

L'Esprit, Concevoir et les Empêchements

Bhante Bodhidharma · International Talks · 53:19

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

This evening, I simply want to talk about the mind, particularly about language, concepts, and so forth. Perhaps later we'll discuss these mental states a little more with the hindrances.

In Buddhist psychology, whenever a feeling arises, a perception arises at the same time. When we speak of feelings arising in Buddhism, we mean there are six sense doors. When we talk about the arising of feelings, we're also referring to the six sense doors. There are obviously the five senses that we know. For example, when a photon comes into contact with the retina, what happens at that moment, in Buddhist psychology, is a sensation. And when sound waves press upon the ear, that's the point of contact. That's what we call contact. And the sixth sense is the heart-mind itself.

In Buddhism, when we speak of mind, we translate the word *chitta*. But actually, the true translation would be heart-mind. At that time there wasn't yet this recent split between them. Even in the West now, when people say they think, they point to their heart. But for us, these two things have become very distinct. But what we begin to realise in our meditation is that when thought arrives, the heart moves. We begin to realise in meditation that when thoughts appear, the heart is also shaken, set in motion. And when the heart is set in motion, the mind is also set in motion. One reacts to the other.

So now, if we take a very simple example, an apple. When we taste an apple for the first time, because it's completely new, we are completely captivated by the apple, by the taste of the apple. Ah, that's it. This is what we observe in very small children. When you observe a child tasting something for the first time, really observe their face. It tells us something about *satipaññā* in its original state. So we were saying this morning that *sati* is this open awareness that accepts everything that comes, and within this awareness there is this intuitive intelligence.

And within this attention, this awareness, there is this intuitive intelligence that grasps the object and understands it. These are not two distinct faculties. It's the same in receiving and in seeing. It's the same at the moment of reception and of vision, of perception. When a child looks at something new, you'll see that their eyes are completely fixed. They are completely absorbed in observing this little spider. Ant. Big ant. Oh my. Ah, welcome.

So we have eyes fixed on the object, which tells us they are completely concentrated. But the jaw is completely relaxed and they're looking at something with their mouth open. From our point of view, they appear gormless. You say gormless in English - how do you translate gormless? They seem stupid. So we

give them a knock on the head and tell them to wake up. Someone was telling me that when she was that age and was in this state, her father would say to her, "Close your mouth or a fly will go in." Unfortunately, in this way we have destroyed that child's chance of immediate liberation. And we, of course, have ourselves had the same misfortune. Obviously, exactly the same thing happened to us when we were children, unfortunately.

So this quality of the mouth being completely relaxed tells us that there is no language. This quality of the jaw being totally relaxed indicates to us that there is no language. In your meditation, if you catch your mind thinking, direct your attention to the mouth - you'll feel a little vibration. Because thought is experienced as embodied physically.

So now, once we have tasted an apple, there is an image made of this in our mind. It's both an emotional, affective image that we attach to an apple - generally it's joy, but not necessarily - and also a mental image. There's also a mental image in the mind of what an apple looks like. From there, each time we eat an apple, we adjust this sensory base, this felt perception, until we finally have in our mind the perfect apple. So from there, each apple we eat is judged against this perfect apple. So from the moment we eat an apple, we are already separating, distinguishing these tastes that we want to feel so they conform to our idea of an apple. And so it's impossible for me to taste this apple as it is.

Now, this idea that I'm tasting the apple as it is - this is really a profound illusion. What I'm tasting is the way my mouth and tongue experience this apple. The nose is the nose. When we begin to investigate our experience in this way, we become aware that we ourselves create the world in which we live. It has some form of contact or reality with the world as it is. But it's never exactly as it is. It's entirely dependent upon my sense bases, and even the culture in which I live.

Our intention in meditation is to return to this childlike state of mind. The main obstacle we have is these concepts we have formed in mind and heart. The fact of noting has at least the advantage of gathering all these conceptual ideas into a single word. A single idea. So when I'm tasting food, for instance, the chocolate that you had for a break, whether I like it or not, I'm judging this chocolate. If I want to be able to taste this chocolate like a child, with a child's mind, I must be able to summarise all the intellectual processes in a single word, in a single note.

It's by the simple fact of saying "tasting, tasting, tasting" that I stop the process of the mind which is actually thinking, thinking. This intuitive awareness is confused, thinking that it's a thought. I'll try once more. This intuitive awareness thinks that it's a thought. Yes, that it's a thought, that it's a thought.

Now when I say "tasting, tasting," I'm aware of this word "tasting, tasting." When I say tasting, tasting, I'm aware of this word, tasting, tasting. This means that this intuitive intelligence has extracted itself from thought. By extracting itself from thought in this way, it's free to put its attention on the feeling. You see? When this intuitive awareness turns to the feeling, it frees itself from its history. Because history contains words and concepts. History is contained in our thoughts and our conceptual reasoning and our

imagination.

Now this intuitive awareness is capable of identifying, of seeing feelings clearly. And it's at this level, at the moment when it can see them, that we begin to be able to see how our mind creates. In eating, my attention is on the sensations of the tongue. If my attention is there, I can begin to feel how the heart responds. So, as the food touched us at lunchtime, you see, the wonder that appears around food. A form of delight, of satisfaction. That's correct. We must encourage the cooks.

So this reaction is conditioned by previous experiences with the past. And in addition to that, there's the process of desiring something. And desire pushes us to continue reinforcing the tasting process. And in doing that, we continue to recreate the moment. You see? So this tells us how we create the world for ourselves - the process of tasting, the process of tasting something, the heart's response, and the process of desiring is completely natural. This is completely natural. This is also what happened to the Buddha.

Where do we go wrong? It's a misunderstanding of where we can find our happiness. If you ask yourself what you really want, I think you'll agree with the word "happiness." Everyone will define happiness differently, but they want happiness. So in our search to be happy, we grasp, we attach to things on the mental level. In our desire to be happy, we grasp, we attach to things on the mental plane. And as we were saying this morning, this has created problems for us.

Our goal is to return to this childlike state of mind and experience things just at the level of pure experience - to experience things at a purely experiential level. The most sensual person in the world is someone who is liberated. Yes, because their life experience, or their experience of life, is not diverted by past experience. Each experience comes as something completely new. History doesn't impose a particular view on a particular situation. This is why we must stop our mind.

When you read Zen literature, you'll find the phrase "no mind." If you read Zen literature, you'll find the phrase "no mind." What this actually means is no thought, no imagination. When this thinking stops, even if it's just for an instant, if you catch a train of thought and at that moment it stops, if you manage to grasp a train of thought at that moment it stops - it's this interval before the next train of thought starts that is the pure intuitive intelligence of pure *satipaññā*.

Now even though we say the problem is in the relationship we have - the desires and attachments - the problem originally lies precisely in this intuitive awareness, because it's an error. The error is believing that it's a human being. Now conventionally, we are human beings. We're not not human beings. But of course, this error of thinking that we are human beings, seeking happiness in this human form - that's really a problem.

The Buddha speaks of this constant desire to search here and there. The Buddha speaks of this constant desire to search here and there. I've told you how the mind constantly seeks happiness and obviously to avoid, to flee from pain.

When we do sitting meditation, we open to our internal life. And what we normally find are horrible things, because it's the turbulence that rises to the surface. It's like removing the lid from a pot. It's like removing the lid from a pot. So now we have this problem - all this pain that appears, whether physical or emotional.

The appropriate response is not to react to it. We react by seeking to push it away or by ignoring it, and even by pushing it away or turning away with fear. So from this position of believing that I am a human being, I create three fundamental attitudes. The first is this acquisitiveness - gathering things. I feel safer if I have lots of money in the bank. I feel happier if I have lots of friends. So the acquisitiveness begins to turn into greed.

Now once I have attached to something, once we've attached to something, I have to defend it, protect it. Because you probably want the same thing I do. And there obviously appears my aversion, my aggression, my aggressiveness. And if you're bigger than me, then I have to run. With all my bags full of all my things. So these are our three basic dispositions: acquisitiveness, aversion and fear. And from this, whatever actions we produce are going to be unwholesome. I'll become more acquisitive, more averse, more fearful. And we have an even stronger tendency to accumulate more fear and aversion.

These turbulences are classified by the Buddha into five different types. The first is all those things that we appreciate. Remember that it's not the thing itself - it's the relationship we have with it. It's the desire, it's the obsessional character. If you find yourself planning these holidays, planning these holidays, planning these holidays - that's the sign that you're becoming obsessed with the desire for these holidays. This is why we note "planning" and then we return.

Now when we return, we return to the breathing. But in returning to the breathing, I can feel in the body this agitation. And there, I turn toward the agitation. I sit right in the middle of this agitation. I allow the agitation to manifest completely. If I have an aversion to being there, I note the aversion. If it's very uncomfortable, I note "aversion, aversion." And I remain very still in this matrix. It's the matrix. So you have this emotion, this turbulence, and you have the not wanting. You place your attention right in the middle. And you allow the fire to burn. You allow the fire to burn.

If you can stay until it has extinguished itself, until it has burned completely to the end, you'll note that the mind has stopped its planning. This tells us that the mind has stopped. And the more convinced we are of this, the more we'll make this effort to stay with the heart in this turbulence.

It's the same thing with all the things we don't like. That's the second category - anger and all these things. It's exactly the same thing. You simply note what you're doing - you're arguing - and you return to the heart, to the feeling. If there's no feeling, perfect - you return to the breathing. And if you do it often enough, the feeling will eventually emerge from the body. And if we don't feel it, it means this energy is going directly into thought.

If we don't feel it, it's because this energy is heading directly, manifesting as thought. Often when you speak to people, they'll tell you they feel anger in their head - they feel depression in their head, not in the body. So if a person continues to detach from thought each time, eventually these feelings will emerge in the body. If a person each time detaches from the thinking mind, finally their feelings will manifest in the body.

If you simply stay there and develop patience with the anger... When the mind is caught in its thoughts, wanting or not wanting, and you note - you see - planning, arguing. When you return to the body, you can feel this turbulence. Stay somewhat relaxed around it. Yes, just, you know, generally heavy around it. You observe this feeling, but in a relaxed way. You can become aware then that it's this little bit of energy that wants to escape. For me, it's always this way. Don't ask me why. It's the path toward the mind. If you can simply wait until it subsides, then the mind stops.

The other is agitation. This can also be physical. When it's physical, a good idea is to start from the top of the head and just make your way down to the feet. Make your way with your attention down through the body. And observe which parts of the body are really agitated and which ones are not. I've never felt agitated at the tip of my nose.

And attention is so overwhelmed by this agitation that we get lost in it. For example, there's a lot of agitation in your hands. Simply stay with this agitation. Move your attention around. And wait for this energy to exhaust itself. When it comes to the mind that...

il pense simplement à rien, il y a simplement beaucoup d'énergie. Vous avez l'impression de devenir dingue. J'ai bien peur que dans ce cas-là, la seule chose que vous puissiez faire, c'est de continuer à noter à chaque fois que vous en sortez et à chaque fois ramener votre attention. Et c'est tout ce que vous pouvez faire, à mon avis.

Ensuite, il y a le doute. Maintenant, l'attitude que nous devons avoir est celle d'enquêter. L'attitude que nous devons avoir, c'est une attitude d'investigation. Croire en tout ce que le Bouddha a dit serait un obstacle, parce que c'est le processus d'investigation qui est le processus de la libération.

Si vous vous prosterniez cent mille fois et chaque fois que vous vous inclinez vous dites "Je crois dans le Bouddha, je crois dans la souffrance et dans la fin de la souffrance", ça ne vous aiderait pas du tout. Toute chose que le Bouddha nous donne, c'est une théorie. Et c'est à nous de la rendre vraie pour nous. Cette attitude d'investigation est indispensable.

L'attitude philosophique d'émerveillement — c'est ça, d'émerveillement — donc c'est nécessaire. On se demande comment, qu'est-ce qui fait que la terre tourne ? Ça, c'est nécessaire. Mais le doute qui n'est pas nécessaire est appelé le doute sceptique.

Le doute sceptique n'émerge pas d'un pur désir de vouloir connaître, comprendre. Il émerge de peur. Quand nous allons chercher un travail, il y a en nous le doute : "Est-ce que je peux faire ce travail ou pas ?"

Si c'est véritablement du doute, nous irons et nous accepterons le travail. Mais si c'est un doute sceptique, ça va nous bloquer, ça va nous empêcher de le faire. Parce que nous commençons à faire des listes : pour le travail, contre le travail. Et on hésite toujours. Et pendant que vous passez du temps à faire ça, le travail est finalement attribué à quelqu'un d'autre.

C'est encore pire s'il s'agit d'une relation romantique. Si vous voulez aller plus loin — oui, non, non, oui — la personne, elle s'en va ! Ce doute sceptique est pernicieux dans notre vie, il nous empêche de faire des choses. Si vous souffrez de ça, ce qu'il vous faut faire évidemment, c'est aller dans la gueule du lion. Ah ! Tout d'un coup, on y va, on le fait. Il s'agit souvent d'une peur de l'échec.

Ça, c'est les quatre obstacles, c'est comme ça qu'on les appelle, qui sont actifs. Et il faut avoir nos stratégies pour les surmonter, vous voyez. Nos techniques pour les surmonter. Nos tactiques. C'est une guerre.

Et le dernier, c'est la torpeur et la léthargie. Donc les précédents, c'est une espèce de tempête. Celui-ci, c'est plutôt un siphon qui nous attire dans un doux oubli. Et ce qui est merveilleux avec cet oubli, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de souffrance associée. Et nous l'utilisons pour échapper à la souffrance.

Combien de fois avez-vous été assis un peu déprimé, et vous vous êtes jeté sur le canapé ? Et puis il y a le délice d'être dans cet état subliminal. On se réveille, on prend une tasse de thé et on retourne. On lit le journal et on s'en va. C'est un... Lotus Eaters.

Et là, notre stratégie, c'est un refus total d'être anéanti, quelles que soient les circonstances. Rappelez-vous que les deux ou trois premiers jours de chaque retraite sont toujours un petit peu fatigués. Mais après le troisième jour, il n'y a plus aucune excuse. Il ne peut plus y avoir de fatigue. Notre effort, c'est de rester réveillé.

Au moment où vous sentez cette léthargie, cette torpeur qui monte dans la tête, ne vous faites pas confiance. Ne pensez pas que ça va passer, ou que ce n'est pas vraiment beaucoup. Vraiment, vous savez, sonnez l'alarme. Ah ! Réveillez-vous. Ouvrez les yeux. Mais votre attention est sur le ressenti dans la tête. Et gardez votre attention dans votre cerveau.

Gardez votre attention en mouvement à l'intérieur de votre cerveau et vous remarquerez que vous pouvez vous réveiller au milieu de ces nuages aussi brillant que le soleil, parce que l'énergie est retenue dans le regard. Parce que l'énergie revient à l'observation et cela se passe parce que l'observation s'extrait de ces sensations avec lesquelles elle se confondait.

Elle est attirée par l'habitude vers cet oubli cotonneux. Vous vous réveillerez comme une ampoule électrique au milieu de ce porridge. Et l'esprit peut être en pleine forme, mais le corps peut se sentir vraiment fatigué, somnolent. Et donc il nous faut aussi faire l'effort physique et garder l'attention en mouvement autour du corps.

Vous trouvez quelles sont les parties du corps qui se sentent lourdes et somnolentes et lesquelles ne se

sentent pas. Et encore une fois, vous découvrirez probablement que le bout de votre nez ne veut jamais dormir. Et simplement en déplaçant votre attention, vous redonnez de l'énergie.

Donc avec chacune de ces entraves, il y a des techniques particulières que nous pouvons utiliser pour ne pas nous laisser prendre dans ces obstacles. Et donc nous pouvons les investiguer. Maintenant, pendant que nous faisons cela, pendant que nous faisons cette investigation, ces turbulences s'épuisent d'elles-mêmes.

Ça, c'est la thérapie. Une fois que vous comprenez ça, ça va vous sauver. Vous économisez beaucoup d'argent. Personne n'est thérapeute ici. Personne n'est thérapeute ici — c'est ce qu'il espère ! Même si c'est évident que toutes les thérapies modernes sont très très bienfaites. Selon la perspective de cette libération de la souffrance, ce n'est pas nécessaire. Si vous preniez cette pratique et que vous l'amenez dans votre vie quotidienne, vous observeriez une guérison du cœur. Ce qui ne veut pas dire que la thérapie ne peut pas accompagner aussi ce processus.

Ce soir, nous discutons vraiment du côté négatif de la pratique — comment gérer cette souffrance. Une bonne partie d'entre vous nous quitteront demain. Et malheureusement, vous manquerez donc mon discours sur à quel point la vie peut être merveilleuse. Il est possible que vous vous quittiez déprimé, avec rien d'autre dans votre esprit que cette terrible bataille contre les forces obscures.

Après le repas du midi, je ferai une longue pratique de *mettā*. J'espère qu'elle vous permettra de développer le bel esprit. J'espère que mes mots vous ont aidé dans votre guerre incessante contre les entraves.

J'ai prié que vous soyez libérés de toute souffrance. Plutôt que plus tard — le plus tôt possible.

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