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An Interview with
Sri H.W.L. Poonjaji
by
Christopher Titmuss



This is a transcript of an interview with Shri H.W.L. Poonjaji on January the 30th, 1991.

The interviewer, Christopher Titmuss, is a Vipassana meditation teacher who lived in India for a number of years before returning to the West. He has interviewed many of today's spiritual leaders, including the Dalai Lama.



Poonjaji, I would like to ask a question from a fairly traditional position and hear your comment and then we will explore it from there. There has been, as you very, very well know a long-standing discussion or debate in this area of exploration about the value, if any, of a relative approach: - the notion of practice, development, becoming, with a view to a long-term end. Some point hopefully in the near future. There are other teachers who regard this as a possible distraction and missing the essence immediately. What are your comments on this relative approach of practice in the theme of the development and becoming of a human being. What comments come to you?

First you started with a traditional way, and then you asked if through a traditional way by relative traditions are all related, relatively connected - and by any tradition I don't think the essence can be arrived at.

Uh huh. So this means that with the traditional forms, they actually serve to obscure or hide the essence.

Yes. I don't think anybody moving in the traditional way has benefitted himself and has been freed from samsara.

Take the case of Buddha.

He rejected all traditions. He tried all traditions. He stayed with everybody

*- Jains, practices - and he found that that was not what he wanted and that is not the purpose of what he rejected by this.
So he tried and then he said, "I cannot arrive at the essence and know and move to enlightenment".
He rejected everything.
He decided I want my own Self, which is not the traditional way.
He sat under the tree in Bodgaya and he found it, not through any tradition, but by himself, you see.*

So one important thing, then, that needs to be understood is the abandonment of the traditional way. Right?

That is the dharma. Abandon all the traditional dharmas and you will arrive at dharma.

Now, if I could take that another step. In some traditions, and I assume you know something from my friends about insight meditation - Vipassana meditation. There has been some wish in Vipassana to abandon a lot of the conventional religiousness.

We might describe Vipassana practice in its most simplistic form - as sit and observe. Walk and observe. Sit and watch. Walk and watch. Sit and witness. Walk and witness.

Some method and technique, but at the heart this is the basic teaching. Free from tradition. Free from beliefs in Buddhism and Eastern traditions, etc. Just sit and watch. Walk and watch and see what happens.

What would be your comment regarding that?

*So this again, insight meditation. I have been hearing about insight meditation. It is observation of some object, say the breathing or whatever it is, you see. You have to fix - there has to be an observer. Observer has to observe something.
Now here, what you are going to observe is going to be observed through*

*the mind, through the mind or through the breath.
So here observer is observing through the mind that which is going to be the object of the mind.*

Right.

So whatever would be the result or the gain through the mind could be only mental.

Yes.

*Isn't it?
Now who the observer is, that is not tackled. Who is the observer is not detected, only what is being observed. It is going to be the object of the senses.*

Can I come in?

Yes.

Just tell me if I come in too much, you just tell me, OK?

*I will not allow you to.
(Laughter)*

OK.

In insight meditation, as you point out, there is the observer of the observed, the watcher of the watched, right?

Yes.

One of the features of insight meditation is to say that the watched has the characteristics of being impermanent, coming and going. It is

unsatisfactory. And to see it as impersonal, not me, not mine.

OK.

The result, as you say, comes to the mind. But people - the meditators, the observers - report that the observing of change, coming and going, the observing of unsatisfactoriness, and the not self, the impersonal nature is, in a way, somewhat freeing. There is less attachment, less possessiveness, less clinging, less desire because there is some realization, relative realization, of change - nothing is worth clinging or holding onto - and a person feels through observation of the object, real change inside: more contentment, more peace, greater clarity, through the mind, of course.

OK.

I think it is a clinging to insight because when you observe something inside...

I'm sorry, Insight or inside?

Insight or inside, same thing. Insight also means 'not outside' - the sight which is not clinging to any object of the outside, but going somewhere on the inside, maybe the breath or maybe any other point that you fixed, so if you observe something, your point of observation is inside, so you must be out of it to have an observation of that inside.

Yes.

You must stay outside, you see, to have some observation of inside. You see. Outside observations of this thing - river, free, contentment. So you reject this and you have an object inside where you cannot easily cling, isn't it? So you stand outside and you are clinging to an object inside, you see. Now what I suggest is, what I feel is, if you remove this wall, outside,

inside, anything - outside, external, say from samsara to nirvana - nirvana is inside and samsara is something looking outside.

Objects and objectlessness or some objects and non-form, emptiness, form to emptiness - so from form to emptiness, if you are looking to emptiness you are somewhere out of it and now you construct a wall between you and something unknown.

So when you remove the wall, then you don't need any meditation.

So, can we go a little bit into it?

Yes.

There are, in insight meditation generally, there are four objects of the mind, four objects.

Yes. Step by step I'll go.

Four objects of the mind is what you said.

I made a mistake.

(laughter)

There are four objects, right? One is the body as object, the second are feelings as object, the third is mind, particularly thought, and the fourth is nature: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch.

Right, right.

These four objects - body, feelings, thought, and objects - a person observes these things, sees them coming and going, doesn't hold on or cling to them, but as you point out, often there is not the inquiry into the observer, who seems to stand outside of all of this.

Yes, that's what I meant.

That's good. Yes, I understand. So there is the observer of the objects changing, but the person says well, what, nothing. Where do we go from here, what do you say?

OK. You started with body, feeling, thought...

and sense objects. Seeing, hearing,

...sense objects, you could call it earth, water, fire, ether, all the other senses... everything and that is what the body is.

Of course.

OK. The body, feelings, thoughts and objects, and...

... objects, material objects or nature elements, ...

Body. First you started with the body. To whom does the body belong, to whom does feeling belong, to whom do the thoughts belong, to whom does the object belong? These must belong to somebody, you see.

Now let us reject what can be rejected by simply calling it: this is not freedom, not this body. It has no capacity to be freed, to be enlightened because it is nothing but earth, water, fire, air, and ether; you see, this is body. So reject the body, then reject the feelings, then reject the thoughts, then reject the objects, material objects.

But let us see what happens if we reject not this, not this, not this, not this, what will happen?

Then...

Then you will arrive at somewhere. Who is capable of rejecting all these things, you see, because he is neither the body, nor the feeling, nor the thought, nor the object? All these are due to him.

So these can be rejected.

Let us reject all these for just a moment.

Now what is the balance?

My feeling, my mind. Now this 'I' is left.

'I' cannot be rejected. Can you reject the 'I'?

You can reject everything. You can reject the feeling, the power, all the possessions that belong to you. My mind, my mind, who am I?

It belongs to me. My feelings, feelings of the mind.

My intellect, I decide what I want to do. My body.

Now these things can be rejected and these things will not get free by themselves, you see. My body cannot be free. Freedom will not come.

So let us see to whom the freedom has to come, first of all.

So, these things: reject these things. Then what is left which cannot be rejected?

It wants freedom. I rejected everything. I am left now. I cannot cling.

Two points. You have said several times now: the place of rejection. When the person, when one is observing body, feelings, thoughts, elements - What do you mean by rejection? Is it something that occurs spontaneously as a letting go? Or is it a clear affirmation, 'I do not want to be identified with all of this.'

No, no, not that. I am tackling what is real.

Supposing, now we are all waking, we are all in the waking state and what you say everybody accepts - the body, the feelings, the thoughts and the objects, you see.

Now let us slowly move toward the sleep state. Now what happens?

Let the body, the mind, the feelings and all these things approach.

So when at the last second, the last second before sleep, what do you do at that time? Do you see, when you slip away, do you see all these things?

No.

What did you do to go away, to enter into sleep, to reject all these things, to enter sleep?

Nothing.

No. No. Let us see. Simply don't say anything. Approach sleep.

"I have office work. I have to go tomorrow. Some friends come. Tomorrow there are discussions to have - how to arrange the wedding of my daughter. He is coming at 11, let us say."

He disposes of everything. He'll see tomorrow. To sleep, what does he do to abandon everything? And unless he abandons everything, he cannot enter sleep...

We might say there is a loss of interest in the activities of the daily life and then there is a natural...

No. No. Not the interest. I'm not calling for the interest only. How do you enter into sleep?

Why do you have to reject all these things to enter into sleep and why should you go to sleep rejecting all these pleasurable things, you see?

Your wife is next door, next to you, why should you reject her?

You have to reject your wife, who is very close to you, in order to sleep.

Why do you reject the things that you love throughout the day? What for?

Your house, your gold, your everything is near the bed.

Why should you reject all these beauties of life?

Why do you go, why do you have to reject all this samsara in order to go to sleep? Why do you offer yourself to go into that state?

Out of necessity.

Yes.

Because it's a necessity.

*Yes. That's the necessity. If **that** is the necessity, **this** is not the necessity.*

*So **that** is the necessity. And in that necessity what has happened?*

When you go to sleep are you not more happy than what you had been in the daytime with anything?

Right. So...

If it were not so, you would not go to sleep.

So, in a way, you are saying, the entering into sleep is the simultaneous dropping of these four objects.

Yes, we can agree on this point. It is simultaneous.

Simultaneously dropping everything. When you enter the sleep state you do not know 'till you wake up next morning. So what is there?

During the sleep, who is awake, who is there? Body, feeling, thoughts and the objects? Do you see anything in deep sleep?

No. Nothing can be seen.

Are you unhappy or happy during that state?

Personally very content.

Very content. OK.

(Laughter)

You are very content.

So this is contentment arrived at by contentment, you see.

We are in the super market. We have made a lot of purchases, we have purchased many things, bundled up. And then contentment will be to go to another marketplace, or to return home directly? What would you prefer to do?

Well. I'd return home, easily.

OK. This is the home that you prefer.

The marketplace that we speak about: body, senses - and their transactions with these objects - this is the market. Then all this - if that could give us satisfaction - happiness, pleasure and beauty, nobody would like to go to sleep!

There is something else more precious that makes us prefer to sleep more than anything else, you see. So we enter into sleep. There we don't see all these things what we speak about.

We are very happy. Who is awake during sleep?

Nobody that I know.

OK. I will tell you. Something was awake!

Because when the next morning, just the moment after sleep, the very next second after sleep, somebody asks: "How did you sleep?"

"I slept very well. I was very happy during my sleep. I didn't think about anything. I was very happy."

So this happiness, during sleep - then who was awake?

Who experienced the happiness? Who was it?

For that I have no answer.

(Much laughter.)

Excellent. Excellent. Excellent.

Can we?

(Laughter.) *I won't forget that face.*

I want to get back to that edge.

OK. So...

Let us go just to the edge. There is, shall we call it, the fading away of the objects...

Yes.

Then you said...

Reality cannot be faded out.

No. So at that edge before the vastness of sleep, the immeasurable...

Yes.

At that edge there can be the sense of I, the oneness or the observer.

When you wake up...

No, I'm talking just before the vastness of falling asleep. Right on the edge of sleep. Right on the edge of...

OK. Now let us start from here.

This is all samsara. You are in the waking state.

Now you are here at the end. That's what you mean, no?

Yes.

You are at the end. So, at the end, this end, this end of the body, feeling and thought and the objects, you see - let us end all this here, OK?

Now then, this is ended. The other thing, sleep, has not yet started.

Exactly, this we call the satshi, pure witness or observation, at that point, which meditators speak of, yet perhaps remain stuck at this point, you understand?

Yes. That's why you speak about insight meditation and all these things.

Yes. OK.

It is this point only. You are clinging here, and the beyond, the unknown or emptiness you have not yet experienced.

That's it. That's what I'm trying to express.

Now let us see what happens here. What is your opinion here?

Now, this, everything ended here - finished.

What is next you do not know, so what is not known and what has been known is rejected already. Coming to the point. So what has to be rejected has been rejected. The beyond is not yet seen. That beyond has not yet started. This moment, everything has ended. The whole waking state has ended, an other thing is not yet known, so you are getting rid of the waking state and you have not yet entered into the sleep state. So at this moment what do you see?

At this moment there is some identification with the known called 'I' which has this notion of being solid and permanent in some way or another.

This 'I' is not the 'I' I speak about. This 'I' and everything, because it's my thought and my body and my mind - this has been absorbed by the I which we have called One I.

I and my property, I and my mind, the "complete I", let us consolidate all that as I. Now this 'I' has come to an end, this 'I' has come to an end and something there has to go beyond. That has not yet started. So this 'I' is looking into that moment. Into that moment it cannot go back - it cannot go back now. It has already ended.

... given up...

... yes, given up, ended. The other thing has not yet started. So, what is this moment in between the two - the unknown and the known?

So that moment, at that critical edge, it seems that the thought is making a distinction - a difference between the known called 'I'...

... and the unknown...

and that's the one which keeps the duality ?? or...

... and the person then thinks I must get rid of this 'I' in some way to taste the unknown and then the person continues practicing in the wheel of becoming in the effort to end this 'I'.

Yes, when this 'I' is facing something else, facing something else, this 'I' which has been knowing everything, so this is one 'I', when she stands in front of something else, this 'I' will feel shy...

Yes.

...will feel shy and dissolve. This same 'I' which was approaching, comes to the end, faces something and she will feel shy like a new bride...

Or bridegroom...

Yes, the bridegroom is still there waiting...

(Laughter)

She will, what will she do - immense, you see they say, immense happiness in what has been seen, and... she is totally face to face with emptiness. I am happy you have brought me to this point which I think is very difficult to bring into here by language!

Yes, that's true.

I hoped you could help me...

(laughter)

At the end 'I' is there, you see. All the known has been rejected.

Now in front is something else which 'I' never heard and never experienced. All which has been known to 'I' has left.

'I' came to this end in search of something which 'I' could not find in body, mind, feelings and others, so 'I' started a travel to somewhere else. When she came to the end and got fatigued with all these things and that fatigue...

She doesn't want to return back, a return is rejected. Then this 'I' is facing something else that she has not seen before. I don't use any word for it, people say Love and Beauty. This 'I' will simply disappear.

So at that critical point in a way there is a humility or a trust that it's own dissolution will take place into deep sleep.

I think so. I think so.

Its dissolution will take place itself in happiness – to leave and embrace something else which has no name and no form, and nobody spoke about.

She will jump into nectar, you see, into beauty and love, where there is nothing to cling to, and no one who can cling. Subject and object are not there, neither the thought process, even the mind is not there to claim that experience, nobody can bring any message from there: "It is like this or it is like that". That news I have not heard so far.

I hoped Mr. Christopher could give me some news about it! I would be happy...!

I have good news.

(Laughter)

So in a way, all the methods, the practices, the traditions and the processes, in a way - at some point the person must come to the edge, at some point, that's the decisive

All sadhanas take you to the end to advise you to reject "me".

Yes, yes...

Sadhana, what does the word mean?

Sadhana, I know the word well.

You know the word? Sadhana. You've heard it?

Yes. It's practice, it's meditation.

Sadhana. It's a Sanskrit word. I don't know Sanskrit but I may have found it somewhere myself, I do not know, the word sadhana means: Sadhan means practice. Sadhana: don't practice.

(Laughter.) That's very good.

Sadhana - S-a-d-h...

Sadhan means any kind of practice, anything that you do, any effort that you make, may be for freedom, may be for other, material things.

The word 'na' is entered. Sadh - na.

So if you give up all practices, those you have been doing so far, what will happen?

Here, where you came to the end, you gave up all practices, that's why you came to the end after having given up all practices, otherwise you would never have come to the end.

So let us see if you can take any practice along with you to the other shore...

Yes, so..

When you have unloaded all the thermas you used to carry on your shoulders, the therma of the body, the therma of the mind, the therma of death, there are many thermas you see, three kinds of thermas are

*abandoned - when you have abandoned that, you are absolutely naked.
And when you are naked you will jump into dissolution - never to return.*

So in the immediacy of the here and now, some seriously committed people, wishing to leap into the never returning...

Ah, right...

...come to the edge, near the edge, but the person thinks if I drop my practice, if I drop my method, if I drop this, then I will just get lost in the world again...

Yes, fear...

... and a fear is occurring.

Yes. So if that particular man stands at the end and he cannot decide himself, there is something behind him pushing him. If a man himself is not willing - there is pushing, you see.

Are you the pusher?

The pusher is the same as the one that has to be pushed.

Expand a little more on that, please.
(Laughter)

*Yes, you need a push according to some people. But what I see is you need a push only to be pushed. Someone else, when you are hesitating to jump, a person knows. Here starts the tradition that you need a push.
Then you need some messenger, you need some son of God to give you the push, you see. Here the religions have started.*

Yes...

But truly speaking, you don't need a push, nor are you at the end nor have you started from anywhere else, nor do you have to jump into anything.

Be here and now.

This 'going to the end' is also a concept.

It is only a concept of the mind and you have started from somewhere...

... and you arrive...

So you are going, you are travelling, you arrive. Now here you need a "push something".

I don't think you have ever started, or ever ended anything, nor do you need any push...

This is very significant. One hasn't started anything, one hasn't arrived at any critical point, and no push is required.

No push is needed.

So that in a way...

No samsara, and no run to nirvana. No samsara. No nirvana.

So the whole construction of the mind is a complete fiction.

This is called mind and that's why it's called mind.

(Laughter)

Right. And this mythology of the mind, going somewhere, reaching a place, making a jump, has a powerful grip. It grips the consciousness, the belief.

Mind is very powerful, you see. Suggestion of the mind. You accept yourself that you are bound. So when you are bound there is the creation of samsara, so then there is the suggestion of the mind "I want to be free of samsara". And then the practice starts, the method starts, some tricks or dharma starts, "let us proceed toward nirvana from samsara". This is also a concept!

Nirvana is a concept also, another trap from the mind's side!

You are bound; to escape from samsara - suffering - you go to nirvana.

Another trap! So how to remove this trap of nirvana?

When you call it a trap you are out of it. When you know by a special spontaneous knowledge that this is also a trap, nirvana is also a trap, then you don't need any pushing nor do you need to jump anywhere else.

And nowhere to go...

Nowhere to go.

... and no coming from.

Nowhere to come from.

Breathtaking...

Hub?

It takes the breath away. (Laughter)

Nice.

Can we, for a moment or two, just go a little bit to the relative?

(Papaji Laughs.) Everything can be accepted. Here everything can be accepted, because there is nothing to be rejected and nothing to be accepted.

Therefore you are free to accept everything.

This gives me a great freedom at the moment.

(Laughter)

I'd like to speak for myself for a moment. I spent ten years in the East engaged in explorations, six of them as a bikshu in the...

Aah! Very nice.

From 1970 to 1976. Since that time I've had the great privilege of serving the dharma to people through retreats and outside of them, so during the last 15 years I've met and talked with many people and, of course, some of my friends you know as well here.

There often appear relative misunderstandings. One of them is sometimes the idea of separation from family life, sometimes the image of the monk and the nun living a life of aloneness, a life of separation and retreat, and people will say many, many times:

"Look. I have children and a job. It's OK for you, Christopher, you spent years in the East. You had the opportunity. I'm just a family man or I'm just a family woman. I have my responsibilities, my duties. I have no time for this."

And yet the person is sincerely interested. You must meet people like this...

Yes..

...every day. What do you say to a person who seems to be forming a strong view that "it's not possible for me because of demands or duties or job or something else". What is your response?

He should only be made to wake up from this dream of duty and realize that one is always free and one is always alone and this is, I think, only... man is only dreaming.

Suppose I fall asleep and in that sleep I marry a woman. This is a very beautiful dream. So I marry, I have children and then somebody suggests meditation for me and I like that and I say "I have a family and I am working. I don't have time to come to the mountain to stay and to..."

Exactly.

So he wakes up now; he wakes up. When he wakes up what about his family, duties and all that, you see?

All these things happen or are uttered when a man is asleep...

So this man is asleep. This man is asleep who says I have a family, a duty, I have no time to find myself. This man is asleep.

But a man who is waking, who is waking up from the dream, he has no family. He is always free. Nothing has ever touched this man. He is so, so very alone, you see, even going to sleep. Nothing touches him you see.

All these things are only possible in the dream state. When I fall asleep and I dream, I see many friends. Some are children and some are grown-up people, some eighty-year-old man and some five-year-old. It means that I have spent seventy-five years there in the dream to see the difference between a five-year-old and an eighty-year-old man, then the mountains a million years old, then the rivers, then the trees, then the birds. So when you see anything, any name, any form, then one is in sleep.

Now being in that state, in that dream world which is all going on and on, one of the themes that has become important both in India and in the West is: surrender.

It has become a major point of discussion, which has sometimes led to misunderstanding. When a person feels lost in the dream world as you describe, then there is a wish to renounce or to surrender to something greater than the dream world of family and responsibilities and such. What do you say? What is your response to this surrender which has

been used in religious life and religious traditions?

That has been imposed on you by the shepherds.

Shepherds?

Shepherds, the leaders of religions. All these leaders are shepherds.

Shepherds, yes I understand.

Shepherds, they all have been shepherds. Whether you herd sheep or you herd men, they are all shepherds who give you this teaching.

So are you saying that the relationship is talking to sheep?

You want to be herded. Only sheep are herded - not the lions.

(Laughter.)

So, if there is... sometimes, from the shepherds, a strong message goes out: Surrender, give up, let go, follow me.

It has not worked.

It will not work?

It has not worked.

It has created many wars. It has created wars - return to me, come to me, I will give you rest. It has created wars. See what is happening today. All these kinds are not worth believing. I don't think it has benefitted mankind so far.

So when I speak of these things, you see, my duties, my sense - I have not read anywhere about it. I have not read anywhere what I am going to explain about this, about duty - one is always free.

I had a vision. In a very awake state, I had this vision of all this samsara, of everything, all these things. I told this to a French bishop, a Father. I spoke to him about this. My incarnations, I have seen myself in many incarnations. I never knew, because I couldn't speak to anybody about it. I didn't find anybody else. That vision was that I saw that I have spent - I think today, this morning also you raised this question - so in that vision I see a different species and I recognize myself in previous incarnations; then everything was my master...

(Here they put in a new tape and a couple of sentences are lost)

I have seen that this is me and this is me and this is me. I have seen many incarnations and I've gone to those graves also, I have gone to those chapels, also where I have been a priest, speaking about samsara. All this I have seen - in a space of time, in an instant of time all this has happened - millions of years I have spent and this in an instant of time, all the samsara from the beginning to the end that happens to us - all this is a thought. This experience everyone is going to have at the end. You will see. Everybody will see. This is an instant of time. That instant is empty, you see, I have seen. I cannot say, but I can still use these words. It is all. Nothing exists or nothing non-exists. This is what I speak again and again. Emptiness, you see...

In the morning satsangs your directness about the nature of emptiness, about the immediacy of it, this immediate realization of seeing is a very rare opportunity for people.

I don't think I can - I can... give the right explanation. It's not what I speak.

I appreciate the difficulty with the language, but isn't it sometimes, I can sometimes feel it here and elsewhere, there is the heart's yearning, a deep yearning to realize the ocean...

Yes, yes.

... and sometimes the person feels I can't because "I'm holding on, I'm holding back". Then comes the message of surrender. And sometimes the teachers, both in India and in the West, major religious teachers, teachers of the past and of the present too, say its not surrender to me; it's surrender to the truth, to that here and now, to emptiness, to God - to whatever the language - and sometimes there is the experience of surrendering. What do you think? Is that still the shepherd and the sheep?

This surrender, I think it's misinterpreted by the religious people - that religion has misinterpreted.

I think this surrender word has not been understood. I think surrender is that I abandon the concept, abandon the concept that 'I am bound.'

So that is the...

This is surrender.

...the genuine surrender?

This is what has been meant. When this surrender takes place 'that I am bound', simply surrender this concept and 'to whom to surrender' is not important.

Excellent. Excellent. This is the clearest explanation of surrender that I have heard. Surrender this 'I' which thinks it is bound. (Laughter. He applauds.) Excellent!

Can we touch on one or two other topics?

With the relative and the becoming and the development of this model it seems to gain a momentum, a strength to it. It's as though

sometimes the strength of the relative seems to hide emptiness.

Yes

... and a person's relationship to the process of becoming - or change - is that the person thinks that *that* is the real truth of things, so the person continues.

When that is occurring there may be a realization. When there is a realization, the dream finishes. Sometimes we anticipate that if the dream finishes for the person - they realize that they are the ocean. They realize this.

Sometimes one expects the expression will be love in the world, compassion in the world, care for others in the world, but sometimes there is no obvious manifestation of the expression. The dream is finished. There is the realization of the vastness, and yet the expression doesn't seem to be so obvious.

The expressions can be in several ways. One man becomes like a rock, doesn't give any expression, you see, an other one behaves like a child - you see, behaves like a child with child-like behavior...

What is child-like behavior? Have you got someone like Jatainya or Ramakrishna in mind, is that that kind of child-like playful dance?

Childlike behavior is one saint - you may not have heard his name. Childlike behavior is Suka: Suka Deva.

Suka Deva.

Yes. He was a seven-year-old child... and another one's behavior is like a madman. Either a man keeps dumb like a rock, there is no expression, or his behavior is like that of a child or a lunatic.

A lunatic. But you are none of those, are you?

(Laughter)

Please give us a description of your expression. You do not look like a lunatic and certainly not like a child, and not like a rock. What do you say?

This is what the others say in the scriptures. You speak about behaviors, you see. One man came from England, James was his name. He asked me the same question. After enlightenment, what is the behavior?

He said, "I've gone to many people and now I'm coming from Bangkok."

He had been to someone, I cannot remember his name. He came to Bangalore. I was in those days working in the mines and then he came to me and he asked me, "I am not satisfied by the answers people have given me. What is going to be the behavior of a person after enlightenment?"

So I only told him: "You get enlightened first and then you will know how you will behave. An enlightened person will not ask this question at all. You don't worry. You leave it aside."

Then he stayed for some time with me and then somehow he declared:

"I am enlightened. I am enlightened."

Then I said, "You are a teacher, a teacher in Manchester. You go back and act as a teacher. You are not to change. Just to remove the doubt that it was never a snake, it was a rope, you need not change. Only the fear is gone.

Fear of death, fear of suffering. All this is samsara. Only this fear has gone away from your mind, which was creating fear in your mind because of the wrong identification of the rope for a snake.

Now in situations like that, and I think that is a very clear illustration, generally it is said that in Enlightenment, in Awakening, or Realization the karma has finished, the samsara has finished. After Awakening, it would appear for some people at times that some ego identification takes place. "I am superior, I know the truth" and the 'I' appears, the karma, the movement of 'I' reappears. Sometimes that is accommodated - accepted and accommodated. Sometimes, for some

people, it leads to a doubt about their original experience, the original realization.

I think in Advaita, it is a traditional answer, even after Enlightenment, so the karma that has been accumulated by a man, accumulated due to the previous Samsaras or Samsaras of this life have been stored in memory to be worked out later and then some are current momentum which have started bearing fruit as this body, you see, so this body is the previous karma, that's how they explain, but I don't give, only I am commenting.

Yes, of course, I understand.

That's what they say. And one karma has come into momentum which has given us this incarnation as the ball, you roll a ball, so in between its full momentum you cannot stop it. Other one is not yet come. So they say on the instant of knowledge, when the knowledge, when the light, when the man gets enlightened, the store of the karmas stored in memory to sprout at a later date are destroyed; they are destroyed, because this man is no longer a doer, no more selfish, he acts as the circumstances come before him, so that will not enable this man to be reborn again because he is not interested in anything.

He works and forgets about it, so the future and past are no more there. And this momentum, due to the residual effects of karma which gave us this body, this will continue up to the end of this life and this will not affect anything in enlightenment.

They call it now enlightenment during life, during life and after death enlightenment will happen, so this is how they explain.

Do you think that is a satisfactory..?

No. I don't believe in these karmas. There are no karmas: no past karma, no present karma, no future karma. So I don't believe in this. A man has three wives, one he married ten years ago, one he married last

year, one he is marrying now - the marriage is just now about to take place, so the old, past ten years old, then the other one one year old and the other one is just now being wedded. In between this function of the marriage, he dies. He dies. With his death I think all his three wives are widowed.

Not the past wife or the recent wife or the will-be wife. If the man dies, all these become widows. Like this it will happen to the past karmas and the present karmas and the future karmas.

If the 'no doer' is here. If doership is not there, your karmas are like all these widowed wives. There will not stay anything else. And this man is a person who is reacting to the circumstances, not with the idea of doership - "I have done that". That ego will not be there, so these egos are dead now. This man is free and some people will be free after that and some people are free right now, they have no doubt about it. And this man who has no doubt has no karmas.

Right.

He is one deliberation here and now. You see, this is the thing I believe. When man is never bound, he has not acted, he is not bound, he is not incarnated. Nothing has happened. It is what it has been all the time - no change has occurred, you see.

So in the metaphor there, Poonjaji, in a way you're saying that when the husband dies, then the wives die, too.

Yes. The wives are all widowed.

So there are no wives.

He is dead, so the wives? The wives are widowed, but they are still there. Now I give this example: this man is still living, but "this belongs to me" and "this is mine", this doership, possessionship is not there, therefore it's a

dead man, you see. Dead while alive.

So this man can do anything he likes, you see and there will be no impressions for him.

Now can I just take the last sentence?

Not sometimes in the East, but in the West, there is the strong social belief that a man or a woman can do anything he or she likes and this is then put in the name of freedom. It has led...

Yes, freedom, yes.

... in the name of freedom, in the name of that. And sometimes in spiritual circles when it is said a man, a person can do anything he likes, sometimes this has led to permissiveness, and license and harmfulness owing to, I think, a misunderstanding of what it means so when you say a person can do in freedom anything he likes, could you bring that out a little bit?

Yes. I'm speaking about the doership. A man is not a doer.

The man you have referred to, they are very much involved, "I have done it", and they will reap, there will be reactions of their activity, of their actions, there will be reactions and they have to pay for that, you see, so what I was speaking, both things will be there and will be accepted, both are living together, but somebody thinks "I am not the doer" and somebody is involved in attachment, "this is mine, that is mine" and that man will reach the consequences of his thought, of his concept. That also is not a fact, as this is also not a fact, you see.

Some situations...

Mind becomes anything. You become what you think. Absolutely. You become what you think, you see. That man is doing like this thing, so he will reap the consequences.

This man is free. He will reap the consequences according to his freedom. Other one will be punished according to his thought process, you see and both of these are not correct. Both of these are not accepted in the ultimate truth. This is according to you; you can behave as you like.

In a dream somebody becomes a king and somebody becomes a beggar, but both belong to the dream, neither is the beggar a beggar, nor the king a king - similar to samsara. Nobody is a beggar, nobody is a king - there is something else, you see, which is neither a king nor a beggar.

Once you recognize that you are free and that you have always been free, so this is how we talk together and some people understand it instantly and this moment, this finger snap is needed, just a particle of a second, you see, divided into 100 times is needed for this freedom to attain, you see.

We can postpone it, if, as you say, by practice, you see, we have not been able to do, so we start. We have the conception that by long practice, we are going from this monastery for a longer practice of meditation, so first of all they are postponing. Whenever they will get enlightenment that will be this instant only and not the result of ten years, so that part is available now.

It will be the same as what will be available after 30 years, you see.

In your communications, listening to you and what people have said, listening to friends, you have a dialogue with a person. That person begins to communicate to you that they are realizing something in the moment, right here and now. There's no reference to the past, history and all their practices, long practices. It's all distraction.

And this person is realizing and then they say to Poonjaji: "I see, I realize, I understand". They taste something - taste something they have not tasted before. And Poonjaji has, if I may say so, a reputation for being very affirmative, very strongly affirmative of somebody's experience, and I hear sometimes you say something like, "So now you see."

Yes.

Like that. And sometimes the person has been encouraged to tell others... do you think that's valuable? I must admit I'm speaking to you as a teacher now, as well as a listener. Do you think it's valuable to be very affirmative to the person when they are tasting something, or to be less so - because your impact in the communication when the person is tasting something is clearly at that time very important. Do you understand what I mean?

Yes.

... and you have the reputation of being very positive, very affirmative. Do you think that is vital?

Ask me again. Yes. I didn't catch it exactly.

OK. You are talking with a person. The person in their communication is realizing something for the first time - nothing to do with the past. In the here and now they are realizing something. Poonjaji is known to be very positive to the person to, as it were, give them trust, in a way, in what they are realizing in the moment. Why do you do that?

Why?

I mean you express, I mean myself, when I arrived here and was in your room yesterday, and today, I mean incredible warmth and kindness. It's very powerful, your warmth and kindness, and it goes on in the dialogue.

Are you saying, in a way that that's vital?

I see.

I mean if you didn't, would that be taking away from the person? I'm not sure, I just want to ask you.

As a matter of fact, I think the best way to, at this moment you are asking, so I have only to explain it at this moment.

I will repeat to check if I have understood it, what you mean to say. You mean to say if somebody comes and he asks me a question and I reply to him and it is affirmative how he takes it, is it - am I right how I respond, how I reply to his question. Am I right, is this what you mean?

No. It's more that some questioning has already taken place. You are listening to the person and the person is telling you, "Yes, Poonjaji, I realize what you are saying. I realize the liberating essence of here and now." Then Poonjaji is very positive towards this person. Very directly so.

Yes. That's what I meant, I think. That's what I meant, you see. I think to reply to this question, what I do or what is being done, I am absolutely empty. I don't search for any answer to the question asked of me. I just give empty without any thought, unconcerned with what is going on. If this man hits into the emptiness with any desire, whatsoever it is, the answer will come from emptiness directly and not from Poonjaji.

Yes. So in that time the Poonjaji, the teacher has no substance, no presence.

No.

Nor has the student or the...

It's not my concern. He asks a question not to Poonjaji nor to my body, so to whom is this question addressed?

This question is addressed. It is responsible to respond to that person. If it is a question of Freedom, I cannot bestow Freedom to anybody. So he is asking this of something which is Freedom itself, so that question is

*asked to that unknown person, so I have no interference.
It will take care of the person who asks, you see.*

It occurs with myself. A person is participating in a retreat, I engage in some dialogue with the person and sometimes in the communication itself or sometimes in the course of the day, the person is realizing something and the joy of that realization, the liberation... - the person then comes to talk about this with me.

Generally speaking, if I think about this, I take more a - a note of appreciation, of course, to the person, and when the person is speaking of profound things, of realized things, I will sometimes say to the person, then or a day later or two or three days later, "Let us see in one year and a day," I will often say, "whether this realization is still alive with you." Because sometimes the person can speak of realization, speak of clear seeing, but they leave the company of the teacher, the company of the retreat, the company of name and form, and then there's the memory, so the realization is sometimes not as deep as the person thinks.

When you give some suggestion to somebody else about this teaching to a person who comes to you, to somebody who comes to a meditation retreat or something else, when you speak, when you speak or try to explain about freedom to that person - so you are passing on, you are passing on something which is not known to you to somebody else, so that is acting, you see, that is acting.

Acting.

*What prompts you to speak? The tongue is speaking, the mind is thinking. There are words.
But where do you get this power to think and to speak and to deliver something else?
Which is that?*

*Does it belong to you?
Does it belong to Christopher?*

Oh, absolutely not.

*So it is the direct responsibility of that speaking, thinking about and through Christopher delivering to somebody else, you see.
If you know this is happening, it will hit the bull's eye for the other person also. His desire is also coming from the same "I want to be free".
This desire is coming from somewhere that he doesn't know.
This thought also: "I want to be free." And he wants Freedom.
He goes to a teacher who tells him how to be free.
So both these things have come from the same Source, you see: "I want to be free" and the teacher says, "You do this and you will be free."
They both know each other, the Source is one.
Then only if you know this thing everybody will understand.
If you say, "I am telling, I am quite able to give freedom or enlightenment to a person," then it will not work. When I am just acting and it has been dictated by a Source whom I do not know, then it will work, you see.*

Yes. And sometimes...

This is called teaching, you see.

The teaching is not a teaching.

*Ah. This is called teaching, you see. This is called teaching. The rest is preaching. The teacher has no teaching of his own.
He speaks, but what is pushed to speak, you see? He doesn't have any responsibility for what has been spoken or what has happened, so that will help the people...
Simply you live as a free man, immaculate, empty man, this is the best teaching that a teacher has to give to somebody.*

*You must smell the fragrance.
You must sit quietly, that's all.
Sit absolutely quiet. No thought. Absolutely empty.
And this teaching is the best teaching, you see, which nobody will reject
and everybody will be benefitted, you see.*

I appreciate, just finally now, because we are coming to the end, the question which you directed to one of the people here: "Who are you?" and then you said, "Before your mind moves." You asked someone sitting here, "Who are you?" and then before, in this case his mind could move, and in a way the nectar is there, isn't it?

Ah, yes.

So I think that sometimes in the Vipassana Insight meditation, sometimes the nectar is lost. There's too much asking, too much looking and missing That, and as you say emptiness, in the non-teaching of no teacher, there is something else, some sweetness is showing. Where there is no teacher and no student, then a sweetness can be revealed.

This is a fact.

(Laughter)
A beautiful fact.

This is a fact, you see.

So we have been talking an hour and a half. Thank you. I think it is remarkable, just from a human standpoint.

(Laughter)

Thank you for your visit. I am happy. I love your work. I am happy.

The people who come to me, I am very happy with them.

And as you can see, we are equally happy, too. A shared happiness!

