

A  
LITTLE LOOK  
AT  
**KARMA**



APPARENTLY BY GODFRIDEV



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# A LITTLE LOOK AT KARMA

## THE DUAL NATURE OF ACTION



I would like to establish our enquiry into the nature of karma on the basis of the underlying principles of the reality paradigm that we've all been conditioned to share. The paradigm of which I speak, or the operational context of our thinking, is the scientific method. So we will look at karma, or action, in the light of the assumptions of science in an attempt to eradicate from the process all wishful thinking, assumption, prejudice, fantasy. Most simply put, karma means action.

Science is an attempt to find out how things really are. Right at the heart of this process is what is known as a fact. It is a fact that we are all in the dome: and it's a fact that nobody else, other than us, is present in the dome. But why you are present in the dome is another matter. How you got to be present in the dome is also another matter. That you became present in the dome is a fact. Which means there can be to the honest onlooker no doubt at all that the people who are in the dome are in the dome and that the people who are not in the dome are not in the dome. In other words there is no room for speculation. Arum is in the dome or he is not in the dome. Your mother is not in the dome, or she is in the dome. So this is a certain class of knowing which we are calling a fact. So in assessing or finding out who is present or outside the dome absolutely no conjecture is required. Absolutely no wishful thinking is required.

When the scientific method first started to get a hold on people's consciousness it created a lot of disturbance: because up until then people's worldview was based on belief, not knowledge. For example that the earth was the centre of the universe. So obviously it was a bit disturbing for the Pope to find out that it wasn't. In the same way as the church created a set of assumptions about knowing how things are, so too has the scientific method. In the last century, the certainty of the way things supposedly are started to become a little shaky again. The clarity and certainty of classical physics began to be revealed to have shortcomings.

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Now this didn't mean that sometimes gravity goes upwards. This doesn't mean that to some actions there are not equal and opposite reactions. The shakiness of classical physics, didn't mean that classical physics sometimes operates and sometimes doesn't. It means that it operates within a limited arena only. Now, that arena happens to be the one in which we live our lives, the one in which we consciously operate, the one in which we experience. But what was discovered in the last century was that if you go deeper and deeper and deeper into the structure of the way things are, into the structure of matter, the laws of classical physics no longer apply down there. But they still apply to that which is expressing what's going on down there.

So for example, if you interact this piece of wood with other objects it interacts according to the laws of classical physics, and it will always do that. In other words if it is projected hard against a more fragile object that more fragile object will break. But if this piece of wood is approached with a huge magnification of sensory perception through instruments and is looked at not in terms of its interaction with other objects but just in terms of its internal structure, then when you get to a certain depth of magnification the laws of classical physics are not operating. Now this perspective has come from the quest that began in Greece: what is the basic aspect or particle of matter? Of what does this wooden object fundamentally consist? What is this object, that if I throw it up, it will come down, and if thrown up with a certain spin a certain part of it will come down first. This, due to the forces defined in the laws of physics, will always be so.

This enquiry as to what is the fundamental particle of matter was an enquiry that began by isolating or categorising objects in a particular way: by distinction, by difference. This process was applied both externally to identify objects relative to each other, and internally to find out what objects were made of. But once the level of the atom had been reached things started to get a little hazy. The notion of certainty, on which the concept of a fact rests, became very uncertain. What was discovered was that the laws determining the relationship between atomic particles, one to another, are totally different from the laws governing the relationship between that which they make up, material objects, one to another.

In other words when you get to a certain level of perception of the structure of matter, things do not work the way you are used to

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them working and the way you assume they must always work. So for example, if Kim had made two of these, and if it were possible to make two sticks identical in size, shape, weight and appearance, they would never be identical because no matter where they were they would be occupying different coordinates of space and that would make them different. No matter that they are internally or inherently the same, they are in a different place and that's a difference and through that you can distinguish between them: the left one and the right one. Or the top one and the bottom one, etcetera.

So you could say that the most fundamental aspect of an object, in order to distinguish it, or create its identity is not its appearance, its shape or its form, but its location; where it is in space. And of course an object can change its location in space, it can have its location changed if it's a stick, or even if it's a branch the wind can move it. When an object changes its location in space that's a function of time. It doesn't happen instantaneously. Movement through space requires time. So you could say the time factor and the space factor are the fundamental attributes or characteristics of identifying an object. And you need them both. It's no good knowing where your watch was yesterday. It doesn't help. You have to know where it is now. So time and space are of paramount importance to the nature of objects. Now this object is made up of millions and millions of atoms, each one of which has to be in exactly the same time and space and relationship to the others that it is in order for this object to be the object that it is. This means that the fundamental qualities, the fundamental characteristics of any object, whether it be a stick or an atom, which must be known, are where it is in time and where it is in space. Because two which appear to be identically the same can never be in the same space at the same time.

So you could say the space factor and the time factor help you to identify the object, which then, in any given moment is a location in space. It is not just in that location, it is that location, for that moment. The location in time and the location in space going inexorably together. This is how we live our lives, even if we don't realise it. There is no space without the time factor; there is no time without the space factor. But when you go down to the level of sub atomic particle, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle states that you can only know the time or space location of an elementary particle: you can never ever know both exactly. In other words if you can locate the particle you can not say accurately in what way it is behaving or moving. You can't say what its relationship to time is. That's called

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the particle aspect of the so called elementary particle. Or if you are able to identify its time based function, its momentum or its latitude then it's a wave. And a wave doesn't have a specific location. A particle has specific location but no momentum. A wave has momentum but no location. Any locatable particle is not moving: and as soon as it moves it is no longer a particle; you can no longer say where it is. It is very hard for our common sense mind to understand how that can be. So down deep space and time can never be united, whereas at the surface they can never be separated. In other words, absolute certainty about subatomic objects is somewhat limited.

*But if you go down and you see this particle?*

Well, what do you mean you can see this particle? Because you don't really see these things, you see their impact, their presence. So you can see a wave in water. What is a wave? It's just impact in water, but in the same way when you are looking at a nuclear particle and you see it as a wave then you are just seeing this wave. But you are not seeing it with your eyes. It is being registered as the instrument. And if momentum or amplitude, the time factors, are definable, then location and size, the space factors are not.

*So if that particle were to move ...*

It wouldn't be a particle. It would be a wave. But then if it was then to be identified in another place, the identification of location equals particle. Momentum identification equals wave, location identification equals particle and they can never be identified together but obviously they are both functioning together. But they can never be perceived together. So when you can say for a fact this particle is here, anything you can say about its momentum is conjecture. Likewise when you can describe with certainty its behaviour, its location becomes uncertain. So this is why it's called the uncertainty principle.

*And they are not necessarily different things?*

No they are not at all. So the understanding is that everything is a wave and a particle at the same time but you can never perceive both. You can only have a limited knowledge when you get down to that level. But also, the fact is, you can only have a limited knowledge at this level. All Kim knows about this stick she knows very well because she made this stick, but all you know is what it looks

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like. I know what it feels like also. Kim knows so much more than that. But still it's limited.

*What does conjecture mean?*

It's a likelihood, or a possibility or a probability. It is not a fact. So what this means to quantum physicists, is that when they are drinking a cup of tea they are relating to the cup tea externally, pragmatically, according to the laws of classical physics. They are aware of an object moving through space towards their opening lips. But at the same time they may have an amused awareness that that of which this cup is made can not be said to be doing that. That at the subatomic level no things can be tracked accurately along the path that this cup is taking. So that means that it's possible to be aware that there is more than one thing happening at once. That more than one perspective which appear to conflict with each other are nevertheless each valid depending on where you are looking from. Or how you are looking. So in other words you can't really say that this cup is not solid from the point of view of classical physics but you can't say that it is solid from the point of view of quantum physics. So what is it? The answer is both or neither but if you say neither then that is a bit foolish because you have to relate to it somehow, especially if it's being thrown at you. You can't say it's neither and let it hit you. You relate to its solidity and then you catch it. If you say both that remains only an abstraction. As far as action is concerned, you have to say one or the other, depending on the arena of your action.

But the cup relative to your eyes and to your hands and to your arms, your whole body, relative to your perception is that same cup. You are picking it up and you are bringing it up to your mouth. That is one cup moving and so, and you're experiencing that and so are lots of people in the room. And so if you were to take that deeper to as far as you possibly could, with an atom or whatever that you could actually record with whatever instrument, why can you not say that that same thing is that thing and is moving through space?

Well you can but if you wanted to be precise, definitive, you'd also have to say something else: that at that level of magnification all that's moving through space is oscillating quanta of energy. These quanta are in relationship to each other in such a way that they are perceptible as a cup but the nature of this quantum relationship is that there is hardly anything there except empty space. That space

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which we see as being filled by an object has actually got hardly anything in it that can actually be quantified. It might be one millionth of one percent. So it's a pulsating throbbing mass of space that is being irradiated by a few quanta of energy in such a way that is so consistent that we can relate to it as a solid object.

*So with the atom it is not so much that it is not moving but that it isn't what it appears to be but something is moving?*

Something is being moved through space by your hand yes. According to our ongoing daily experience it has to be a solid object. Otherwise we won't grip it properly. So we have to act as if it is solid. It is solid from our point of view but a physicist could say that technically, from the point of view of quantum fact, it is not solid. So from the point of view of the deepest scientific fact, which is what we all carry round as the arbiter of truth there is nothing solid here. What Heisenberg and all of his colleagues are implicitly asking us to bear in mind is that the fact of solidity is an appearance; an appearance determined by the nature of the perceptual mechanism. There is something actually there from the point of view of scientific fact but it is not really a thing because it is just oscillating quanta of energy arranged in a particular configuration relative to each other.

If a nuclear scientist can't free himself from the classical paradigm of ordinary perception he is not going to be able to function as a quantum physicist, he is not going to be able to function freely at the deepest level of matter. If he can't let go of the quantum perspective when he goes home to his wife, he is going to end up divorced. You have to be able to function in both. And it's completely arbitrary to say one perspective is more true than the other. Some quantum physicists would like to say that their perspective is more true and they'd have their argument. But I might argue that this perspective of solidity is more true because this is where we live. So it's a foolish argument. They are both valid. But what makes them valid needs to be understood; their context and their applicability is what gives them their validity, not an external authority that says this is true and that is false.

So there is something almost identical going on relative to our experience of action. We operate from a classical understanding of action: but this classical understanding of action is underpinned by a quantum reality of action. To uncover the quantum reality of action is not to dismiss the classical reality of action. They are not

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separate at all. They are two sides of the same coin. And just as a scientist is trying to find out what matter really is, a yogi is trying to find out what life really is. It is not just matter but life as a whole. So what's the difference between the yogis looking and the scientist's? The scientist is trying to find out what matter really is. The yogi is trying to find out what consciousness really is. What is really going on when you perceive something? What is really going on when you think something? What is really going on when you feel something? What is really going on behind all your actions? You think things, you feel things, you want things, you believe things.



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CHOICE MAKING



It's very clear so often that you take an action on the basis of having made a choice between a few options. Having considered those options, you make your choice. You decide what to do on the basis of that choice and you do it. Now even if this could be said to be happening unconsciously, to be happening intuitively, it could still be said to be happening in this way: consideration, choice, decision, action. In the sense that at any given moment there are hypothetically many options, but only one of them is ever taken. So that selection can be called decision, even if it's an unconscious selection, even if it's on the basis of habit. There is a selection from the infinitely possible to the one and only actual. So a lot of our actions don't have conscious decisions but they have a selection element in them, in the choosing between options. But just as when a physicist will openly and honestly check solidity out by applying the available magnification, so the yogi does the same thing relative to action. He will examine as deeply as possible each of the elements in decision making: "I", "have", "made", "a", "decision", "to act": it doesn't really matter which one you take. You can take any one of those words and check them out exhaustively. See how they stand up to relentless scrutiny.

But if you are thorough you are going to have to do it to all of them; if you want to be really sure what's going on you are going to have to investigate all of them. You're going to have to examine the nature of the subject; you're going to have to examine the nature of the object as well as the nature of the action. So you are going to have to make an examination of object, subject and action in order to investigate actions because actions appear to be taken by the subject of the action and applied to an object.

If you do make this investigation it is no longer possible to say, from that deeper perspective, that any particular object or action caused any other. You are only able to say that the field of causation of any action is constituted of every other action and every other object in existence, past and present. The implications of this are many but one of the implications of this is we are not in control of

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our actions. This notion can be disturbing but the disturbing aspect of this notion is assuming that if it is true that we are not in control of our actions, it must be untrue that we are. But it's not. From a certain perspective we are in control of our actions, and from a certain perspective we are not. So it's the wave particle uncertainty principle manifesting all the time, but relative to personal action. And just as you could say matter will not unlock its secrets if you don't go down to the quantum level, action will not unlock its secrets if you don't go down to the quantum level. But just as if you don't come back from the quantum level of matter to the classical function, if you can't come back from the quantum level of the investigation of action to the classical level, you sit around doing sweet fuck-all thinking that there's nothing to be done. In other words you can't act, you get frozen into, "well I'm not capable of making decisions and therefore I mustn't make decisions". This is simply swapping one side of a dualism for another. It is certainly not wisdom.

So it would be foolish for me to say that I didn't make an unconscious decision to fill up my cup, to say it so strongly that I would be trying to disabuse anybody of that perspective to such a degree that they might think that they are going mad. That would be foolish. But nor would I permit anybody to try to force me to think that I really did make a decision. I would just say "yeah, it appears that I did make a decision".

*Well you did make a decision but you weren't in control of the decision you made.*

Okay, you can put it like that but then the question is what does you refer to? When you say you did do it but you were not in control. Okay, but then what is Godfrey? Is Godfrey a separate entity with volition?

*No, but you are the instrument.*

But the classical assumption is that Godfrey is a separate entity with volition and this assumption is manifest when anybody ever says "Godfrey shouldn't have done that. Godfrey shouldn't have said that. Godfrey could be a better yoga teacher if he wasn't so aggressive". So the classical assumption is that Godfrey has volition. And that assumption has to be operated on for social interaction to not be total anarchy. So if I throw this stick at you and it breaks your skull you have to take me to the police station. You know, you

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might like to take Joel but you're going to have to take me because he is going to be able to get off and it's a waste of time.

You're not in control of those decisions that you are making. It's your character that dictates the decisions you are making so you are making those decisions and you are in control of those decisions in order to satisfy your character but you are not in control of that which demands that you make those decisions.

So how far back do you go? I mean you can put the line anywhere and all I'm really saying is why put the line anywhere? Or put it wherever it's most effective to put it in the moment. If I come into your dome and slap you, if you believe I have the freedom to not do it you will hold it against me. If you too much identify with the classical understanding of action, and if I do that too many times then you are going to hate me. And then you are going to resent that you've put yourself into my life, my power, when I'm such a hostile bastard. You are fixing the line on the classical surface. But if you fix a line on the quantum level, then you think, "Well there's no point in telling Godfrey not to because he's not responsible for his actions", that's also foolish. Because you don't know what the actual mechanism is that is controlling my actions and it could be that all that's required for me not to do that is a threat or some other kind of feedback.

If you fix the line permanently it's not going to work. That's dualism. If you move the line all the time according to the applicability of the pragmatic situation, then that's ok. So the idea is to allow the line to become fluid which means you don't hold to any concept: neither of in control, nor not in control. You simply use the concept in the moment that helps. So if there's somebody around in your life who you don't like what that means is they are constantly producing actions that you don't like. And it's the actions that you don't like and, especially if you are English, you tend to keep your mouth shut and so the actions continue. But if you just relate to what is actually happening, the actions, and their instrument, then you can say, "you know it's really not a good idea to do those actions around me". Then maybe they'll stop and then all of a sudden that person is no longer a person that you don't particularly like. And then you discover that other actions come out of them and they are fucking brilliant. And this of course starts to undermine the classical notion of a person, as a separate entity with volition creating a uniquely definable set of consistent actions.

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So in other words if you don't attribute an action to its instrument you relate just to the action. At the same time you relate to the instrument of the action just as the instrument of the action, not as the action, nor as its cause. Then you are relating to what is actually there, actions and objects. But you are no longer endorsing speculative concepts, which can only be dualistically determined, never absolutely: such as volition. Then you are living a life that's quite different from the norm, and you don't blame. Now that doesn't mean you don't avoid or you don't confront, or you don't attack, but it simply means that within those conditioned responses you don't blame. And there is one person you can not avoid and that's yourself, and so, most significantly, eventually, you don't blame yourself for anything.



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PERSPECTIVES



So the classical perspective and the quantum perspective are just a matter of perspective. So why make a fuss about whether they are right or wrong? Why try to say this is true and this is not true when they are just a matter of perspective, or a matter of opinion? So what works is what works for you from moment to moment. It's not hard to understand that the possibility of things working better are increased the more options you have. So if you only have one of those two options available then it's limited. And this happens to a lot of people when they become exposed to the quantum analysis of action. They end up thinking there's nothing to be done: so they try not to do anything. But only in their limited imaginations, because of course, they are still doing things. They are still scratching their head, you know, flicking the fluff off their trousers, they are still eating. And underlying all of these, conscious or unconscious decisions, choices, selections are taking place. They are using the quantum analysis of action as an excuse not to make the big decisions that they used to find so difficult to take and they are waiting for somebody else to take those decisions. Which, of course, they can't help doing. That's the inevitable impact of hearing this for a certain conditioning of mind: but it's the impact on a mind that hasn't really heard. And oppositely there is another kind of mind that doesn't really listen, just projects out of its own belief system. And says, "No, I am in control of my life".

So it's not that you're not really in control of your life. Nor is it that you really are in control of your life. From where you function you'd better assume that you are. But from the depths of your internal silences, you can admit that you are not. Then you are going to relax. And you are going to sometimes make decisions, and you are going to sometimes let decisions be made. Recognising that these two processes have equal validity. Then when you make a decision and it turns out bad you are not going to get your knickers in a twist.

So when you are making this separation, this either or, between quantum and classical perspective, or personal volition and destiny, this is called dualism. This is at the very root of the dualism of right

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and wrong, good and bad. In which one is supposed to be better than the other. So when you think I must kill the classical perspective with the quantum perspective this is a sickness that's called dualism. It is a fundamental sickness in which I say "Debbie is over there. Now she is a woman and I know that women are dangerous, but I can't control everything she does. I had better kill her just in case she does something I don't like". You know you might think that's foolish but Hitler did that. In his own way it's exactly what he did. And when people don't do that there can be no holocaust, there can be no war, there can be no conflict in that area.

*Godfrey, are you trying to control? Don't you attempt at controlling outer circumstances?*

Oh yeah, absolutely. For sure. I mean what's coming to live in Ibiza but an attempt to try and control external circumstances and get away from the weather? This is where we operate. We operate as objects being affected by other objects and part of our responsiveness to other objects is to see what influence we can bring to bear upon them in order to bring about a change of circumstances which we would find favourable. But that's the classical viewpoint. But from the quantum viewpoint it's the power of the whole universe operating through this instrument that allows the movement from London to Ibiza to happen. So what I've been saying is it's fine to try to control external circumstances, it's absolutely fine. You're bound to. The point is to allow that wanting to, to happen in such a way that the failure of external circumstances to respond to your intention doesn't upset and dissatisfy you. If the thrust of the matrix is not permitting it. Fine, maybe I can find another desire that coincides with the thrust of the matrix and then everything will be cool".

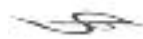
*Going with the flow.*

Going with the flow. Right. But your wanting something that's not going with the flow is part of the flow. And so is it if you resist going with the flow, that's part of it too. The river is flowing downstream and you get these eddies. You are the eddy getting stuck, but the flow of the river is still flowing and all of a sudden the eddy becomes part of the flow again. So the eddy is still part of the flow but the eddy doesn't feel like it. The eddy is getting stuck. That pebble is still down there. Why hasn't it gone? So that's what happens to you but it's still part of the flow. You are just not flowing for a moment, but the flow is still flowing.

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*Would you agree that one of the great problems with classical physics that there is only one particular perception and therefore it is true and so the allowance that there is an alternative perspective let alone, perspectives beyond that is antithetical to our original understanding of classical physics?*

Well, let's say to the implications that we take from it. Because even within classical physics there are different perspectives. You could see an elephant from the front or the back and that's a different perspective but it's still an elephant so that perspective is still the same; the basic fact is the same.



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CHANCE



*What about chance? You were talking about being control of your actions. If you change that by an external force using a dice or something to determine what you want to do, like the choreographer Merce Cunningham when he choreographed he would use the chance method by throwing a dice so they would be different every night. Where does that come into it?*

Well, it's not anything different. You know when he throws the dice and it comes up six we call that chance because we are unable to predict that it will come up six but if you say that it could have come up five, its conjecture. It's not a fact. The fact is that you can have, relative to the rolling of the dice, six possibilities. But another fact is that only one is going to come up, and once it has you can't say anything about the other five that isn't pure fantasy. Hypothetically it could have come out one, two, three, four, five. Fine, but it didn't. The way that a dice rolls, or how a dice ends up, depends on how it starts. If it had a different face when it started with exactly the same throw it would have produced a different number so you could say the chance, the so called chance is a function of where the dice was sitting when you picked it up. You could also say it's a function of how free the wrist was. This could have been a function of how much moisture there was in the air. This could have been etc etc etc ...and all of a sudden no longer chance. All of a sudden it's determined. All of a sudden, when you look deeply you see it had to be that way because the forces and factors of the whole universe were leaning in to that statistical possibility of six options to force one. But we can't predict it so it looks like chance. So we think that our ignorance is the nature of the universe. That's called arrogance.

The point is that it's not a question of having to say I'm not in control of my life, nor to say I am in control of my life. The point is just to see that volition is a reality from a certain perspective and is not a reality from another perspective. The perspective within which it is a reality gives you a stability and a cohesion to interact effectively with people socially. But the other aspect allows you to be

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happy within that interaction no matter what that interaction is. Whereas if you only have the classical, volitional perspective you are only happy in this interaction if it turns out the way you want it to. Which it never always does. So the only way you can be happy is to marry the quantum and the classical perspective and see actually that the quantum one is the underlying one but the classical one is the operative one: and that you must and you will continue to operate there and you must allow everybody else to operate there.

*Is there a yogic definition though of what you just said rather than talking about physics? The marrying of what? Shiva and shakti is it? Or something?*

The yoga sutras as a whole, or any self standing part. To "surrender the projections of the mind and the true nature of the self manifests" means when you surrender the classical perspective then the quantum one arises. And then at the end, when you've got it all really, really clear then you live in freedom which means shivashakti or "consciousness energy has been established as the true nature of the self": which means that both sides of what was a dualism, but is now a duality, are seen to be expressions of the same thing. Shivashakti, consciousness-energy, the same thing and in the living from that understanding is the freedom of which yoga speaks. But not the living from the concept. If you just live from the concept then you tend to go into what I call the dualism of non duality where "all is equal. Nothing to be done. Chill out man. I know i just smashed it up, but what does it matter? It's all god. Chill out man. What's the matter? Why are you so uptight just because i killed your wife? "It's just the flow of the matrix man." You know that happens. It happens to us sometimes and its irritating, it happens even more and then it's very annoying.

*I'm really interested in what you said there is no such thing as chance or luck.*

Well luck is just a conventional term that's applied to how it looks to us. So it exists in that sense.

*Yeah. But you said something about it's our own stupidity or ignorance that we think that it's luck but actually it's a force of ...*

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Well because we are unable to analyse to the depths required we can't see the factors and forces that contribute to that action so we call it chance or luck.....

*It's kind of like; I like the feeling of saying oh it's just luck in the sense that, and it's kind of ironic because for me saying, oh it was meant to be, feels a lot more big headed.*

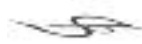
"It was meant to be" is a big headed attitude? Yeah, well that's cool. Say whatever you like. Say whatever you feel comfortable with, but what I'm saying is don't be too attached to what you say because the next moment you might not be able to hold it up and then you might get upset and try to fight with what's happening because you want to be right, because you want it always to be like this. We all have our beliefs, preferences, ideals, desires; we have them. You can't fight it. But these are all operating in the classical paradigm of objects liking or disliking actions with which they are identified. What I'm really saying is if you hold your desires and concepts and preferences very, very lightly then if one of them collapses in your face you go, "oh, huh", and then move easily on to the next one. Rather than going to war with yourself or somebody else or God or reality because your desires are not fulfilled or because your decision making faculty turns out to have been not very effective today or whatever it is.

So it's not about getting rid of desires and concepts and preferences, but it's just loosening your relationship to them so that it's not an imprisoning relationship so that it becomes more light and playful. I don't like "it was meant to, it was supposed to" also because it implies all kinds of things that I don't like either. Like some kind of overriding will or plan, which smells too much of anthropomorphism to me, and is not really necessary. I just say "it had to be", to me that has slightly different implications. I totally sympathize if you don't feel comfortable with a particular turn of phrase, then, so what? Don't use it. But don't think that you have to get annoyed with somebody who does because they're wrong. I mean you can if you want. It's sometimes fun to get annoyed with people! And anyway if you do, you can't help it can you?

*What I can't get my head round still, is I do feel that some people are luckier than others.*

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Well some people are in more comfortable lives. But is it really luck. You could say, if you look more closely, that they have just been endowed with more favourable capacity or circumstances. We call it luck because we don't really understand why it should be like that. But there isn't a why to the universe and its unfolding, that's anthropomorphism again. But we would prefer it if everything was more even. I agree it's not fair that you should have more luck than most people, but you do. You have the good luck to live where you live, to do what you do, to be surrounded by the people that you are surrounded with and it's not fair. You know compared to somebody who can't get out of Brixton where you've come from. Can't get out, it's not fair, but it's not luck either really, but you can call it luck. Commiserate with your friends and say, "yeah, its bad luck" and that's the way it is. You don't have to resent me because I am living in Ibiza. But you can say, yes bad luck. There's no point in saying, "i'm jealous", it's not going to help anything. But if you are, of course, you cant help it, can you?



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GROUNDING THE ENQUIRY IN ACTION



You could say that the primary or the pivotal object of actions to each one of us is the self, the subject of action and the subject of perception. However, direct investigation of the self, direct investigation into the true nature of the self, is fraught with difficulty because on the one hand the self appears to be so obvious and so concrete and on the other hand when you start to look more closely it becomes so elusive and subtle.

Were it not so then it would be relatively easy for everybody to just sit down, cross their legs and examine the true nature of the self, or enquire into the true nature of the self. And it is possible for some people; and this is the path that the Buddha took; and this is the path that those who follow the teachings of the Buddha also are attempting to tread. Even though it is a path that not many people finish, nevertheless, it's very beneficial to tread it even a little. And it seems to be that the difficulty of that path for us today is simply because of the way our minds are, the way our lives are, which is quite different from the way the minds and lives were in India two thousand five hundred years ago. The pace of life, the speed of the mind, the incredible range of experience to which our minds are subject means that the self has a huge catalogue of impressions and characteristics which are all very superficial but very obvious compared to those more subtle characteristics that have always been there and that were there two thousand five hundred years ago but weren't covered up with so many other experiences.

My friend, Juan who built this house is Spanish and he built this house with the help of the local people and he became very friendly with them and a few years ago he bumped into a very old lady who grabbed hold of him in a fit of excitement and said, "Juan, Juan! I had no idea there were so many people in the world". He said, "How many did you think there were?" she said, "fifty, sixty", because she knew ten or twelve. So she assumed there must be a few more. So there weren't very many objects in her life, in her mind. There weren't many different kinds of experiences and opportunities that she had to look at, or would have to look at, to come to herself, to

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sift through. There are women apparently alive today, on this island that have never seen the sea. It's hard for us, people like us, to imagine that. Whose experience of life is so limited that they haven't even seen something which is only a couple of miles away? People in the time of the Buddha, their lives were more like that than like ours.

So what this means is that the contemporary mind is very, very full of knowledge, very full of experience, very full of information. This information is kind of like the balls in the lottery thing, just spinning round all the time in there creating lots of noise. The purpose of the physical side of yoga practice, the posture practice can be seen as a fantastic medium for harnessing the movement of the mind, for going with the movement of the mind by moving the body. So this is where vinyasa or movement comes in and becomes very powerful. The movement from posture to posture rather than stopping and lying down between postures. In which case the movement of the mind tends to just take over, completely re-establish itself, and then you go back into the next posture and you go on off, on off, on off, and you never go very deep. But with the vinyasa linking posture to posture, the movement of the body or the flow of the practice harnesses and expresses the tendency of the mind to flow. But by harnessing it, it focuses that flow of the mind into the flow of the body. And then when that harnessing of the mind has brought about enough focus then all there is for the mind to be concerned with is the body, its actions and its impact on the mind.

The beauty of yoga practice relative to this enquiry into the nature of action is that it can take it right out of the realm of intellectual speculation and ground it fully in the direct experience of action itself. So it's not important whether you are familiar with any concept about the nature of actions, objects, perception or consciousness because you are familiar with actions, objects, perception and consciousness themselves. And yoga practice is a way of establishing very deep intimacy with one's actions, one's thoughts, one's feelings, one's mind, one's life and with oneself. Within that intimacy there is a movement from the appearance or the apparent nature of actions, objects and perception to their actual nature, their true nature.

So then the mental activity is related totally to what's going on in the body and so you are immersed in an instantaneous field of actions and objects. By instantaneous I mean actions and objects

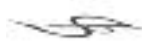
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that are in your awareness that are happening right now. That are constituting the moment whereas most of the time the actions and objects that are catching your attention are not present, they are absent, they are from the past or they are in the future. Of course that can happen also in your yoga practice but it tends to happen less and less. So eventually you are just brought face to face with the actions that you are taking and the object with which you are taking those actions, the straightening (action) of the leg (object), etcetera, etcetera.



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THE INEXTRICABILITY OF ACTIONS



Within the intimacy of what's actually happening in the body in the flow of yoga posture practice the conceptual isolation or the extraction into attention of separate actions happens less and less. You start to experience very clearly that there is always a net of actions going on at the same time: even if the focus of your attention into that network is through a particular action which might be bending the front leg for a warrior pose. Within that bending of the front leg the primary action is to take the head of the thigh bone down. But in order for this not to create collapse in the pelvis and the trunk, at the same time you have to rotate the hip socket upwards. So you start to realise that so called separable actions within the integrity of the posture are only perceptibly separable. And if they are accurately and actually separated then the postures disappears, it collapses. When intimacy with the attempt to establish the body in comfortable stability, *sthiram sukham*, deepens it becomes clear that it's not just two or three or four or five actions that are going on in the moment. You can actually take any one of those actions and divide it into any number of actions; say five and then you can divide that into five, you can get down to neural action in the brain, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. So any action turns out to be constituted of hundreds or millions of other actions, depending on the depth of your perception. At the same time as being connected to a field or a web of actions at a similar level of perception to itself. All of which are part of the one master action of making that posture. This is a sub set of the activity of your practice, which is a sub set of the activity of your life.

So within the body, within yoga postures this exploration is pragmatic, the enquiry doesn't have to be intellectual. There is nothing wrong with intellectualising about it, but if there is no pragmatic experience behind the intellectualisation then it's just speculation. Even if it happens to be accurate there is always going to be some doubt in you as to whether or not it's really true. So within this process there is a dissolving of obvious actions into subtle actions which become obvious and it is the dissolving of those actions into more subtle actions which then become obvious, and then the dis-

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solving of those actions, and then that goes on and on forever as far as your sensitivity, ahimsa, or the subtlety of your perception permits. But it doesn't have to go on forever for you to realise that it's going to go on forever: but it would go on forever if the process of sensitising continues.

So what's actually happened is that actions have just disappeared. Actions have just melted away into the field of your refined awareness, refined perception. This doesn't mean that the body has stopped acting; it doesn't mean that the nervous system has stopped firing; it doesn't mean that muscles will stop contracting. We're talking about how you experience, we're talking about the nature of perception, we are talking about perception. We are not talking about matter, this is not physics, this is yoga.

So when I say actions disappear that means a particular action turns out not to be an individual action but an expression of many, many, many other actions. And as soon as it becomes obvious that if in virabhadrasana you take away the straightening of the back leg, you don't have virabhadrasana. You have a poor copy which damages your lower back. That damage to your lower back is the lesson of the true nature of action. This is that you cannot extract one single action from the network of actions in order for virabhadrasana to be there. Virabhadrasana requires every single action at every single level in order for it to be there, in order for it to be virabhadrasana, not just a shape.

So this is bringing you to a quality fundamental to the nature of all actions. There is nothing special about the actions that you are taking in your body relative to all other actions. Actions are actions. And what this quality or characteristic of actions that you come to is the inextricability of actions. You cannot extract an action from its context and the contextual situation remain intact and whole: remain what it is. If you extract an action from its context, the contextual situation has gone. But of course we can pretend to ourselves that it hasn't. We can say, "I still love you", but it isn't true. But because we don't want to be left alone to do the washing up every night you say, "I still love you", and give them some flowers or whatever.

After a while your pragmatic investigation of the nature of action in your body, in the postures, gets to a point where it's really clear pragmatically and conceptually, that all actions are inextricable from

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the web of actions within which they participate. You then don't really need to go very much further in your investigation. A few people have said to me lately, "what's the point in carrying on investigating?", and my answer is none. When you no longer need to. Then you just go and play. But until there is absolutely no doubt that absolutely no one is to blame for any action by which you suffered, then there is reason to continue investigating and that reason is just guilt and blame. That reason is just that burden: resentment, regret. That pain is the reason the investigation needs to continue.

Exactly the same as in virabhadrasana: the reason to continue investigating the true nature of action required in virabhadrasana is the pain that comes, that's all. Just the pain. Okay we often can't feel the pain that's going on in virabhadrasana and of course most of the time we don't feel the pain of our guilt, the pain of our blame. We take too many drugs. We are running too fast. Our mind is moving too fast. We make it move so fast so that it won't feel the shame, so that it won't feel the blame, so that it won't feel the resentment, the hostility. But in yoga you can't keep that up. Within yoga practice, as you harness the movement of your body, it all slows down and so yoga brings out this kind of pain, just as yoga brings out the pain that's already in your lower back or the back of your knee, or the front of your knee, or your hip joint. It brings it out. Sometimes it makes it when you are doing it wrong, but even when you are doing it right it brings it out. It shows you the pain that is there, it shows you the damage that has been done, not just to your body, but to your mind, to your heart.

And of course there is a lot more resistance to acknowledging the pain in your mind and in your heart than there is to acknowledging the pain in your body. So it's very easy when it gets to that pain that you just start turning away and you go back to the speeding mind. And then you use the vinyasa element and the handstands, and the, "I can get my feet on my head, behind my head", as an expression of the speed of the mind. As a defence against the recognition of pain. This is unfortunately also a defence against the recognition of the source of pain and its lack of necessity; that it's simply a habit. It's a habit that is based upon the extraction of individual actions from the inherently unified field of activity. The isolating of actions. "I'm unhappy because my mother kicked me down the stairs when I was two" or, "I'm unhappy because she left me for another guy".



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THE IMMACULATE NATURE OF ACTIONS



The belief that actions are extractable and replaceable means that it is assumed that an action didn't have to happen, that it could have not happened, and everything would still be the same. I would still have the same income, the same house, the same friends, the same holiday opportunities. There's absolutely no evidence for this. This is pure conjecture: that if one thing had been different, everything else would be the same except for the one consequence of that that you don't like. This is called puerile childishness. It's called absolutely pathetic inability to think. But this is what we all do all the time, all the time, all the time. But thinking has to be based on something and it has to be based on something that's yours, not anybody else's no matter how brilliant you may think that they are. The Buddha, Patanjali, whoever. It's no good. The thinking has to be based on your own experience and yoga gives you plenty of experience upon which to base your thinking. So when you are unable to argue with the inextricability of an action from its context, without damaging the whole context, without taking away and removing the whole context also, it doesn't take very much thought to substitute the word inextricability with the word inevitability: and arrive at the inevitability of all actions. It had to happen in order for that context to happen and that context happened.

The inside of the recognition to the inevitability of an action, is that all actions are imperfectible. Inextricability means there was no other option for the part that it played in the context within which it happened. For its context to happen the way that it happened, and for the consequences of its context to happen the way that they happened, that exact action absolutely had to happen. It could not have happened in any way differently, neither better, nor worse, neither sooner or later, neither harder nor softer, neither less or more. It could not have been in any way different. It could not have been done in a better way. It could not have been done any better. It could not have been better. Now this 'it' refers to every event, every action, every thought and feeling that has ever taken place. Every action is perfect, is immaculate. Every action that has happened has been sanctified by its happening. Within the inevitability and inextri-

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cability of its happening is its being immaculate. Perfect. Everything is quite simply perfect. Even if we do not like it much. From our point of view maybe it sucks. But from the perspective of the whole, for an awareness of the true nature of action, it is absolutely perfect.

That's the easy part: to go from the inextricability of an action to its perfection. That is the easy part of the investigation of the source of action. So far we're just looking a little bit at the nature of action. But yoga is isvarapranidana, finding the line to the source of choice. We are on the line right now. Inextricability, inevitability, immaculateness taking us on that line of action back to the source of choice. If everything that has happened is perfect, if everything that has happened is inevitable, what does that have to say about choice?

*There is no choice.*

There is no choice. But it does not mean that it doesn't feel like there's no choice. You know it feels like there's choice. Nobody can take that away from you. You know it feels like choice. But you know when a pickpocket pulls your wallet out of your back pocket it feels like nothing happened, but it's not nothing at all. Things are very rarely what they feel like. The new age has asked us to abandon logic, to abandon reason, to abandon the male principle and give ourselves up to the female principle and trust our feelings. Doesn't work. You can't take the female away from the male, you can't take the male away from the female, you can't trust your feeling about life. You have to question it. You can't rely on logic. It has to be based on your experience, your feeling.

On the basis of your own practice, your familiarity with the melting of any action into subsets of actions, forever, and the inextricability of even one of those subset actions, from the contextual activity of the posture, you can go from there to no choice. If you can go against common sense. Common sense tells us that the sun is going round the earth. That's what common sense tells us, so how helpful is common sense? Not very! I mean it doesn't matter, most of your life it doesn't matter you know, but to understand things like tides and menstruation you need more than common sense. You need to understand the true relationship between the balls that move in the sky, between the planets.

So also if you really want to understand your life you can't rely only on common sense. You have to contextualise common sense.

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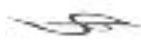
So we do have the common sense feeling that we do have a choice, and we have been told over and over again to make the right choices. You know multiple choice, eleven plus and all the rest of it. Make the right choices. But if you can dissolve out of that habit on the basis of your own experience of your body on the mat in the yoga postures and just consider what is being suggested by that, you might find that you have no choice.

If you want to say that you do have choice then inextricability has gone, inevitability has gone, immaculateness has gone. And then supposedly you can take anything that you like out of anything that you like and it wouldn't change. How absurd, of course it would change. Something has been taken out, it has changed. And there's no way that you can predict how it would change unless you have a huge amount of knowledge. So sometimes you can. You know, if you are just talking about a cheque. Less money would be in your account. But how can you predict what that would bring in its wake. Or an arrangement of dominoes; if I take this one out I know what's going to happen. They are all going to fall down. But if you take your worst enemy out of your life, you have no idea what's going to happen. You think you do but actually you don't. You don't know how your so called worst enemy is interconnected through everybody else that you know, doing things to your advantage that you don't even know about.



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NO-CHOICE



If you can savour the notion of no choice, if it doesn't too quickly leave a bad taste in your mouth, then that's what you should do. If you want to be free from the pain of guilt, of blame, of shame, of resentment, of envy, of pride, of doubt, of uncertainty as to the meaning and point, the purpose of life. Just take the notion of no choice lightly in your hand and use it as a lens to look out at the world.

What are the implications of there being no choice? If no choice is an actuality then what that means is that with regard to any action that has occurred it could not have been otherwise. That's the past. Could not have been, in any way, different at all. All you can honestly say about the past is that it did happen. You cannot honestly say that it should not, could not, did not have, to happen. This is pure speculation: foolishness: childishness.

The problem is with the future, that's where you feel like you have a choice. You feel like you have a choice when you are anticipating the future. But we have been looking at the past. But we have been looking at the past so that we can look at the future in a different way. In a way in which there is no anxiety. No anxiety about the future is necessary for you to be happy in the present. If you are worried about whether you are going to have enough money to go on holiday next year while you are on holiday this year, you are not on holiday this year. If you have anxiety about whether or not you're going to be able to pay the rent when you get home, then you're not in the present and you're not happy. You may not be feeling that though; you may be making your mind spin so fast and thinking, "I'm happy, I'm on holiday, I'm having a good time, I'm really having a good time".

So by looking back at the function of choice relative to the past, knowing that you are going to make choices in the future, can help you in the making of those choices in the future. It can become not so hard for you to make choices in the future. If any action in the past was a result of no choice operating, it was operating through a

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psychological process of choosing. It was a subjective, superficial, personal experience of choosing, that was expressing a much deeper inevitability, a thrust that goes back way past your birth, way past the conception of your great, great grandparents, way past the first coupling of human beings, way past that, way past the beginning of the formation of whatever it was that resulted in this planet. This is the thrust of no choice; this is the thrust of inevitability which is not what it feels like because our attention is on the surface. Because our attention is on the juggler, the pickpocket pulls out the wallet.

If underneath the feeling of having made a choice in the past, having to have made a choice, if underneath the sense of that there is an imperfectible and inevitable thrust originating in the beginning of time that means that the statement that we've made so many times: "I couldn't help myself, I couldn't help it, I didn't mean to": Those statements that we've all made to the people that we care about turn out to be absolutely true. They turn out to have been absolutely true even when we did the brilliant thing that they love us for. Couldn't help it. Had to happen. If you can ever get to that point where you know that, not intellectually, but you know that because you see it happening moment after moment in your practice and in your life; or even just when you start to get close to that, the closer you get to that, the more the future changes its hue, it's colour, just somewhat. And instead of being something possibly slightly threatening, possibly, doesn't mean that it's actually threatening, but there is an awareness that things may not turn out the way you'd like, things may go wrong, you might lose your job, your boyfriend, your car, the use of your legs, your spine, your nervous system, your body, your mind, all these things, you don't know could be coming: but when your relationship to choice in the past has changed so that you no longer argue with them, wish or imagine they could have been otherwise, then the future looks different. All of a sudden it changes. It changes for the better.

And the way that it changes doesn't mean you don't have choices. It doesn't mean you don't have to make decisions; it doesn't mean that you don't ponder and you don't consider; it doesn't mean that you're not uncertain and you can't figure out what the fuck to do. These things are all going to happen some time, but what it means is that you will be allowing this to happen. This will be happening within a slightly more relaxed context, in that you will have some understanding, some recognition that whatever decision you finally make will be the one that will have to be made. And whatever

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er the consequences of those actions, will be the consequences that will have to have to happened. So even though you may be unhappy about the consequences, even though you may not like the actions taken, you will be able to see that you couldn't help it. In other words you won't feel guilty. You won't feel bad, even though you might not like it. Which means you won't feel bad about yourself even though you might not like the situation you find yourself in.

You may feel a little bit like the rug has been pulled out from under your feet in the face of the unsustainability of the notion of free choice. This is bound to happen in the beginning, to a certain extent: saying, "woah, what the fuck am I supposed to do" As it is now the whole of your life is based on trying to make the right decision, right for other people perhaps, right for you perhaps, right for the planet perhaps, but the right decision, always. Well not all people maybe, but most people are always trying to make the right decision: some people only for themselves, but trying to make the right decision, the correct decision. So when this kind of insight into inextricable inevitability in the past arises in yourself, if the experience behind it is not so much or that insight is not so clear and broad and deep then it can make you feel very unpleasant. "What should I do?" is the question that arises. And, to the extent that you have accepted the inextricability of action, the inevitability of action, the immaculate nature of all action in the past and therefore in the future, the answer is - it doesn't matter. You can't help yourself. You will do what the thrust of time demands of you. No matter how much you do or don't ponder, no matter how relevant your pondering is to that action, that action will happen. You could say if you've got good judgement; your choices and your decisions will always support the actions that you end up taking: or the actions will always express your choices and your decisions as if the action were the result of your choice and your decision.

This is our arrogance. That our actions are the result of our decisions, our choices. And the more accurate your judgement, the more clear your judgement, the more able you are to recognise the thrust of history and make the decision that does become an action, then the more difficult it is to accept that you are not in control.

Perhaps the most abstract but, nevertheless, potent and pertinent implication of no choice is the inability to pin down and confirm that the sense of self actually points to something real. But this in

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itself is really just a concept and not particularly important except to the extent that there is a clinging to the concept of the self. It's not actually necessary to replace the concept of the self with the concept of no self.

More pragmatically, what happens within a deep acceptance of no-choice when you're faced with a choice? As you actually are moment-by-moment: shall I eat now? Shall I eat Japanese or Chinese? Shall I eat Sushi or Sashimi? Shall I have wasabi or not? This is happening all the time. Of course a lot of the time it's not conscious, it's not noticed. So then what I have to say doesn't really apply. Anyway when choices are not noticed there's no problem. Till afterwards. But afterwards there won't be if there has been a deep understanding of the in-extricable, inevitability of the immaculate-ness of all of the choices and actions. Because afterwards that choice also will be in the past. So the problem is when the past hasn't happened yet. When choice hasn't actually been made and the consequences of the choice have not become yet apparent. When you are not sure yet if you are going to eat Kentucky Fried Chicken or MacDonald's.

So when you are faced with a choice you either deliberately make a choice or you say, "Well I'm just going to go with the flow man and see which way the wind blows". This is in itself a choice. Even if you are going with the flow choice, or selection is still being embodied in your actions. So there is actually no getting away from choice. There is no getting away from the fact that choices are being made all the time.

Okay, which restaurant to go to is not a big deal; but what about, "should I continue with my university studies or should I drop out and become a yoga teacher?" or, "shall I live with a bunch of people where I don't really like the people or should I run away and hide somewhere?" or, "should I kiss her now?". These kinds of choices are a little bit more poignant because their consequences can be much more varied and unpredictable.

One practical implication of no choice is simply that you begin to recognise that no matter what choices you are faced with and no matter which alternative is decided and acted upon you are always and only doing what you feel like. The danger in that statement: that you are always and only doing what you feel like, is the word "like". That doesn't mean you like it. It means you think it would

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be the best thing to do. You think it would be the right thing to do, you think it would be the proper thing to do, you think it would be the good thing to do and because you are interested in doing the right thing, proper thing, good thing, that's what you'd feel like even if you would rather go to the beach.

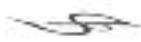
So the fact is we are always doing what we most feel like even if it is not what we would most enjoy. So the actual pragmatic significance of no choice is not much really. It's just the recognition that that is what always happens. And when you recognise that, when you can recognise that that is what always happens then the tendency to make a fuss about what you should do really diminishes and you just do whatever you feel like. But if what you would most enjoy amongst the options that are apparent is not supported by the thrust of the matrix it will not happen even if you decide to make it happen. "I'm gonna kiss her now!" It didn't happen. I wonder why not. "Maybe now." Or, "I'm going to tell him to shut up now", but if it's not actually supported by the thrust of the matrix you are not going to tell him to shut up or whatever it is.

In other words the pragmatic implication of no choice, when no choice is genuinely understood, is simply to allow you to relax about the choices that you are faced with moment-by-moment. Simply because you have an understanding of immaculate and inextricable inevitability. An understanding that you do not really have any choice no matter how much it appears that you do. Then you know perfectly well that whatever the consequences of your choice may be, they are really beyond your control. Therefore, whether or not your choice is accurate according to any criteria whatsoever, whether it's good or bad, kind or unkind, doesn't necessarily have any bearing on whether or not it's going to happen.



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SPECIFICITY



So when an action happens its inextricable inevitability means that it has to have been supported by the matrix: but in a very, very specific way because every action is unique. Every action is supported uniquely by the matrix. In other words there is a path. You could call it a critical path to every action and if you work backwards from the action, along its critical path, the very beginning of that working backwards is at its maximum difference to that of every other critical path. But the further you go the more they become alike and by the time you've finished they are all almost exactly the same. They all reveal the total path to be the total matrix. But you could say the end of the critical path is how it seems, what it feels like, what it looks like.

In order for unique action to happen it must be supported by specific conditions. Every one of which must be present. We have already recognised that every action is a unique, inevitable, inextricable expression of the matrix as a whole, of totality as a whole. Which means that totality as a whole produces all of the necessary conditions for every single action. The falling of an apple from a tree depends upon the loosening of the stalk, which depends upon the changing of the seasons, etcetera, etcetera. Not to mention gravity. The implication of the condition of gravity is that the earth must be present to produce a gravitational field and that field must have a certain power to pull the apple down. If it was a little stronger the apple would have fallen earlier. If it was a little weaker the apple would have fallen later. So the falling of the apple is all to do with the spin of the earth, its relationship to the sun and the moon, etc etc, and so it goes on out endlessly.

So this network, the matrix, is a network of conditions. And this is why it is said that all actions are conditioned. Now there is a fantasy in the spiritual world that you can have unconditioned action. An unconditioned action is one that jumps into the matrix from outside. That suddenly pops up without a reason, without a cause, no gravity involved, just an apple falling. That you can go beyond your conditioning. Okay? Because Krishnamurti says this. You can and

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you must "go beyond your conditioning". But the question is what did Krishnamurti mean by "go beyond your conditioning"? Not what would we like it to mean.

We would like to think that we can become free from the impact of our parents. That we become free from the impact of the linguistic culture into which we were born. That we can become free of the impact of Vogue magazine on our lives. And even somebody such as myself who has never read it has been deeply influenced and conditioned by the belief system embodied in Vogue. Of course I would like to think I could become free from that, and that there isn't a woman ever coming into my life who thinks that she should be tall and thin, but I can't. That doesn't mean that every woman is going to walk around with such foolish ideas. Going beyond conditioning doesn't mean that conditions disappears, because then everything would have to disappear: it means something else.

When you take any action and you honestly assess and analyse those conditions which brought it about you can see that if you change any one of those conditions the nature of the action has to change somewhat. It may be that it comes a second later. It maybe that it comes with slightly more force. It doesn't matter: it is not the same action. It is a different action. All actions are very, very, very specifically and precisely conditioned. And all actions that have as their most immediate and obvious instrument a human being, have as a necessary and unavoidable aspect of their conditioning the nature of the human being. So we are not for the moment going to look at all the other conditions like the trigger, the impulse coming from the outside, the stimulus. We are going to look at what is it that produces the response. Not what is it that produces the stimulus to act but what is it that produces the response.

So if it's a physical action such as one taken by Godfrey this morning when Edward said, "help me do a handstand". My ability to support Edward is conditioned totally, and is conditioned in two fundamental ways. One: my experience which gives me or does not give me the confidence to handle somebody heavier than myself. Two is my physical structure. My physical structure as it is right as a result of my past experience and my DNA. So it turned out it was okay, I could handle him. But this has got nothing to do with whether I wanted to or not. This has got nothing to do with him asking me or not. So any action, there's the Edward part, we're not

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going to look at the Edward part, the stimulus, "will you please help me". And then there's the inner part, the response.

If I'd never done it before then there would have been a very different result. In the configuration of conditions that permitted me to support him there are those which originate entirely in the very moment that my father ejaculated into my mother and created my specific DNA, over which obviously I had absolutely no control. Then there are those that result from the total of my past experience. These two are not really separate. Every single experience each one of us has from the moment of conception conditions us: how hot it was in the womb, whether mother was running up and down, whether she was frightened, happy, sad, being told that she was loved or not - all of these conditions have conditioned the development, the expression of our DNA.

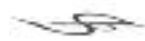
Every single moment, moment-by-moment we're being conditioned by experience. Right now you are being conditioned by what I'm saying. Right now I am being conditioned by your presence. Conditioning is always open to change. But DNA can never change. Your past history can never change but the impact of them both can change. The impact of them both on your attitude, on your beliefs, can change. And as your beliefs change, you change. This is happening all of the time. This means that that which you normally call 'yourself' is constantly changing. Is constantly being de-conditioned and or re-conditioned. Constantly. There is no end to this.

These conditions are the manifestation of the matrix. These conditions are inextricable, inevitable and immaculate. These conditions cannot be and are not to be overcome. These conditions are not the enemy. These conditions are not what are making you suffer. These conditions might be bringing you a broken leg. These conditions might be bringing you a lesser income than that which you like, but these things in themselves do not make you suffer. They are just minor surface annoyances and you can find this out by going to any shanty town in India, Bangladesh, finding people who have zero income, walking around with club feet, laughing their heart out.

The conditioning of your DNA and the conditioning of your past experience are the structure of being human, of the human body-mind. And when this conditioning is looked at from the outside in terms of the actions that the body mind take then it is called karma.

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This is my karma. This is your karma. Conditioning is the psychological or psychosomatic configuration which is expressed in karma. So all actions that are taken by an instrument, or a human being, or a bodimind are an expression of the conditions within that moment meeting the stimulus in that moment. This means that karma is an expression of conditioning, plus circumstance. What happens is an expression of conditioning, plus circumstance. If you are not in control of what's happening you can't possibly be in control of your conditioning. Because your conditioning is conditioned by what happens.



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WHOSE KARMA IS IT ANYWAY?



So any attempt to change your karma or change your conditioning will only succeed if the thrust of the matrix demands it. If you have the intent to improve your karma, change your karma, improve your conditioning, change your conditioning and that intent is fulfilled it has got nothing to do with your personal power; it has nothing to do with your skill. It has to do only and always with the total conditioning of the whole of the matrix. In other words karma belongs to the matrix. Karma only points to the object when it's seen very superficially and karma never points to a person except when the body mind is taken mistakenly to be a person. So not only can you not become free from karma but there is no one to become free from karma. This means there is no one to be reborn.

When we look at Lily, the first thing we see is DNA impact married with her physical experience. This can never be again. That DNA is unique. Lily can never be again. Lily can never have been before. Reincarnation of the physical body is impossible. If you think you are the physical body, or its subtle counterpart, the mind, you cannot be reincarnated. Simple as that. It really is as simple as that. In a couple of sentences reincarnation is dismissed immediately. Obviously can't be true. Transmigration of psychic tendencies, from one body and life to another one, is another matter, though.

*So how does one account for the fact that, especially in India, somebody can remember being thrown down a well by their husband that they're pointing at in their past life? How does this get accounted for?*

Because this actually happened. Past life memories happen. But when a young girl of five years old points at a man of fifty five and says, "That man threw me down a well when I was his wife", there is some confusion here. The imprint of the event has crossed to another body, but even if it came with all the other imprints, it's still not the same person. Same memories perhaps, but not the same person. When death comes the physical body dies, yet something

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does seem to continue. You meet somebody and you just know them. You really know them. There's no getting to know them. It's all there. So, "oh, we must have known each other in a past life". Okay, but obviously it can't be true DNA wise. It can't be true personality wise because your personality has been created by this life, in this life. But there must be some truth in it we think, if we've had those kinds of feelings, experiences.

According to Patanjali all perception, and therefore all action, are the result of the triggering by a stimulus of the psychological tendency to act in a particular way. This tendency he calls a vasana: subliminal behavioural tendency. According to Patanjali these vasanas, subliminal behavioural tendencies, are underpinned by the coagulation of what he called samskara or psychic traces left over from past action. Samskaras coagulate into vasanas; vasanas respond to stimuli and produce action. So samskaras, it seems can cross over. But coming into another body, they come into brand new DNA, and into a brand new set of circumstantial conditions.

So the fact that something has continued from one body to another, from one life to another doesn't make it personal. It's totally impersonal to the extent that you think you are a unique person based upon your DNA and your personal history. So what this all means is first of all, you can't make your karma better. Your karma is your karma except it's not your karma, it's just karma localised in the human organism that bears your name. Which you've identified with. And when I say you have identified with, who is the you? What is it that is identified with the organism? What is it that identifies with the body? What could it be that becomes identified with the body?

What's going on when you say, "I am the body"? What is the I? I am the body. There's a distinction already and yet when you say, "I am the body" you think that that means that the body is what you are but actually in that phrase, 'I am the body', I am is something else otherwise you'd just say, "I am" wouldn't you? Or maybe "I am I". But you don't: you say, "I am the body". It's obviously deluded, its got built in division, immediate schizophrenia. But what is it that's fallen into delusion?

That which you are, that which you know that you are, that by which you know that you exist has got nothing to do with your name. It has got nothing to do with your form and it has got nothing to do

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with the karma that pertains to that name and form. In other words you are already beyond karma; you are already free from karma. So what Krishnamurti means when you have to go beyond your conditioning is to see that you are not the conditioned object. See that you are not the conditioned action. See that you are not the conditioned actions and you see that you are not the conditioned object (the so-called self). See that you are not the conditioned object and you are free from your karma. You are freed from your conditioning. You are already. You are just recognising the freedom that exists and that's why especially in Zen they say, "You are already free! What's all the fuss about?! You are already the Buddha! What's all the fuss about?! You are already Ishvara! What is all the fuss about?!" Well I don't know, what the fuck is all the fuss about? He did that and shouldn't have. She said that and shouldn't have. That's what all the fuss is about. Blame. Blame. Identifying instruments with their actions which is the more superficial expression of identifying consciousness with an instrument, with its object.

Of course if consciousness is identifying itself with objects it is a very short step from that to identifying objects by their actions. This is all delusion. Avidya. Ignorance. Vidya, to see is the recognition that actions do not belong to their instruments; that actions belong to the matrix as a whole and to see that the body is not the identity, the body is not what you are. Ramana Maharshi would say you are not the "I am the body thought". It's a delusion, it's a fundamental delusion. Now we're more sophisticated. We realise that body and mind are not separate. So when Ramana Maharshi said "I am the body", it means "I am the body mind". We say that all the time. I am the one that likes. I am the one that can. I am the one that lives here. I am the one that used to live there. This is all bodimind identification. It is all based on the thoughts. Claiming the thoughts, claiming their pattern, claiming their context: the mind. I am the bodimind. In other words claiming thought is the fundamental problem.

This doesn't mean that thoughts shouldn't arise, that thought shouldn't happen. If they've arisen they had to. If they're gonna arise they're gonna have to. It just means that it's in the claiming of them that suffering arises, that God is lost.



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REAL FREEDOM



The fundamental belief that makes you suffer is the belief in the autonomous self; the belief that you took those actions or he took those actions or she took those actions, independently, autonomously. This means the mechanism of personalising actions. What Patanjali calls selfclinging: the identification of actions with their final instrument. Whereas actions have already been seen to belong to God and to the matrix. To the inevitability of the immaculate network of conditioning that is karma. So all of this means that the possibility of living without guilt, of living without blame, without shame, without resentment, without pride, without envy, without anxiety, without manipulation, that delicious possibility actually exists. But that possibility depends upon very definite conditions and one of those conditions is that the belief in the self, the belief that actions belong to their instruments comes into the light of awareness in such a way that it is seen to be a fallacy. This is perhaps the most powerful invitation to a guilt free life. And this is what yoga is for.

Yoga is for us to find out that every action, without exception, originates in pure consciousness and is brought about through the totality of the karmic conditioning of the matrix. This is an invitation to a life lived without guilt, without blame, without shame, without resentment, without envy, without pride, without anxiety, without manipulation. In other words as Chris said the other day, living life on the high road. This is what freedom means. This is what freedom from karma means. This is what freedom from conditioning means. This means that when an action arises, no matter who apparently did it to apparently whom or what, no personalisation, no identification with any aspect of the action taking place means there can be no blame, of any kind. This is freedom. This is lightening the heaviest load that we all bear. You cannot become free from the body without death or psychosis. You cannot become free from gravity, except momentarily if you know how to use your bandhas properly. But you can become free from guilt. You can become free from manipulation. Hypothetically. In practice, you will or you won't. And the more deeply you see into the interconnected network of karma conditioning, the more deeply you see into it, the more you

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realise that no matter how much you want to be free of guilt, there is nothing you can do about it that you are not bound already to do. The doing is already underway. And the result of the doing is already underway. If you see that, accept that, you don't care any more. You realise that your personal freedom means absolutely nothing because there is absolutely nothing to carry it. And if that happens you are free. It's gone. So you're coming in through the back door as soon as you truly stop looking for the front door. When you've really totally stopped looking for the door you are in the room.

This is why a sign of being very close to enlightenment is not having all the right answers. A sign of being very close to freedom is genuine and deeply having no interest in it whatsoever. After having had a deep fascination with it first. There are lots of people who never have. It doesn't apply to them. If you had interest, you will hot foot after freedom. And then all of a sudden it just seems completely meaningless. Simply because you've seen quite clearly that the whole thing is a charade. That the whole thing is barking up a tree that doesn't even exist with a mouth that doesn't even exist.

What was being said? Anybody know what was being said?

*Who cares!*

Exactly. Who is there to care? What I was going to say was: it's not necessary to make any judgement, any evaluative judgement of your behaviour, your thinking, your skill; it's all inevitable, and it's all impersonal. Did I do it right? Who cares! Somebody might. Whoever is still personalising things, whoever is still identifying actions with their instruments is going to care.

*That's everyone here, almost.*

Almost everyone. But it's not everyone. Everyone has moments when they don't do that. It's a spectrum. At one end is total delusion, which is just concept: and at the other end total enlightenment, which is just a concept. And in between the rest of us are fluctuating all the time. Sometimes we can go months without personalising a perception, without identifying an action with an instrument and then all of a sudden, bang! We can't stop ourselves doing it for three days flat. And during those months we are thinking, "Shit, I made it. I made it. I'm enlightened. I'm free". And if we are really foolish, you know, we'll tell people. Just hope you don't

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tell the people that experienced those three days. And then you start blaming them or blaming yourself. You know we can look at somebody like Ramesh and say you know, he is enlightened and how the fuck do we know? We only see him for an hour and a half a day. It's dead easy to appear enlightened when you're sitting in a chair. Not because you're trying to appear enlightened. But that particular chair doesn't invite much hostility because people who go there are already open so why should his heckles rise and why should he get caught up in the rising of his heckles. I'm not suggesting that he does. He gives me the impression that he doesn't. But how would I know? I don't live with him. I can't tell. I haven't punched his wife in the face and waited to see what happens.

Freedom, enlightenment, all these things, they're dangerous concepts. They'll just wind you up. Totally useless. They wind you up no less than guilt. Because you feel guilty with all that fucking effort. Or you feel ashamed for all your fucking effort. You know? Twenty five fucking years, thirty five fucking years I've been doing yoga and I'm still not fucking enlightened. I must be full of shit. Well you are. We all are! That's what we're full of. That's what we're made of. It's called conditioning. And that's one of the first things that you have to deeply accept, that you are full of shit. And it doesn't matter at all and you do not have to get rid of it. You do not have to change it.

Or to put it another way we are all fucked up. We have all been conditioned by factors and forces which we didn't choose. We have all fallen from Grace. We all got the boot out of paradise. We are full of shit. All of us. Exactly the same. Because what we all are is the matrix as a whole accessed from a unique perspective. And if you focus on the access, if you focus from the door we look all different but if you walk into the middle of the room and spin around, you see it's all the same. We are all sharing the same karma.

So once again I'm going to finish on the same old tune; that no matter what happens, no matter what you do, no matter what anybody else does, no matter what anybody else says, no matter what anybody else thinks about you, no matter what you say, no matter what you think, no matter what you feel, no matter what you have, all of those in the past, or in the future, no matter any of that. It is always and only God. It is always and only your true self. Everything is happening right by the heart, by your own heart. Because it is always and only God. Now and forever. Nothing else.

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God means no other. God means just that. No other. There is no other. No other.

For people who already have some entry into all this, there is a beautiful possibility. When things get a bit weird and you're getting angry and you're prolonging it, you're making a story out of it, and you're sad, and you're prolonging it and your making a story out of it, a very effective way to enquire into the possibility of bringing the story to an end is to remind yourself that it's always and only God. And sometimes it brings the story immediately to an end and every time it does that it brings the tendency to tell such heartbreaking stories closer to an end.

In my opinion it's the most powerful mantra that you can come across. It's always and only God. Same idea expressed in the bible, "thy will be done". "Thy will be done" means it's my will is being done all the time. Not my personal Godfrey's will, but the only will there is: the will of God. The will of God operating through conditioned karma of the matrix, every instrument, moment-by-moment. The matrix is simply the body of God. Karma is the will of God.

Every perception, every action, every feeling, every event, every situation is always and only God. There are no exceptions, because there is no other to God. That's why God cannot be said to be one because one implies another. That's why the Buddha says, void, empty, shunyata. Nothing. Nothing's happened everywhere. Nothing is what is happening. The appearance of nothing is what this is. This is the appearance of nothing. All of this universe. And all of its 385 million different dimensions only one of which we are aware of. But that doesn't matter, what matters is blame. Is blame happening? If blame is happening, then look at it, look at it. Look at that mechanism. Just look at it. See if it can come deeply into the light of awareness. Enquire into the possibility of that. Every time blame is happening. "Bastards. Shouldn't have done that." "That cunt's in the way." Whatever. That's an invitation to see God, every time you blame.



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YOGA PRACTICE AND KARMA



When Patanjali uses the word *ishvarapranidanah* he is inviting us to investigate the mechanism of choice as the origin of action: he is inviting us to look at how choices come about. Not so that we can select the ones which we think are more proper, more virtuous, more righteous. Not on that basis at all; but just so as to see into the mechanism of action. There is a commonly cherished notion that spiritual practice, yoga, can make you free from your karma, or free from karma. That statement is either true or false according to your understanding of the nature of karma. And if your understanding of the nature of karma is in fulfilment of your wishful thinking or assumptions then the statement is patently false. But if your understanding of karma is actually an understanding of how things happen, then the statement is true.

Karma means literally, directly, action, but in effect karma means the nature of causation, the nature of cause and effect which in terms of our daily experience means the web of conditioning from which we operate. The web of conditioning within which we act, within which we decide, within which we choose and within which we desire. That web of causation, that web of conditions, that web of tendencies is the world. That web is life. It can never go away. The net of karma can never go away. And even if you die to it, it is still there. Even if when you are dead it is no longer affecting you, nevertheless until you are dead, it is always, it has to effect you.

You could say that your life is the localisation of the web of karma in a particular moving place. The place being your bodimind. Patanjali goes into the nature of karma and how to become free from it in quite a lot of detail in the yoga sutras but its technicalities are not really relevant. They are only really of interest once they've manifest, which they do in deep meditation. The key issue really is just to investigate the nature of action: which is to investigate the nature of your karma. And within that investigation certain things become apparent. One is that all of the genetic determinants to which you are subject can either be accepted or resented. Resenting your genetic determinants in no way can change them. It is not hard

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to see how foolish it is to resent your height or the size of your bones. It can have no positive result. It can only have negative result of making you dissatisfied or dukkha with yourself, with your life. That's not so hard to see. The foolishness of resenting or resisting genetic inevitability. But there are many aspects of our lives that are changing in a way that genetically determined factors are not changing. And what Patanjali is asking us to do is to investigate these factors also.

When we investigate an action, even if we don't go all the way into the investigation, we find out something about where it's coming from. We're finding out something about our tendencies. So when you are sitting meditating, and you're constantly thinking about money, sex, approval, in whatever way it is, then this is telling you something about your interests or your anxieties. This is not telling you that you are wrong or bad or not spiritual. This is telling you that right now you have some concern with or interest in money. Or sex, or food, or power, or fame, or whatever it is. And the investigation of these thoughts is the point, not the judgement of these thoughts. Not the repression, the stopping, or control of these thoughts. Not so that you can get to know yourself in terms of I have lots of information about what I'm interested in, I have lots of information about what I'm anxious about. That's fair enough, but that's not the point of yoga. Self knowledge can give you a certain satisfaction, but it cannot free you from your karma.

The point of yoga is to try to see how these thoughts, feelings, attitudes or invitations arise and how they operate. When you are doing yoga practice the line of the posture is important from the point of view of safety. The presence of the bandhas is important from the point of view of experiencing the nature of the body and perception. The most fruitful thing, for this investigation into the nature of action and the nature of freedom is: yama niyama. Especially yama. And this is why Patanjali puts them first.



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WHO'S IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE, ANYWAY?



So relating to what you are doing in your practice, relating to what is happening to your body, what is happening to your breath, what is happening in your mind, through the lenses of yama niyama is the key. It doesn't really matter if your leg is bending or not, what matters really is that you are aware of the implications of that. And it doesn't really matter that you are being sensitive or not, honest or not, open or not. What really matters is that you start to realise that when you are open, openness is just happening, and when you are dishonest, dishonesty is just happening. You haven't invited it deliberately. Not to come and not to go: especially not to go. You would never invite the absence of sensitivity.

And when you start to be confronted with that breath after breath, action after action, moment after moment, in your practice, where there should be very little else to disturb you from the way things work inside you, then the idea that you are in any way fixed starts to be very deeply undermined. The ideas that you have that fix you as somebody who is more or less intelligent, more or less lucky, more or less skilful, more or less beautiful, more or less likeable, become less and less tenable as you start to realise that qualities, tendencies, energies are constantly coming and going without so much as a by your leave. Then this starts to suggest something, not conceptually, but you can see the suggestion being received into your actions. The suggestion is that this applies to so-called other people also. And that lazy bastard over there is not actually really a lazy bastard after all. Somebody else might think that he is the most active, committed, dedicated person that they know. Stalin was very much loved by his daughter. He was apparently a very kind and considerate person at home. Yet if your home was the Kremlin, you would definitely have thought he was a bastard, best avoided.

So when you start to see that sensitivity, honesty, openness, focus, generosity, integrity, acceptance, passion, self awareness, selflessness, just coming and going and coming and going and coming and going and coming and going, despite your intent or desire to have them the whole time that you are on the mat. This undermines

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the belief that you are in control of your life. Which also undermines the belief that other people should be in control of their lives and should be polite whenever you are in their presence, or generous whenever you are in their presence, or understanding whenever you are in their presence. And when the idea that everybody is or should be in control of their lives starts to lose its authority, I'm not saying it's being replaced with another idea, that you are not in control of your lives, but when that idea fades then life starts to open up and become a little bit more spacious and you give a little bit more latitude to yourself and to other people.

And into that latitude possibly arises a huge increase in your enjoyment of yourself and other people. This is not based on extracting anything specific from yourself. It does not require that you should become virtuous, or that you become enlightened. Nor is it based on extracting anything from anybody else. It is just being open to whatever is manifesting. And if whatever is manifesting turns out to be unpalatable, it's very easy to turn 90 degrees or 180 degrees on your heel and walk in a different direction, without making any judgement. Accepting that "I don't want anger right now" or "I don't want confusion right now". But sometimes you go, "yeah, I don't mind anger because there's something going on between me and this person so I'll go into the anger with this person and just see what it really is, or more importantly, see what it really isn't. That it's not really directed at me because I'm a bad person or I'm not being loved". Aldous Huxley's wife wrote a book called "You are not the target", about this, about the arising of anger and things like that. That you are not really the target, you might be the trigger, but you are not really the target. So you don't have to take delivery of the arrows, but we do when we think that everybody is in control of their lives and these arrows are coming to us because the person is intending to hurt us and they are intending to hurt us because they don't like us, and they don't like us because, whatever.

And your mind goes into a spin, your mind is spinning and it is spinning like this all the time, in what is really just a mindfuck. Spinning away from that which is actually happening into a story, a personal story. He said this because, she said that because, they did this because. And you can never really know actually so called motives or reasons for someone doing something. The other day, Anita heard directly from me I had done something that she thought was not right, that was somewhat unfair and potentially harmful to

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her in the past. And at the time she didn't say anything, but a few days later she said to me, "can you tell me why you did that?" and I said, "do you want me to be really, really honest with you?" and she said "yeah, I know you can do that", so I said, "well I don't know". And she just said laughed and said, "of course you don't" and that was the end of the conversation. Now even I didn't know why I'd done it, let alone anybody else who might have said, "Yeah, Godfrey did this because ... he is a bastard, he only thinks about himself", or whatever.

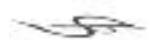
So it's that kind of spaciousness that she was giving to me by laughing and saying "of course you don't", which I'm talking about. A spaciousness that really has to begin at home. You can't make yourself be spacious to other people if you don't really believe that they are not in control of their lives. You can't really believe that they are not in control of their lives until you really know that you are not in control of your life. That spaciousness, that openness, that sensitivity happens when it happens. Of course, it can happen as a result of you looking for it, perhaps. But when it comes, how it comes, how long it lasts is not subject to your intent, not subject to your so called power.

So then you can start to see that intention is just an appearance, that decision making is not how it normally is taken to be. Then you stop arguing with what actually happens in terms of what could have happened, or worse, what should have happened. And what could have happened, and what should have happened no longer bothers you, and you are dealing only with what actually happened. And when what should have happened and what could have happened are no longer asserting themselves then there is no question any more about anything that happened and it's very clear that what happened, happened because the forces and factors that coalesced into that moment of time and that place, demanded that it happened and you know this because it happened.



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FACING REALITY



Anything else is speculation, speculation that can create guilt, speculation that can create blame, speculation that can create resentment, regret, guilt, envy, jealousy, anxiety, pride, arrogance. You could say that once something has happened there are two basic things you can honestly and truly say about it: it happened, and it did not happen. And if you can see that very clearly then you can see more clearly that it couldn't have been otherwise. That it couldn't have been better, you couldn't have done it better. There is nothing that you have ever done that you could have done better. There's nothing that anybody has ever done that they could have done better. Therefore it had to happen, therefore it was inevitable. In other words where is the space for blame?

That's going backwards in time, but the implications can be taken forward in time. Once you start to really see: "yeah, no choice about that, it just had to happen". No choice about that it had to happen. Then there is clearly no need to worry about that which has not yet happened, about the choices leading to that. The choices will be made in their own good time. In their own undeniable way. So many times when something potentially tricky is approaching, you spend hours trying to decide what to do and then when the time comes you just go and do the opposite. Despite everything that you thought about; despite what you decided.

So there's actually no need to plan in advance. Because you've never got enough data. There's always more data when you get to the point of action. But of course planning is a habit and it's a habit that you can't stop just because you want to. You can't stop doing that just because you want to. But it starts to stop when you start to see that when something happens you don't really have any choice. That it's really an inevitable expression of the thrust of circumstance. Or what is sometimes called in India Indra's net. The interconnected web of forces and factors, actions and objects, which from the moment that you are in, needing to make a decision, in order to take an action, extends backwards in time and space in every direction.

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So just look at the genetic consideration of the action that you are about to take. The genetic consideration of the choice that you are about to make, is determined by your mother and father. Then its also determined by their mothers and fathers back in time. This is a very, very specific determination, or conditioning. If any one of those forefathers had ejaculated two minutes later, five seconds earlier, a different pattern would have come out of the DNA. You know this because you have brothers and sisters and they are not you. And you might say, "ah yeah, five seconds, two seconds, it doesn't make any difference. A day for sure, a month for sure, six months for sure". Each sperm is totally different. Okay, egg might be the same for a whole month, but sperm is totally different, minute by minute: even second by second.

So your ability to make a decision was affected by how horny your great, great, great, great grandfather was on his birthday. Which was a result of how hard he had been working in the fields or whatever. When you see clearly into this net you see that actually absolutely everything had to be there. That if you change just one circumstance in your past by one degree, the present changes likewise. Then inevitability becomes obvious.

Inevitability sounds like a lack of freedom; and it is. But it is also a freedom. It's a freedom from the burden of choice. A lack of freedom to make a choice is also a freedom. The freedom that it is, is huge. Even though you may have been living your life espousing the notion that you have freedom of choice, along with that came the bondage of guilt and blame. Freedom of choice comes well packaged: with shame and resentment; with regret and anxiety; with pride and arrogance; with anxiety and manipulation. So you can flip the freedom round. You can become free from them and have no freedom of choice. Even if we are just looking at it psychologically, not looking at it from the point of view of truth, that is surely enough. I mean how can you ever honestly and truly know what's true? You can only know what you're doing. You can only know what you're feeling in the moment. You can never know what's true. You can like to think that what you'd like to think is true is true, but you can never be sure what truth really is. But, you do know guilt. You do know shame. You do know regret, anxiety, blame and pride.

I think you can see very easily that you don't have to. So who cares if what's being said is true or not in some abstract sense? If it

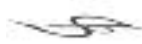
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can free you from guilt, if it can free you from blame, it must be worth a lot. What's the big deal about the truth? You don't live your life measuring everything by truth. You live your life according to how you feel in the moment. If you don't feel relaxed you see if you can take some action to relax yourself. If you don't feel really alive, you see if you can take some action to activate yourself, and that's all. That's going on moment by moment, oscillating between relaxation and action. Truth is the self-indulgent playground of philosophers.



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THE ILLUSORY NATURE OF VOLITION



We all live; we actually live in a web of guilt, blame, regret, resentment, anxiety, fear and hope. Seeing the inevitable nature of all actions, seeing that to change one thing in the past changes the present completely; seeing that 'the change one thing in the past' is pure speculation, then guilt evaporates. Eventually when you really accept it, when you really see it, when you just can't take an action without recognising that it just had to happen you see it was not something belonging to you. You can see your instrumentality, you can see it was your hand or your voice or your finger, but why did that finger move in that way? Why does Leonard Cohen's voice sound like it does? It's nothing to do with him, that he has a fantastic voice. Well a little bit. He can affect it by smoking too much, but generally speaking his ability to hit a note has got absolutely nothing to do with him. So why take pride in it? Why take it personally? Your inability to hit a note, likewise. I think he said somewhere, "I was born with the gift of a golden voice". I was born with it. It's a gift.

This whole perspective is opened in yoga practice through the lenses of yama and niyama. So there is no need to reduce yoga practice to flexibility, strength, alignment, even bandhas. Especially if they are not coming. If strength is not as much as you'd like, flexibility is not as much as you'd like, bandhas are not as much as you like: it doesn't matter. You can still look through the lenses of yama niyama at whatever is actually happening. You can still discover the illusory nature of volition. Discovering the illusory nature of volition doesn't mean you all of a sudden stop making decisions. For some people it does for a while just out of confusion. When they haven't really discovered the illusory nature of volition, and are just obsessed with the concept of the illusory nature of volition.

When the illusory nature of volition is truly seen then action after action after action, decision after decision after decision, just takes place as a natural function and expression of circumstance. And so life is lived through action taking, through decision making, but without the claiming of them. Without the personalising of them, with-

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out the saying, "I am the decider of this decision, I am the doer of this deed, I am the taker of this action". There is an ongoing awareness, moment by moment that this action, these deeds, these decisions are the expression of impersonal inevitability. They are the necessary result of the flow of historical circumstance going right back to the beginning of time. And if a decision leads to what actually happens, that means a decision is what was actually required. It doesn't mean that "you" all of a sudden popped in and made a decision. The decision was made by forces and factors that extend back infinitely in every direction.

The Bhagavad Gita is quite a big book compared to the yoga sutras. There's all kinds of stuff in it, and a lot of it is just Hindu culture. But at the heart of it there is an understanding of, and teaching on,. The core teaching of the Bhagavad Gita is that "you are not the doer". This means Gavin is not the doer, Isabel is not the doer. It means the body-mind is just the instrument. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says that prakriti is the doer. Prakriti means the matrix, the energetic matrix of manifestation. Totality. Everything that's ever happened is the doer. And according to Krishna knowing that, living from that is wisdom. This is the definition of a sage: knowing there is no personal doer. Wisdom is not the ability to flip into a special kind of consciousness. Not being able to project energy from your third eye and give shakti pat. These are just tricks of the bodimind which some people have, regardless of their understanding. Freedom is not about power, it's not about personal power. Freedom is the recognition that there is no such thing as personal power. There is no such thing as a personal action, a personal feeling, or a personal thought. Freedom is knowing that and yet, taking apparently personal action, having apparently personal thoughts.

Actions are specific to organisms, feelings are specific to bodies, thoughts are specific to minds: but that doesn't mean that they belong to them. That doesn't mean they originate there. They don't originate there, they end up there. You normally think of yourself not just as a body, but as a configuration of mental tendencies. Your mental make up, your personality. This is based on an assumption. The assumption that the thoughts and feelings experienced here inside, originate here and are yours. But this is somewhat spurious because the causes, the forces and the factors contributing to those thoughts are mostly outside you.

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I'm sure you've all been in this situation. You reach for the phone just as your friend calls you. The same thought being picked up by two minds in the same moment. It's not one person reading the mind of the other; it's both people reading the same part of the script of the matrix at the same time. When you are sitting in meditation and you have any thought it's coming from your personal history meeting its circumstances. It's not coming because you are lazy, useless, disinterested, it's not coming because you are anything. It's just coming and then it's going. And then the next one, and then the next one and then the next one. Be it a thought be it a feeling, be it an action, be it an image, be it an event, be it a project, be it a relationship, be it a life. All coming in exactly in the same way, all coming from exactly the same place. This is the matrix. This is the form or the body of God if you are theistic. In Zen they just call it the "One Body". The world, the history of the world is the "One Body".

Patanjali says that suffering can be avoided. But he says that future suffering can be avoided. He doesn't say that past suffering could have been avoided. And he says that future suffering is avoided when you see the true nature of karma which means when you see the true nature of action. When you see that action is neither good nor bad but simply that it happened, therefore it was inevitable, and impersonal. That's what freedom from karma means. Not that you are no longer subject to conditioning forces and factors: but that you are no longer claiming any of it for yourself, or anyone else.

Life can not stop. Conditioning doesn't stop. Needs don't stop. Desires don't stop. The impulse to fulfil needs and desires doesn't stop. We all have our preferences. When we are taking things personally, and life says to our preferences, "no you can't have it", we stamp our feet and have a tantrum. But when life is not being taken personally we just go, "oh, okay, plenty more options". We all have one very deep desire, preference, longing that's there all the time. To be at peace: to be quiet: to become still. We have a very deep desire to become still, to relax, to open and to feel. And this desire can be overlooked by all of the other desires to act, to get, to grasp, to receive, to experience. But it is still a desire and when too many of the other ones are met with life by a "no", then stillness tends just to happen and you go "ahh", and then you go into that stillness and it's "mmmm". And it's seriously yummy to be there.

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So sometimes you think that you really want to do something but you are not doing it and so you go, "i really should". Then you start to give yourself a hard time instead of just going, "ahh, well, plenty more options". If you listen to yourself when you feel like doing something but it's not happening, if you just listen very deeply to yourself you become really relaxed about whether it happens or not. This deep listening, if it is deep enough will bring you to that longed for stillness.

*Does anybody have any questions?*

*You were saying about not making plans. There is no point really because when things come to happen then according to what the circumstances are then you will react or do whatever you do. But not making doesn't necessarily mean not preparing?*

No, I don't really mean don't make plans at all, that is a deeply conditioned tendency. What I mean is that you don't need to get your knickers in a twist in that process. You don't need to exhaust yourself trying to get it just right, right now. Trying to get the right decision now before all the forces and factors have manifested. You are bound to plan and anticipate. Planning and thinking ahead is bound to happen. You know you make decisions all the time and so often you don't even act on the decisions but another time you make a decision and you act and the result doesn't come out as you expected: so to all these things I say, just hold it all very lightly. Just do it all very lightly. More like as if you are playing, to see what will be the outcome. Rather than to make sure that you get the outcome that you thought you would like or even were trying to get. Instead just let it be an enquiry. An enquiry into the mysterious and inexplicable happening of the movie of this life you take so personally. You know, so often you think that you know what would be the best extraction from a circumstance. And you seem to have the power to get it so you extract it but you've got no idea what you didn't get. You've got no idea what could have been so much better that could maybe have come. You know, okay, so you got that vase from behind the window, or whatever. You broke in and you took it, but you don't know what would have happened if you'd made another decision or you'd gone further into the house. You know you might have found a pot of gold.

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*So when you've made a decision it's done. You don't have to think about it afterwards?*

Well, you do think about it afterwards or you don't. But, it doesn't help matters to do so and when you do make a decision you don't have to worry if it doesn't come to be. You don't have to worry if its coming to be doesn't bring the result. It's all coming as an expression of inevitability and of course if you are worrying about it, then that's inevitable. If you are planning and getting your knickers in a twist, that's inevitable. So the deep point is that there is no absolute need for you on the one hand to judge anything, nor is there any need for you to be concerned about anything that hasn't yet happened. So it's not a question of making these kinds of distinctions between personalising things and not personalising things in an evaluative kind of way to find out how well you are doing. Though it's very difficult not to. Getting your knickers in a twist or not, these things are actually all equivalent really. All that is really relevant, that has any significance is what has happened and is happening. That's all. Knicker twisting isn't bad. Staying cool is not good. Their happenings are equally relevant, equally necessary, equally important, equally unimportant and equally impersonal.

You talked about not replacing one concept with another, when you were talking about personal doership and impersonal doership. I can't, that's fucking impossible.

Well, in the sense of what's happening normally, let's say the concept of personal doership is a concept that's iron clad and it's got all of these tendrils going out to other concepts, and they're all fixed with nuts and bolts so you can replace that with impersonal doership but don't fix it to anything. Just let it be free floating and if it gets knocked out of the way, in other words if you suddenly feel that personal doership is happening then fine. Personal doership is happening and don't get yourself into a judgement situation because of the concept of non personal doership.

You know, last November Shirrli and I went to Kovalam to help make a series of videos about Ramesh and I was so glad that I wasn't there as a participant that I was there to work because I was really disenchanted by the strong atmosphere of competitive comparison of understanding of these concepts going on between the participants so the conversations had as a subtle agenda, "is your

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understanding better than mine?". And people were selecting who to spend time with on the basis of those kinds of assumptions and it was really kind of sick. But not especially sick, I mean that's going on everywhere all of the time. To different agendas. You know, have I got the biggest cock, have you got the biggest tits, how flexible are you compared to me, all the same kind of crap. But it goes on in spiritual practice no less than anywhere else because we're human. It seems to go on more in spiritual practice because it's more obvious because that's what you're looking at. Spiritual people are not any more like that than anybody else but it tends to be more obvious because the assumption is that it shouldn't be there. But it's not that it shouldn't be there. The whole point is to see that and how it's all working.

*There is also something that you said was an assumption that people have about different worlds, what's the spiritual world?*

Well, it's not a world that's separate from any other. But very often, let's say it's not unusual for a person to step into somewhere like CanAm or the dome and manifest a completely different set of behaviours to that which manifest when they step into the pub. Almost deliberately sometimes. "Oh! I'm now coming into a spiritual environment I must, I'm now coming into whatever, I must ...". It's those worlds which are just in the mind.

Yeah, how can you be spiritual and not on the spiritual path?

Well as far as I'm concerned spirituality is, I don't know what the word is, an oxymoron. If you're human you're spiritual. End of story. You can't be very spiritual or a little spiritual unless you can be very human or a little human. But the spiritual world is the world in which this is not understood. The spiritual world is the world where this is a better world than the material world, the yoga centre is a better world than the pub. We don't swear, we don't smoke, we don't drink and we don't talk about sex. Because we're better. But most of us do all of those things, even those of us who are in the spiritual world pretending that we don't. Or not letting that be manifest for the time being and by that creating huge impetus for it to be manifest later. So why not manifest it wherever. Whatever it is. If you want a cigarette have a cigarette. If you're not supposed to smoke then be ready for the consequences if you've been asked not to smoke, but smoking or not has nothing to do with being spiritual. So you could say that the implications of what I'm saying, the

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implications of the illusory nature of volition are its all okay: you are ok; everything that actually is, is just ok. Just be whatever you are. Do whatever you do. Because, to put in theistic terms, that's God's will. So if try and go against that, if you try to go against the thrust of the matrix, something's going to break. Maybe it will be your heart, maybe it will be your resolve, yourself image, your temper, whatever. But that trying to go against the matrix is the thrust of the matrix.

*So that's part of the game? Going against the matrix?*

Yeah, it's a big part of the game. It's the major part of the game and it's a major part of the fun. Resistance is fun. Without resistance there would be no flute. No oboe, no clarinet, no trumpet, no Louis Armstrong, No Mozart's Horn concertos. They all depend upon very specific resistances to the breath being used to create so much beauty. So it's very easy to listen to this kind of speaking and think, "Oh, I shouldn't resist anything". You resist when you have to resist and you surrender when you have to surrender. You accept when you have to accept: and when you can see that then you don't have any problem any more. If you're resisting you don't mind. If you're in acceptance you don't get dead chuffed and look to see who's not accepting, so you can give yourself a medal. Or maybe you do. But when your acceptance is truly deep you accept your lot just as it is, but not passively, not complacently; there will still be ongoing enquiry into the possibility of easing pain, deepening comfort. But it will be an active enquiry, based on and related to action, not vain and idle speculation about how things could, should or ought to be.

According to Patanjali the activity (kriya) of Yoga is tapas svadhyaya ishvarapranidanah. The fact that the sound of that: 'tapas svadhyaya ishvarapranidanah, can be broken down into three words has no more significance here in the fact that it can be broken down into many syllables. Yoga is tapas svadhyaya ishvarapranidanah. Which means the activity of yoga is passionate enquiry into the source of personal action. Yoga is enquiry. Passionate enquiry. Passionate enquiry into the source of personal action.

Without burning, without longing, whether it be longing to know, longing to be, longing to know something, longing to be something, longing to feel something; without burning no enquiry will be effectively sustained. Without really wanting to know the time, if it's not

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easy to find by just moving your hand to look at your watch, then you'll just forget about it. The burning, the longing for peace, for happiness, for ease, for comfort, for reassurance, for certainty, is necessarily at the heart of Yoga. Likewise, the focus of the enquiry must be the self: sva. Dhyaya is the enquiry, sva is where you're looking; you're enquiring into the self. And this enquiry must be based upon something. You could be enquiring in order to judge. You could be enquiring in order to improve. You could be enquiring in order to change.

Pragmatically ishvarapranidanah means to clarify the making of choices. Which means to direct your enquiry into the consequence of choice: which is action. Actions are the result of selection between hypothetical options: choices. Choices are the source of action. To enquire into the source of actions, the choices behind the actions, the decisions behind the actions. Tapas svadhyaya ishvarapranidanah: therefore means a passionate enquiry into the nature and the source of the self by enquiring into the nature and the source of the indicators of the self: its activities, its actions.

Yoga then is simply an enquiry into that which is actually happening; those actions which are actually occurring: enquiring into them so as to elucidate, to clarify what is actually happening. In order to know what is actually happening what appears to be happening needs to be examined so that it can be seen where it is coming from. So when you feel wetness on your cheek or in your hair, you know that what's actually happening is that it's raining rather than somebody is spraying you with a hose. This realisation that it is raining as opposed to somebody is spraying you with a hose appears to the different realisation or different recognition of whether the one or the other is happening appears to give you different choices. If somebody is spraying you with a hose and you don't like it you can ask them to stop, you can force them to stop, you can walk away. If it's raining you can't ask it to stop, you can't force it to stop, you can walk temporarily away. But in order to walk permanently away from that kind of wetness in the cheek you have to move to Ibiza.

So even in that: the seeing the difference between not liking being sprayed by a hose and not liking being sprayed by a cloud and the different options that they give you in order to do something about not liking, the nature of choice can very clearly be elucidated. First of all you have no choice about what those choices are, what those responses are. And then you can see that your action, if you

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don't like rain, is predetermined or you don't like getting wet cheek is predetermined by the nature of what is actually happening when you are getting a wet cheek. Your so-called freedom to act is predetermined.

In effect you could say that this enquiry svadhyaya ishvara-pranidanah being directed towards action, being an elucidation of the mechanism of action brings you to the notion or the notions of freewill and destiny and also to the notion of karma. Karma literally means action. But the implicit significance of the word karma is cause and effect. Because every action is an effect and every action is a cause. Any action can be an effect of many actions and any actions can be a cause of many actions. To become free from karma is a cherished ideal, a cherished goal of the idealist school of sadakas yoga practitioners. "I want to be free from karma so that I can be free to do whatever I like."

The significance, the actual significance of the phrase 'freedom from karma' will only become apparent when the nature of that which is becoming free from becomes apparent: the nature of action. If liberation is a freedom from karma, which it is said to be, the important issue for us is not, 'what is liberation?' but 'what is action?' What is that, which if it is that which we must become free from, is that which is binding us? In other words, our concern is not freedom but bondage. If we concern ourselves with freedom we will never know what it is. If we turn ourselves away from bondage, we will never know freedom. Tapas svadhyaya ishvarapranidanah means to examine the chains within which you feel bound, the chains in the cycle of cause and effect of your actions or your karma.

When the burning, the longing for freedom, the longing for an end to dissatisfaction, the longing for an end to confusion, disappointment, regret, resentment, blame, guilt, shame, pride, envy, when the longing for the absence of all of that is strong enough, then honest satya, sensitive ahimsa, open asteya, focus brahmacharya, generous aparigraha, enquiry into any action will produce the same result. That result is beyond measure in terms of its value and is rich in pragmatic and psychological implications. Simply because the honest, sincere, ruthless, meaning you do not give up until you've finished, relentless, ruthless meaning being honest, not allowing the investigation to be pushed this way and that by your preferences or your belief systems, by your wishful thinking, by your goals, by your aims, by your prejudices, by your preferences, this

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kind of investigation is not easy to make. It requires that you are burning for the truth. Even if that burning is only temporary, it doesn't matter. If the burning is there, the investigation can be completed. If the investigation is not completed then the rich fruit and the invaluable effect will remain a matter of conjecture: guess work, wishful thinking, hearsay, belief or disbelief, arguments, projection. When however that investigation is thorough, ruthless and relentless, honest and sincere, what is there always to be found is that any action, any action you care to choose, upon investigation can show to you a cause or more than one cause and upon investigation of those causes they can be found to have causes and those causes, upon investigation, can be found to have causes, and those causes, upon investigation can be found to have causes, and this investigation goes on endlessly and in the endlessness of that investigation, being sustained perhaps not the first time it happens, or the second or the third, but eventually it begins to dawn on you that this endlessness of the chain of causation which is not a straight linear chain, but a multi dimensional interlinking web: that the endlessness of this chain is showing to you the same chain, the same web every time just from a slightly different angle.

You could say there comes a realisation that any action that you've investigated turns out to have been caused by exactly the same web of interconnected causes and effects; has been brought about or happened as a result of exactly the same web of interconnected cause and effect. The realisation of this, the single source of all action, this is not actually that. The recognition of the single process, the singular process by which all actions are brought about, points to a single source. The same thing, the same structure of cause and effect is bringing about every single action. Apparently different actions have the same supporting structure of cause and effect points to them all originating from the same source or all being expressions of the same thing: that structure.

Any attempt to attribute anything other than temporal or linear relative significance to any cause will fail if that attempt is honest just because an action occurred closer, a causative action occurred closer in time and space than another can that in itself be said to prove that it was more important, more necessary? This honest investigation will make very clear that if you take any one of those effect/causes out of the picture the final effect, the action, would not have happened. Therefore each link in the web is of equal importance, absolutely totally necessary and that if you change it around

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and if you see that the absolute necessity of the causes that accumulated in your action, you can see actually therefore, that that action was inevitable; that those causes could have not produced a different action, just as not one of those causes could be taken away. And into the spectre, the raif, the dark looming shadow of lack of free will, riding to the rescue comes the realisation that if there is no single primary cause, if primary cause can be attributed to no action, responsibility can be laid nowhere. And in the investigation of this insight is the realisation that there is no independent agent of action anywhere. That there is no independent source of actions, receiver of actions, maker of decisions, maker of choices anywhere and if there is no independent entity anywhere to make a decision there is no independent entity to not have free will.

The will is one and only that of God. A very thorough investigation of all actions occurring or having occurred will reveal that the will of God is pretty much free to do anything and everything and it does. Everything and anything that you could imagine can be found to happen. And more.

Into that insight of the lack of actual existence of an independent, autonomous choice-making, action-taking entity into that realisation disappears not only freewill, predestination, not only guilt, shame, blame, etcetera, etcetera, but also good karma, bad karma, bound to your karma, samskara and nirvana. The significance of karma is that every action has the same web of causes and this web has neither beginning nor end therefore karma as a chain or a web of interconnected causes and effects can never be brought to an end which means that if liberation or freedom is an event in that chain, in that web, it does not bring that web to an end and that if liberation does occur located in a particular mind-body organisation that mind-body organism is still subject to the cause and effect: still reaches for water when thirsty, still closes its ears when exposed to Led Zeppelin, begins to dance upon hearing whatever. Freedom from karma means very simply to see that actions, their causes and effects pertain not, belong not to nor define a person. It doesn't mean that the body that carried out the action nor the mind that recognised the need for the action and facilitated or prepared for the action by apparently making a decision, it doesn't mean that that body mind will not suffer the consequences of those actions: it will. Whether those consequences are biological by drinking poison, social by breaking a law, or whatever, the only way to become free from bad consequences, unwanted consequences of actions, is to commit

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yourself to the one action of non action which will be found to be impossible. The only freedom from karma that there is, is to see that there is no entity subject to karma in the first place. It is the seeing of this, the living of this within the mind-body organism that is the subject to the web of cause and effect acting out the thrust of that web in that particular space, time, location. To live that realisation is the invitation that Patanjali is extending to us and is the significance of the word enlightenment or freedom, liberation or salvation, self realisation or emancipation.

This is the pearl beyond price. This is peace even while suffering. It's not an absence of suffering. This is love even while being attacked. It is not a freedom from being attacked. This is to allow the life that is living itself through you to live itself through you without any personal stake or claim being made with regard to any of it. Not the good nor the bad, not the praiseworthy nor the blameworthy, not the conscious nor the unconscious. The karma of a mind-body organism is pre-determined; it's already there. The mind-body organism is an expression of the one karmic web in a particular space, time location. That organism has been programmed to live out that karma. The programming is the embodiment of the karma or the mechanism of the karma; the actions resulting from karma coming through the conditioning, through the programming. Recognition of the inevitability of every action whether it just be that the left hand moving onto the left cheek bone to scratch or the right index finger pulling a trigger, is an opening of the door to freedom within which the impersonal nature of actions and life can be lived as if personally. In other words, can be enjoyed.

*Yesterday I had really strange deja vu. It was just a moment in the dome, something over there, about thirty seconds.*

Recognition that something had already happened? Do you think they changed the matrix? Yeah, maybe deja vu works like that, who knows?! Maybe the brain remembering something or seeing something, but yeah, it can be like that. How else can you, how else really can you explain any kind of precognition? You know what's that famous guy? American guy, Edgar Case. I don't know if that's how you say his name and I don't know how accurate it is but if he was accurate, how can he have been accurate unless it's like that? There is no other way, there is no other explanation. It must already have happened. Must already be pre-determined. If it's already been pre-determined there's no freedom of action, there's no personal

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self. If there is no personal self there is no bondage. If there is no bondage there is no problem. Life is just to be enjoyed.

The impersonal nature of life, the impersonal nature of actions, events and situations meaning that there is no independent entity, no personal selves doing these actions, doesn't mean either that they're not happening or that they're not witnessed: they are being witnessed through every organism that is sentient and they are being thought about by every organism that is both sentient and conscious. This witnessing, this awareness, this consciousness within each organism, witnessing everything is what Patanjali called *citi-sakti*. Or what Ramesh calls consciousness. Or what theologians call God. Or what Hindus sometimes call the self. And it is this, *citi-sakti*, consciousness, God, the self, Brahman, *shunyata*; it is this which you are waking up with in the morning. It is this which you refer to when you mean I, myself. *Ishvara*, the true nature of the self, or God, means the one who made the choices. The one from whom all actions come and the one by whom all actions are witnessed. Life is the play of God. There is only one player. Looking out through billions and billions and billions and billions of lenses.

Robin Williamson of 'The Incredible String Band' wrote an incredible song called *Maya*. The rather haunting minor key chorus which I am not going to attempt to sing, goes like this, "maya", he kind of drones "maya" which is normally understood to be illusion, "maya" and then he goes, "all this world is but a play. Be thou, the joyful player" which is what you are. You are not that which is disturbed by the cold. You are not that which is disturbed by cruel words. That is just something that is momentarily happening as a part of your total self-expression which is everything, sometimes called totality. Sometimes called the totality of manifestation, sometimes called *prakriti*, sometimes called *samskara*, sometimes called this veil of tears, sometimes called a mere accident. The unsatisfying work of a blind watchmaker, Stephen Dawkins would say. Unable as he is to recognise the arrogance implicit in the human mind attempting to define the universe entirely. The part is never going to be adequate to understand the whole but the whole is totally adequate to understanding not only the whole but all of the parts and you are the whole. Your mind that bears the label of your name and has the infrastructure of your memories, your beliefs, your assumptions and your prejudices is not capable of that. But you are.

*Shouldn't I ask the question about 'I am that'?*

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Yeah, I am that! I nearly went there by myself but I didn't. Well of course not surprisingly Nuz Aved Maharaj's statement, 'I am that' can have more than one significance, but first of all I would like to introduce my old friend, Nuz Aved Maharaj to those of you who have not met him before. Nuz Aved Maharaj was a marati cloth merchant, not sure where he lived, if he lived in Bombay. He was a disciple of Ramana Maharshi and he was Ramesh's teacher. And he wrote, well he didn't write a book, he gave many talks and some of those talks were compiled into a very famous book called 'I am That'. This book was edited by an American who made the issue somewhat confusing by trying to distinguish between consciousness at rest and consciousness in movement by using the term of awareness for one of them and consciousness for another whereas Nuz Aved Maharaj never did that because consciousness in movement and consciousness in rest are not separate. He used the same word, the same marati word whatever it was for both. The title of the book, 'I am That' could be taken to be the essence of his teaching and the pragmatics of his teaching or his relationship, the nature of his relationship with people was to point them towards finding out the significance of 'I am that' in a way very much like Ramana Maharshi was but he offered very more words than Ramana Maharshi relative to it which was to enquire into what I am, what you are. And the answer is 'I am that' but you have to enquire. So if I was to ask Nuz Aved Maharaj a question you know, 'what's the meaning of karma?' he might say, "Who wants to know?" He points me back to myself to find out, to enquire, to investigate the origin of the question: where is the question arising from and how is the question arising from there. And the answering of the question, who is asking that question can be said to be, 'I am that'. So if the question is taken to be, 'who am I?', the fundamental question of Ramana Maharshi which can be expressed and explored in many different ways; 'who am I?', if the answer is 'I am that', the word 'that' can be taken to mean and it does mean more than one thing.

First of all, 'I am that' means, it means, I am that which is behind and is the network of interconnected cause and effect. 'I am that, I am god, I am totality, I am that', the big 'that' from which all has come. 'That' which actually is, I am. But equally important, 'I am that' also means because of the nature of interconnected cause and effect because of the way that is, it also means 'I am that cup', 'I am that mat', 'I am that bottle', 'I am that action', 'I am that thought', 'I am that feeling', that there is nothing that I am not for I am that

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which everything, is which is everything. So there is a double significance to I am that and if it's only taken the first way you are lost in non-duality, you are lost in the godhead, you are lost in thinking that you are god and a bottle is not, or you are god and Glen is not and then you have, into that gap jumps Hitler.

The problem with taking only the other side, 'I am the bottle, I am the ...' is that your inherent nature of freedom is not visible in that and secondly, as also a part of that you never can see all of the 'that's'. So you think of yourself as being limited and you do that all the time. You actually say 'I am that' all of the time but in a very limited way. I am this feeling or I am that feeling. I am that belief. I am that conglomeration of feelings, beliefs, expectations, desires, past actions, responsibilities, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That is when 'I am that' is not taken far enough. The 'I am that' must be taken to everything and then when, 'I am that' every hammer, nail and screw, then 'I am that, I am god' is equally clear. So you could say that life is a process whereby we move in a strange way from being a baby where we identify with everything, without saying it but 'I am that', 'I am my hunger', 'I am the nipple', 'I am my mother'; to withdrawing that identification totally from everything, from the dualistic 'I am that' to the non-dualistic 'I am that' so that you can then return to the dualistic 'I am that' and enjoy it and be free within it, and be light and easy within it.

So are you free from your karma now Aran?

I was always free!

Well don't let anybody try and pin you down.

What do you think, I think someone asked you this question before, all these Buddhists, Laoists, they found their reincarnation. Do you think its bollocks?

Oh so now we go onto reincarnation! No can't be total bollocks but it can be misunderstood. In a way, I think you'd have to be honest and say that not only is anything I am going to say now a concept, but it's also really unverifiable. So, if you see, if you look back and you see that there is an interconnected cause and effect web going back, creating your karma, and if you can see that there is no person within that then you can very clearly see that there is nobody to be reincarnated. No one is being reincarnated but that doesn't

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mean that the traces of an unresolved past action, they have to be resolved. That's the nature of the manifestation and that's where meditation comes from and that's where yoga comes from, the impulse to resolve these actions so if the person who wasn't fully present to the actions so that it wasn't resolved dies before it's resolved, that impulse is going to find its way into another opportunity to resolve itself which is another body. But if the person has died, that finding of the impulse into another body relates not to first or the second person and whether all of the unresolved impulses in this organism go to the same organism in the next lifetime is totally unverifiable but that's the normal assumption.

Ramesh's teaching is different. What he says is that upon death all impulses go back to the great salt, to the universal karmic deposit and they accumulate together like vasanas and then when conception occurs the energetic situation of conception draws from that pool a particular configuration which might mean that in that drawing a lot of what was Godfrey comes into the next body, and it could also mean that what was in Godfrey can go into a thousand different bodies which means a thousand different people could remember the trace, the action that took place in Godfrey's life and say I'm a reincarnation of Godfrey. If they should want such a dubious ....

So it could be that's what's happening in these lama things is that you could say the integrity of their soul is such that it sustains itself through incarnation after incarnation. But it doesn't mean that it's total and it's well known that it's not. I'll give you an example, Songyal Rimpeshe is well known to be a half incarnation of another guy. Two of them incarnations of the same guy, and a friend of mine who has been looking after Songyal Rimpeshe for many years of was looking after him was there to witness their first meeting of these two reincarnated entities of the same previous lama.

*And they knew it before?*

Yes, they knew it before and she said it was absolutely mind blowing and completely indescribable to watch these two people meet, a lifetime later, in two different bodies. The same meeting itself.

*In different bodies?*

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Yeah, yeah. So it's like you and me, let's say I die, and then I get reborn as Shirlli and Susannah and then one day you meet.

*That must be happening all the time. Is that not when you meet somebody and there's a part of you and you just say ...?*

Sure. But you don't know why and you don't know if you were in the same body in a past lifetime or if you shared and experience in a past lifetime. Of course when you have that feeling it does refer to past lives. But not Susannah's. Susannah is the product only of your parents. It could well be that the karmic association with that zygote, with that ovum is 99% from an organism before called Jo Bloggs. That's theoretically possible but unverifiable. Except perhaps to an Arhat like the Buddha they say that the Buddha could see everything and that the Buddha could look and that's the nature of an Arhat: totally enlightened one and it hardly ever happens according to the Buddha of course! There's not going to be one like me for a very long time. And there hasn't been! Okay so one of the attributes of the arhat is to be able to look and see the past and future lives of any entity. But that doesn't mean that the past lives are the same person it just means it's seeing the specific flow of impulses, karmic imprints, vasanas, behavioural tendencies, psychological tendencies from life to life to life to life.

*So it's not the individual?*

Yeah, cos there is no individual. Yeah. It's the imprint that's not been resolved that carries on into another body. And if there is a lot of imprints from one body into the next it can feel like I was Godfrey in my last life time but I could have some Richelle in me also.

*What do you mean by the word imprint?*

Well imprint. It's a technical term used by Patanjali, well not just by Patanjali but in you know that part of the world, India, and imprint in this case means that effect, left over of a past action in a psychic effect in what he calls the karmic deposit which is a depository, the storage of the effects, the karmic imprints, the samskaras. And these imprints that have come from unresolved past actions want to resolve themselves and they create behavioural tendencies and that's what drives your so-called karma.

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*Godfrey, this is what my friend Donna says, that she sees in people all the time. That's how she sees people.*

In terms of the continuity of impulse life to life? Does she see it through different incarnations or does she just look at it as that.

*I've never asked her about incarnations but that's how she sees ...*

Right. She sees peoples' imprints?

*Absolutely. Completely. I'll ask her.*

*And we assume that animal impulses don't happen to an animal body process?*

Well, I wouldn't assume that. You have an animal body. You know, our body is the animal that we are. It's just like, it's affected by the fact that we just have a certain type of mind, a self reflective mind that's let's say an ant may not have, a dog may only have a little bit, chimpanzee but a little. So we have a certain difference in mind but our body is fundamentally the same. You could say there is a cortex extra. What's that? Okay it's a lot of cells but there's still two arms and you know, and you still, somebody whacks you from behind, you run away or you turn around and bite 'em. So we are animals. Or as Leonard Cohen says, "we are apes with angels' glands".

*Umm, I've just got this in my head and I kind of think it's a bit ridiculous now, I've read lots of free yourself from karma, fulfil your karma, and then, so what's beyond that? I don't know. But you can't possibly fulfil your karma because it's continuous and you can free yourself from karma, there's no way ...*

To stop it. Yeah. So yes.

*It's just in my head, you know that's what happens in Buddhism, like, things that I've read, you can free yourself from your karma.*

Yes but you do free yourself from karma when you see it doesn't pertain to the individual. That's what it means to free yourself from karma. To free yourself from karma it doesn't mean it comes to an end. Fulfilling your karma doesn't mean it comes to an end, fulfill-

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ing your karma means not putting the sense of personal self in the way and just allowing life to happen as it happens. That's fulfilling your karma and that is never ending. So fulfilling doesn't mean ending. Freeing doesn't mean ending.

*But not creating any more karma?*

Well you can't stop that but the point is, when you see through the personal self, no more karma is attributed to you. That's you bringing an end, the creation of karma. The creation of karma is an illusion. This is the idea that something is pertaining to something. That which was pertaining carries on but that to which it pertained is no longer there. If you, like I, I haven't read, so it's a terrible assumption you know. If you, like I, assume that what Barbara Cartland has to say about love is pretty much a load of rubbish, you know because she said a lot about love in her stories, you could say that just as much rubbish about spirituality has been said in spiritual books. You know I'm reading a book at the moment and it slightly freaked me out you know because it's the most hallowed Buddhist text from the eighth century and it's just a load of fucking bollocks. It's deadly poison. Deadly, deadly poison. 'You must do this and you must kill that and you must overcome that, and you must relinquish this'. You know, so ignorance is not new and the authorise or the authorisation, the institutionalisation is not new. Something can be old and ignorant. Something can be old and stupid. Whereas we tend to think that if it's a few thousand years old, if it's written in the eight century it's probably gonna be true. Why?

*Godfrey. When you started the presentation you were talking about passion or tapas. Does that diminish as you lose a sense of self?*

Yes in a way it does. And it becomes dispassion when the sense of self is very weak.

*What does that mean?*

Well it means that you go through this phase, and it's sometimes called the dark night of the soul and you're just fucked off with everything. You know because you're just going through this disidentification, this depersonalisation and the clinging to intensity as a positive thing is no longer able to happen so as you're no longer clinging to the isolation of the strongly positive, you are noticing the

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other end more and it's just a function of attentiveness and so you start to think, you know life is really drab. And you know I went through this recently for a few years, you know, and it was, you know my normal functioning wasn't affected but in the silence of my own mind sometimes I went, you know, where's all the delight gone? Where's all the excitement gone? Where's all the, you know? Where's it gone? And it was dying with the self but only to be reborn again into a different way with the death of the self. In other words impersonal and inherent. That action which inherently produces delight will inevitably now produce delight. Rather than only those actions that you pre-decided were the ones that you decided produce delight.

You didn't get that? Well, let's say, let's just say you're looking for love or you're looking for sex or you're looking for something, a man, and you pre-decided that the only place you can get it is from a six foot six, blue eyed, blond, with curly hair and big pecs.

*Can he have a beard as well please?*

Okay! So, Andreas with a beard. So what happens, if Peter comes to give you exactly what you want, is you say "no thanks". And you walk away. You turn your back on the delight because you preconceived what it should be. Or what should be its source. Go for it Pete! You're still thinking on that? I mean like we go through our lives normally, we've learnt from past experiences certain things feel good and certain things feel bad and we associate a lot of the event situation with feeling good or feeling bad. So then we carry that through and it narrows our focus, it narrows our openness and it makes us look for the one and avoid the other.

*The thing is, I think I was coming from a different point of view. Because when I was talking about passion I was talking about the things that that leads to, so creativity, and most of the like the amazing works of art, are done by people who are really fucked up. And it was that kind of battle, in a way with the self, that produced those things.*

Yeah, but we don't know what they would have produced if they hadn't been fucked up.

*No, but my feeling at the moment is probably that they wouldn't have done it.*

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Well, I mean that's just pure conjecture. And that was inevitable and they had to. And if being fucked up was a part of their configuration then that was inevitable. But I'm quite sure you'll find great works of art coming out of not fucked up minds.

*Also, most ...*

Mozart! Was Mozart's mind fucked up?

*Could be just in relation to ...*

No! Was Mozart's mind fucked up?

*No!*

No! Absolutely not. His life was fucked up because people didn't understand him. But Mozart's mind was as pure as the driven mind and full of joy and delight. It doesn't mean he didn't feel suffering, of course! His father died. So he mourned and he produced that work.

*And in his association with other people he may have been confusing by not towing the line?*

Well he's confused by their responses, their judgement of his music. Their inability to understand his music.

*Or his needs or anything?*

Yeah, because in the court of the time where he lived, a court musician was regarded as less important as a house servant. Now imagine if you were Mozart with that gift and you have a gift to point people towards God, and it's regarded as being not as important as sweeping the floor. You are treated accordingly. And so when you want to say to somebody, "no, I need to keep that semi quaver in there", and they say, "no you don't! Do as you're told. We're paying the bills". Imagine what it was like living with that. You know because to him he knew every semi quaver was counted but people were saying to him, "no not like that", because they didn't understand it. "Let's take this out", because they didn't understand it. "We need five movements, why only three? It has to have five. Why did you want to do it in German? It has to be Italian." All this kind

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of shit, he was being subjected. So of course he suffered but not because inherently he had a fucked up mind. So you know don't think you have to make yourself suffer in order to maintain your creativity. Because if you are programmed to create you are going to create. If you are programmed to become free from suffering it may be that the two programmes stop together and you are not going to mind. You know maybe your creativity is going to come into teaching yoga. You can be creative anywhere. Design the most beautiful yoga centre ever and you can use in that design photographs. And people in two thousand years time can go, "wow! That's the Taj Mahal of yoga centres!"

You know what would you say honestly if you were being as unprejudiced as you could. What is the most amazing act of creation? What? Say it again.

*Birth.*

Birth. Exactly. You know you can't come up with anything like a human being. Can you? Nor can Mozart. You know, and that intrinsically is supposed to come out of love and joy and appreciation and not out of suffering. The fact that many children might come out of suffering is neither here nor there.

*But we don't do that with our minds do we?*

No we don't nor do you. In the full free flow of your creativity you leave your mind behind. You might prepare it with your mind. But also you prepare, "am I going to have a baby with you or with you?" is operated. "Are we ready? Do we have the means to support one now?" You know the mind is there, but then not in the act. Not in the act of creativity you let go don't you? Beyond that. And trust something is going to come through you that is gonna be right on. That's okay. Worry not unless you must, then worry on. Did somebody say something?

*No, it was in my head. Umm, well it wasn't fully formed so I don't know how it will come out. So the dissolving of the self, do you have to go through the dark night of the soul? I'm sure that you have to suffer.*

You just don't want to suffer.

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*No, but if what you were saying is that creativity comes out of something that doesn't involve suffering then why do you have to suffer to dissolve the self?*

Yeah, well okay you might be able to say that it's not intrinsic but if the self creates any resistance to its dissolution that will create suffering. The suffering comes in resistance and it does seem that it happens to everybody to a certain extent but how it happens, it doesn't have to be like Job or Theresa Overvillia that you go through day after day, night after night and week after week, month after month of intense suffering but it could just be that you feel lackadaisical.

*Well, it's a bit disappointing to realise that you've been doing this for so long and you feel so stupid that there was an easier way and you think, twenty years of doing that.*

So that's part of the dark night of the soul. Disenchantment. Oh my god and oh my god there is nothing I can do about it but it's actually not even that without this concept, you know what people do go through is recognition that all of their efforts have really come to nothing. Really come to nothing. You know. In that, okay, more flexible, okay more strong, okay more money in the bank, but there is still this nagging something making you try to improve things and the realisation that maybe you've actually never been able to satisfy that nagging no matter how brilliant you got at whatever technique you were using, ushers in the dark night of the soul. And the dark night of the soul might last for two minutes. But it has to come because that proceeds the letting go of all intent. That proceeds surrender. You have to see so clearly that there is nothing you can make happen. And in that seeing there is always an element of sense of helplessness or impotence or powerlessness. And that bothers you until you get the significance of why you are impotent and powerless and then it doesn't bother you because then you realise that I am that. In other words I am not Jo, definable.

*And then you really realise quickly that you had to get through that to get there so ...*

Yeah, inevitability.

*Yeah, but you see that you can't help hoping.*

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You can't help hoping for stars and rainbows all the way.

*Yeah, but I can't help hoping that phew, you know. That was heavy. Because that's happened quite a lot recently. So I'm kind of like, maybe this is the nice little bit that's going to last a while.*

Well you know there seems to be a relationship between the ability to say, "I'm okay if it's stays shitty forever" and being close to the end of it being shitty. That as long as you're wanting that shittiness to end you're pushing the end away from you.

*I can't bear it, okay if I bear it, even if you bear it, which you do obviously cos it's happening. How can you honestly say that you feel the same about feeling like that as when you're feeling great? I don't have equanimity ...*

No you don't. But the time may come when you do. The time may come when you really don't say to yourself consciously or unconsciously, "I'd rather be free than in bondage". And that's when the chains are about to break. You can still say that after they've broken but the start of that thought. You know cos really after they've broken you don't give a shit about whether they're there or not, broken or whole. You know it's not even an issue. It's a total non-issue. So when it starts to be a non-issue is when you're getting close. Okay, that's not the same as the complacency as somebody who's not interested. Not at all. You try to talk about this stuff to some people and they just say, "I'm not interested". It doesn't mean they're really close.

But you don't know how long any of it anything, whatever, you were thinking then you don't know how long it can last: the thought you were having, what you thinking about. It could be the last time it ever comes up. And actually if you commit yourself to that, really commit yourself to that, really it will be. You know, by which I'm saying, if you commit yourself to the fact that you will be free, you are free. You either can or you can't. Cos that act of commitment is an act of expression of your freedom. So until then, you know when you're hesitating, when you go, "I don't know if I'm God".

*I do know!*

You know!

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*We've had this before! I absolutely do know that I am!*

So, if that is true then you never resent anything that ever happens to you and you never personalise any situation which you participate. You believe that you are God. You do not know.

*Yeah, I believe.*

And it's very important to distinguish between believing and knowing. And knowing is not indicated by the power of thought. Knowing is indicated by you could say, the integrity of the action. The integrity of the action being you don't personalise anything. You don't say, "he did it to me, bastard". So in the same way that you a moment ago said, "I know that I am God", you know that it can't be all rainbows and stars, but in the same way you believe you are God, you believe it cannot all be all rainbows and stars.

*This is not looking good from here though.*

Well then stop smiling!

*There is a really long way between believing and knowing.*

No! That much space.

*Yeah but that much space is infinite.*

No. That much space is being sustained by that thought and by that thought alone and by that belief alone. Reinforce, entertain that thought, that belief then yeah, it will confirm itself. If you can meet yourself to the opposite then it will never come again.

*How do you put that into practice?*

Well exactly, that's your karma. She can't right now. But you don't know, she might in two seconds. We don't know. She might in five seconds, you might in three. You know, in other words, what Susannah said, what is it? So you don't know what's going to happen next. To allow you to not have to think about what's going to happen next. You don't have to think about what's happening next in other words you don't have to assume anything about the future. You don't have to figure out anything about the future. The future's coming. It's inevitable. Not everybody who wants to be liberated is

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liberated. Now you have to, you will become a much happier, relaxed and more effective yoga teacher Jo, if you consider and accept the fact that you might never be liberated. You will then relax about that whole issue. If it's God's design, if he needs you to be liberated and do your job, you will be liberated. If your job is going to be more effective without you being liberated you will not be liberated. This is God's business. It is none of your business. Your business is to live out his work without resisting cos if you resist you suffer, you suffer that's all. You can't stop his work. But you can suffer within it if you're resisting. If you're wanting his work to have a different shape than it does.

*That's enough!*

So just be warned you know, if you ever establish yourself or find yourself, established in a relationship to me as Jo is for example, or as Shirlli is, you're gonna get that from me. I'm gonna be even less nice.

*That's why I said that's enough because I saw it coming.*

So if you want me to be nice to you, stay away from me.

*But that's why liberation is a paradox: you've got to have a real desire to be liberated without actually caring whether you're liberated or not.*

Well, it depends how you're using the words, doesn't it. You can say you can have an interest in. But desire normally means you really want it and the nature of desire, the nature of thwarted desire is normally suffering. But interest doesn't have to cause, you know interest, like you could say, well whatever you know. You can tell the difference. You know in a way we all want to be liberated. Some of us would like to sit here and say we don't. But somebody who doesn't want to be liberated doesn't want anything. Anything. Doesn't want people to sit and listen to him. Doesn't want people to sit and talk to him. Doesn't want anything. That doesn't mean they don't have preferences but it means that the non realisation of the preference is not a thwarting and creates no suffering. And most people want slightly warmer climate, a little bit more money, little more of intense orgasm. Whatever you know, so that, yeah. When you really don't mind, only when you really don't mind are you really not interested in liberation. And you're really not interested in lib-

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eration when you're liberated. So I'm just wandering how does all this relate to teaching yoga and the first thing that jumped into my mind was, well, you know it could well be that a lot of your students are going to be closer to liberation than you. It could even be that some of them are liberated. Can you think of any that are maybe quite liberated?

*Definitely. Nearly all of them!*

So if that's true and you're helping them, perhaps it's necessary that you're not liberated in order to help people. Can you bare the possibility of that? Can you give liberation to others? Can you be a bodhisattva?

*But the only reason that I said yes when you said how many students can you think that are, is because they of course they appear to be because I love them and there's a love thing going on, so.*

Well you and I both know who we're referring to, one of your students in particular.

*Yes. Absolutely.*

Who you know, the lack of liberation in her is superficial, cultural and easy to get rid of and you are going to come across that all the time: people who are fundamentally free but who have these little chains that you don't have, but you can help them with.

Okay, enough.

