

Patience and Equanimity.

Dharma roadside dialogue series

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We are going to talk about a topic that was requested, a topic about patience and equanimity. I think it's always very actual, I mean it's always something we have to work with, right? So basically, what is patience? Patience is a training that helps us be more steady and open-hearted in the face of difficulty, whether it is difficult people or circumstances. And Patience will entail cultivating courage. Skillful courageousness and mindfulness and also tolerance. That's basically what this training is about. When we feel that others are hurting or inconveniencing us we react with various forms of anger and irritation, and instead of looking to strike back, the usual MO, but when it comes to the paramitas however, we try to remain unwavering like a mountain; at least not seeking revenge or harboring deep resentment inside our hearts. Tolerance is a very powerful antidote to anger. So that's basically the idea of the training of patience, but I'd like to reframe it in a larger picture.

Patience is a training, as I described it, but it is part of a series of training that are training in the six transcendent qualities, or the 6 paramitas. Starting with generosity and ethics, patience comes third, enthusiastic effort or diligence is fourth, or perseverance, if you will. And then also of course, this will be supported by training in stabilization of the mind, or meditation we would say. And all of that creates the fertile ground from which wisdom, discernment which is the sixth paramita, can arise. But I would say that if you don't have the sixth paramita, the first five qualities remain sort of blind. They are still trapped in the dualistic framework; it's always a subject that is generous towards an object, or patient, or has effort regarding such and such tasks. It's always in the framework or duality, so it's not really free from that. It's only with the sixth quality that a transcendence, the *ita* of paramita is transcendence, the transcendence will be experienced.

But it cannot arise by itself, otherwise it would have been already present and we wouldn't even have to be here today to talk about things, so obviously there is a path leading to this. But it's not so much a path of construction, I think it is more a path of deconstruction. I think through generosity and patience and ethics and so on, we learn to get rid of unnecessary stuff that clutters our mind, that comes from habit, karma, emotional patterns and reactions such as anger, grasping, desire, jealousy and whatnot; fundamentally ignorance. So I would say that the main obstacle to patience is a lack of awareness of the reality of this situation. And I think that impatience comes from not knowing what is happening, and only operating on the assumption of what is happening, which is just a personal subjective description of the situation which is based on our own preferences and habits and whatnot. And of course the answer will be based on these assumptions that such is the thing happening.

But it's very difficult to tackle impatience directly from the point of view of wisdom, directly from the point of view of absolute reality. And that's why we have to work from the other angle, which is

cultivating patience. Now, this being said, if we ignore the real cause of impatience, which is a deep ignorance of the situation, even if we cultivate patience, it will never be really complete, and will never transcend, there will always be some remnants, there will always be some resentment. You know, “I made so much effort, I made so many concessions and it doesn’t work, this and that situation just doesn’t work out because of this, that and the other thing, etc, etc....who is to blame? We’re always in “who is to blame?”

And so that is why I wanted to start with, first, the real fundamental cause for impatience, which is ignorance. In a way, just like in mind-training literature whether it is either Chekawa Yeshe Dorje or Shamar Rinpoche in his book *The Path to Awakening*, they describe how to cultivate bodhicitta, they cultivate it through one angle, which is to look at it from the ultimate reality and the other, which is to look at it from the relative reality, or actually look from both sides simultaneously. But the explanation begins from looking at it from an ultimate reality angle or point of view. And as the ultimate reality of impatience is that, just like a dream, what appears seems to be real, but it only appears as real, it is not truly real. It is real in a certain context, it’s real in the context of dualistic clinging, it is real in the sense of I truly believe in the existence of me and that person as autonomous and independent and substantial, it’s sort of an exaggeration of what is happening, we make it more real than it is. But we don’t know how to do otherwise, because what is the alternative?

The alternative is to deny that this is happening, which is just as ridiculous as asserting that it exists. So we’re sort of between a rock and a hard place here, because if we buy into the solidity or substantial reality of these situations, then of course there are a thousand reasons to be upset, and then to retaliate. There is no doubt about it, it’s what we do all the time.

On the other hand, if we just simply deny the reality of this, it’s not bringing any solution, we live in a fantasy of nothing exists, and if you can protect yourself and live in an environment where nothing harms you, you can say, like, oh yeah, it’s true. But as soon as you collide with reality, then you wake up from your fantasy of nothing is happening. Okay? This is what happened to a lot of people when they realized that minorities are oppressed. “Oh, I didn’t know that.” Yeah, because you are a part of this world where you are not oppressed, you’re a middle-aged white male; everything is cool for you. It’s fine.

But if you look at another angle, another segment of the population, you see that there is a lot of suffering. So you wake up, in common terms you say you become “woke.” You wake up to this reality. So we cannot live or find resolution when we claim the substantial reality of the situation, but we cannot either find a lasting solution when we deny what’s happening. So how do we find a balance?

Basically, by a step by step training, beginning by understanding how impatience comes, and what is, number one, the true basis on which impatience may arise. That’s number one, and number two, how this happened, what is the process, what is the genesis of impatience, if you will? So the first

point is ignorance; mind doesn't know itself. Mind ignores itself. In a deep sense. Let's take an example. When you are dreaming; whatever happens to you when you are dreaming is actually very similar to what happens to you in the wake state. There's no difference, it's the same thing. Everything is real, everything is solid, you are the protagonist, and things are happening to you and it's damn real. But if you step out of the dream, let's say you become aware that you are dreaming, it is not true; you know this is just a dream.

You know, sometimes there is some sort of detail that is anachronic or out of place, or whatever as you dream, and there is a sort of awakening to the dream. As you dream, you are still dreaming! But you tell yourself, "This is a dream." There is no reality to this. But, at the same time, it is still happening. Somewhat there's a part of you that believes in the reality of what's happening, or let's say, is sensitive to what's happening. You may be happy, you may be scared, and all of that is pretty real. But it's only real, and there's no way to deny this level of reality, in the context of the dream experience. When you wake up from the dream experience you realize that all the things you were dreaming that were "real," were not true.

So that's the basis, the innards, when you are dreaming and you don't know you are dreaming. Your mind doesn't know that the protagonist is merely the cognizance of mind, mind's own quality of being cognizant, on which you superimpose a sort of accoutrement, a sort of disguise onto the subject, the protagonist. And what is experienced is not seen for being the natural creativity of mind; that comes from the subconscious, this is all the things I have stored in my mind...memories, likes and dislikes, preferences of a sort and so on. They create this experience. We don't know this when we are dreaming. What we see is just the first level of reality, we don't see the deeper level of reality, and so that's why the dream experience can be either pleasant or extremely unpleasant. We can have nightmares. And all sorts of things can happen, mind's creativity is endless, limitless, all kinds of things can happen in this very fertile mind.

So that's the ignorance, and ignorance doesn't mean that you are stupid. In your dream you can be really good at making money, you can know how to make your way through life and everything, you can discuss with people and have opinions and quote thinkers and philosophers or books you've read, you're not dumb, ignorant doesn't mean dumb. Ignorant means you are ignorant of reality because you are trapped on one level which is subjective manifestation. So that is the real deep ground for impatience.

Now let's go into the dream, let's say, and how does impatience manifest in the dream? There's three main categories that you find in Buddhist literature when it is talking about impatience. The first one is the very classic form of impatience. We're impatient with what we define as enemies...troublemakers. That's the very basic thing, whatever is hurting me or inconveniencing me, is an enemy and becomes the cause of my impatience.

The second type of impatience that is listed in the Buddhist literature is an impatience related to the study and the practice and the realization of the Buddhist path. When we study we are confronted with topics that are very deep and are very elaborate and somewhat very complicated, intellectually speaking, and so we may lose patience when studying this. It maybe feels too complicated or like we just can't get it. We don't have the patience it takes to receive the information, contemplate, debate. You know, we want an instant result. And this has been really enhanced, or strengthened in our society with this desire to have effortless instant results. You know, make it quicker, make it more efficient, bigger, better, faster, more. Very American;~} But somewhat western, everybody now who belongs in this what we call western world, because that could be Hong Kong, that could be Indonesia, Europe, or the USA or elsewhere, it's the same idea, this kind of a post-industrial mentality. Bigger, better, faster, more. Produce more at less cost, and all of this.

We also want instant results on our path. We want the biggest return on the smallest investment. *We need patience with these difficult topics* wouldn't only be just when we study them. It takes time; to receive the instruction, to really understand what it means, and then to think about it and see how relevant it is to your situation by contemplating. And then eventually, of course, using the instructions on meditation, put them into practice, so that from an intellectual understanding of the view, that is what these teachings are talking about, you come to an actual experience of it. It's not merely intellectual, it's not exotic information; this is you.

This is how you feel, this is how you understand reality....something has happened. Moving from merely an intellectual understanding to a living experience that will also have an influence on your actions. Once you have this experience your actions will not be the same. How you relate to the world, and how you communicate and so on and so forth; how you behave in general will change. You can understand, easily, that this takes time, several decades minimum. We're not talking days, we're not even talking in years, we're talking decades; and a serious commitment. It's not a hobby. It's a transformative path. So you need patience.

But sometimes we would like to have a quicker result, which is another form of impatience. And then the third aspect of impatience is impatience with the ups and downs of life. Life has a lot of ups and downs, you know; it's a roller coaster, you probably figured that out by now. Sometimes it's light and easy and sometimes it's heavy and strenuous, and you really have to put a lot of effort into it. Sometimes it's extremely complicated and it seems that there is no way out, and it seems you are trapped, lost in a maze. But that also becomes a source of a lot of impatience. We want to get out of the maze quickly. And then you get excited, and when you get excited you don't think straight, then when you don't think straight you go in the wrong direction, so you get deeper into the maze.

So these are the three aspects of impatience, or the cause of impatience. One, what we call the enemy, two, the difficulty of the evolution of the path through study, reflection, and meditation; on the Buddhist path, because that's what I am talking about here. And then thirdly, impatience regarding the ups and downs of our daily life. So how are we going to work with that?

First: The enemy.

That connects with the other part of the theme, which is patience and equanimity. I want to say a few words about equanimity as I deal here first with enemies. Shantideva, in *The Bodhicaryavatara, The Way of the Bodhisattva*, explained that friends and enemies are relative and subjective notions that are constantly changing. And if you look at it with a little bit of distance and not in a passionate way, friends are friends because mostly they do not disturb us. They are our friends because they please us; I mean they are our friends in our understanding, we label them as friends, basically they please us. We have good times with them. If we have a friend who is a little bit too challenging, sort of like for our sake, telling us the truth all the time, like when we are going in the wrong direction this friend will say, “Hey, you shouldn’t do that. You’re totally wrong about this.” If that friend does that everyday, very soon he will stop being your friend, because they’re just a pain, why don’t they just enjoy life? So your appreciation of this friend might change with time.

Enemies are the situations or the people that are hurting or challenging or inconveniencing us, basically. All of that is relative, subjective reality. When somebody exposes your hidden faults, of course it’s very inconvenient and you feel ashamed and you feel embarrassed; you shouldn’t be embarrassed because somebody exposed you, but you should be embarrassed because you had something that needed to be exposed. The problem is not in being exposed, the problem is in having something that is wrong. If it happens to be exposed, that’s another thing. And if you are really on the path, that is you are in this process of discovering the true nature of mind, and removing everything in the mind that sort of inhibits this experience. Then you will be really happy. It’s kind of a sweet and painful point, you know, like, like everybody, I’ve got my dirty laundry and sometimes there’s a little part of me that wishes I was exposed, but at the same time I don’t want to be exposed, because if this was exposed I wouldn’t have to pretend...that would be lighter. It would be easier, and then I could really face this problem and change. But I don’t want to do that, because I like the status quo. We’re all like this, I mean, I’m not saying major things, small things, like, you go to have dinner or lunch with a friend and then at the end you look at the check and say, “Oh, I didn’t have the bread, I only had half of it.” And your friend says, “You’re really stingy.” And you hate this, you say, like, “No, no, it has to be divided fairly, I’m not stingy, it’s just fair.” No, it’s actually a fairness that’s a cover-up for your stinginess. Pay for the whole bread, what’s the problem? Then that’s how you got into an argument with your friend, and then this friend stops being your friend. And it’s in the “folder” of I don’t want to have lunch with that guy or girl anymore.

So friends and enemies and “frenemies” are a very subjective reality. From the point of view of someone on the path to enlightenment, what do we need? We need circumstances, or people, that help us to get a better look at ourselves so that we can see flaws that we haven’t noticed, so that we can work on them and enhance ourselves. Whether it is in terms of, say, generosity, the opposite of stinginess, or ethics, the opposite of carelessness, or patience, the opposite of impatience, or meditation, the opposite of a scattered mind, energy’s opposite is laziness, and wisdom’s opposite is confusion. Whatever exposes the lack of or an insufficiency of generosity and points out my

stinginess, is good. It's not pleasant, but it's deeply good. It's helpful, because I can see it, and I can address it and enhance myself. I can free myself from the clutter of stinginess. Stinginess comes from having a mind that is very closed around its own security and satisfaction; all of this brings you back eventually to the ground which is ignorance. Extreme attachment to a me that needs to be secured, and so on and so forth. So by working on stinginess you come to ignorance. By working on carelessness you come to ignorance. You can't miss it. I mean, you can miss it if you don't want to be aware, but if your intention is to be aware, you can't miss it.

So these are friends, or allies; support. Call it whatever you want. They are only hurting your pretense, they're hurting the image you try to project of yourself in the world so that people appreciate and like you and so on. So from the point of view of a truth seeker, it is good. So these are truly friends, but sometimes it's a little bit hard, and maybe sometimes we want to have a break. "Could you just be a "nice" friend today, and not point out my flaws?" And that's okay too. And that's why we have both friends; we have the soft, tender friends, with whom we have a loving time and pleasure and good moments, and then we have at times, maybe the same person or somebody else, rougher friends that help us to wake up. But in both cases they're friends, hence the equanimity. We see them as friends from that point of view. From that point of view they are friends of my inner development. That's where the equanimity is.

From the other perspective, what is pleasant or unpleasant to me in a very subjective way, then yes, you have friends and enemies. But even that is not fixed. Your friend of today can become your enemy tomorrow. And those who become your enemy tomorrow are the worst enemies, because they know all of your secrets, since you were friends before, and you told them everything about yourself, and now they are on the other side, and they use the information you gave them against you. So that's the first form of patience; we find patience when we are able and willing to use every circumstance and every person as a platform for deepening your understanding of the nature of mind, and becoming more aware of the flaws that need to be liberated. And there will be equanimity because everybody will be contributing in their own way; a softer way or in a rougher way.

Two: The patience regarding Dharma.

When we study, what we realize is that all this new information that we receive through reading or listening to lectures or teachings, are actually rocking our world. Especially when we've reached a certain age, let's say mid-life, we've already established our philosophy on a few basic things, and we don't want to question that too much. Actually we are trying to find things that will comfort us and stabilize our views. So we tend to read books that comfort our position, we tend to have conversations with people that will comfort our position; if it's too confrontational in that our foundations are questioned and you are brought to a point where you have to really question your foundation and maybe see that, hey, what I've based my life upon is not that valid. It has not been validated, it's invalid, and that's scary. And that's why we don't question it most of the time. We need to have courage in the process of exploration and study, and we need to have curiosity.

Curiosity is very important, we have to keep this taste for discovery of new things. After a while in our life for some earlier, others later, we don't want more things to rock the boat. That's fine, just don't come and rock my world, that's fine. But we're stuck, because maybe some things are true and valid, but a lot of them are assumptions, just habits that we have never questioned, and so we're stuck, we don't progress. So if we're truth-seekers, if we are looking for the true nature of mind and reality, being stuck is the worst thing, because you've stopped the process. One has to be open to new things and new possibilities and to listen and think about it and see if they are valid or invalid and see how they relate to what "I" have discovered myself, and who is right and who is wrong. Is it the new information that is right, or is it my "old" information? So there is a process of study and confrontation, and all of that somewhat shakes your world, it's not comfortable; and that's why you may be a little bit reluctant. There's a form of impatience, you know? *I don't want to see that, things are fine the way they are, don't come and disturb me with your new thing, I have enough.* That's another form of impatience.

We have an impatience that is related to coming back to *how my world was*. How comfortable it was before *you came in with your not so funny ideas*. There is an illustration in Buddhist literature of the snake entering the tube. Once you have entered the tube of truth-seeking there's only one way, keep going. You can't go back. Nor can you go right or left; you may feel a little bit claustrophobic at times, because you would like to get back to the old days when you were so unconscious and could just party and do whatever you wanted, they were so cool. But it's too late! You've been infected by the virus of curiosity and discernment, and you can not step back, it's almost impossible. If you really wanted, of course, you could totally sedate your awareness and pretend nothing happens, but it's very unlikely. So there's a form of patience then...and how do you cultivate this patience regarding the teachings? By giving time to time; it will take time. And there's something that is really beautiful that is called maturity. Ripening.

When I was in Europe this summer I met friends that I have known, some of them, for twenty or thirty years, and we have been companions on the Dharma path. It was really beautiful and inspiring to see how much they've matured in their Dharma practice, and of course their Dharma practice now doesn't look like it did twenty years ago. It's less formal, it's less repeating things or doing things because we have been told it would be the right way to do it, but it's more talking from the actual experience. The Dharma sort of merges in the stream of their mind and they express it in their own particular way; through their actions, through whatever their profession is, or as parents, or as a regular citizen, they express Dharma. And they are still seekers, still looking for the true nature of mind, and the true nature of phenomena, confronting everyday the things that need to be abandoned and things that need to be modified and things that have to be discovered, but I found it in a very relaxed and a very friendly way...it's less dogmatic and less violent I could almost say; more in agreement with their deep nature, more true, more real; it's beautiful.

While I was in Vienna, my friend Thule, who has been documenting everything on video and audio since the invention of the camera:~} said, "I was working on my archives and I dug out this little

piece.” It’s an interview of me made by a friend of mine, Christian Loidl, in 1993, so 28 years ago, and it was really interesting to see and listen to myself answering the questions how I was 28 years ago. That was quite revealing. On the one hand it was quite interesting because what I said I could still say today, there was nothing I would disavow. But the way it was delivered...I was so deadly serious. My wife said, when she watched this, she said, “You didn’t crack a smile, not till the end of the interview!” And another friend of many, many years, she wrote on Facebook a comment I really liked, she said, “You were so old then, you’re much younger now.”

That’s true, and that’s maturity. I’m not the only one, I’m not a unique specimen, you know. I’ve met a lot of friends and we’ve been traveling the Dharma path together and they have this maturity in their own way and it’s very soothing to see that, because maybe there is this impatience like, “When are we going to reach enlightenment, what will it look like, did I make any progress on my path, what level am I at?” All of these questions are an expression of your impatience. They’re irrelevant and a little bit humorous. You still have these questions, really? You are where you are, and you’re doing what you do. Your Buddha mind is still there, was there, will be there...so just don’t panic. Okay? The more relaxed you are, the more you can let your mind abide in a relaxed fashion the closer you are to it. And Gampopa said, “Whoever is able to let their mind rest in relaxed awareness is the best meditator. If you’re sort of relaxed, then you are an average meditator. If you are unable to sit in relaxed awareness, you are a poor meditator.”

So if you have this attachment to how things should be done, the “should be,” then your mind is so busy with that, that there is no space for relaxed mind. Therefore you cannot see the mind because the mental consciousness is busy producing an image of perfection of mind. So the achievement and the desire for achievement can be the worst obstacle in your practice and in your path of the discovery of the true nature of mind. But on the other hand, if you just don’t do anything, you just remain as you were to begin with. This is a fine line to find, and that’s partly where patience is needed. You can also translate it as forbearance. It’s not easy but you keep doing it. And you keep doing it because you’re becoming more and more relaxed; you’re opposing less and less resistance. You’re changing from being a rock to becoming water; you can block rocks, but you cannot stop water, the water always finds a way. So that’s how we can cultivate patience in relation to the impatience we have on the path to enlightenment.

Third: coping with the ups and downs of life.

This reflects again a fixation in mind, like, “I must be happy.” I’m so tired of this happiness thing. Like one day you’re happy, the next day not so happy....so what? It’s not about being unhappy or not, it’s what you do with both. Are you learning something from it? If you’re obsessed with happiness, your mind is only running after these mental representations of happiness, and as you do that you have no space whatsoever for your awareness to look at itself. You’re sort of mesmerized by these obsessive thoughts of happiness. And now it’s, you know, happiness has been merchandised. You have courses, you have books, how to be happy, and it is like if you are not

happy you are a failure. You've got all these classes, all these seminars, Deepok Chopra is going to help you! Whatever, these merchants of happiness. And if you are not happy, it's because "you're so dumb," "you don't even understand," "you're lazy," "you don't practice," so happiness has become an object, an artifact, that has a recipe and if you follow the recipe then you have it, and then you can hold it and show it around. Then you can brag because you are so "happy."

This is what is happening on all this social media. I'm actually on social media a lot, observing this, because it's kind of like a picture of our time, it's really a snapshot. I'm watching on youtube, I'm watching on Facebook, and now I'm into tik tok! This is supposed to be a kids thing, but it's really interesting, because it's very short, less than a minute. And then they show you how happy they are; showing their body, how beautiful they are, or something funny, how witty they are, or the car they drive...so everybody is exhibiting evidence of their "happiness." It's all fake! It's all fake. You can't stay like this forever. With pursed lips...only for a snapshot. "I'm so happy!!!" You know, this is the obsession of happiness. I'm sick of it! And sometimes I'm pissed, and I'm happy to be pissed, because I can look at my mind being pissed. And sometimes I'm happy because things are easy, and I had a good lunch, and now I had a good coffee, and after I will have a good nap. "Life is good." And then I can look at my mind enjoying something.

What matters is not what happens, what matters is what you do with it when you observe it; that's what matters. You are unhappy? Look at your unhappy mind. You're happy? Look at your happy mind. But do not promote happiness, the ups. I always want ups in my life. I don't want any downs. I don't want to have dead times, I want to have fun all the time. But fun only exists in opposition to boredom. At times fun becomes boring, and boring becomes fun. I like to be bored at times. It's fun. But there is always this quest for more excitement. Excitement, fun, to run away from boredom. We are not trying to have fun, we are trying to avoid boredom. We don't want to have ups, we don't want to have downs. So if you keep emphasizing how great up is, fun is, and how debilitating, humiliating, downs are, then you promote your own misery. And you're not doing what is required on the path towards the wisdom of self-awareness; you're not looking at your mind, you're looking at what your mind produces and then you get all engrossed by this excitement or depression. So you're manic or depressive, up or down. Then it becomes really a condition and you need medication.

So the ups and downs of life should be seen with equanimity, in the sense that no matter what our mind experiences it is still an opportunity to look at this mind, look at the perceiving mind are the meditation instructions. What is the mind perceiving unhappiness? What is the mind perceiving happiness? There you find patience regarding the ups and downs. It's not even patience, because you don't care whether it is up or down. It is what it is, and whatever it is allows you to look at the perceiving mind. And when you look at the perceiving mind you find that it is empty in essence but indissociable from awareness. You just abide in this experience and that's bliss. It's the best experience you can have; better than any idea you can have of fun. But it's not even bliss in the sense of an object, an artifact that you own. You haven't owned anything, you haven't gained

anything. You're just released, you free your mind from all the things that we're creating, paradoxal experiences and ups and downs. So then you're very patient.

You're very patient and, you see, what I am really trying to point out here, is that patience is not stoicism. Not, "I can take it, I can take it." Most of the time we think that patience is about "taking" it. Biting the bullet. But nobody can bite the bullet forever. It's not possible. So there is a moment where you can't take it anymore, and all the things you have been repressing jump at you all at once, and then you're dead. Patience is not repression. Obviously it is not shooting whatever disturbs you, but it is not repressing the resentment you may have, the anger you may have, the reaction you may have....no, don't repress it. Own it, and be aware of it! "Yeah, I'm angry," what is the perceiving mind that perceives anger? That perceives someone as anger, what is this perceiving mind? That's how you find beyond ups and downs. You find equanimity.

Equanimity and patience, in a way, work hand in hand. If you have discernment, you see that friends and enemies are subjective reality, and so you don't get so hung up on friends and enemies. In a way you can even be comfortable sometimes when you realize that you don't have friends, because when you don't have friends, you don't have enemies. They're just people, and, you know, we're just dancing together...sometimes it's cool, and sometimes it's hot. But, whatever the steps are, whatever the dance is, I learn more about my mind. I become more efficient in relating to them in a wise and loving way. So that's fine...we dance, you step on my toes, I step on your toes, that's okay, that's dance. With the Dharma, the obsession of enlightenment, and then the panic with what seems to be a deadline; literally, the deadline is my death, "before I die I must do everything because who knows what will be my next life." Well, next life will be pretty much what you do in this life...because it's just a continuation of your old habits. Why would it change? Maybe you have a little more hair or fur because you've been a dog for so many times in your life, but now you're really a dog. But maybe it's good, being a dog you learn about unconditional love, maybe it's good.

This obsession of finishing, enlightenment as a task, like, "by the time of death I must have finished, reached a certain level, I must be free." I must this, I must that, which in the absolute sense is true, but in the relative sense, not, because it becomes an obsession. You are obsessed with success. I write the word in two syllables. Suck cess, because it sucks, this idea that you have to be performing and successful. We apply this mind set that we have about success, we apply it to the quest. It's an "until enlightenment" project, bring your lunchbox, it's going to be a long journey. And by the end of this life we have done the best we could in this lifetime, in a relaxed way, appreciating the maturity that we have developed or found, and that even if we were on the path of discovering the true nature of mind, the path of enlightenment, we remain human beings. We enjoy good conversations with friends and sharing a meal and we're not obsessed...because even sharing a meal and having a good time as friends is an opportunity to look at this mind who perceives a happy moment. Everything is a platform for discovering the true nature of mind, so why select? Why this, better than that? We create some conceptual format that this is holy, this is religious, whatever...this is just of our own making, it's just our own obsession.

Since the time of the Buddha. The Buddha says, “Look at your mind, and free yourself by seeing what your mind is.” Period. Pass the message. After that, we feel we have to create a religion, we have to create this, we just have to create that and so on. Okay, that might help, but that’s just props. It’s here to help you look at your mind...so whatever helps you to look at your mind is fine. And however you do that, that’s fine. We appreciate the path, we appreciate the journey. You know, one of the names of the Buddha, epithets, we say Buddha, and Bagawan, Tathagata, and Sugata. Gata means gone, and Su means pleasant, free, easy. So a Sugata is somebody who’s gone towards pleasantness. But the definition of the word is really, pleasantly gone. To pleasantness. That means even the path is pleasant, and the only moment where the path becomes unpleasant is when we refuse it, when we want to impose on the path our dogmas, our conceptions, and how things should be. When we are fundamentalists, then the nature of reality is rubbing against fundamentalism, and this is unpleasant. We think the path is painful, but no, you are the pain, not the path;~}

Pleasantly gone to pleasantness. The result is pleasant, the process is evermore simple and open and relaxed and aware, aware, aware...and looking at this mind. Whatever it creates, whatever it perceives, however it perceives, whatever it likes or doesn’t like, look at this mind all the time. And then everything will fall apart. All the misconceptions and the habits and all of that will go, and of course sometimes we are attached to it, so it will be a little bit painful, but eventually it will go. So that is how I really want to see your patience; it’s a patience that comes from not being impatient. You are not being impatient when abiding relaxed in the natural state of mind as often as possible.

That’s why meditation is the key to all of this. If you don’t sit with your mind now and then, if you don’t stop running around like a headless chicken, it’s never going to happen. Like if you have the most beautiful person in the world, just the person you’ve been dreaming of, but you’re running around looking for the perfect soulmate and you’re so busy projecting images of what this perfect soulmate would be, and you just miss the point. It’s just there, but we run around. Patience is to relax, be attentive, and be present to what is.