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P1 Sometimes you can have a deep sense of peace and well being and you know wherever you are in this world there is something way beyond that, and you can connect with (it) and yet at the same time you make that ripple out, that same harmony and that heart can be with all the people you come into contact with.

RW I go along with that up to a point but not wholly; you don't make it go out, you merely establish it within yourself. You become like the incandescent part of this bulb here, when it is lit it just shines in all directions, it cannot 'not'. So if you have that stable as your base, the Metta aspect, then that is all that is there, and that is all you can give, without any words or thought, that is why it emanates throughout the whole, you can't project it by thought. Even if you can you are being discriminate, whereas it is for the whole world and not any individual. The sun shines on the righteous and the unrighteous, it makes no difference, throughout the whole world. But it has to be experienced in order to go, if you are angry it is going to be anger going, if your thoughts are of being kind and you are angry at the same time it is not going to work, is it?

P2 When you were talking some while ago about what was Metta and I'd always been used to the standard theory of pushing it out...

RW The point about it is you can't pour milk out of a jug that contains water. If you have Metta there it will go out, if you have something else, thought won't change it.

This is where your practice, or your chanting, or whatever, will take you to that level, and if you can only establish yourself there and use it as a base for all your activities then you'll find that Metta flows through all that, but mind you that's a long way ahead.

After all if you take the last sentence in the Metta sutta: "those who are made perfect will not know rebirth". They are made perfect, not stabilising in that direction. Because you cannot stay in that and have any aspect of desire or aversion, so they have to be eliminated in order to achieve it. Only then can it remain. Though you can keep touching into it, which is very useful, and begin to experience it, and know the benefits of it, and that's how you learn to avoid some of the things (*inaudible*). Hence the mindfulness aspect: to be aware of the things that might take you away.

P2 And just how easy it is to be taken away.

RW Yes it is, and this is where duality starts you see, this other thing is unqualified and therefore it is not conditioned in any way. So, if desire is eliminated it won't be taken up by anything else, or aversion for that matter, that's the way it is, so what.

It's not easy I grant you but it can be achieved, if only little by little, and the more practice one does in this area, the more it will give greater areas of uses

P2 Of course, naturally.

RW Yes. And you might say it is like the thin end of a wedge and it goes further in gradually until eventually there is nothing left.

The only snag about it is that when you are there is nobody putting it out, ego has gone.

P1 Otherwise there would still be this "I".

RW It falls away, it weakens and weakens and weakens and eventually there is no desire for anything particular, and whatever you look at you see as being empty, hollow, void, no identity whatsoever, it's just things, of no great value at all in the world, but you live in a situation where there is a greater fullness in a different area altogether in which you are never wholly separate from anything at all.

It's an interesting thing when you come to weigh it up, pin it down to an everyday level, much easier to look at it that way, we're all so used to it: the "I", "You", whatever, duality; but is any sentient life: person, animal, flower, whatever, completely separate from anything else?

P2 No

RW This "I", is it mine, or is it a combination of various factors coming from other people? Somebody comes along irritated, how long before you take on the condition of being irritable? Is it yours, or theirs, or are you sharing it? And it's happening all the time isn't it, as you go through the day, other people, whatever their quality is when you meet them, you begin to pick it up, like going to somewhere with a different language as a foreigner, you begin to pick up their language. So you pick up their "vibes", so you can't say this is "me" because this "me" is a combination of many different factors, unless by stabilising one area which does not get disturbed by anything else. But even then you find it still has contact with all those others, even though their "vibes" don't alter "this", these "vibes" alter that. So you will still be part of the others but working in the opposite direction.

You know you meet some and you have feelings for them, "I like this one", "I'm not too keen on that one", it's not intellect, it's feeling, isn't it?

P2 Yes

RW And if they don't say anything you pick up on the vibes nonetheless, how is it being done, an interchange of consciousness itself? Is therefore consciousness separate, or perhaps, a communicating factor between all, that can carry whatever might befall? I am only raising a question here, I never make a point.

<Break>

RW Really, to truly appreciate the results which will come about through the practise of what the Buddha taught you need to take on parts of the Christian aspect. The Buddha only dealt with the conditioned areas that we deal with, and to eliminate them, so that there is a cessation of the conditions; but yet there is still the "Deathless", it's not the end, where does it go now? There is still consciousness there, and that has to live somewhere. It may still be where it appears, but in a different dimension, or whatever, so you see there is a greater aspect.

Shall we say, this greater aspect, we'll call it consciousness, this is what the Buddha meant by Mind in the first place: "Mind precedes all things", in other words it is unmanifest. Therefore consciousness is unmanifest, that's why it can operate within and without the body, it isn't contained, though attached by some means, I'll grant you, and from the shadow of it, you might say, we decide we are separately conscious ourselves, but it is only a shadow of the real.

Is it possible that consciousness is the be all and end all and nothing to do with the conditioned world whatsoever?

If you look at it in another way: unborn, uncreated, unmanifest. Because of this you have the born, the created, the manifest, one to the other. Now we have a distinct area of oppositeness, so we assume the unborn, unmanifest, and so on, is an apparent emptiness from which you get a fullness and materialisation. Now in the unmanifest you've got a peace because there is no disturbance. The moment you get manifestation you get disturbance and chaos. In the unmanifest you have as you might say a universal form of consciousness which is everything, and in the manifest state you've got a minimum aspect of separateness.

We are so conditioned to the separateness we cannot see the wholeness of the (*inaudible*). But only when we begin to look at the manner in which we operate and say "you are not feeling very well now are you?" You feel it in here the condition over there, or you see it, there are so many ways, it might be somebody who is hundreds of miles away, "Aunty Fanny is not doing to good, I'd better phone her up", and you find it's true. How do you know? This is consciousness. You can be sitting on a park bench somewhere and become aware somebody is staring at you, you look around and fifty yards away somebody is staring at you. How did you know? And these are experiences we've all experienced at some time or another. It takes a little looking at, what is the nature of consciousness, because this is what we are. Without consciousness there is no life. You wouldn't know life; you wouldn't know the world existed if there wasn't consciousness.

P2 Will you just say again about "big" consciousness and "little" consciousness?

RW What I'd like to say is there is a universal conscious which is the whole universe, the spacious element, the emptiness apparent. Could there be a manifestation unless there was an emptiness, a space? Because where would you put it? Is it possible that all matter that exists is an emanation from the emptiness, and does not disturb the emptiness in any way because it is made of the emptiness itself?

Does this agree with scientific theory? The atomic situation, no such thing as a solid but little whirls of energy in space. Is it so different after all? These are things to ponder; when you start to ponder you start to get down to the real nature of what is going on. It is bigger than you and me, far bigger.

This, to me, is where the idea of God comes from. Here is a God, that (*inaudible*) demands and decides the way you are going to act, this way, that way, another way or whatever, it knows everything. Suppose there isn't a God, just this huge consciousness, now the man Jesus said "I and my Father are one", referring to that aspect of God, the so called Father. Father is principle isn't it? The beginning, not necessarily a physical father, but if he and that were one then his conscious would create the universe and not just this separate thing. You begin to appreciate what I am saying here.

Now when you reach the end of conditioning, the grasping, the aversion, have fallen away, this is what is left, consciousness is being born into another area and it begins quietly to assimilate the true nature of that for what it really is having already to some degree seen it in the physical sense. Shall we say, your living condition is more in feeling than in thinking.

P2 Yes

RW Now where is consciousness in feeling? Alright, physical feeling is outside, but the strange sort of thing where things are sort of somewhere in the middle, external, and the body takes on the very condition itself and becomes the manifestation of that particular quality.

Is that the true consciousness showing through, now and then?

P2 It seems to be.

RW That is my point, what I am aiming at. If we examine this a little more closely we might find out the truth of the matter and by that find out who and what we are. All you have got really is to examine these experiences as they arise, which means you have got to be very careful in the consciousness of observing, and let's face it, it is a very difficult thing because you can't control consciousness.

You can use it, in the sense that you can sort of sense, "I'm thinking thoughts I don't want to have, why can't I get rid of them?" Now everybody has had this. What is looking at it to know this, if one were in the middle of thinking it one wouldn't know one didn't want it. So, there is another sort of criteria that is judging it as being not wanted.

P2 I'm afraid you lost me there.

RW It is almost as though there is some part of you, as if there is two parts, the bit that is watching and the bit that is doing. The bit that is doing is the thought mind and it is thinking up things you find most distasteful, and I don't really want to know about this. It doesn't say it in words, but it gives the impression of words. The thought aspect is troubling but the aspect that is observing it is quite peaceful really, it is trying to find "is there any necessity for this?" That is consciousness in its own right seeing that this really isn't any good. Is it possible that consciousness in its own purity sees these things? And I mean purity. And occasionally it gets lost again by grasping at things of impurity. The thing is to cast aside the impurities to see the purity of consciousness, which is the very thing which gives the idea "I can deal with this person", (inaudible). You have these feelings don't you? They are not thoughts, they're feelings.

All the time we are dealing with feelings, and it's not physical, it's not manifest, and a lot of these feelings come unbidden from somewhere we don't know, because they are of a quality which is not (inaudible).

Now hold on, love and kindness in a world of chaos, it doesn't fit. It is an unworldly quality which we allow to come through and to condition us. It is unconditioned, not conditioned. It only exists here for the moment we experience it, insofar as temporarily our grasping and aversion is dismissed, but when they come in again we lose it. Now that is the true nature, the oneness, the wholeness, in the consciousness area, and that truly is what we are.

I do suggest that, but, it is for us to discover for ourselves individually, and not to accept anybody else's word for it.

P2 Does that consciousness have inbuilt Metta?

RW Its very nature is that because it is total unity. Alright we've got separate bodies, but can we not have a rapport within us in which there is no separation.

And that is not physical. There you have it. A unity.

I'm sure you do when you practise these thing, meditation, chanting. You have a rapport which everybody shares, you might call it Holy Communion. Is this not the one consciousness shared by all. It is something you already know and experience, but only temporarily, suppose you could hold that? Well that is the whole aim, to get there. That is why the conditions need to be allowed to fall away, in the Buddhist sense, in order that that can be achieved. (Inaudible)

P2 That's it problem solved.

(Laughter)

RW Look, I've said this to the group a few times, in the four noble truths, the thing that matters most of all is the eightfold path, because this is the working aspect, the others are just theoretical information, but this is the working path.

Now if we take the aspect of Sila, morality, then we begin to cool down a lot of the desires and aversions, and when we do this we can reach into the Metta,

P2 Ah yes.

RW Now when we reach into the Metta that is the whole eightfold path, all in one.

<Break>

P3 Would you agree there are stages of things, and would you say that the stage in front has an overlapping effect from the one before.

RW Yes, definitely, there is no marked point of moving over, there is a sort of overlapping takes place and you only ever know when you are way past the point of change

There is no marked..., well you can, with great difficulty when you realise there is a change, track back to where it actually happened, but it is very difficult.

P3 There is some stuff in the Bible, I've not read it recently, but I can remember the words, and there is a hymn that uses it as well, it's about "looking through a glass darkly" and if the person that does it is patient then...

RW Then, as you might say, to quote another Biblical situation, though I don't know where it comes from, then you might say the peace and the presence appears "as a thief in the night."

It creeps up on you and before you know it you are overtaken.

If you relate "through a glass darkly" to the void, then all things arise from the void.

P3 I was thinking more of when you said to P2 there was a stage at which other layers of stuff start to appear, intimations of something which is beyond...

RW This you find is in the spirit side rather than the physical side and the lines of demarcation are very vague, but what you find is, even as you do in this world, you reach a point where things have taken place within you which you find are of a beneficial nature, and similar things arise in that total conscious area of the spirit, and there are in the lower aspects what you might call spirit bodies, so it would appear they are as people, or whatever, and gradually you find a greater transparency takes place in them

all of which indicates moving off into another dimension until the transparency fades away altogether and it's just a total unity.

And that of course is where it moves off into another area altogether, into the celestial realms instead of heavenly realms, which are very difficult to talk about at all.

Except for the factor, and this is where the "little bit hard to believe" comes in, all the while through the physical, through hell states, through heaven states, there is a degree, at least, of duality, but the transparent becomes so clear that this disappears into a total unity, still retaining, in some fashion, it's "conscious identity" rather than "self identity" with the realisation that it had never been born, which it never had.

Now that is a strange thing to say, isn't it? You and I are here with a physical aspect assuming that we were born.

Consciousness was never born into this body, it became attached to it, but (was) never born as the body, and that's why it can eventually leave it. (Inaudible).

P4 When did it enter the body?

RW It didn't enter the body, it became attached to the body, so it is both in and out, but not part of, the physical at all. That is why you can sense things and feel things which are physical, even within the physical body. You pick up the vibes from other people and make them part of your own identity, and this of course is a construct and not a reality. The sense of feeling and knowing within that feeling is one thing, but when we grasp it and make it into another world then you've created another world. That is what we keep doing, making worlds of a delusory kind, and kidding ourselves that we are...something we are not.

The truth is we were always and always will be pure consciousness which was there before the world began and will be there when it is gone, but that is very hard to take in, even though I made a bland statement that that is the way it is, it is very hard to take in. You don't have to take it in because at some point by yourself you will find it to be true yourself.

To quote a Biblical statement, and there is so much in the Biblical sense that does deal with these things, because Buddhism only deals with getting to the attitude of mind which is free from concepts and ideas and can see things clearly, and seeing things clearly you are looking into the spirit world as much as the physical world. Buddhism does have it's part to play in this, to get you there, the so called spiritual (ways) don't give you much, very much, instruction in how to get rid of all these things, because it's always working with a "duality" point of view, even in its heaven states.

I think at some point the Bible says Jesus sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Still separate. No whole unity. So duality all the way through that.

But underlying it we have a total unity which is the reality.

Where is the "I and my Father are one"?

It was known at one point, but writings made it different.

You get to points where it is beyond words and that is the snag; if you were a fish and were able to talk would you be able to talk fish language for us to understand here? You wouldn't, because all the concepts and everything else would be up the wall.

The same thing applies with us and the spiritual element because we have meanings of things because they are conditioned, and there are no conditions there whatsoever, so how do you explain this one to this one when we are dealing in thought conditions we can't explain in thought, we don't know what unconditioned means. We only know what conditioned means, until we can break away and see the reality once duality ceases in your own consciousness, and you can see things for what they really are.

So what we talk about generally speaking is not wholly true, if it goes into words it is not wholly true, it can't be, because truth lies in experience, it does not lie in any thoughts or ideas about experience. It's like hitting your thumb with a hammer when you're putting a nail in a wall, then you know what hurt is, but you couldn't explain that hurt to somebody else, could you, unless they do it the same.

This is one of the snags you see, you have to experience it to know it. Understanding and thought doesn't exist in terms of truth, only untruth is there.

But we do the best we can and stumble along, if we're stumbling in the right direction we'll come onto something.

Practice, meditation and chanting take you away, at least temporarily, from the conditioned world. You can get an open conscious arising from that for a little while at least, which gives you a chance to appreciate the difference between the conditioned and the unconditioned and what you find, generally speaking, if you go into depth in meditation for instance you come to this empty void, how big is it?, or is it beyond dimensions, beyond measure, isn't it?

So consciousness expands way beyond the body, in fact it isn't even conscious of the body, just this vast emptiness, boundless, this gives you some idea of the true nature of consciousness

<Inaudible> in that total unity there is only that, is that not so?

If we can keep going there, don't try to see anything at all but keep the mind's eye open and sooner or later things will arise to show themselves to you, and in that showing you can get unity because it has absorbed into the consciousness and is not seen as separate.

That is the only time things are absorbed into the consciousness, and where it and those things are one, because one arises out of the other. But you have to keep going back and spending a little bit of time there and then perhaps sometime when you are quietly doing something with a little bit of absorption, then you say look I see what that's all about, it takes your breath away, that's what it's all about, but it's never in meditation, meditation gives the opportunity for it to arise at the point where when you are dealing with something in, what you might say, a semi-absorbed state, oh that's what it is, that is where it usually comes about. Anyone who says they see things in meditation, they are up the wall, they don't happen in meditation, it only prepares the ground.

You can only deal with these things by looking at your own experience because that is your truth, don't look to mine as a given truth, it's mine, it won't work; your truth is what matters, not mine. And when you begin to see things you'll find it's not so greatly different

anyway, but at least you know for sure and nobody can take it away, it's not a belief system. That is one of the problems with belief, it prevents you from seeing the actual.

When you see the nature that is there it is both your own and that of the whole universe. It is one nature, and this again is where the Metta aspect comes in: being total, complete, nothing separate, is the love aspect. And when we are able to access that, and live in the world with that, there is nothing we can give to the world but loving kindness because that is all we are.

There are various ways of showing it of course, and funnily enough, crazy as it may sound, the body in your life time picks up many habit patterns, so does the "think box", and a lot of these will still continue as habit patterns and certainly not anything to do with you, and you see, "this is just conditioning, that's all". Not me but conditioning, and because I was so closely attached to it, I thought it was me, it isn't anymore, though it still carries on for quite a long while, the habit patterns.

I still put a tie on, why?

Because I've been doing it all my life, (*laughs*) no other reason; habit pattern.

Daft, isn't it. But that gives you an apparent identity, and people around you don't understand you, so you live a false life, to some degree, but do no harm to anyone.

Anything arising please say so.

P3 We were talking about Metta,...

RW In its true sense?

P3 Well, no, in the emotional area.

RW That's a different matter altogether. That is totally different thing, there is no Metta in emotion.

P3 Yes, it struck me that the apparatus of emotion can feel very expansive.

RW Yes, but we have to be careful about this. The emotions are a very necessary factor whilst we live in the body, the emotion as an active part of the whole thing that is.

In the normal aspect it is agitated, if you imagine a glass of water, there are a lot of ripples. If you look into that you see a distorted image of what is over here because of those ripples. And seeing that distorted image you don't know the ripples are there, really, you assume that is what you are really looking at, and you act upon your apparent understanding of that distorted picture.

Now this is what has been going on throughout your life. What happens when we begin to cease the agitation that is caused by grasping and aversion, which are the prime factors in this, then it smoothes off, become a mirror like surface, and now you see a true picture, and seeing it truly for what it is, now you can see the need, if there is one within it, without distortion. So, living in the moment, now a clarity, there is not the need to understand everything, because in the seeing is the knowing, the experiencing is the knowing, and therefore can respond if necessary, or not if not necessary.

It is as clear as that.

So emotions do play a part afterwards, once they have been stilled, for the first time they make their play in a proper manner, things are seen clearly without distortion. At this time, having eliminated the grasping and aversion aspects, we've also eliminated the whole conceptual field, so whatever image you see, and the emotion coming up, we see clearly and it does not require any judgement whatsoever, there is nothing to judge by, because that was in a conceptual field, unknown to ourselves this is where we judge right and wrong, black and white, and goodness knows what. But, if that is clear and empty then no judgement can take place.

It is so utterly simple, things don't need to be understood because they can be seen, wholly and not partially, whereas all kinds of understandings are built on partial information and never on full information, and that's why they change as you see different criteria and your understanding changes.

When you see things clearly for what they are, understanding isn't necessary, it is complete and comprehensive.

The emotions are very useful, but, be very careful looking at emotions, when you look you see, other people for instance, you see their natures for what they are, you see what they are aiming to respond to and what they can't, you don't assess it, you see it clearly for what it really is. Consequently you are able to deal with their needs at their level rather than at your level.

So gradually step by step you can bring them from where they are, just stretch their mind a little bit at a time, so gradually they are expanding, initially their understanding - yes initially understanding, we have to work with that - and then gently guide them into comprehending these feelings, which is in experience, and then gradually of course it makes the change, over from understanding to knowing, and with knowing it does not carry any luggage, it just knows the moment without any reference to the past, it just is, and that is living in the moment, and that of course is the completeness of the whole thing.

One can every now and then achieve a little bit of that, but it takes a while to be able to drop into that and remain with it.

P5 Are judgements always contracting: I was looking today, judgement concerning emotion, I was looking at a particular emotion, of fear, and why it arose, and I saw it arises from judgement, and it's that judgement that creates the contraction.

RW That's right.

P5 Is that always like that?

RW Yes, it is almost as though it has got a grasping of its own, which covers the situation and doesn't need covering.

P5 It literally draws to yourself and you feel a contraction inside and it focuses the energy really and that is the emotion .

RW This is how ego is created, within that process, grasping takes place, grasping at something "other than itself". "I am". "This is mine".

Once the conceptual area is cleared away there is no such thing as that, just this directness, it does not need any half way measures.

P5 It seems to actually sustain itself like that.

RW Yes it does. You don't do it, it does it for you. In a sense you have always been doing it, then you become the person and let the thing do it for you, and enjoy the ride, as you might say.

It's very strange, I try to explain it as best I can but very few people can appreciate what I say, the fact that this thing talks about these various aspects, as I have been doing tonight: it's not me. It just comes through at any given point in time and I have no control over it whatsoever, and I don't carry any knowledge about it whatsoever. Something starts something and it comes and I listen to it the same as you do, and then it's gone again. To some degree this is annoying for Joyce, my wife, she'll ask "what went on tonight?", and I haven't a clue.

P5 (*Laughs*) But you can remember who was here?

RW Oh yes, but what went on, I could not tell you. It's all gone past and I'm in a different situation. It must be very frustrating for her.

P5 I can imagine you going home and saying to Joyce, "I said the same bloody thing to them again, and they're still not listening."

(*Laughter*)

(*Break*)

P3 What struck me a bit is that at one end you've got the emotional expression of Metta, which isn't really Metta, and at the other end you've got grief, loss, whatever, and it's actually not very much, it is quite limited.

RW Yes but when you really look at this what you see is that a lot of it is false; a great deal of falsity, untrue in other words, because when you look at the emotional feelings you can have moments of utter delight, and utter despair, opposites, yet the feeling is precisely the same. The only difference is content of the mind.

P3 You have said this a few time and I think I'm beginning to get the...

RW We make the condition of it what we wish, all you have is a disturbance, we decide it is good or bad as the case may be

P1 I was doing that yesterday, I felt really out of sorts, I'd left work late, I was behind already, and I suddenly thought I could be at peace with where I am now, then it would be irrelevant what state I was in, and all of sudden there was a bird flying and I could see the feathers on its wing..

RW It's almost as if you have a choice to be this or that..

P1 The body still felt uncomfortable but the mind wasn't reacting to it anymore.

RW This is the truth of what the Buddha taught, "What is the motivation for doing anything at all?"

The answer is: I am not content with where I am; I want to be something else; I want to get something else; I want to get rid of something, because I am not comfortable. If I

were comfortable, would I move from this chair to that because that might appear to be more comfortable?

Unsatisfactory situations, within oneself, is the cause of everything. If we knew precisely who or what we were we'd be content with that and we wouldn't want to go anywhere and we wouldn't need to pursue any ambitions, would we?

If you were content would you do anything particularly? So, we're not wholly content, and that's why we pursue other things, to alleviate our discontent, and this is the whole point behind what the Buddha taught. Discontent is the ruling factor behind everybody doing whatever it is they do.

But, unfortunately, since they don't see it very clearly, all they know is, instinctively, they are not very comfortable, something looks more comfortable so we'll go and chase that, or we'll possess it, or whatever the case may be, and we'll feel better. Perhaps you will for a little while, but since you have taken to it your discomfort, that is going to be a discomfort as well. So the whole of life is discomfort moving from this to that, to that, to that, like a grasshopper.

So the whole thing is to eliminate those factors that cause the dissatisfaction, which truly speaking is our idea, a concept again, of duality: "I am lonely", therefore I need some sort of company; "I'm not whole, there is a bit missing in my life." There's nothing missing in your life, it was always there, it has just been looked over, you never saw it was there.

You looked into duality instead of the fullness of wholeness itself.

It may appear daft at the moment, but you find that the very factor of not being content is the source of all of our problems, and since we have a conceptual area of duality we assume that something is missing, and therefore we've got to add to it. Now, if you take the conditioned world all these things are subject to change, as also is self, it is never going to be wholly satisfactory, and you are just building more discontent on discontent upon discontent to make it worse. The answer is to go deep down within, and ask "why am I discontent?"

Now if you look that way you find there is no discontent at all, there is just an idea that has become the problem.

Unfortunately, we're stuck with it, right through the whole of humanity.

If I put this in another way, here is a group of people, it could well happen, in a little while, we get a nice rapport, and we all feel as one in that sense, and we'll all be contented.

Do you agree with that?

P2 Absolutely.

RW So we don't have to do anything do we, but let things go.

Its a very hard lesson to learn, that we don't have to do anything, just let things happen.

P2 It can be experienced sometimes, it is all as if at the heart is contentment.

RW That's right, but we don't live at the heart of things, but around it, not in it.

P2 It is like a pendulum swinging in and out of it.

RW Exactly.

P2 And often we are content.

RW So in actual fact we have to seek a middle way, not this extreme or that.

(Break)

P3 It is awareness of that emotional area and how it interacts with life, just being with it, again and again and again, builds that ability to see it as “not you.”

RW We've got to face up to our so called problem, not run away from it and create something else, we must meet it where we stand if possible.

No matter what it may appear to be it can be no stronger than you are. Why? Because you are the one who created it in the first place.

P3 That is what I mean, it is limited. You can see the limitation of one end and the other, in a sense it is the same mechanism but with a different mental object.

P5 What struck me when you were talking earlier about the unconditioned, is that these things are conditioned, because they are limited. They can be seen quite precisely because they are limited, conditioned; so by definition, what sees it is unconditioned.

RW That is right, consciousness is the unconditioned side.

P5 Because it has no content, there is nothing in it.

RW That's right, it doesn't think, it has no means of thinking, it doesn't need to, it knows precisely because of the experience of the moment.

P3 And the conditioned keeps changing, no matter how strong it is, and therefore it can't be real.

P5 And also this point about “anything can't be bigger than you”, by definition, it's impossible, because you're the container.

RW And also the creator.

P3 That explains more what I am trying to say with this word “limitation.” It is exactly that.

P5 Considerably limited as well. Normally when we look from our usual point of view something can appear very big, but when you take that step back you realise how small it is and how small a world we live in. It is very limited in that sense.

P3 The only reason it was big is because you identified with it, and the act of identification changes it utterly.

RW It gives you duality right away.

P3 You can't be one or the other, you're straight in there, asleep, and it's massive, or aware and it is limited.

P5 It is like putting yourself right in the middle of it, identification, you surround yourself with it.

P3 You become it.

P5 Literally.

<Break>

RW One of the most difficult things to follow, in that sense, is Buddhism, how do you know when you have made progress?

You don't. It's only when something shows you something has happened that you begin to realise change is taking place, because at all points, no matter where you are in your life, it is still normal. The normality changes but you don't notice it.

It's not something you gain in Buddhism, but something you notice you've lost that gives you the idea.

For instance, you may recall, from way back in your earlier days, that you used to get angry very quickly about whatever, but now when similar things happen today you find you don't get angry at all. A mark of change, you've lost that grasping at that situation that made you get angry, or it has weakened. These are the things that show us, but, unless the situation arises, that tells you that, you would not know. It is as though you have forgotten, and you are amazed you feel like this, so that is a mark of change.

So, it is not something you gain, as you (might) think, because you are still normal, but it is something you have lost.

And if you lost something do you know you lost it? Not easy is it?

It's not lost until you realise you want it and it's not there.

(Laughs)

That's why it's difficult, you could be well along the path and not know it, unless some little incident shows you, "I have changed, I used to be like that and I'm not like it anymore."

It could be a long time before that situation arises. That's why it's known as a gradual path.

(Laughs).

Other people may see it but you yourself don't.

P1 I agree entirely with what you are saying, but sometimes when you are being mindful you know you are letting go of something and it feels a little bit like you are losing something.

RW That's right and you're not too sure what it is, and you can't be certain, until something really remarkable, more intense shows that's what it was.

That's why it is so necessary to have a group where you can compare notes from time to time, where you can begin to "oh I see now", because you are bringing it out rather than keeping it in.

P3 There is a sense of something developing, almost like a plant, you go out in the garden one day and it's got a flower, where was that.

RW This is perfectly true , but in earlier days you wouldn't have noticed that, it's only because you have sharpened up the aspect of awareness you see these things, and you are aware of an impending change, even before it happens, though you don't know what it is yet.

It's almost as if we are waiting for something to happen whereas normally you would not bother

You are getting into the truer levels of consciousness, it has got a wider expanse than your norm anyway so it can reach into the future which has not yet happened, and pick up the vibes from that, and hence the possibility something might occur and it usually does.

P3 Then there is the overlapping.

RW That's right. I don't know whether it is aware of the future or merely sees the potential of the future, it's just a possibility, it doesn't really matter.

At this stage why do we need those definitions.

P6 One of the other things is that you become much more aware of the subtle manifestations, particularly greed and hatred, and I found myself thinking there is hatred there but when I actually compare it with a few years ago, now it's just a subtle annoyance. Yet you have become more starkly aware of it.

P7 The more you sharpen up your awareness the more you notice the weeds and you may think you are going backwards

P6 Yes but if you actually compare these are a lot smaller than the blooming great trees you had in your youth

P5 Even if something comes up which is actually quite strong, the interesting thing is you see it as somebody else, almost, and that for me is quite interesting because although some things do disappear, and some things do weaken, some things may be still tucked away and may peep out and be quite powerful, but it's when they come out and you're in the middle of them it's like being in the middle of somebody else, and it's like a person who has a certain feeling and you can almost see this individual, or taste them, or smell them, and you know it's not you.

RW The curious thing is where these things occur and arise quite easily from time to time, you do see them as conditioning and not of yourself. That is the interesting part and you can decide whether to pick them up or to leave them be.

This is where you find you are having choices, you can either pick it up and go back in the world, or you can leave it behind and go forward . That is your choice, but usually you go forward, you won't go back, it's not worth while. And that without a single thought taking place, strangely enough. The choice is done by consciousness

P6 One of the things I often compare it with, is like when I've had something really painful, like a toothache, I think to myself "when I'm free of this pain I must remember", you know, and delight in that, but what happens is you get rid of the pain...

RW ... and you've lost the clinging.

P6 Yes

RW (*Laughs*)

P6 Occasionally I look at how things are and I think "there is an absence of pain". There isn't that pain that there was

RW The point is you can come to the conclusion the body can know pain as well but it does not have to be you. I've recently been experiencing that myself, you can be quite sure about that.

P6 I realise you've been in pain.

RW There has been pain, but that doesn't mean we suffer it, that's the point.

P6 Yes

RG It's a very strange thing isn't it, as though there is two of you, very strange.

The body is a very necessary part because of the communicating factors in the physical world (*inaudible*) ... so it would appear the body has a life of its own apart from the conscious aspects of the so called entity.

As though consciousness is an entity in its own right, separate from the body.

This is where you find the attachment is there, almost as though it's attached physically in some strange way, rather than directly in any way, because it has its own life, we can use it of course, that's true, but it's only through this (*indicates body*) we can communicate with one another in this world, because truly we communicate in consciousness, which is a different level, all the time anyway, regardless of the presence of the body.

I know that sounds a bit odd because you don't experience it very much yourself, but it is possible.

Let's say you are well aware of your offspring, or somebody or other, around the country, or the world as the case may be, you are well aware of that condition, within yourself, true?

P6 Yes.

RW You're not looking at physical contact, but spirit contact, that's why you can do it, consciousness. And the body couldn't be conscious of the other body, that's just not there. So, we are dealing with a conscious entity rather than a physical one. Of course with this one living with this body it knows the condition of the body also, but it does not have to suffer it, that's the difference.

To a great extent it is sharing the experiences of others, at that level, that's how we know how they are, and they don't have to be present either. (*Inaudible*) and when you begin

to take that consciousness is “what I am”, not “who I am”, there is a big difference, rather than I am conscious, which is a different thing altogether.

The real entity is the consciousness, not me being conscious at all. If you can only figure that one out, only then can you realise a degree of contentedness because then there is nothing missing and all is well with the world, the way it should be, the way it is

I think that about sums it up.

(General laughter)

The problem with this, it is very strange, when you approach it from the world side, you might say, Buddhism in particular, when you see how it is laid out, that in order to achieve peace we have got to get rid of our desires and aversions, you name it, all our sensual perceptions, as you might say, and you look at that, with understanding, you can't have a drink, and you can't have sex, and you can't have this, and you can't have that, it's not going to be worth living, you'll be a cabbage, nothing at all to live for, many people have said that I know, you've heard it probably, but as to the understanding point of view, not really understanding what it's all about.

Because, quite the opposite occurs, as these things diminish, quietly fall away, you find that the perception decreases, ones interest isn't just narrow anymore , it's completely broad, there is nothing arising which isn't still interesting, in fact infinitely interesting, so in actual fact, since there is less thinking about things there is more experiencing of life, so in fact one begins to live life to the full for the first time.

Interesting isn't it, living life to the full for the first time because one is attuned to everything in the moment that it arises, therefore, contentedness, because there is union with everything. Hard to believe, isn't it? That is the truth of the matter.

So you find, when you extinguish all these conditions you are entering into a different field altogether, because all these discomforts are weighed up with the conditions, if you remove the conditions the discomforts disappear.

What are you left with, since you are not dead, there is no condition to produce any sort of discomfort so you must be comfortable, it goes without saying doesn't it?

P4 I feel attached to things like the wind and the trees and the water and the sky, and the physical senses. Does that have to go as well? I enjoy it.

RW I question that. What you find really is when you look at those things you are at peace within yourself

P4 And at one with them

RW So in actual fact it's the peace you look for, and you can't cling to that can you?

P4 I don't know, you can search for it.

RW The facts would be that you put your attention on these things which you find restful. You can't have rest with clinging to things. You have to relax, and become as one with them, so there is no attachment whatsoever. That is the natural state of consciousness, to be at one with everything in its consciousness, surprise surprise, and it is so perfectly natural you don't have to do it.

P4 No, but I must put myself in the way of it.

RW That's right of course you can. But, then of course as you go further along with this you begin to find it can be done by just letting go of things which annoy you, look for something which doesn't. You see? The same thing would occur

P4 Yes

P1 I noticed this morning on the way to work, the usual things that catch me weren't.

RW One thing about this is, that you recognise, is quiet stillness that comes about is the most important factor in your life. I think you will agree with that. Now, if you can remain within that in other situations, if you find yourself rising out, then go back to it, and whatever you are dealing with do it from here, not there (points to head), a little tricky, but if you do you'll find it remains with you, but if you rise up into the head you'll lose it. Because it is a whole body experience, isn't it, not just a brain thing, so, if you take it into the brain you separate it, if it's a whole body thing it stays. So, learn to live within the body rather than the head.

P4 I realise what I do need to let go of is aversions rather than...

RW These things you are averse to, don't bother too much, try to accept them, they'll not do it any harm at all, leave it be. That's the best you can do, just don't make a big deal of it.

One of the things I ought to emphasise, it's very important, but very few people mention it, this is on the karmic basis, there are several ways of looking at this I grant you, but this one is rather important. Most people of course are not aware there is even such a thing as a karmic wheel that turns, but they are still operating (within it) anyway, it's just too bad, but those who are aware to some degree, or accept there is that potential as a possibility, we need to take a little care here, because you see how easy it is for your state of mind to change in the presence of others, so easy to tip over into something unpleasant, and when you're in something, whatever you're doing is done with an unpleasant motivation. Would you agree with that?

On the other hand if you are more amenable then it will be a much more healthy situation, but other people in close proximity or whatever, you are dealing with, can change your state of mind, which means to change your karma, as you to other people.

Now to a great extent this is where the Metta principle comes into its own. If you can establish yourself in the feeling and experience of Metta, you can weather this and if you stay there nothing can (disturb), it will all bounce off but you stay that way, but your presence will help to cool other people around you, because of that peaceful aspect, yes?

P2 Yes

RW So you agree with that?

P2 I do.

RW Now, if people in your proximity, like you have been for an hour or two here, (indistinct), now you want to retain that peace, and whatever you do your karma will be healthy, and whoever you meet, you will pass a little of that on and their karma will be better.

Yes?

P2 Yes

RW By the same token if you didn't have that, you are uneasy, well that is being passed to other people and their karma is not so good as it might be. Do you see the point?

P2 Yes

RW So to some degree, by virtue of our own state, if we can stabilise it, we can do an awful lot of good for other people's karma by helping them to cool down and have Metta, which means that over a period of time they will be able to lift themselves up to see things a bit more clearly, whereas if they maintain their normal status they are going to go down and just have a little wade back but never getting anywhere.

So to some degree, by our own behaviour we can help other people, even without knowing about it, how much more by us do knowing about it? Does that make sense?

P2 Very much so.

RW So be aware of your states and keep that as stabilised as you can for the benefit of those around you. And not only that but it makes it much more peaceful for yourself and they respond to you like that.

(Laughs)

So you are helping to cool the world and its problems, so it is worth looking at and giving a bit of thought. It's like the ripples of a pond: you chuck a stone in there and it ripples out, you never know how far this thing can go.

It can also go in a bad way as well as a good way. It's up to you and I to get it as good as we can in order to help the rest of the people around us who are quite frankly in a hopeless condition. Whether they know it or not they still have a karmic cycle.

Now, from that we go to something of a different nature, again on the karmic cycle: now I think you will be quite happy about this. They will tell you, you have to work out the whole thing before you get enlightened; it's not true. It's not true.

What we find is, as you begin, by virtue of opening up your conscious awareness and are more careful how you go about things, little bits drop off the wheel.

As little bits drop off, your mind becomes even more clear. So when you get about half way through the wheel, about half way roughly, give or take a bit, then your mind gets much more clear than it was in the first place; it may just get to that point of clarity where it sees the whole thing as delusion, in which case the other half (of the wheel) doesn't exist anymore. Ah, never thought of that did you? "That's truth as well, because it is delusory." There's a big help isn't it, there's half your battle gone.

You don't keep making more (karma), ever. All you keep doing is renewing the old, giving you the idea you are making more, but you don't.

As this (process) takes place it comes to fruition, when some other thing crops up, returns to you – because it is in here, not out there – but something outside will trigger it...

P2 Yes

RW ...and if you can recognise it as it arises and let it go, it drops at that point and that bit's gone. If you don't it will take, and renew itself, and this is where you think you are making more, but you're not you are only getting rebirth to the old karma, so you've only got a molehill in the first place, it never becomes a mountain. But, it has the illusion that it is getting bigger. So, again you see it cuts down the battle.

P2 Yes that is useful information.

RW Think about it and you will see that it's virtually true because in your own experience, you are old enough now to realise that certain things keep cropping up every so often, of a very similar nature keep popping up, this is your mark of how your cycle is turning. Simple really, when you think about it, but it doesn't tell you in the book, these things.

It makes a big difference.

All the while we try to lighten the load.

(Laughs).

It's a joyful thing, not a heavy thing. The more you laugh about it the better. The more you play with it the better. Don't be too serious, play with it, and enjoy the play. Yes, where else are you going to get the joy from unless you play with it.

If you are going to get serious you get bogged down and go into depression. If you are light hearted you absorb things. In the play you learn far more than being serious, in depth that is, in experience, this is how we learn. Start from being joyful and you have no problem, start with being serious and you have great trouble, granted it is the most serious thing you ever did in your life, it does not have to be handled that way. Do it with fun, make it fun.

P5 I was in a seminar today on how to make a living for performing artists. Three artists were brought to talk about their experience, one of them a very strange lady, but a nice lady, who was quite a well known comedy writer. She was talking about writing and how to present things. She had been commissioned to work on a piece about the deaths of those prostitutes in Norwich, and the brief to her was to do something with humour, because people would listen to it and connect to it.

RW Somebody knows what they are talking about. You can do so much in a jocular fashion you can never do with a serious (fashion) you go over the top, to weighed down. We get helpless then.

P3 A famous impresario, I can't remember the name, his favourite phrase was "if you ain't got no fun you ain't got no show."

<Break>

RW A chap who used to be here a long time ago, you remember Alex (Holden). He was born in Wigan, he went to Australia, New Zealand, married a girl from New Zealand, he worked in Australia in copper mines, and he had an accident with a runaway truck in a

narrow tunnel and he lost his leg. During the experience, as he lay there, his experience was, out of this world you might say, anyway he came back, and he came here trying to rediscover this experience, which of course he got there, a real black time on that one. He used to introduce himself to people, "Hello I'm Alex, I'm a Buddhist, I've only got one leg." As if the criteria for being a Buddhist was (having) one leg.

(Laughter)

RW He was a grand chap, he died on a beach in Australia, about four years ago I think, he had a heart attack. I'm not surprised, he was such an active man it was unbelievable, the things he did, with only one leg, it was nobody's business.

P5 I went tree cutting with him once, and the tree, only a small one, he was pushing at it with one leg near the root, and he said, "that's the trouble with having a wooden leg", "what's that?" I asked, "I keep breaking it."

(Laughter)

RW He was a character, I'll never forget that phrase, "I'm a Buddhist, I've only got one leg."

P3 Another one he used a lot was "They are not very good these bloody legs, they make 'em for cripples."

(Laughter)

RW Mind you he did a lot for good for artificial legs, he kept breaking them and they had to go into new materials.

P5 He had a very special one in the end

RW He did, one from Germany.

P5 Because he had a bit of a stump under the knee, and he got one to fit that was held on just by a wedge. It had to be precisely cast.

RW That's right. How he managed that I do not know but he did. Incredible.

Anyway he found what he was looking for and that is what matters most of all.

P5 Sometimes you come across somebody who is not on a particular path and yet who is actually a very, shall we say, an enlightened type of person.

RW Yes

P5 Some of you may have read books by Terry Pratchett, they are very humanist and I was listening to an interview with him this week, he's been diagnosed at 60 with a rare form of Alzheimer's, but he is still fine at the moment. In this interview he made some disparaging comments about JK Rowling and when asked why he said in her books people are described as muggles in a disparaging way and he objected to the attitude that ordinary people are foolish. His books are very humanistic, it's all about helping people.

RW People who have that natural humour have a great deal of wisdom, it goes together. It is one of the marks of a greater freedom

P5 He can put his message across with a great deal of humour

RW It is the way to do it, humour, there is no doubt.

Light heartedness is where you absorb things. You can't do that if you are in any form of rigidity.