don't practice X, and then I'm never able to do X, whatever X is. It will never appear in my playing. It will never appear in my creating, discovering, my improvisation, because I never practiced it.

I could talk extensively about this, but I want to keep it brief. If I had to look at death now and reflect back on my life, I think there's one grief. There's one grief in my soul that I think I will take with me to my grave, and it feels like a deep soul grief. That is specifically around not developing certain things in jazz guitar—my ability to do certain things to a level that I would have liked. A level of virtuosity and fluidity, specifically, that I would have desired. So it's actually about technique.

I don't know, maybe that sounds very strange to some people—to look back at life and think that's an odd thing to have grief about. But for me, that's what it is. And it goes very deep. As far as I can tell, it's the one thing, and it's a real soul grief.

In a way, there's a story behind that. I did develop all kinds of abilities on jazz guitar—some very rare abilities, I would say, capacities to do things that are really quite uncommon. Other things that were perhaps less rare or more seemingly obvious, I never got the chance to develop. The reason I never got that chance was partly, well, mostly because they weren't taught.

There was no one at that time—there is now, how many years later, more than thirty years later—but back then there were no people teaching electric guitar technique with a plectrum, with a pick. I went to music conservatories and colleges, and no one could teach that. They could teach it for every other instrument because all those other instruments had hundreds of years of history behind them for people to figure out how to teach piano technique so that people can be very fluid and fly in that way. But on the guitar, it seemed like no one really—if they could do that, they didn't really know how they figured it out. It was something they just stumbled across, and they didn't even realize quite what they were doing. They'd never put it under a microscope. It just worked, so they went with it. But a lot of people couldn't actually do that stuff to the level I'm talking about, so I wasn't alone in this boat.

I had to kind of make do with what I could do and work around my inabilities, my incapacities. I feel really good about that, but there's a grief here. And it has to do with this deep, unfathomably deep, visceral desire, calling, vocation for music to come through, which was then not physically enabled to be fully physically manifest.

I'm going to say that again because this is really key to what I'm talking about in all these talks: it was not enabled to become fully physically manifest. It was never explained to me. I couldn't find anyone to explain, to teach me those things which on other instruments would be completely basic—exercises and such that are just part of how you learn the instrument.

So there's a grief for me there. It's too late to go back. I eventually gave up the guitar, got more into composing, partly because of that, because I felt the limitations. I eventually gave up that and became a

Dharma teacher. So who knows? Had I had available to me that enabling and that teaching of technique, and was enabled to fully physically manifest that degree of musical creation in improvisation, maybe I wouldn't have taken those other steps. I wouldn't be giving this talk today; I wouldn't be a Dharma teacher. But that's also been very wonderful, of course, and I feel very much that it's part of my calling too.

Anyway, the main point here—there's lots relevant, but for this talk there's one main reason for sharing this—it's about exercises that allow something to become fully physically manifest, that enable those possibilities.

Just as there are many elements or techniques and capacities and abilities that go together to make up being an improvising jazz guitarist, there are many that go to make up Dharma practice. There's a lot in there, and there's a lot even that goes to make up soul-making Dharma practice.

So when we come to soul-making Dharma practice, when we come to wanting to live a life of soul, we can hope that just practicing, just loving all this soul-making business, listening to the talks and loving them for the most part...

play and I meet with friends and we play soul-making together and all that. And it may be—or I can hope—that it opens possibilities. And it will open possibilities.

But the question is: will it leave some possibilities not opened to me, to my practice, to my soul-making dharma practice, but also to my life and my life in soul, and my soul in life?

We can hope, and maybe it will to a certain extent, but maybe not. When we talk about exercises and techniques, they're not everything. Some of you will be musicians—you know that when you're playing a scale, it's not really music yet. And some of these things we're going to talk about, they're not necessarily even soul-making. I mean, they might be, but like that bone in the wing of the bird or near the wing of the bird, or like just the ability to do certain things—they're crucial. They're absolutely crucial.

They're not everything, but they're necessary for music. They're necessary for the fullness of soul—the fullness of soul-making, formal practice, and the fullness of soul-making in one's life, and soul in one's life, and soul through one's life, and life in soul.

So what I want to offer—okay, that's the end of the introduction—what I want to offer is five exercises. And exercises means they're for practice, which means, in this sense, like doing technical exercises on the piano or whatever it is, or the scale. The point is repeating them, maybe. Gaining facility through the repetition. Not just something to do maybe once or twice, but actually doing them until you really don't need to do them anymore.

They're not necessarily soul-making, as we just said. They won't necessarily—these exercises—bring a kind of sense of a wow experience or some kind of dramatic shift in anything. "Suddenly I was doing this thing and this exercise and following the recording and suddenly there was a shift." They won't

necessarily do that. They might, but they won't necessarily.

So five exercises. There's no prescribed order, I don't think, between these five. But I'm regarding them as preliminaries—and I hope you can get a sense of what I mean by that—so even if you're well into soul-making dharma practice by now, there would still be good to add, I think, and to explore. No prescribed order. They form part of what we might call a set of preliminaries, or might hopefully develop into a set of preliminaries. I'll talk about other ones later on.

And so I want to explain more about the why as we go through.

Okay, so five exercises, no prescribed order. Well, I need to choose where to start, so I'll start with one which I'll call exercise number one—but not because it's really number one. We're just calling it that. And it's a movement exercise, okay? All of them have movement, gesture, and voice, and some of them are a lot more complex. So this starts relatively simple. Relatively simply.

Okay, exercise number one.

Now, immediately you're going to hear there's lots of variations. So there's five exercises, but lots of variations within each exercise. This exercise can be done in two ways. It can be done as an actual physical movement—your actual physical body is moving and someone else in the room can see that you're moving. Or it can be done just with the energy body and the imagination, and there's no physical movement.

So all the different variations within this exercise number one can be done either physically or just in the energy body and the imagination without the physical movement. Between these two possibilities—physical body or just energy body—there isn't an order. Or I don't think there's an order. Try. Try different—you know, if you're going to do these a number of times at least, I hope, then experiment with different orders. First the physical and then not, and then the other way around.

Okay, so two large camps: physical and just the energy body. Also then, starting in four postures. So already we've got eight variations, right? We haven't actually started yet. So four postures: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down. The four classic postures of the Satipatthana Sutta.

So that already leads to eight, and then the actual parts of the exercise—we're going to say there's five. Actually, even more. But you can see, it's just already proliferating variation. So it could be just in the energy body, standing, okay?

And then, or physical movement, starting in the walking posture. There are different variations within these different categories of choice.

So one category is whether it's physical or whether it's just energy body. The second category is which of the four postures you're going to start in. Well, let's take, as an example, let's say you start standing.

Then there are five parts of the exercise.

First, you adopt your starting posture and you feel the energy body. So let's say it's standing. You adopt the standing posture and you feel your energy body in that posture. And then you feel or imagine the energy body extending to fill the room that you're in, so that it touches the walls. This isn't something we would always want to do with the energy body at all. Usually we talk about energy body just a little bit bigger than the physical body. But here, with your primarily kinesthetic imagination, you're feeling, imagining your energy body extending to fill the room and touch the walls of the room and the ceiling and the floor. And what does that feel like? Maybe there's some visuals to it, but primarily you want it kinesthetic.

So that's the first thing. You're just standing and you're imagining doing that.

Second, you begin to move. So you have to really take your time working through this. We really want the experience. The intention here—I'll repeat this at the end—the intention here is sensitivity to the energy body and in this case also the projected or expanded energy body, and the space you're in. So really feeling a sense of sensitivity to the energy body, sensitivity to the expanded energy body, and the inhabiting or filling of the space you're in. That's the intention. It's primarily about sensitivity.

So you've adopted the starting posture, you've expanded and you're feeling that. You've extended the energy body and you're feeling that. Second, you start moving your hands and your wrists and your arms slowly, just in an improvised way. Move your hands and wrists and arms any way you want and feel your energy body. And feel and sense, imagine the space, as if you're pushing water or air—which you're doing as you move, you're pushing the air or the energy in the room. Or just imagine you're standing in a swimming pool or floating in a swimming pool, and you're alone in the swimming pool, and just the movement of your arms is going to send ripples out. The movement of the body will automatically send ripples out through the space, through the water there in the pool, and they will reach the sides and then they will bounce off.

We're not just talking about the space of awareness. We're not just talking about expanding the space of awareness—that's a different practice. We're talking about energy body sense expanding, moving and feeling, sensing and imagining not just the space of the energy body in its usual size, but also the extended sense of the energy in the room and how that's connected with and impacted by and filled by the energy of your body movements.

So it's more than just the space of the awareness. We're talking about energy body movements, sensitivity here. Of course, the awareness must extend, if we're going to do this exercise, from, for example, the palms of my hands to the walls. So actually, I first have to have that much expansion of the awareness. But we're saying more than that. Then it's this sense, imagination, felt kinesthetic sense of energy through the movement, in the movement, with the movement, initiated by the movement, propped up by the movement, occupying, filling the whole space.

This is just the second part of this: your hands, your wrists and your arms. Remember this can be done physically. It can be done just in the imagination with the energy body. There's no obvious physical movement there.

It could be done from the standing posture, lying down posture, or sitting posture - there are all these variations.

Spend some time doing that.

The third possibility, the third stage, is to then move your head and neck. You could stop moving your hands and arms and wrists and just move your head and neck. But with the same awareness, the same sensitivity, the same expansion, the same kinesthetic sense and imagination and feeling extending there. Or you could make it cumulative - so now you're moving your hands and wrists and arms and your head and neck freely, improvisationally. Same sensitivity, the same imagination, the projection, the inhabiting, the filling of the space.

Then the fourth stage is to add your legs, your feet, your ankles. They can start moving slowly, improvisatively. Again, that could be where everything else becomes still and you just move them, or you add that to the other areas of the body that are already moving.

And then a final stage - free and improvised movement including the whole body. So the hips, the pelvis, everything.

There are lots of variations, lots of possibilities. The intention is sensitivity to the energy body in the usual sense of size, but also to the much more projected, larger, expanded energy body, and the whole sense of the space that you're in - of inhabiting and filling that space with the energy body, or letting the energy body project to fill that space.

Another variation is that we can do the same thing with faster movements. I would probably start slower because there's much more chance of sensitivity. This really does take a lot of sensitivity - this is the prime intention of this exercise. Actually many of these exercises focus on sensitivity, and also the capacity to expand, the capacity to project and not always be held back. I'll talk more about this later.

But when you've done this for a while, when you've practiced this a few times, then you may want to experiment with faster movements. It may well be that doing it faster is much more tricky to maintain and really tune in and feel and have a good kinesthetic sense or imagination there. But see what happens. If it's too fast, then you need to slow it down until you can find what does work. Or maybe just stay with the fast a little longer because maybe it will come alive.

So that's the first exercise. You can see lots of different variations there. I'm not going to repeat that because you can just rewind and listen to it again.

The second exercise - I realize there are lots of variations, but relatively speaking, it's pretty simple. It gets

maybe a little more involved later on in the exercise.

So the second exercise is a voice exercise. The first one is really movement, we could say. The second one is a voice exercise.

Again, broadly speaking, we can do it two ways. We can do this voicing, making an actual sound that's audible to ourselves and to others. Or we can do it only imagining making a sound and feeling that in the energy body, with image and energy body sense. There's no physical sound and no physical movement here. So two ways of doing it, and two ways of doing any element of it.

What we're going to do here is sound extended tones, extended notes - vowels probably, or syllables, or maybe mantric syllables. In this exercise, it doesn't matter which sound, or if it's a mantric syllable, which one. It doesn't matter for this purpose at all.

So make them extended - you hold a note for a long time. Not till you're out of breath, but the idea is long notes. And within that, you have notes at different pitches - higher notes or lower notes.

Use your full range—however high you can go, however low you can go. This isn't directly about stretching that range, though eventually it may connect with that. Use your full range without being uncomfortable, exploring both high and low notes.

The first thing to notice is: where in the body is the center of emanation of this sound you're making right now? Can you notice and feel this? While you're standing there practicing, you're still feeling your whole energy body as we do in pretty much any practice—maintaining that whole energy body awareness as at least a background. But where in the body is the center of the emanation of the sound? Can you notice and feel that?

Any trained singer will be aware of this. Different pitches will feel like they're coming from different places in the body. A very high pitch comes from actually higher in the body, or feels like it does—from the top of the head. From the crown of your head to the pelvic bone is the usual range where a singer will feel the center of resonance, the center of emanation of the sound.

So the first thing is: can you just notice and feel where it's coming from? Within that range, from the top of your head down to your pelvic bone, right down to your perineum, you've got the whole energy body awareness. Then you notice where the center is. Can you include the arms and legs? Can you feel the sound as also emanating from your arms and legs? Can it come from the whole energy body? Remember, the energy body is usually bigger than the physical body.

Do you notice that it's easier to feel and sound from certain places than others? Not so much hitting the note, but actually feeling the center of emanation and being comfortable with it really emanating strongly and surely and full-bloodedly and embodiedly from that center.

Over time, you might notice patterns. Perhaps it's the lower belly that's hard for you to really inhabit and

fill out, hard to let that really be a center. Something's blocked there, or just not available. Or perhaps something up in the throat is much more possible, or a higher note. Other people experience the reverse. Just notice.

Maybe over time, with practice, the whole range becomes more evenly available—so that the sound your body is making can emanate full-bloodedly, full-bodiedly, with full presence and full power from any place in the body. And you're comfortable with this. It doesn't feel like there's a dead spot or that it's hard to get feeling there.

That's the first part of this second exercise. The second part is: can I have the sense of the whole energy body emanating? Where is your voice coming from? It seems to come from your mouth and throat, right? But what is it to really feel and let yourself imagine—with kinesthetic imagination, a felt sense—the whole energy body emanating that sound? The sound is really coming from that whole space, which extends a little beyond the physical body.

The third part: can the sound you're making and the sense of the energy body feel like they're mixed together—to quote the Buddha—like water in milk? They're not exactly the same thing, but once you mix them together, it becomes almost impossible to tell them apart. They're not going to separate like oil and water. Can you sense—get a kinesthetic sense and an aural sense—of the sound and the energy body mixed together almost indistinguishably? Hard to tell, almost impossible to separate them apart. They've almost become palpably the same thing. Sound is the energy body, is vibration. The vibration is the sound. The energy body is sound, has become sound, has become vibration.

The fourth part of the exercise: we've got this awareness of the energy body, as usual, and awareness of the sound, of course. Now add to it, similar to the first exercise, a sense of the space around you—the waves in the pool, the ripples in the pool around you. After all, sound is in fact waves in the air.

That's what actually makes sound—sound is waves in air. What is it to have the energy body awareness, to have the awareness of the sound, to be really in that, open to that, sensitive to that, and then also open the awareness to the sense of the space around, the sense of the medium, if you like?

Imagine, feel, hear that medium resonating with the sound, filled with the sound. That sound, that energy that you are sounding, that's coming through you, is filling the space, is reaching the walls. Can you get a kinesthetic felt sense, a kinesthetic imaginative sense, hearing it and feeling it as reaching the walls, the ceiling, the floor, filling the space?

And sometimes you think, oh, well, I need to get louder. Not necessarily. So here's a little sub-variation. Sometimes it's good to get loud. Let yourself get loud, because sometimes that's also—and this is very related to one of the reasons why I'm doing this—sometimes some people really hold themselves back from being loud as a whole. I'll return to this. So sometimes let yourself get loud as part of filling the space.

But you can also have this sense of filling the space, of projecting with the energy body and the sound and

letting it fill and impact and shape and flow through and penetrate the medium when you're not necessarily getting louder, even in a big room. And it still feels like you're imagining that it's projecting. You're feeling it as projecting and filling the room.

So that was actually the fifth variation—sometimes you do it loud and sometimes you do it soft. I've run through these because I've woven some of them together.

So the first part is—remember, all this can be with sound or just with the imagination and the energy body. Extended tones, doesn't matter what—high, low pitches, different pitches over your whole range. First part: where in the body is the center of emanation of the sound? Can you notice that? Can you feel it? Whole tip of head to pelvis, and then actually include more and see where it's easier. And what happens over time to that sense of where it's easier to have that sense of the center of emanation?

Second part: can you have a felt sense, a felt imagination of the whole body emanating? The whole body radiating sound that way.

Third part: can the sound emanate and the energy body become mixed? The vibration, the resonance, and the energy body become mixed like water and milk, like milk and water.

Fourth part: with the energy body and the sound awareness, the awareness of the energy body and the awareness of sound, can we also feel, imagine, hear, get a kinesthetic, an aural sense of the whole medium of the space that we're in, and the whole space that we're in resonant with that sound, filled with, filling that space with sound and energy, reaching the walls?

And fifth: can we do that both loudly and softly, but it still fills, expands, radiates?

So I'm going to stop there now and introduce and go through the other exercises in another part. These are relatively simple, but still I think really worth doing. They may sound completely boring or pointless to you. Hopefully I'll explain more about why they're important. But I hope that's clear enough for now. We'll stop there.

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