

MINDROLLING JETSÜN KHANDRO RINPOCHE

ABIDING WITHIN THE BUDDHA NATURE

VANA, DEHRADUN | 6th March 2019



V I D Y A L O K E

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In this profound 90-minute teaching, by one of the greatest living Buddhist teachers of our time, Mindrolling Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche speaks of our incessant movement, propelled by a search for happiness. She goes on to demonstrate how we perform unvirtuous actions when faced with challenges, and the great need for us to slow down our experiences through stillness, silence and non-thought.

This transcription was transcribed by amateur transcribers. With an intention to retain the flow and rhythm of the verbal teaching and the vocabulary used. Corrections to grammar and syntax were not done. We recommend this transcription as an aide to the recorded verbal teaching, available on Vidyaloke's Youtube channel and Podcast channel.

This is very good for me, to be back here. I think I've been here now...three times. All short visits but, I've always left with a wonderful, inspired experience. All of us are not new to the witnessing of tremendous diligence and love and vision that Veer Singh Ji has had. I think it's tremendously courageous, of this young person to take on this enormous task of introducing human beings to their own humanness - which should be normal. Sadly however, it has become not normal in today's times. I think Vana, this place, has for me at least and for many of us with whom I have had an opportunity to speak about Vana, become a symbol of what this world has today become - developed, fast, speedy, growing, modern or whatever modernization means. Developed many good things, but with the good things comes chaos, comes speed, comes a situation where our body and our minds don't seem to be quite in synchronization with one another. And therefore most of us and most of you who are here, are with the aspiration of trying to bring some sense of unification of body, of spirit and of our physical health and our physical sense. And Vana I think, is a pocket...and as the team here, the wonderful team here led by Veer Singh Ji, has created what I think is an oasis, a sense of refuge. And humanness and what we value or whatever it is that we are trying to develop, through spirituality specially, seeks to find that sense of sanity, sense of peace, sense of wellbeing, sense of openness, where there is more in-depth understanding of who we are.

So Vana I think to me symbolizes the innate nature - the topic is Buddha nature. It's a very vast topic, something that would be foolish to attempt in 2 hours. But, keeping it very simple what we do mean by Buddha nature is, from the Buddhist teaching perspective - wanting to, having the awareness and the insight to look intrinsically, to look within every human being, to realize that human mind is such a wealth of qualities, of basic goodness. That from the essential perspective, Buddhist teachings talk about what the awakened nature is intrinsically. But if we don't go too much into the deeper philosophy and keep it simple, even so, it can be this Buddha nature. What do we mean by Buddha nature? It is a space of goodness, space from where genuine goodness and the best of the qualities of the human being can evolve. Quite like the human mind with its sanity, with its good quality, with its quality of peace and awakeness, Vana I think is a place where we are trying to do this. And then, when we don't reflect, when we don't introduce ourselves, when we don't become aware, of this intrinsic nature, then pretty much, it's like standing in Paltan Bazar. I'm not sure how many of you are familiar with Paltan Bazar if you're not a local person here, but there is

a clock tower for example, in the middle of the town here, and you just need to stand there, if nobody runs over you, for two or three minutes, and that's pretty much what our physical body and our mental state is, in the world today. It's chaotic, it's busy, it's speedy, there is a lot of noise, there is a lot of movement. And so this contrast between Vana and the city outside, is quite reflective of where we are as human beings. The contrast between our nature, and what our emotional state is, what our physical state is, in today's times.

So I think you're doing a wonderful work in introducing and encouraging all of us to go beyond this chaos and busyness, to discover who we are as human beings. And you're well supported by a wonderful team here, who through all of their different forms of treatment as well as bringing us together for dialogues and discussions, seeks to then bring that awareness, and I am very appreciative of your efforts. I hope it continues to grow and the whole team.

So going back to the topic that we have today.

Shariputra... those of you who have been introduced to Buddhist teachings, are familiar with the two names, Shariputra and Kashyap. If you're not, then that's just two more names. Known as some of the foremost students of the Buddha. There's an old anecdote, of the meeting between Shariputra and Kashyap. Kashyap was an Indian Brahmin, a very renowned teacher, who had many students and was a very, very accomplished scholar in the Vedic tradition and a very, very accomplished meditator. He happened to be around, during the time, where Buddha was teaching. And one of Buddha's main students was Shariputra. Now Kashyap, being himself an accomplished teacher, had heard, and having heard had become very curious about what the Buddha was trying to teach. Sometimes it's simpler for an ordinary person to approach and find out about something that you're curious about. When you are a teacher with hundreds and thousands of students, there are certain limitations perhaps, which do not allow you to openly approach. And so Kashyap never really had the opportunity to find out what the Buddha was teaching. But he was very curious and he was very happy one day when he happened to be walking and saw a Buddhist monk, begging the afternoon alms. He thought this is a good opportunity for me to find out what the Buddha is trying to teach. And so he approached this monk, who happened to be Shariputra, one of Buddha's main students. So he asks Shariputra, "Are you a student of the Buddha?". Shariputra says, "Yes", and he says "Tell me...". And I myself find great delight in this

anecdote, because of who I am, how I am dressed and how I look...usually people do this when you're about to board an airplane, they usually tap your back and say things like "Are you Buddhist?". And you have to end up saying "Yes". And a lot of times people will say things like, "Tell me what is Buddhism?". And much worse, they will say things like, "Tell me how to get enlightened?". And between boarding a plane, and trying to find your seat, and trying to explain how to get enlightened or what the Buddha nature is, or what the nature of mind is, or what Buddha taught - I have always found it to be very very difficult! Of course you end up saying something that sort of most of the time satisfies the one who is curious. But I guess it is not something new, because Kashyap says the same thing, "Tell me what does your teacher teach?". Shariputra answers and says, "It's absolutely difficult for me to even begin to explain what my teacher teaches. But if I were brave enough to summarise what my teacher teaches, then this is what he teaches...". And then we have a beautiful quote comprising basically of three lines...four lines, but the main is the three lines. He says, "My teacher teaches, 'Abandon everything that is negative, cultivate everything that is positive' (sometimes we use different words and we say) 'Abandon everything that is unvirtuous, cultivate everything that is virtuous, train your mind', this is what my teacher teaches."

This quote and these three lines, are considered today the quintessence of what the Buddhist teachings are about. So if you are about to board a plane and see a monk or a nun and you want to know what the Buddha's teachings. Or you are flipping through all the books that are in the libraries and wondering what His Holiness is talking about. Or what other Buddhists teachings are talking about. There is a wealth of information and wonderful teachings, but if you are busy, if you don't have much time, if you want to summarize everything into the quintessence and wonder 'What do Buddhists actually practice?', you will find that everything is contained within these three lines. As a human being, do not do anything that is unvirtuous, do everything that is good, that is virtuous, that is accessible to you, and know that the root of both of these two, lies in training one's own mind. 'Do not do anything unvirtuous' became the meaning and the essence of what is today is known as the Hinayana path of the teachings. Discipline, is the main theme Hinayana, or the Theravadan tradition. 'Do everything virtuous' became the main essence and the meaning of the Mahayana teachings. And the whole concept of Mahayana's training in developing compassion, what is known as the Bodhi-mind or the Bodhicitta...altruism... stemmed from this line 'Do everything that is good, do everything that is virtuous'.

The third yana or the third vehicle, today what is known as the Vajaryana or Tantra or Mantra Buddhism, came out from the theme of the third line 'train your mind'. So essentially, all three forms of the Buddhist Vehicles, are not separate from one another, they are step-by-step progressive ways of really working with yourself.

Now Kashyap, being a learned scholar and an extraordinarily accomplished meditator, understood the enormity and the depth of these three lines. He himself, knowing what that meant, became so fascinated, that is at that time, that he told his students - I am going to go and take refuge with the Buddha, those who wish to join me can join me, if you do not wish to join me, continue with what I have taught you and stay true to your own path - and Kashyap went, and it is said that he became the Buddha's student. And for many of you who are new, Kashyap became the Regent. So when the Buddha passed away, the lineage of the Buddha's teachings transferred to Kashyap, who became so struck by the wisdom and the depth of these three lines. Because he understood very clearly, the intent of the Buddha in his teachings.

We have to keep in mind that 2500 years ago when Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment and turned the wheel of the Dharma and then successively we have all these teachings, we have to...

...now as Buddhists we become very proud and we think oh Buddhism is a very special form of teaching, you should all study the Buddha's teachings and so forth... and that's true, you can always be very proud of the wonderful precious teachings that are there...but beyond that you have to understand, it happened in India. Rich and wealthy in its culture and philosophy and religion, that definitely one more was not needed at all. One more religion was not needed. There is nothing in Buddhism that is not there in the Vedic culture or any other culture. Whatever teachings we have, whether it is about compassion, whether it is about wisdom, whatever it is that we teach and we practice, it can be found in all the religions in different ways. But basic essence is always the same. So you have to agree, that one more philosophy was not needed, one more doctrine was not needed...definitely one more religion in India was not needed! We already had hundreds and thousands and therefore one more was definitely not needed. But then we have to understand what is the uniqueness? Why did it become called the Buddha's teachings? And Kashyap, was the one who understood it. And for that the Buddha, I think, also selected him as the successor of his path. Because here what Kashyap clearly understood as the Buddha's intent, was

that Buddhism was never intended to be something to follow as much as it was to consciously become aware of who you are as a human being. Life's responsibility that you have, as a human being, as a sentient being in general, particularly as a human being...the responsibility we have of not blaming somebody else for the situation and the experiences that we go through, but that beyond all the causes and conditions that we are subject to...you are an independent individual. The creator, the director, the producer and definitely the one who creates the ground of one's own experiences... that's what Buddhadharma is.

What does it mean to be a Buddhist? What does it mean to be connected to the Buddha's teachings? What does it mean and what you will find when you explore the Buddha's teachings, is that you are yourself responsible. And this is not good news for us!

I've always said that Buddhism, you know all of us when we teach Buddhism, its very common to say things like Buddhism is growing, it is growing in the west, it's growing in the East so on and so forth, that there's a resurgence of Buddhism in India - well that is all very nice if you count membership, but the truth is that Buddhism will never be popular. It will never be popular like Christianity, it will never be popular like Hinduism, it will never be popular like Islam. Why so? Because human nature is that we love blaming somebody else. God is the best one to blame. You know... for happiness you blame god, for suffering you blame god, things are going right you thank god, things are not going right you have a complaint against god or the creator or whatever it is.

And we Buddhists now today, we blame the Buddha, we blame our teachers and so on and so forth. Of course we have developed that system in Buddhism as well. But to be told that no you can't blame anyone else...you're happy because you are the designer of your own happiness...you can't blame someone for suffering, because you are the main protagonist of the experiences that you are creating...is not necessarily good news! Of course, when we're all in a comfortable air conditioned space like this, and we have our mind conditioned to being philosophical, you will not complain about that. But when the fact of the situation that you are experiencing comes and then you are told, well you did it, so therefore you haven't anyone to blame but your own self...you have to train your own mind, you have to create your own happiness, you have to create your own state of experiences, you have to avoid creating the causes and conditions that will bring about suffering and pain and hurt - its very difficult for us to

accept that, because it's something that we're not very used to doing. We are very lazy in that sense, and therefore the uniqueness of the Buddhist teachings is that, that unless you have the insight and the courage to really reflect upon these three lines, it will be very difficult to really fully engage in what the Buddha's teachings are about. So here therefore Kashyap understood this, and as I said, these three things become the main practice of the Buddha's teachings.

Now in all of this, the Buddha says...in Tibetan we have this wonderful word *dowa semchen*, in English people translate that today as sentient beings. And I think the English word for sentient beings is that it's a being that has a sentient, which is a consciousness or a mind. Now in Tibetan however, we have one more additional word to that. We say *dowa semchen*, which means sentient beings who are in a constant, incessant, movement. That's the basic characteristics, of what is a being. And in that, more impactful I think, than the term consciousness, is the characteristic of movement, incessant movement. So therefore, in some ways we say *dowa*, and what we mean by that is, we don't say sentient beings, we say movers - beings who are in constant movement. Be that a mosquito, a fly, a bug, a germ to what we consider human beings, the most sophisticated of all forms of life. And in the beginning it is very essential to look at this characteristic that we have, of constant movement...physical movement, you just have to stand, you just have to go outside the gates of Vana, and why is Vana very exclusive, is because it tends to pull back on the movement, slows everything down, that's what makes Vana different from the highway that is outside. All you need to do, probably it's a good time, is to put some benches out there, outside your gate, and have people sit there for some time. If they really need to appreciate Vana, you just give them every day half an hour of an experience, just do one thing...just cross the street ten times, and you'll know what we mean by movement.

World is in constant movement, from the beings of the very lowest depths to the highest realms, there is this movement. You go to a train station, you go to a bus station, you go to the road, you go to the malls, you go to the shops...it is just an incessant movement. And then you have to ask...why...is movement, so propelling to us? What propels this movement? And the Buddha's teachings say, what propels movement, is search for happiness. We are in constant, continuous movement because we think movement will give us happiness.

Physically moving...it's very comfortable chair that I am sitting on, nothing more needed. Give me 15 minutes, I'll start shifting - the pillow needs to be put in a

particular way, this leg need to be stretched into the other, you lean this way, you lean that way...in just this little space, I can find hundreds of different maneuvers, of movements, all thinking that leaning this side is probably going to give me more comfort and happiness, or maybe doing this is going to give me more happiness, maybe leaning forward is going to be better, maybe leaning backwards is going to be better, maybe the right leg down, the left leg down. As someone trying to understand what the Buddha's teachings are, you have to first go down to the basics of seeing movement, physical movement. Then there is verbal movement. If you are not physically moving, verbal movement. You have to actually pay a lot of money, to come to a place like Vana, where you are told be quiet. So the irony of human wisdom or human ignorance, is that we now have to create spaces for silence. Otherwise there's verbalization, no one listening, everyone talking. And we are very generous with our speech, constantly. You are supposed to be a group of people who are more contemplative so it may be more clear to you. But just spend some time outside with people, you sit in a public place and you just remain quiet and you observe, and you will just see what we mean by incessant movement of body and speech. And if body and speech for whatever reasons can't move...what can you say about mind, thoughts, feelings, sensations, emotions, opinions, judgments...you know, it's an unceasing continuous eruption of movement. And that is then physical, verbal and mental movement, all sort of, for happiness. Thinking in this way will probably give me more happiness. Saying something, not saying something, saying it in a particular way, will give me happiness. Physical movement for happiness. You are here, sitting here, thinking, and listening, all in search of that happiness. The number of days, that you are going to be here, whether you are going to sit still or move, or somebody is going to move your body...that's all in search of happiness. You get all the oils, the essential oils, baths and whatever it is that you do...all in search of happiness. You eat the kind of food that you eat, or you don't eat the kind of food that you have to eat...all in search of happiness. And that is a characteristic that has to be understood.

We don't mean to be good or bad. We just are in a continuous, incessant movement. Propelled by the wish to be happy. And that is what is the characteristic of a human being. Now not only do we have this incessant movement, but together with that there is always another thing, one more level to that. Is that you do feel threatened. Since your movement is in continuous search of happiness, you encounter threats to that happiness. Your movements experience threats. Your speech experiences threats.

You say something like it's a nice day, and someone says no!...your whole body, mind, bristles with some kind of a threat to the opinion. It's a very simple conversation. You can be you know over lunch or whatever it is, you could be having a cup of tea and a conversation, and you will experience how many times your heart misses a beat, because it experiences threat in your happiness. If I tell you sit straight and don't move for 15 minutes, you'll feel physical threat. Why do I, I am not a Buddhist? Why should I be sitting? Why can't I be enlightened by stretching out my legs?

That momentum of how your mind goes through an experience of threat, has to be understood, because the threat usually brings about two conditions. One is a reaction and the other is a sense of recoiling into yourself, what we call the contracted self. Of course you are in a constant movement, you are searching for happiness, but you encounter threat. Wherever there is a threat, you tend to either recoil into your own self – and that's usually called a guardedness, you become very guarded about yourself, which is very common specially in today's time. A nice experiment that I usually have, if you can do this in cities like Hong Kong or even Singapore, but Hong Kong mainly, because that's where I have experimented with it, is to stand on a busy road. As it is in Hong Kong you know, making your way on a busy street is always very difficult. But you try smiling at somebody, you know, you just go to a perfect stranger and you smile. This doesn't work much in India I've found, because people are so willing to engage with you, so usually it goes in a wrong direction! But in Hong Kong what I have experienced is, you stand and you smile, now specially if a Buddhist nun, who is bald-headed smiles at you, they become very guarded immediately! Now what's the problem here, they're going to ask me for money...or what is going to happen...or they're going to try and change me...and then of course everything! But whatever is happening in your mind, its very easy to see this tendency of being very guarded. This kind of a recoiling into yourself. Those of you who are you trying to meditate, should always experiment with this. Look at your own mind and see, first movement and search, second when it encounters anything that threatens what you are expecting or what you aspire for, how you tend to engage in these two - either you react or mostly you tend to recoil, you become very guarded in yourself.

Now in that moment of being very guarded in your own self, if you sustain this guardedness, you can experiment probably just in this space, that next time a stranger walks up to you, just look into your own mind. You may be fully embracing that person, you may be out there to say welcome to Vana and give this person a good hug. But you

will also sense simultaneously a percentage of that guardedness, just in case the person doesn't respond the way you expect this person to respond to you. You have to really feel that energy of guardedness in you. Because at a certain time, this tendency of being guarded in making sure that you are not a victim to the threat to your own happiness, if you consistently keep that, like drops of water filling a bucket, in the same way if you sustain this habit in your own personality, guardedness will then become hostile behavior. You become very hostile to one another. And this is where today, you know, we are all experiencing this. Everybody wants happiness but everybody is very guarded. In their being guarded, there is a certain hostile attitude that we have towards one another. We are very conscious of the space, we don't want to be manipulated, we do not want to be taken advantage of. If I am going to be good, I expect everyone to be good. If you're not going to be good, I am not going to be good. This builds up, this is the attitude, that then builds up which becomes our personality.

Now if you don't do much about transforming guardedness...let's go back...if you're very attuned to your own happiness, and it is so much so that you do tend to be very vulnerable to the threat you experience, and in being vulnerable to the threat you tend to be building up a habit of being guarded, worse...hostile, then you become a mean person. We don't wake up in the morning everyday thinking I am going to be obnoxious, you know, I'm going to be very mean, I am going to be angry at everyone. Quite the contrary, we always think let's start again. Whether its New Year, whether its Diwali, whatever it is. All of us have the habit of thinking 'fresh start'. Mondays usually, you know, weekend's gone. Monday I am going to try and be a better person. Everyday we wake up with a sense of some amount of hope that we can be better in our own selves. But it doesn't work very well. The resolution becomes weakened by the fact that the habit is more overbearing than the resolution or the aspiration. It just is in our... the energy is just in our own mind, so seeped as a habit, that involuntarily we usually tend to become, let's not say in some cases, mean, but not always mean, but definitely hostile and very, very guarded about our own space, our own freedom, our own individuality, our independence and space. Now as we cultivate this kind of a certain hostile and worse, mean attitude, then comes all of the negativities, all the neurosis, all of what we call kleshas. Whether it is greed, whether it is ego, whether it is jealousy, whether it is desire, and then aggression, irritation and sense of anger. All are the resultant emotions and experiences that we then begin to build in our own selves.

Now, when this tendency of hostility and meanness is sustained, irrational behaviour becomes very, very rampant in our own selves. So therefore, lashing out at somebody, saying very hurtful things to somebody, being very angry, being very egoistic, being very greedy...these involuntarily become resultant of this threat that you feel to your own happiness. And within that, it doesn't really have a rational way of discriminating things. And that is then in the Buddhist language, called unvirtuous actions. In Hindi, we have words like 'paap' for example, which in the English language can be translated as sins, as it is in many of the religions and the philosophies. Buddhism, does use the word unvirtuous actions or negative actions, but it's not really necessarily what we define in dictionary as paap or sins. Because from the Buddhist teachings perspective, unvirtuous actions...especially in Tibetan we have the word digpa. Digpa, literally we say unvirtuous actions, but it carries a meaning which means to crush. Something that crushes yours and others happiness, is considered to be unvirtuous actions. If it's a sin, it's a sin. If it's paap, that's a paap. But anything that crushes the basic goodness, to the extent that it gives you unhappiness, it gives other unhappiness, that is then considered to be unvirtuous actions. So the Buddha's teachings; self-discipline or mindfulness, all of these, are geared towards recognizing that you could be creating unvirtuous actions. Not because fundamentally you are a bad person, but just because you are so subject to an impulse of a habit that stems out of thinking your happiness is the most important. And in search of that happiness, you have gone to the direction of being so guarded about your own happiness, that you don't care about another person. And when this uncaring attitude or hostile behavior is sustained, you tend to get into impulsive habit of being unjust. Mosquito bites you, you squash it. How much blood does a mosquito actually take from you? You know, if you really weigh it against taking life. If I were to suck a drop of blood from you, would you kill me. But we don't care when it comes to a mosquito. That's the kind...is that threat to your skin experiencing a bump, you know at the most it gives you a little bump over here, you are so careful that your skin doesn't want to feel an itch, that you don't care if somebody else loses life because of that. This is just one example, but you take for example hurting somebody with your speech. And you say something that is really mean, that hurts a person for decades, if not for whole life. But you don't care so long as you find a minute of some sense of victory, that you've had the last word. That's the kind of uncaring attitude, a hostile attitude, a mean attitude, an unjust attitude, that gives somebody else unhappiness, it crushes the happiness of somebody else. But in the long term, it does boomerang back to you. People say things like...we get this a lot...when people say things like,

I'd like to find a nice wife or husband. And as a teacher we of course say, be hopeful, you will find someone, we try to match up somebody else with someone else, within our community. But the reality I've always felt is, you don't find someone to love you, because you have to start loving others. If you, as a person, is someone who is irritable, and lazy, and selfish, just let's say obnoxious, that even as a teacher I see that person I try to take a U-turn and go somewhere else. And you are looking for a good husband or a good wife, someone who is going to take care of you, and really give you love, unconditional love - reciprocity is there, you give love you receive love, you are a good friend then you get good friends. You like the company of others, you have to be at least somebody who listens a little bit more than talking all the time. It's just simple things. But when we don't realize this, we don't find, we don't see that anger or greed or arrogance, these have a short term some sense of happiness, that you may achieve from it. But it boomerangs back to you, it comes back to you.

Karma is a subject that is very much the pivotal subject of Buddhist teachings. Causes and conditions. You create anger around you, of course, it's not only going to hurt somebody but it's going to also come back to you. Karma comes back to you. Causes and conditions are created. It's very simple thing. I can sit here for 5 minutes, say some things, and that's going to bristle up all of you in this room. And you can have the worst day at Vana, because of what a person said for 5 minutes. That's the power of speech. That's the power of movement that any individual can make. "My stay at Vana was wonderful except that day when we had to go through this", you would say. And that is the kind of environment that you are creating in and around of your own self. Crushing of your own happiness, and that then comes back to you, and harms you, affects you, that is called unvirtuous actions. Do not do anything, that is therefore unvirtuous. Not only for others, of course it is wonderful to think about the others, but if you are truly searching for your own happiness, do not do anything unvirtuous. That's the key; refrain from all of those impulsive habits, that tend to create causes and conditions of unhappiness, disguised in that moment, as an elusive happiness. But which in the long run, for you and for others, is going to be filled with pain. If you don't want pain, don't create pain.

And the way to now change that is, to do everything that is virtuous. What do we mean by 'virtue' in that? The Tibetan term we use is gewa. Gewa, again from an essential meaning perspective, is to do the opposite. There is no greater virtue, than tolerance. And a genuine sense of altruism and understanding. Nagarjuna's very beautiful quote,

where he says, “just as the moon becomes brighter when it is freed from an eclipse, in the same way, human mind can be brighter and more illuminated within the darkness, if only, an individual had insight to look at the darkness”. To be virtuous requires oneself to really introspect and see how the happiness is so important, how the threat you feel to that happiness becomes the basis of all the unvirtuous actions. And then, as again another quote from the Sutra, it says, “just as the most beautiful pure lotus arises from a muddy swamp” -in the same way, from this human mind, which is so filled with this meanness, this guardedness this hostile behaviour, in search of your own happiness - you begin to then get the insight, just as I do this, everybody does that. And to be able to really understand, how we as human beings, this if we don’t talk about all sentient beings, if we just talk about the billions of sentient beings, human beings that are there - this is the family that we have created - billions of wonderful people, all in search of happiness, blinded however by their own happiness, that inadvertently they keep creating ground of unhappiness. And through your own personal experience, when you begin to get an empathetic attitude of, this is how I do, this is how you do, this is how all of us. Everyone in the room, trying to do everything; physical movement, verbal movement, mental movement. . .all in search of happiness. And yet each individual, most of the times, blinded by their own search, not able to actually discern between what brings happiness and what brings suffering. And how sad that is.

With all the studies we do. With the meditations we do. We are doctors and lawyers and professionals and family people. . .all of you are supposed to be people in society, who are thinkers, who are intelligent, who have wisdom, who have knowledge, who have capabilities. The fact that you are here, means, you’ve done successfully in your life. And you’re trying. But that same intelligent person, not knowing this very simple thing. You want happiness, you create happiness. You do not what suffering, you refrain from creating the causes of suffering. How simple that is. How complicated we have made it.

Human beings are ignorant. The term comes from that. Ignorance is the cause suffering comes. Not because of any fantastic thing, but because the most simple and the most obvious thing, escapes us. There is no greater irony, nor I think, a slap to our human wisdom mind, than for fantastically successful individuals like ourselves, to having to resort to things like meditation and spirituality, to do the most simple thing - be a good human being.

What could be more ignorant than that? Look at it this way. You have to have a Guru, from the Himalayas. You have to go to retreats. You have to read books. And who knows better than Buddhists how many books we have to read. I think the Christians are the better lot, they have a Bible! We have how many bibles? They say, something like what 16 elephants could carry. The number of volumes of teachings that Buddhists have, is just innumerable! Every wonderful teacher, comes out with no less than 20 volumes! And 1200 years, of wonderful teachers bringing us out all those teachings. These are profound, wonderful, precious... I don't mean to discourage you from reading wonderful teachings and texts. But... keep things simple. Because in every page, of every volume, you will hear the same thing repeated over and over and again: you're a wonderful person, with a wonderful mind. Don't be stupid enough to be ignorant to that, chasing after everything, other than training your own mind. And then you sit under trees and in locked rooms, and you call them retreats, and you meditate for hours. And we do that 3 years & 7 years & lifetimes of retreats. In humid caves, and you get rheumatism and arthritis, and you think I've done wonderfully well. We shave our hair, we become monks and nuns and you become Vanavasis and... what are we doing? Everything but, being focused on the simple thing: you're a wonderful human being, with the capacity to do everything that is good. Why not?

If you want happiness, build the ground for happiness. You are responsible for your own happiness. You do not want suffering, it's very simple, don't do things, don't create causes, that bring suffering. And we think, yes that's true, but let me try another way, let me read another book. You know... maybe I should just become a Buddhist! Maybe I should have a Guru... the Guru will make me definitely better. What's this Guru supposed to be doing but saying the same thing? And as I said in the beginning, human beings are better followers than leaders. We love following. Responsibility for our own mind, that's not so delectable.

We would rather be associated with somebody who sat in a cave for 25 years in the Himalayas, and came out with herbal products! And that's then what makes a very simple philosophy - do not do anything unvirtuous, do everything that is virtuous, train your mind - into one of the world's most complicated spiritual philosophies.

Buddhism is complicated not because the philosophy nor the Buddha's intent was complicated, but we as human beings are very complex. In that, we tend to choose

what is complex, over what is simple, because we think what is simple, just doesn't par up with who I am, as a wise individual. And that's ignorance.

As a person contemplating and observing, and this is all what mindfulness and meditation is about...mindfulness meditation is nothing other than observance. Observing yourself, you take yourself as the guinea pig, you take yourself as the object of analysis and examination. You observe within your own self, how a simple search of your own happiness, tends to bring out the habitual neurosis of every kind. And you're propelled into unceasing movement, all in search of that happiness. Not knowing that in pursuit of that happiness, you create the dramas of multitudes of negativities. That then inadvertently create more harm and hurt to yourself and to others. And further more, using yourself as the example, you then begin to say, this is how all of us are creating this chaos. Samsara or the cyclic existence, is all of us, caught in the whirlpool of this movement. Everyone's searching for happiness. But each one, is really going more outward, than truly being able to create ground of happiness. And the third line comes into being, train your mind. Because yes, creating virtue we understand, do not create unvirtue we understand. But the root of that lies, in training one's own mind.

Dharma, as the Buddha realised and he taught, was kept simple. Everyone knows, that when Buddha did attain enlightenment, he did seek out to share his wisdom. But it is said, that the first group of people who heard him, couldn't make sense of what he was teaching. So the Buddha chose to be silent for seven weeks. And within these seven weeks, in deepened contemplation, about how he could impart, he then went into making one of the most simple things into the most complex philosophy. He turned the wheel of the Dharma. Taught the teachings once, twice and many times. And today we have what is called Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana, all these many different teachings. As a child when I grew up and I used to hear this story, I used to always complain about this first group of people who missed the point! Because you know, you have to sit long hours and study all these texts...and I thought, if that first group of people were intelligent enough to get it in a simple way, we would not have to memorize and study all of these complex teachings! And then, as I often tell my friends, over time when you grow up, then you begin to realise, that that first group of people, never really changes. It's always very simple, but we always side step the simple thing, and we choose to always rely upon something more complex. And the whole point is, rather than training one's own mind, we like to change the decor of the

outside. We try to relocate to a different place, find a different teacher, find a different spiritual belief. And we think by changing everything external, that perhaps there will be this change in the internal mind as well. And the Buddha's teachings are about that. That yes, virtue is important, abstaining from and abandoning unvirtuous actions is important. But until you train your mind, that is not going to happen.

So out of that today we have what is called the Buddhist path of meditation, and all of you meditate. I am sure you do wonderfully well. I have lived my life with Buddhists, myself being a Buddhist, I am always a little bit sceptical about people who meditate. Because I take myself as an example. And if you are doing what I am doing, then there is a lot of room for being sceptical. Because I really don't know what people do, when they say they are meditating. Because if you are meditating, by simply changing the extrinsic, that's not going to help much at all. Yes there's going to be some benefit of course, but true meditation, is about training one's own mind. And to train one's own mind you have to understand what you mean by mind.

So, do not do anything unvirtuous, create everything that is virtuous, but train your mind.

I am going to pause for 2-3 minutes, just for you to shift and reorganize yourself, before I start talking about this...mind.

After a short break...

So the third line, training the mind...now as I said...meditation is well known, people try different forms of meditation, and to be truthful, all forms of meditation are good. Whatever you can do, especially if you were to keep it very simple, the whole essence of Buddhist meditation boils down to three instructions. Stillness of the body, silence of the speech, and non-thought. That you can let your mind relax, without the infiltration of incessant movement of mental thoughts. Stillness, silence and non-thought, are the highest degree of meditation. It's a huge subject, we are not going to get into that. But you can see that within the highest of the teachings on meditation or recognizing mind - we are calling it Buddha nature here - these three instructions oppose what we have been talking about, and that is the movement.

Like the wind that blows the clouds to reveal the spaciousness of the sky. In the same way, when stillness, silence and non-thought settles one's own mind, into a clearer

state, beyond the impulsiveness of movement - this is the birth point, point of where the wisdom is able to look more clearly. You're not able to really see things clearly, more than that, you are not able to clearly have any understanding of what mind or your fundamental nature, the Buddha nature, actually is like. As long as you are victim to the movement. So therefore, the whole Buddhist tradition of sitting in stillness, being quiet and silent, and trying to do all the exercises, whether it is breathing, whether it is focusing upon an object, whether it is visualization, whether it is mantras... all of these are various techniques, they're different methods, that train the mind to free yourself momentarily from all the emotions, and the thoughts and chasing after, which then again encourages the movement. Where there is movement, there is always an extrinsic sort of an influence. And that does not really allow you to look within your own self. So the basic principle of meditation should be understood that way.

Usually these days I have been speaking a lot about this subject - to take on a much more technical approach, based upon some of the Yogacharya teachings of the Buddhist doctrines, those of you who are studying Buddhism. Because I feel people tend to meditate and work with the mind. That's very difficult, because Buddhist philosophy says, mind is empty in nature. That you can't really find a self, you can't find ego... we'll get to that. But if it is something empty, what are you supposed to be working with. Then what are you trying to train. So the whole point of meditation, what am I meditating on? And people say things like, I meditate. When you ask them the question, what are you meditating on? You have all kinds of answers. If you're a very traditional Tibetan Buddhist, then you have mantras and visualizations. I meditate on Chenrezi, on Tara or Buddha. Or people say mostly I meditate on silence, or I meditate Shamatha and Vipassana, or I meditate on my breath, I observe my breath... all kinds of variations. And as I said, I tend to be a little bit sceptical because you really don't know the subject. And if you don't know the subject, you could be creating your own kind of movement again, in meditation. And when you create a movement of your own, you become very religious. And being religious, is missing the point altogether, in Buddhism. Because again you are going to resort to relying on something else, rather than the fundamental mind.

So it's very helpful for you to understand that to train the mind - now coming back to the three lines - do not create anything unvirtuous, create everything that is virtuous and to do that, train your mind.

What is the anatomy of mind? What is mind? What do we mean by mind? Some of the teachings, Yogacharya specially, categorizes mind into many different levels of consciousness, in the Buddhist teachings. So when we say I am training the mind, what does it mean?

If you force mind to not think, to sit still, to be silent, it's going to pretty much become claustrophobic. That's where you don't want to meditate. So its very important first to understand, the whole anatomy of mind.

And in this way we are going to look at what is, what we sum up as mind in Buddhism, usually means the 8 levels of consciousness. Primarily, first is the 5 sense consciousness; eyes, nose, mouth, ears and your body that feels the tactile sensation. These are the five sense faculties. Form, sound, taste, smell and tactile sensations are the experiences of the five sense faculties.

Sixth consciousness, is called the mental consciousness. Invisible...but it's the mind and the mental events. All of the different thinking that you do, particularly in the realm of opinions and judgements and discrimination.

There's a seventh cautiousness, which is called emotional consciousness. Some call it afflictive consciousness. In simple words, it is every time when you say I, when you identify yourself. It's the self, the ego or the I, and the whole assumption that there is me. That's called the seventh consciousness.

Eighth consciousness, is called the ground consciousness. Using a Sanskrit term, it's called the alaya or just the ground consciousness. Now according to great Masters, some of you are familiar with the great Longchen Rabjampa, according to one of his illustrations, he gives a beautiful example of a mirror, a plane mirror. That, a mirror if you look at it, doesn't have anything in it. It's crystal, it's something that's transparent, it's translucent. It doesn't in its own self, have a form or sound, or smell or thoughts or any kind of ideas or identity of its own self. So therefore, the eighth consciousness is usually illustrated by the example of a mirror.

Now when you look into the mirror, you see the form, you see the reflection of your face for example. That's usually illustrated as the example of the first five sense consciousnesses.

These five sense consciousnesses, characterizes experience. So whenever you say something like, I am experiencing...its usually within the realm of the five sense consciousnesses' experiences.

It has an ability, and it has a disability, or an inability. Ability of the five sense

consciousnesses is, it experiences. The inability is, it cannot do anything but experience. It doesn't have anything. So you can see a form, eyes can see a form, basically that's what it is, it can see a form. Beyond seeing a form, it cannot do anything. So it experiences, but it doesn't do anything other than experience. To be able to take the experience or acknowledging the experience, you have to rely upon the sixth mental consciousness. Sixth mental consciousness, is that it discriminates. It really is able to discern, and see. So you say things, oh I like what I am seeing, I don't like what I am hearing. So basic discrimination of experiences is the ability of the sixth mental consciousness. It also has an ability, and an inability. Ability is, that it can discriminate. Inability is, that it can only discriminate one experience at a time. But...your senses are not sympathetic to the mental consciousness. And when you stand in Paltan Bazar, or the clock tower as I said earlier, you stand there, your five sense faculties are all outside - you can smell, you can hear, you can see, you can see many things. So basically in a chaotic busy mind, your sense faculties or sense consciousnesses, bombard mental consciousness with a deluge of experiences. So it bombards it with seeing and thinking and tasting and smelling and feelings and all kinds of...but because it can only discern one thing at a time, it has to speed up. It tries to then speed up with its discrimination. It's like if I have ten balls in my hand, and I throw all ten on Nupur here, all at the same time, most likely she will not be able to catch even one. Because you know, ten things are coming to her at the same time. But if I tell her, look Nupur, I am going to throw this at you...catch. If I give her enough time and I throw it to her, she'll be able to catch that thing.

Mental consciousness suffers from the same situation, where if the five sense faculties are all facing outward, sending in hundreds of information. Taranatha for example, in our teachings, says you can have more than 60 sensorial experiences within a given moment, in one moment. That's being kind. In Vana maybe, it comes down...because everything is quieter, slower. It lets your senses really slow down, and that's the beauty of retreat, is that it allows senses to retreat into a rhythm where it is more kinder and gentle to your own mental consciousness. So that you can actually say, oh...it smells nice. You can spend time.

Thich Naht Than is a wonderful teacher. I always mention this, the first time I went to United States I went to a teaching of Thich Naht Than, in 1987. He gave a talk for more than, I think two or three hours. And I went with my notebook to write whatever he was going to teach, I was I think 19 or something at that time, and I was ready to

write down. And all I came back with after that two and a half hour teaching, was the word orange. Because for two and a half hours, this wonderful teacher, simply spoke about mindfully eating an orange. It was a wonderful experience for me. Because I come from a very traditional Tibetan background, where we speak, speak, speak, speak, speak...you know our teachers speak for 5 hours nonstop, with almost not even breathing, and so you have to write, write, write, write. And suddenly to be brought into a situation, where this teacher just talked about recognizing what you're eating, and he spent half an hour just learning how to peel an orange! Have you eaten oranges in your life? Yes? With what speed have you eaten?

That's the difference between meditation and non-meditation. It's that your kinder to your own self and the experiences. Senses have to be taught to experience, but to experience one at a time. So that there is more clarity for the mental consciousness to discern. But as I said, if I throw ten things at Nupur, all at the same time, she's so taken aback by the impact of what is coming to her, that guardedness, hostility, threat is immediately felt. So she doesn't respond to what is being offered to her at this point. So in that moment what happens is, our discerning mind does not clearly discern. This is the point where we say ignorance...we don't choose to be ignorant, but the speed of our sense consciousness being so chaotic, confused and speedy...the mental consciousness suffers from ignorance. Ignorance being that it discerns but it cannot discern well.

So another example is, if one person asks you a question, you can answer that person quite coherently. But let's say five people ask you five different questions, all at the same time, how well can you respond to all five at the same time? Imagine ten people speaking to you at the same time, how much clearly are you going to be able to hear and respond? Imagine sixty people asking you sixty different things and expecting your sixty answers simultaneously...what are you going to do? At best what you're going to do is...yes, no, I don't know.

So our mental consciousness, that can discern and discriminate, is brought down to the level of being very gross, very blunt. So most of our discernment comes in the form of, I like it, I don't like it, and a very big bulk is, I don't know. So that's our discernment in today's times. It's all about yes, no, I don't know...yes, no, I don't know. We think we're intelligent. But our intelligence is now so blunt, that it can only say, I like, and you grasp...I don't like, you reject...and you tend to be, I don't know, and you don't care, and you don't bother, you just prefer to shut yourself down into your own self.

And that then is the unfeeling and the hostile sort of behavior, that you continually create. So therefore, it is important for meditators to understand, five sense faculties only experience, discriminating mind discerns but does a bad job, because it can only discern one thing at a time.

Seventh consciousness, is even more trickier than this. It thinks that it is discerning for something, someone. So we say things like, I like it.

In 3 words...I...like...it, we have five sense consciousness working in experience of that 'it'. There is a very gross, blunt, ignorant discernment of liking. And there is the fact, that we without any challenging it, think that there is an I that likes it. The whole Buddhist, and Mahayana teachings specially, is spent in investigating what the reality and the nature of this I is.

And that's very simple actually. You go around searching for the I, you go around searching for this elusive self. Other than it being a mental assumption, you can't find it. My teacher used to... one day we were studying with our teacher, and this was a group of Tulkus or Rinpoches, who were all studying with him. We were learning about the Prajnaparamita, and the reality of self and ego. So we studied the text and we are all very intellectual. So Rinpoche, our teacher, asked us, "What's the nature of mind? What's the nature of the ego? What's the nature of I? What's the reality of self?" And we all gave the correct answer. Its empty. No color. It doesn't have shape. It doesn't have a form. You can't see it. You can't feel it. You can't touch it. It's a mental assumption. It's not really there, that's what the Shunyata is, that's what emptiness is. And our teacher said, "I don't believe you, it must be there, and it must be in this room. You should all go and search for it.". And he told us, it's in this room, search for it. First we thought he's joking. But he wouldn't budge! And then we thought, he's serious. So we all started doing the most silly thing - searching for yourself, you know, I. And he said, pick up the table it must be under it. So we had to pick up his table, we dusted the table cloth. Then he said, it must be in the strands of the rug. So for 45 minutes, intelligent Rinpoches and Tulkus, were searching in the rug...for I, where can you find the I. There was a lot of giggling and sniggering, and...Rinpoche is gone a little bit...you know. Maybe he's just playing with us. We were very frivolous with it, and as long as the frivolousness stayed, he made us search, in that little room, twenty five elite teachers, looking under carpets, in rugs, under tables, in table cloth, and everywhere. He kept making us search for it.

When two and a half hours or even more of that futile search was happening, he then finally said, “There is a difference between intellectually thinking it is not there, versus a firm unchallenged belief, that even though it is empty, has no form, has no color, has no shape, you cannot catch it, you simply think it has to be there. And as long as the supposition and the assumption, of that what does not exist, is existing at a subtle level is there - your mental consciousness is always going to dominate, every experience, every discrimination.” Because of which, it becomes very important for meditators in the Buddhist doctrine, to not only just intellectually know that the I, the ego, the self, does not have a form, shape, color, does not exist as a reality...but it is important for each one of you to take time, maybe Veer can then actually make a program, searching the self in Vana. And you could then make the parameters a little bit bigger, and you could go under every rock and leaf and tree and root, and under your bed and beddings, and every nook and cranny of this place, to look for it.

Meditators, without joking about it, meditators have to exercise this. You have to look. What is this that is this I? Other than your own assumption, that at some level, it has to be there. What is the reality of it? Is the existence of yourself as a real I, as a real entity, nothing but a mental assumption? And beyond a mental assumption, can you prove its existence? That’s the challenge that you have.

We always say, either you prove the Buddha wrong, who said it is emptiness, and you come back with an evidence that the Buddha himself didn’t find, or you accept defeat. And you truly say you’re just clinging to a neurosis. You are just clinging to a supposition. That you’re being ruled, your sanity is being ruled, by a mental assumption. It’s called afflictive consciousness, because you’re afflicted by a misconception. You’re afflicted by an assumption. It is afflictive in its own self, because it itself doesn’t exist, and yet you think that at some level it exists. And therefore, it’s the birthplace of ignorance. It is the birthplace of karma. It is the birthplace, the breeding ground, that nourishes habitual impulses.

Seventh consciousness is just an assumption. It’s not even a consciousness, it’s an assumption. Now beyond that, then is the ground consciousness, which is called the Alaya. Alaya is a vast topic. Different teachers have taught in different ways. Broadly it is generalized into two categories. Great beings and enlightened teachers saying that Alaya itself has an awakened state. And some who then say, Alaya is just an unconscious state. Now, experientially for meditators it’s very important to understand Alaya as

having these two aspects, and Alaya that is a ground of habitual patterns and all of our impulses. And at the same time, Alaya Janana, that Alaya also has within it, intrinsically a wisdom aspect. Somewhat like the two sides of our palms, two sides of a coin. It has unconscious state, and it has a very luminous, very clear state in its own self.

Now why we do mention this is, meditatively you're trying to train your mind. What does it mean to train one's own mind? In order to train one's own mind, you have to reverse the whole process of habitual impulse. Because remember, we started with movement. Now movement is what propels cyclic existence. Movement is what propels actions and habits. So therefore to reverse the process, to train the mind is, settle the experiences down. That's why Buddhist meditation, seeking to train the mind, first engages in limiting, pacifying, sensorial experiences. Close your eyes, sit quietly, do not move, let loose everything, concentrate just on your breath...these are all techniques and methods, that are oriented towards really settling experiences. Because when the experiences settle down, at best and in the least when it is slower, in its comings, then mental consciousness has more clarity. It can see clearly, it can think clearly, it can discern very clearly. So that's the whole point of sitting still, not following thoughts, just going back to your breath, centralize your awareness, let the breath be, just let yourself completely be relaxed. These are all methods to train the first six consciousnesses.

Having trained the six consciousnesses, there's the view, there's the philosophy. And that's where we do study a lot in Buddhism. Because it allows you to then search for this self. So that the dogmatic and the very strong influence of the self and the ego can be pacified. Even if you don't really realize emptiness of the self, but if there is an intellectual knowledge that in the ultimate sense, there is nothing to hold, there is nothing to grasp, five senses settle. Your discerning mind can then slow down, and since there is no experience, it can also settle down and not discriminate for a moment. Further, it does not even hold onto to any notion of self or the ego, it then is, where the clarity of accessing your fundamental ground. Now we're talking about Buddha nature. Then you can reach that fundamental nature, the Alaya.

Every day you go to sleep, you actually reach your fundamental nature, every day. You do. It's your nature, so you reach it all the time. But more direct experientially, is when you go to sleep. That moment where you're just about to fall asleep, you will notice all your senses quieten down. You stop seeing things, you stop feeling, you're not

talking, you don't feel any smell or taste. It's that juncture where you're just sort of falling asleep, in that moment your mind even stops having opinion and judgements. You don't care. It's completely relaxing. There is also no sense of I as an identity. But it's a very brief moment, between that sense of complete relaxation, to a state of unconsciousness, when you actually go into sleep.

When you fully fall into sleep, it's about the whole system of your mind, entering into the Alaya, entering into the ground consciousness. It becomes unconscious, that's usually called the sleep state.

Many of you sleep during meditation as well, that's what's happening. Every time you need to just know, I am entering into the state of the all-ground consciousness. Now when you do fall into a sleep state, there is more unconscious resting, there is no momentum or movement of the mind at that moment. But, now meditation seeks to, in that state of Alaya, turn it around, so that it can be awakened in that state. That within that state of complete pacification, not falling into sleep, but just as in sleep, you let the experiences settle, you stop discriminating, you do not hold onto the notion of I, you completely let yourself rest into that expansive state, that has no boundaries, no limitation, quite like Space itself, completely open, not unconscious, but awakened in that state. But awakened without ego's identity. Awakened without unnecessarily discriminating. Awakened but not being completely distracted by the experiences. You can be...but you can be free from movement.

The question is, can you as an intelligent, wise, good human being, be completely content within the basic nature of your own self, without constantly being in motion? A motion, nobody wants, a motion that's not going to make you better or worse, and a motion that is unnecessary in the first place. Can you be absolutely content by abiding within your own nature? That you could see and let be, you could hear and let be, you could think and let be.

Particularly, we're not saying not experience. Within the clarity, within the awakensness, you could have experiences. But you could do without two things - unnecessarily having opinions about your experiences - I like this, I don't like that. You have a plate of food in front of you, watch yourself. We're going to have lunch very soon, you can watch and experiment during that time. Five things on your plate, and you're going to start with one, right? Could you do that in a very relaxed motion? Where everything is taken, and you're grateful for that. Or are you going to say something like, this is better than that one, but this is definitely worse than this one - an opinion nobody wants, nobody cares about. You yourself could be very well without that opinion.

It is the discriminating mind that creates an unnecessary judgement. A judgement that has consequences. Because eventually, the judgement and the opinions become karma, become causes. Causes because...now karma is not a heavy duty thing. People often get bogged down by the concept of karma. Karma is very easy. You do something...you bounce a ball, its scientific, you bounce a ball against the wall it returns back to you. Action and reaction.

Small things add up. Karma is a pivotal subject in Buddhism, because karma defines your character. It eventually becomes your personality. It becomes the person who you are. A peaceful person, an angry person, a greedy person, a satisfied and a content person, a happy person, or a person who is always with disappointments and pain. Because this is the discrimination that you are building up, and influenced specially by the self and the self-cherishing.

Training the mind therefore, is all about quieting down. Especially the sixth and the seventh consciousness. So that it ceases to discern, especially discern to satisfy an elusive, empty in nature, ego or self. So where the self is not found, and you're therefore within that spaciousness of not finding the self, you allow the influence of it, that constantly discriminates, to also quieten down. Then between the clarity of your nature and the experiences that you're doing, it's not infiltrated by the unnecessary discrimination of an ego mind.

There's nothing that stands between you and the experiences. It is what it is.

That spaciousness of being clear, being able to move everything, without the ego's dominating tendency of discrimination - that then allows you to have a healthier, friendlier relationship with experiences. Training the mind is just that.

But prior to being, this is theoretical, to actually engage in it, must then therefore require you to actually take some time. You have to become familiar. You have to be more familiar with resting, than with movement.

And so people say things like, how long should I meditate? It's always a difficult question to answer. People also say things like, is half an hour for meditation sufficient for me? Or most of us, we meditate an hour or two hours or whatever it is. All is very good. But you have to always be wise enough to understand, you're working with two kinds of things, opposing one another. If you think, twenty three and a half hours of movement, can be broken down by half-hour of stillness, then half an hour of meditation is good for you. It's being very optimistic. But that is where it is. The ratio has to always be, that the medicine has to be a little more powerful than the disease.

Many lifetimes of movement and the habit of impulsive movement, has to be broken apart by stillness. That's what training the mind is. You have to judge your own self. How much do you have to meditate, to make resting and non-movement, a habit that supersedes and is more imposing, than the habits of movement.

So although your innate nature being absolutely still in its wakeful state, it does not need to grasp, discriminate, judge, feel threatened, be selfish, greedy and grasp in its own identity. That capacity is simple and is in there. If you think, that being introduced to that simple aspect of your own mind, you could be true with it, and abide, you could be the best Buddhist without ever being a Buddhist, and you do not need to meditate. But if you think, yes, that the impulse of movement is so very strong in me, that I need to take some time, to familiarize myself with resting, then you do what most of us have to do. Is that we have to be kind to ourself, in knowing, that to train the mind you have to take some time off, to familiarize. To familiarize, so that you can settle the senses. You can settle the discriminating mind. You can completely settle without ego-grasping or self-cherishing or cherishing that which does not even exist. You could rest and familiarize yourself not to fall into an unconscious state. But within that resting, you could be clear and awakened. And that by doing this every day, and becoming familiar with it, you could then engage in every post meditation state, with the strength of that understanding.

And that is why you come to a place like Vana, go on retreat, and you listen to talks, and you read books, and you sit quietly and meditate, and you give yourself time to know your mind, so that you can train it.

When you really have a sense of, oh my mind, it's up to me, then you are gifted with the knowledge that the great teachers have said. That there is movement in every sentient being, but it is only the human being that has a choice, that enjoys the freedom of having a choice, of whether to move or not to move. That's what makes human life precious.

And therefore, here you are, with the choice. You have the movement, the habit of movement, but you should know you have a choice, and you're free. Because you have the choice, you have the responsibility as well.

Therefore, as the Buddha's teaching say, 'be still...in your own nature'. But if you can't, and you must move, then make sure, the movement is virtuous. Do not do anything that is unvirtuous.

If you have to move, make it virtuous, be generous, be kind, be disciplined, be ethical, be free from selfishness and pride.

Do good things.

Refrain from unnecessary things that give unhappiness, anger, greed, ignorance, desire, jealousy, arrogance,

and above all know that, whether it is anger, or whether it is tolerance, it stems from your own mind. It blossoms in your own mind. Therefore it is your mind. You are the owner of your own mind. It is the mind from where the best of the best arises. It is from your mind where the worst of the worst thing arises. You have a choice, you're free to choose.

Sanity and the basic nature, always says, choose right. And for choosing right, if you need support, then have teachers, meditate, read books, study, be a spiritual person. As we always say, keep things simple. If simplicity escapes you...be complicated.

And that's where we say...welcome to Buddhism :)

So...overall, this is then just the gist of what Buddhist teachings are about. So for those of you who are not very familiar with the Buddha's teachings, this is what it is, is to continually keep in mind, try as much as possible, to refrain and to abandon unvirtuous actions. Do everything...if you really want happiness...do everything that is good. If you find these two simple instructions difficult, learn to train your mind.

How to train the mind?

Observe your mind.

First know the world of your own mind, and how powerful it is.

Sit still, be quiet, free it from the pollution of many different movements.

And you will find your own innate buddha nature within...

So I'll stop here, there are any questions?

(Please see the video of this Teaching on Vidyaloke's Youtube channel for the questions and answers at the end of this teaching. Certain extracts from the answers are cut, copy, pasted below)

The transition from negativities, to something that is virtuous, is all about being empathetic, and altruism as we say. And empathetic altruism, has a lot about taking yourself as the example, and then being able to from that point, learn about the others. To really be able to see, just as I very quickly give my opinion, or I'm sharp with my words, and very often times you don't even mean it, but that's the impulse of the habit of speech that we have. In the same way others do it. And so you have a broader vision of where others are coming from, that's an empathy or sympathetic attitude that you have. Which cultivates into a much more altruistic understanding.

In the teachings of Nagarjuna, he gives this very beautiful example where he says, "Let the thought of understanding others, first knock. Then let it enter. And then let it abide." He gives three stages. So he suggests, that altruism and having a compassionate attitude towards the others, must always come from first a sense of knocking. It is like when you enter a person's house, you knock, and in the same way let the idea knock your mind. Where it begins to say, greed or selfishness or anger or all of that, people don't intend, but it's that search of happiness, they're trying to find happiness in that.

When you see another person really being aggressive towards you, there has to be an understanding of saying, where he's coming from is not from identifying anger, as much as it is identifying that as a moment of happiness. So in search of happiness, the anger is being demonstrated, or the greed is being demonstrated. So that idea should knock in your own mind, that's the birth of altruism.

Otherwise if you're going to simply go out right, no matter how bad you are, or mean you are to me, I am going to be compassionate to you, works very rarely. Oftentimes you have to force yourself, most of us Buddhists try. You know you're going pink and purple, but you're trying to be compassionate and understanding to the other person. That's very deliberate, that's very forced. Because it is lacking in that understanding, the sympathetic understanding, that is there.

So let the ideas knock you. Even in that moment of anger and you're retaliating in anger itself, doesn't carry what we call the quality of compassion, but... whilst doing it, if the idea, that just as what you are doing is in protection of your own happiness, what the other person also doing, as a protection for his or her own happiness; it doesn't have the apparent form of compassion, but it is definitely with wisdom. Because its giving you the seed, that is going to be more powerful than a deliberate compassion, at that point. So let it knock. Then let it enter. Let it enter means, make it more... you know, doesn't have to always be something negative.

If people are gossiping for example, instead of saying you're wasting your life gossiping and you should be silently meditating, you should immediately have an empathetic attitude of, they're trying to find happiness, in that moment of idle chatter. And that's sort of letting your mind be more pervasively with the idea – everybody wants happiness, everything that is being done is being propelled by that wish of that happiness.

It makes your heart and your mind, more aware of where other people are coming from. Then when you let that enter and abide within you more, that is then the transition to an altruistic mind, its a compassionate mind. So there we have a Tibetan word, which I like very much, we say nyingje. Nyingje, usually is loving-kindness. But nyingje also means - this experience or this moment is very tender to my heart, its sort of gently patting my mind. That's very important. That your day to day experiences of being with other people and other sentient beings, has to have a tenderness of understanding, what other people are going through. That's the birthplace of compassion, and it makes you a lot more open to other people and situations and experiences. And this is long term, a slow process. But it is longer lasting and a much better process, than to walk around saying, I'm going to be generous, Im going to be patient, Im going to be kind. Which is sort of exciting in the first few days, but after that it becomes very burdensome to you.

So empathy and a sympathetic understanding of equalness of yourself and the others, is very very important. I always give the story of myself. When I started teaching, and I would often come back to my own teacher. And the moment you see your teacher, what you do is, you complain about the students. He is not doing this, and the westerners are not doing that, and the Tibetans are not doing this...and this and that

and so forth. I used to do that. I never recognized myself doing that, but every time I met with my teacher, it seemed I used to spend a lot of time, what I thought was trying to find answers, but it came across to my teacher as complaints about everybody else. So one day I think he got very fed up after my repeatedly doing this. And he looked at me and he said, “You don’t really like the people you work with, do you?”.

And that was a big moment of thinking, and I really had to look into myself and think - do I really like the people I’m teaching? And then you find, no...you don’t necessarily like them...you sort of get along with them...but you don’t necessarily like them. And that’s why you complain about them. It took me years and years and years of really observing that habit in my own self. Gradually, I would say it’s a work in progress, but I have worked with that a little bit, to try and see that I like the people that I am with. I start there. I don’t go very much into I love everyone unconditionally, or I’m compassionate to everyone! That’s really far into the future. You could start with sort of liking everyone that you work with. And that’s a very good point to start with. Because it does create a sense of equalness. I am going through this, you probably are going through that as well. What you’re going through I’ve been through that, I’ve gone through that. So there’s a sense of understanding. And that’s a good place to really work with tolerance. Everything else just follows.

There is no such thing as being patient. If you like somebody, you like somebody. Whether its patience or whether its kindness or generosity...everything is sort of a spontaneous, resultant state of being able to get along with everyone. I think our great teacher, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a very good example of that. He really likes the people he works with. And that then speaks volumes more than us sitting under a tree and thinking I love all sentient beings, and then really being irritated that somebody is singing loudly or being busy around and so forth.

So work with a sympathetic understanding, and that’s I think helpful, that’s my personal experience. Whether it works for you or not, I’m not sure :)

Joy is very important...absolutely! I think this is the biggest missing point. And it’s a huge subject. We speak so much about loving-kindness and compassion, but we don’t speak about joy, what it is to be joyful. Joyfulness in the accomplishment of the others, is a wonderful wonderful concept. Spiritual people, take themselves way too seriously. And that’s then what makes us all, sort of, burdened I think. I’m just so bogged down

by how kind I am! So much pressure being compassionate, every day of your life, you lose the sense of joyfulness.

Joyfulness from the Mahayana teachings perspective is, to also relax with the thought, that everyone will find their way without you. It's good to be kind and compassionate. But the world's kindness and compassion doesn't begin and end with you.

You're all doing well, and I must learn to be happy, knowing that each one of you will do excellently well without me. That takes the pressure off, being kind and compassionate. Joyfulness is very important. To be joyful, in knowing others are happy, to be joyful in other people's accomplishment. The joy of knowing you are doing the best you can. When you lose joy, then you really become overly, I think, depressed spiritual people.

From a teaching's perspective, from the Buddhist teachings perspective, habit formation is more to do with levels of energy, we call it karma of course, but karma has to be understood very clearly. Karma is not destiny. It is just...an unchallenged energy, with which you just become so familiar, that the momentum of that energy supersedes the awareness. And so usually, we call that habitual impulse, or the karmic impulse...bakchuck...imprint, so deeply imprinted in our consciousness, that you don't challenge it. It sort of just goes on its autopilot momentum.

So that's where it is, it is not challenged, and the momentum just keeps...and the more you move it, the more energy it gains, and that's what sort of is, the cyclic existence.

Samsara, the whole sort of illustration of samsara, is an incessant round and round, going around, in the same...it never really has a beginning and an end. But it has an energy that circles. For example, if you just turn something very quickly, the motion itself keeps the round movement, for a long duration of time. And so it is quite similar to that. The imprint and the energy in our subconscious mind is so strong, that you don't question it. And so it has a life of its own, and then it moves. So its almost sort of autopilot.

So awareness is therefore so very important, and awareness is not something, from at least a Buddhist perspective, it is not so extraordinary or sort of religiously glamorous. Awareness is just knowing this energy that you have within, and that you have the

choice, to let the momentum be stronger than your own wakefulness, or that you begin to realize that it is a momentum that I have created, and therefore I can bring a cessation to it as well.

Sitting meditation is relatively easier, than walking meditation. Walking meditation is very advanced. We usually...the Theravadan culture for example, the Zen Buddhists, use a lot of walking meditation. Which I think is really very beautiful.

Tibetan Buddhism has its own mantra and the visualization, which is a form of walking meditation. It allows the mind to be in momentum, and still be still. So there's a little bit of a difference in styles in the techniques that it uses. But, generally we have what is called meditation and post meditation.

People often think I am meditating, and then what should I do in post meditation. Whereas, the actual Buddhist practice, is post meditation. The formal meditation is a basic principle to familiarize yourself with the resting, and in that case, post meditation or walking meditation, are both almost the same. In certain traditions, walking meditation is more advanced, in that it allows the same subtle awareness or the very ground consciousness or the wakeful state - call it Buddha nature or call it Dharmadatu or call it the absolute nature or the very fundamental clear wakeful state - to remain within it, without any kind of dualistic conceptual movement. But physically being in motion, verbally being in motion, mentally being able to respond and work.

So therefore we have a very simple example where we say... there are the clouds in the sky, but the sky doesn't identify itself with the clouds. So walking meditation is trying to do that. It's trying to remain within the sky-like nature, by involving physical movement and verbal movement or even in the mental movement. But without itself becoming identified with the movement itself. So there is movement, and fully being embroiled in the movement. Then there is a wakeful awareness state, where there is movement, but you're not identifying with the movement. That's what walking meditation is trying to do. And it's very important, because if you don't do that, then of course you are very restful in your own formal meditation. But in post meditation, then when you have to respond, and when you have to work with other people, then its sort of such a contrast, that you think you are either in meditation or not in meditation at all.

Whereas, the walking meditation is a very good bridge, because it allows you to be within a restful state, while still being fully functional, and you have to be functional. Otherwise, you know, meditators are going to be really in a forced sort of passive state. That's why people ask things like, will you be able to stop at a red light if you are enlightened. Of course!

The difference between that is, in this state we are so much in the movement, not only, but that the movement completely becomes our identity. Whereas, in a more realized state, you are yourself, very acutely aware of your own nature, and even in movement, you don't identify yourself with the movement. So that's a little bit of difference, and walking meditation is then a very good way to bridge that gap. I always encourage people with walking meditation.

*We express deep gratitude to Mindrolling Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche
for this precious teaching.*