

2003-03-02: Samsara

Sun, 7/5 4:18PM • 56:49

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

buddhism, people, mind, world, samsara, rebirth, realms, buddha, reborn, life, heavenly realms, practice, step, born, cycles, wandering, momentum, clinging, die, classic

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So good morning, everyone. Nice to be back. I had a very nice month off from teaching. However, in the last week, my whole family's gotten a cold. It's kind of one of these family system kind of things that goes through. And it's my turn on them at the tail end of it, but there's still a little bit lingering in the head. So if I'm not intelligible today, raise your hand or something, and I'll try to make amends some way

It was very nice to be able to be kind of a sabbatical and did a lot of sitting, not as much as I hoped, but certainly stopped all my usual activities of teaching. And it was very significant for me to stop all that. I realized the first week or so how much momentum I had, with all the teaching activities I had, I do commitment my mind. And so it's nice to kind of put that all to stop.

And it was strange to think about coming back To start teaching again, even after a month, because the end of the month I had forgotten I had anything to teach. So that was a little bit awkward to come back and have to teach something. Maybe. And I don't know if I said this on Sunday, I think I said it on Monday before I left in January. I just wanted to name the people who made it possible for me to take my sabbatical despite our gratitude, and because I got a grant that was given through spirit rock for spiritual teachers, and that grant came from Newman's Own Newman's Own organics. So if you've ever bought their pretzels or something, you're supporting my sabbatical.

And then there's some announcements for me to make.

This Wednesday morning, we have a half day sitting that I'll be leading from 930 to 12. 15th and then this Wednesday evening, do a start a three week, Wednesday evening series that I've titled dying in the Dharma, with the idea being that a lot of us who have kind of made Buddhism and Vipassana very central to our lives. As we approach our deaths or his loved ones die. We'd like to know

how you would die and the resources that are available from a Buddhist perspective for this major transition. And so the goal of this class is to offer that. And then this Saturday, Terry Lester is going to offer a yoga and meditation half day from 930 to one. And then today also is that temple cleaning day, but every other Sunday. Those of you who like to stay behind a little bit after the Dharma talk and help the stewards to take care of the river center and help with some of the cleaning. In some of the artwork, it's really wonderful that people do that. And it's a nice, really nice group of people that work together. And you can meet you're interested in that you can meet over there by the window to the kitchen and the passageway to the kitchen. Get organized. So

well, since I'm going to be doing this series on having to do with dying, starting on Wednesday, I think that's probably one of the reasons why once it has been in my mind the last couple of days is issues related to that. And the topic of samsara has come up for me, and I want to spend a few minutes as I did yesterday, talking about the classic view of samsara. In Buddhism for those of you might not know it, and then to see if there's ways of applying that understanding or adapting that understanding to our lives today. The image of samsara the idea of samsara is one of the very powerful ideas of classic Buddhism. The word samsara means something like literally something like to wander on, to wander on and on and on, wander to Rome, on and on and on, to be running on and on and on. And in ancient India, before Buddhism, there are various theories about the human predicament for human human life and what it's all about. Just like most religions have different addresses the issues of human predict problem of suffering in life and what happens with death and what happens after after death. And in Vedic times, thousand years before the Buddha There is a very kind of parently kind of a general idea that when people die, they go to some place and that place was considered to be okay to go to maybe a place to the elders or I don't know, exactly understood to be heaven, but a place and, and then as some of the shamanic or some of the renunciant traditions of India were developing, they developed ideas of some of the more developed ideas of rebirth, that in fact, we don't you simply go off into some other other world, but being get reborn, and that cycles of rebirth happens over and over again. There were other traditions at the same time, we didn't believe that. And it was one tradition in time of the Buddha, the materialists who believe that when we die, that's it. There's no continuation beyond this. ticular life. So there were a diversity of ideas floating around India at the time of the Buddha and the Buddha belong to that tradition that believed in rebirth. And the Buddha teachings on rebirth is that there was no discernible beginning to the process of rebirth, there's no first beginning first point where it all started something like the big bang just starts from the Big Bang, and then it goes from there. You can't find the beginning. And, and the same way for people who are roaming on and on who wandering on and on. There is no discernible end to this process. And so he had a lot of similes or analogies for this process. And one of them is that very powerful one is that the amount of tears that you have shared in your endless wandering through samsara exceeds all the water and all the oceans That's quite a bit of time. There is another one where he says in modern terms, he would say you take a plant chipper to all the plant material in the whole world, all the trees and bushes and grass and everything and chip it up into small pieces. And you make a big mound of this plant material. And for every one of your ancestors, you know, your mother, your grandmother, your great

grandmother, you go back in time, you move, you take one chip away from this pile. Well, your ancestors are greater than that mound of chips, because that far back and then to emphasize again, this kind of infinity of time in which people have wandering, wandering through samsara. samsara is not exactly a kind of a place, sometimes it's treated like a place, but samsara is like, wandering, wandering on and on

If you take a cubic granite. That's the size of that. So one mile square and every hundred years, a person comes by that granite and brushes a soft silk scarf in Varanasi against that. That grant the amount of time it would take to wear down that granted to dust is one culpa one Eon and we've been going through wandering through this endless rounds of rebirth, for not 1000 nada 100,000 or 100 million but an infinite amount of the these aeons is Calpis. So you get kind of says to me, this image is endless, endless time we've been reborn and perhaps it was kind of a A strategy here in this kind of strong imagery was to really drive into people. The The, the futility or the suffering the pain of this endless endless recycling, so that people would want to stop being recycled human beings, you know human bodies, the ultimate recycled machine are all made up of recycled parts. Well, the human psyche also the human consciousness is endless recycling itself through through this cycles of birth and birth, death and rebirth. The Buddhist contribution to this idea in ancient in ancient Indian idea of of rebirth is that the mechanism or the impulse of fuel for moving through the cycles of rebirth is greed, hate and delusion that the human consciousness the human mind, has a certain momentum minute. Through the activities we engage into activities of greed, activities of hate of delusion.

And it puts the kind of spin momentum of the on the consciousness that then at the moment of death causes that consciousness sense to move forward into the next life. It's kind of like you know, if you've had a habit formation of always wanting, wanting wanting in your life, that wanting doesn't simply just evaporate when you die. But that, that wanting momentum is still there. It's kind of like you've been sent forth into the next life without wanting, it latches on to the next life. But if there's no wanting momentum of the mind, then the mind will not push forward to grab onto the next slide. And, and in Buddhist terminology, then you're liberated from this endless cycles of rebirth. And the same thing with a version if that momentum is there. And it's very easy to see that as I mentioned in my little introduction, I saw the momentum of my mind when I started my sabbatical. It wasn't so easy to stop it like that. It's still you know, my concerns my thoughts would keep going on. And probably most of you coming to sit here this morning, probably your mind is suddenly in suddenly stop and turn itself off and you're sitting very peacefully, maybe you were but chances are, you're aware a little bit of the momentum of your mind and how your mind has a mind of its own. And it's not so easy necessarily to stop it that quickly, the momentum is there. So the theory in Buddhism is that the same momentum that continues is the fuel is the cause for continuing rebirth. If that desire, the momentum wasn't there, there'll be no further rebirth. So why so isn't it Why isn't it good news, that we're endlessly reborn? And some people are quite happy with being alive. And they think like being alive is great. And the idea of, of the fact that life doesn't end with death seems like a very good thing and it means you get to have a second chance and a third chance and 100 chance. Groundhog Day endlessly, right? Currently Trying to make it work out.

And I don't know exactly the reason why ancient Indians felt or alternate ones. Also, sometimes Buddhists all over Asia, in America some feel so strongly and motivation to get off the wheel that part of it is that they see that this world. This life is inherently has more suffering than is desirable to experience. And so there's so many analogies that Buddha gave then is that you know, the mountain the number of times that you've seen your mother die, you know, is endless. It's part of each, you know, and so just to go through that, again, you go through the suffering of life over and over again. And our society in America at some degree, hides or is not as cognizant I think of, of the amount of suffering that is inherent in human life is sometimes pretty over suffering. Certainly bad modern medicine has made some of the suffering has been traditionally part of human life. Not so prevalent. It has been many places in the world as it was in this country, just some decades ago. A lot of people died in childbirth, both the mother and the child. Many places in the world people don't live beyond the age of five as it was in this country just some while ago. And so when people kind of experience this kind of endless suffering, they said yesterday, you know, I went to the country store that Museum in Woodside at the post office, and have an exhibit about how it was like 100 No, 2030 years ago there and store and the guy who runs started was the dentist, the town dentist in Woodside and it talks a little bit exhibit of how dangerous it was to go to the dentist back then. Because they didn't know about those bacteria they know about infection. And so they need a pair of pliers to pull your teeth out, they would go to the barn and just you know, sitting there next to the, you know, whatever and just, you know, take it out of the barn and put it in your mouth and pull your 2000 then you get gangrene and you die. Going to the dentist was not always that the case always the case. But so I think being cognizant of this suffering, it's so much part of life, people thought it was desirable to somehow get off this wheel. And, and in the in the Indian mind, the idea of getting off was not an end.

In Buddhism, the fate of enlightened person when they die is indescribable, and it's not something we talked about. The Buddha refused to say that enlightened person comes to a final end when they die. Like that's it, but refused to say there's any continuation of the person refused to say that there's both continuation non continuation and refuse to say There's not continuation nor not continuation, although all the different ways of talking about the enlightened person when they die is simply not interesting. But somehow it was somehow wonderful, glorious, something special, something to look forward to this idea of stepping off the wheel. So that's kind of the classic view, which motivates still a lot of people in the Buddhist practice. I was very inspired when I went to Thailand and, and spent some time with Arjun Buddha Dasa. And with his teaching. He was one of the great teachers of Thailand last century, great partly because of his great influence in Thai culture and Thai Buddhism. And what it had was what was happening in Thailand was many of the ties to being educated, getting kind of modern education. were feeling somewhat turned off by what they thought as being This superstitious and supernatural aspects of Thai Buddhism. And then Buddha Dasa came along and offered what he called or two has been called the de mythologized view of Buddhism, that then suddenly inspired a lot of the educator ties in their native Buddhism, and kind of be found themselves were inspired by the Buddhist practice in Buddhist religion. And one of the ways that he mythologized Buddhism, he didn't exactly negate the classical teachings, but he offered an alternative or second view on how to

understand some of them. And with the idea of rebirth, being reborn, the endless cycles of rebirth, he offered it he offered another way of understanding this and this is you understand it as the mind gets recycled to be born a moment by moment, day by day in the various states of being that happens in the cycles of rebirth in there Five or six states of being that consciousness can be born in the classic view, human beings just one. There's also the three born in the animal realm, you can be reborn in the hell realms. You can be reborn in the hungry ghosts realms, you can be reborn in in the heavenly realms was five. And sometimes people had the sixth one, which is the realm of the Service Assurance, which is sometimes called the jealous Titans or the jealous gods, the kind of like Gods but a jealous, jealous jealous of the other gods and their current trying, fighting against the gods trying to take over the heavens. And the chances of getting reborn as a human being are really miniscule. And if you just if you knew how, you know, it's like winning the lottery. You know, people win the lottery. The way it's classically described is If you take a log as a hole in it, and it's floating in the ocean

and you have a blind turtle, tourists tortoise that's floats swimming in the ocean. And if that blind tortoise, once every hundred years, tries to surface in the ocean through the hole in that log, the chance of being reborn as a human being is the chances of that turtle, blind turtle making its way up through that log floating around the world understand the analogy. So it's not something like a lottery right? So your chances of being reborn in these other realms are much more likely. If you spend a lot of time with a lot of the momentum of your mind is the momentum of desire. That's going to be living your life, then you're more likely to be born as a hungry ghost. Where that's that's kind of the nature of a hungry ghost is to have this insatiable Desire. And no matter how much they consume, they'll never get satisfied, it always wants more and more. If you've spent a lifetime of being afraid, or confused, that tends to tend to be the conditions to be born as an animal. In the classic view, animals are considered to be characterized by fear and confusion. And if you are filled with hate, and violence, then you tend to be reborn in the hell realms. And if you're live a very virtuous life and have wonderful, blissful spiritual experiences, then you're more likely to be born in the heavenly realms. So I just wanted us to turn this around, or offer this other view. And so this happens, moment by moment in their own mind, that there are times where it get consumed by desire and desire can be insatiable. And that moments, those moments, those minutes those days, and that happens Then we have entered into the hell realms. And no matter how much we consume, we don't feel satiated. Not good enough. And this is very descriptive of people who have addictions for example, or in some sense addictions, there's less and less satisfying more we get and get and get. And there's kind of endless cycles of sometimes addictions, leaving us empty, wanting more pleasure, like, you know, for alcohol or food or whatever, and, and leaving us empty and we want more to fill it. And I went through a period of laughter with food, where where I would grasp the food to comfort myself. The food made me worse. No overdid it. I had actually a wheat allergy. And it was kind of led to kind of addiction to wheat, paradoxically, oddly enough, and, and so I'd comfort myself to want more, eat more wheat or bread and stuff. I'm working in a bakery, so I had lots of access to food to produce bread. So eat these baguettes, and then I feel worse, and then to comfort myself. I would try More. And then I would compare myself and feel worse cycle until finally I just, you know, I felt I was ready, really I felt like I didn't want to talk to anyone because I felt if I talked, I couldn't talk and they would probably send me

often in silence. My mind was just so numb from this process of having some allergy at least, but this addictive process that was part of it. And so the wanting, insatiable wanting we can sometimes have, and then there's the if we filled with hate, or anger, sometimes we will talk about being you know, on fire hot with anger, and then we're in the hot tails. Or if it's a frozen anger, I call resentment, frozen anger. And then maybe it's a cold house Buddhism, there's classic view, there's cold and hot tails. So we get reborn in these things moment by moment, depending how we're feeling. If we're filled with fear, then we're in the animal realms. Economic, perhaps virtuous lives, people who have failed to secure the safety, the bliss of living virtuous lives and clean lives were able to kind of access to spiritual experiences get reborn in the heavenly realms. And this also can happen you know in daily life and my mom in various ways.

So they're not and but as I said, they know that also can be translated this classic view to say that what perpetuates this perpetuating this cycle of cycling through these is the very same thing that's cycles through the cycles of rebirth is that the moment moment cycles of the mind has to do with momentum of greed, hate and delusion to a mentum the reaching forward the grasping the wanting of the mind, the aversion of the mind to hate to the mind, and the mind has this momentum and the spin on it. And it's possible to stop that spin to step off the wheel. And a lot of the trusted Buddhist practice, then, both in the classic sense in this quest, since a Buddha Dasa is a step off the cycles of endless cycling, treadmill that goes on and on and on, that has no beginning and has no end. Part of the value of understanding has no beginning is that the quest to understand the original cause of why I'm doing this way, is a pointless task. The original cause cannot be found. samsara has no beginning, the beginning of your desire, there is no first cause and your desire. Perhaps in modern terms we would say, we're simply born with with it's maybe genetic, almost born with desire. It's not because your parents treated you a certain way that you have this problem with desire. You know, you need to go back and find the first original cause is not something can be found.

Other people have taken this demon what can be called maybe it's not a name. It's not a fear probably not a fear associated vocabulary to use the mythologized version, because people believe in the mythology. So those you know, they don't they, they feel a little bit insulted them because they don't see it as mythology. But this rationalized alternative or something. This humanists alternative with, I don't know what to call it the immediacy of this the mental alternative understanding it's being how the mind works moment by moment, maybe it's a better way of saying it. chigan Trungpa offered the same teaching in this 1970s in his book, great title, spiritual materialism cutting through spiritual materialism.

Mind mind, mind, my mind is going back to thinking about the city. of addiction. And the great contribution that he has made to this whole issue of addiction in America. And how an A there's this idea of a higher power, I guess classically was God it was the higher power but then to be more pluralistic or whatever, they talked to him about higher power and some recognition that you have to go outside samsara outside of the mundane world of desire and clinging in the world to find our, to find some kind of solution to the addictive, addictive tendencies of the mind. Buddhist analogy and our

analysis of the human condition is that we're all addicted to some degree. If we weren't addicted to some degree, there would not we wouldn't be cycling through, on and on and on. And so to have some refuge or some reference is something which is outside of samsara, or some understanding that our ultimate happiness is not found in the world are exposed to people who said more carefully. The world has The problem, the ultimate happiness is not found in our attachments and our clinging to the world. The world is fine in itself, but we're not holding on to and clinging into into it, or running away from it is not going to provide the answer. So the tendency in Buddhism, I believe, is to offer a view of mental practice of spiritual practice. That is, neither is life affirming or life denying. It just simply doesn't play that game. What's focusing on is rather, is no longer relating to the world, through clinging, or through aversion. So to find some way to step outside of this wandering on and on and on with the mind.

And how do we do that? One way that Buddhists have done this is to take refuge the idea of taking refuge in Buddha Dharma Sangha is the equivalent for Buddhists of you know, taking refuge in a higher power. The refuge is that which is Damage pertains to the non samsaric world, which points to that which is beyond worldly, you know, worldly attachments in other way, which I find very powerful, and I think is a very simple kind of straightforward thing of cultivating concentration. That staying with a breath, for example, to open concentration is a way of encouraging the mind to step out of its preoccupations to be preoccupied in the cycles of thoughts and thoughts and thinking things over and over and over again, it can be very hard, you know, there's a kind of a inner voice perhaps, or kind of his intuition we have perhaps are not the right word is of thinking that the mind is going to solve its own problems. Certainly, the mind can solve problems at times, but sometimes the mind kind of goes over and over and over and over and over again. And it just a dead end to go over it. And sometimes you need a vacation to step out to really see get a perspective to see See, it's really what's going on. So taking a sabbatical, taking a vacation for some people is very, very helpful. Because as long as you stayed in the situation that you were kind of wandering around and around around and you don't see the solution. So this you can take a breather, for example, go for a walk in nature. Same thing with developing concentration, to focus to latch, the hook the mind, the energies of the mind, onto the breath, or some other object of concentration begins to take the energies of the mind away from fueling its preoccupations. And the more fully we can kind of throw ourselves into the world of concentration, the less refueling, swirl the preoccupations and if you're convinced enough, that's not useful to keep thinking over and over and over again, your problem, then you're more likely to put your attention on the breath. And as you do that, as the energy goes away from the thinking, you're not identifying with its thinking so much in the marina few It's so much anymore. And you get a better perspective of what that thinking is all about. You almost need to step outside of samsara to see what samsara is really like. You step outside of the momentum of a desire to see Oh, that's not who I am, I'm not my thoughts. I don't have to believe my thoughts. I don't have to be in their grip. And so maybe they don't go away, but they certainly can soften unless they don't pull us around by the nose anymore. As can often be the case.

So concentration is one way of helping us to step outside of some of this momentum of the mind that cycling through. In other way is to practice seeing, seeing or recognizing very clear recognition of what happens when the recognition is really clear, is understood or can be a form of stepping outside of the very thing we're seeing, stepping outside of in terms of being caught by it. There's a way in which the psyche when it's very, very clearly sees what's happening tends not to be caught by it. It's kind of like a magician's trick. You know, as long as you don't understand how the trick works, it's fascinating. But once you kind of see how the trick works, you get bored pretty quickly, you know, you're not caught by it anymore, to really see how magic the mind works. We tend not to kind of be caught by those things anymore. So seeing is another way of stepping outside, to explore things we practice also in the past is learning to see clearly. And another way of stepping outside of the wheels of samsara is to have the experience of that part of the psyche, that part of the mind, which does not pertain to say maybe a little differently, to have some sense of that part of the psyche which is independent of clinging and diverting to things of the world. There's some aspect of the mind some dimension of the psyches and dimensions of consciousness and the dimension of our being some dimension of life, which is considered to be deathless. That's what we have written on the wall up there, the deathless dimension, that's part of the psyche, which which is independent, or at peace with itself. We are needing anything to feel that peace or to create that peace. to back up a little bit, in the analysis of the Buddha of this process, the Buddhist analysis of this process of samsara clinging is the ultimate fuel for the process of samsara. And the word for clinging here is upādāna in Pali and upādāna has two meanings. It means clinging and it also means fuel. So it points to this dual nature The very act of clinging, perpetuates further clinging is a fuel for further clinging. That dimension of the psyche, which is a piece that needs no fuel for its perpetuation, or its continuation, the needs nothing is that dimension which in Buddhism is called Nirvana or, or Nirvana. It's a dimension of the psyche, which doesn't wander anymore, doesn't run anymore, but running on and on and on and running after things.

It's kind of like if someone ... I've used this analogy before, say that you were born in the water in the ocean. And we're born swimming. And all we're doing is swimming. And we're swimming and swimming and swimming and all we do is swimming. We don't know anything other options with swimming, swimming, swimming. And we've heard that there are these places you Go to these islands, we maybe can go up on the shore and the beach and kind of rested a bit more swimming, but you swimming and looking for these islands and you kind of see an oasis in the distance or the waste in the ocean. And, and you swim to and disappears when you get there and, and you never quite find where that you know how to get there. And, and, and you could swing on and on and on and you're looking and looking and you can't find anything. And you're so exhausted from this endless lifetimes of swimming and swimming and swimming. And finally, you just give up and you flip over and you're back. And lo and behold, you find out you can float. You don't have to swim. The search was not about finding something out there. But the search was a flipping over of consciousness. So consciousness itself is rests in finds that piece that's possible here now. So part of this process, then is to be very respectful very kind, in a sense very generous to the samsaric aspect of our minds that part of the mind that clothes on and on and on, and not to be engaged with it or relate to it in ways that is pupils further roaming around in samsara. If we hate our minds, we hate the momentum that clings and

versions of our mind. We're just adding fuel to this fire is burning. Can we meet ourselves with kindness, screaming ourselves with some kind of some level of non interference, some level of nonverbal violence some level of in a sense, it has to be okay. It's kind of an acceptance of this in the seeing of our practices part of this just to see, to not just to see it at times. We're in the safest places to do that is in meditation. Because you're not going to act on what you see in your mind. What your mind does. You can just see it, see it, see it and step up. upside of the cycles and it's not an easy thing to do. And that's why I think is very important to have is non violent approach this peaceful approach to what you see there. And practice forgiveness, practice compassion, generosity, to what we see as part of the path of becoming free.

I think I just stepped off the wheel of the talk.

So does anybody have any comments or questions you'd like to ask? Yes, please.

You live a certain way you can be warned in another realm. Perhaps

It's more or less a concept. No, no life that we're born into, is permanent. So in Buddhism, just like in other religions Buddhism has held, I was really disappointed when I heard this, because, but you know, the thing of even the hell's in Buddhism are temporary, but temporary means can be come in a long time. You know, practical purposes seems like eternity, but it also happens in our eternal, but they can be a long time. But we tend not to create. My understanding is we tend not to create a lot of new karma. In these other realms, we tend to create most of new karma in the human realm. But then, but then You know, in a sense, we're working out the karma. And when the karma is exhausted, then we either sink arise in this you know, it's series is being hierarchical, which sometimes is seen with Hell's at the bottom of bad karma, it cause you to sink down there and when that bad karma is exhausted and since then you float up a little bit, and good carbon mix, you float to the heavens noon that is exhausted, you tend to sink down. And but karma doesn't exhaust itself in one lifetime isn't like you come back to neutral human being, you might go through cycles of, you know, being reborn hell for a while, or in animal realms for a while. As considered human life is considered very fortunate to be in because it's considered to be the best one to practice in the spiritual practice and most conducive is most conducive to practice. So if you're born in the heavenly realms, that you know if things are so pleasant, so wonderfully blissful, but you're not interested in practice, and if you boring the hell realms you so suffering so much, it's Can't you just you're blinded, you can't really see your way through practice. And so in terms of this lifetime here, sometimes you born very fortunate circumstances where things are really pleasant, sometimes not really the best thing in terms of spiritual practice, as some of the Dharma teachers who teach in Hawaii have pointed out. People don't come to one day sittings in Hawaii so much because they can go to the beach

which is a wonderful thing to do.

Yes, please.

Say was that competition is important discipline, because the environment has a lot to do with how we behave and how we perceive the world. And when we have an environment is constantly refining this desire. Constantly. Wherever you look. Everybody is doing it is kind of a real difficult thing to see the desktop normally.

Yes sir.

Life and this is supposed to be a and I should just work to death so I can try this. And, you know people have a really difficult time with the word discipline because

without

discipline yourself.

Yeah, very good. So here what you said that

it's very hard

to

you know the environment What if the environment is all about desire and consumption. And that seems, what seems is that's what appears as being normal. It's very hard to step outside of that conditioning, and that pressure from the society, you know, we think in order to be successful, the person who dies with the most toys dies the most successfully And so we tried to acquire acquire and

and

shed more light with my wife's car stuffy. Oh yeah.

You need to have a certain amount of discipline to set the time aside to be able to understand these concepts and change yourself.

Yes. So, she said that she said that the word discipline is taken negatively by some people, because it seems like a kind of denial, but actually discipline is actually that which that thing if you apply yourself which, which leads you to that kind of freedom, and need to be disciplined or to find it. And another word is similar to discipline is renunciation. You know, to actually renounce is, you know, seems very, against this whole idea of me myself in mind, having But what you gain through renunciation is you

gain yourself you can your peace, you get this really wonderful thing. And so when society in general goes in different direction, then it's very hard for us to go in to kind of go against the current of society. That's always been the case. I mean, we think of modern Asian teachers who come to America and look around and say, This is a culture of hungry ghosts. But, you know, I think that it's, you know, it's the Buddha, the Buddha talked about it his time even that the practice was going against the current, current popular currents of the time. And so if you're going against the popular currents, it's helpful to realize that what you're doing and to find support and doing that, and some people finding like minded people is very, very helpful. Otherwise it's hard to stand against the flood by myself. Yes, please.

I don't know I haven't studied this kind of thing so much because the whole there's a whole mythology. There's whole mythology, a whole cosmology in Buddhism describes all these things in the heavenly realms. There's there's many different heavenly realms that just like heaven. And so depending on where you are in this could be born. Your shape you have the form you have varies the highest heavenly realms. There's no body at all the beings are formless. So and then as you get further down, I think is more and more formed. But generally depictions of it in the high lower forms like Brahma. Brahma is kind of like the highest God the king of the gods in the 33 lower health looked through 33 levels. heavenly realms, right? So there's more about that. And usually when he's depicted usually depicted kind of like in entero, pre centric forms or through, you know, human, human, human human form, kind of like, you know, two arms, two legs, two eyes in hell realms, I think it's usually the I think, generally the concept is, you know, are the pics paintings, they're made usually like, beings with two legs and two arms kind of resemble human beings. But I don't know if there's any reason why it should be that way. It's kind of attribute centric. You know, is it that you are you getting when you die? Are you getting reborn as a earthworm? Or are you an earthworm is reborn as a human being? I mean, it's kind of arbitrary, how we, you know, we tend to focus everything from our perspective that we're a human being and so human beings can we can be born as an animal or as a god are all these different things. But it's just it's the flow of consciousness which is taking these different forms. In the flow of consciousness sometimes takes the form of the human being and then sometimes other forms. This responding to your question somewhat. Yeah.

Whether it was physical shape of it or whether there's a very clear map that the classic Buddhism has of this the world is flat and the flat world is divided to four different continents. And, and the southern continent is jumbo Deepa, which is the rose Apple, Rose appletree continent, which is basically India. And, and human beings lived there. And the other continents other kind of beings lived into other continents. And in the juncture of these four different continents in this flat world, is a huge mountain called Mount scenario. And below Mount severo, below this flat world, is this heavenly realm, so kind of like upside down mountain. And then above the Nazi mirror, if you go up to the top not scenario, you find these at the higher realms of the mouth scenario, which is quite similar to the Himalayas, you find the lower realms of the god realms for the realms of form. And then when you go above ground scenario into the kind of the ether that's above there, then you find this more disembodied spirit kind of God realms above that. So that's kind of the image that you find paintings in, in Buddhism of that kind of depictions, and sometimes it's depicted kind of like an upside down like an hourglass With a pointer

Nakamura being the narrow end of the hourglass, and then the heavenly realms beyond that, go this way. And then below that goes down to the heavenly route into the hell realms below. So that's kind of the classic image and what it's been a little bit of a challenge to some Buddhists, when they like when Tibetan Buddhists, for example, before 1959 lived, some of them lived purely independent of Western views of the nature of the world. And so some Tibetan teachers, most monks grew up with the notion that the world was flat. And, and it was a bit of a shock to find out that the world was not flat or there's a great story, a great story of, of Tibetan teacher, monk coming to the west, I think in the early 60s and being at some conference and taking it for granted that the world was flat and

and then

The person who's writing by the city, you know, I was I'm a geologist and I had to kind of search through my mind, it's been a few hundred years since we had to kind of prove to anybody that the world was not flat. But given the proof, which point to the fact that the world is not flat, it's around. And the Tibetan teachers very calmly said, Oh, that's, that's nice. I, in the time of the Buddha was flat.

And now it's no longer flat now it's rounded.

So,

there's a classic, classic, you know, cosmology, and then there's, well, how we relate to it nowadays. And how we, you know, it's kind of hard for people you know, and so for me personally, and it's just very personal statement is, to me, I don't relate so much to the classic cosmology, it doesn't have much meaning for me. But the this Buddha Dasa form of interpretation of it, that it happens moment by moment on mind, that has a lot of meaning. For me, that's what I find most useful. And the wonderful thing about it is that is that to step off the cycles of samsara, the endless wanderings of samsara in a more literal sense of it classically of off the cycles of rebirth or to step off the endless cycles of the mind reborn moment by moment is exactly the same practice same process. So you do exactly same practice both ways. So you're kind of covering your built both basis and so it doesn't really matter that much for you know, which one you believe in as long as you do the practice. Okay.

His please about

kind of living an ethical life and not trying things now, how Sangha

I'm wondering if someone

could be you or someone

new or

certainly that view has existed for people have that viewed You know, every everyone everyone is teaching is that everyone at some point or other has been your mother or your father or your grandmother or your uncle or your daughter or your son. And so when you go around to see another person, it isn't just like a stranger like some point in the in his eternity of cycling. That person was probably a relative. So you kind of relate to a little bit differently. Or this fly. You're right. Yes. Why might have been?

You know, we're cannibals.

If we meet

Yes please. To

the right. Experiences

Yes.

So I wanted to I was trying to figure out what what what would lead to one versus the other end I

think of it when you were talking about food is there times when

it allows

greater freedom and other times

rather than feeling your sense of deja

vu Great question. So the question is, but discipline? And is when is it that it's useful and helpful? And when is it that it actually is forward to provision that actually makes things worse for a person? Right? And one small thing is, is we use our experiences being self correcting, we learn from our consequences. And then we study that we feel you know that there's more suffering or more deprivation coming from it, then maybe we do a course correction, we learn from that. And what why is that? Why is it Why can discipline be different and what can be liberating and what can be enslaving? Probably a lot of it has to do with our motivation behind it. And if that's why in Buddhism, I focus a lot and what is the motivation? And if the motivation is somehow egotistical, or fear based on greed based or clinging based credit, credit, better identity, you know, I'm good I'm going to fast for three days so that because I believe that, I don't know, there's all kinds of motivations built into why we do things, that if we pay attention that motivation, we'll see we'll see Oh, this is off. So that's what I encourage you to do is look at the motivation.

Yes.

How would you hold the concept of

biological force and the desire or wish to escape from rebirth, particularly in view of your upcoming lectures?

Buddhist dealing with dying is my experience.

The will to live inherently is fighting against acceptance

This appears to be the last answer so we will stop some You're leaving already. So, you know if we're coming to an end

well there has been the notion in Buddhism various times that the will to live is something we can let go up. And if a person has if the if a person has cultivated themselves in such a way there's no momentum in the mind,

then it's actually

you can just released that we'll have someone you can release that last little momentum of we'll have live and you can pass away so the Buddha did that in a sense.

He was asked,

he vowed, promised to stay alive. He was asked to die, Mara came and asked him, you know, to die. And he said, No, I'm not going to die until I'm confident that this path that I'm going to teach is well established and growing human beings. And then when that was finally well established, then the Buddha in a sense, let go of his will to live at the age of 80 or 81 years old. He was sick and frail and he didn't hold on anymore, but he held on as long as he felt it was useful for him to be alive. You have a lot of it. You have examples in many examples of great teachers in the past great practitioners who have sat in meditation or done walking meditation or something, and then basically let go of their will to live a particular time and place that was called appropriate Not at all instead of being suicide, but it's understood to be, you have so much power over the mind that you don't have to let go of even that. And and, you know, we see that sometimes you know not to be a great adapted, spiritual adept. You see it For example, when people who are dying maybe in a hospital or something, and you get a sense that they are hanging in there until someone can fly in from out of town. And when that person finally flies in, then they kind of let go, they're holding on to something.

And

so I don't know if that at all addresses your question. Probably not. It's a bit hard for me to think today. My mind is a little bit stuffed up. Yes, another doctor Millennium

statistically significant

explanation.

So

I hope this has been useful. And mostly my intention of giving this talk was to encourage or inspire you to see if the if you could look at your own mind a little bit and study it and see if this idea of samsaric and you can apply it to your own mind as a way that's helpful for you. So you don't get caught by so much in in find some freedom, peace with your own mind. And may you all remain human beings.