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Public Seminar: The Wheel of Life

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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN: Last night we discussed the fact of egolessness and also the notion of Yama, the Lord of Death, as being the ultimate projection of one's mind. The word "ultimate" should not be understood as "the greatest" or "the best." When we talk about ultimate we're talking about the fundamental or basic projection. The Lord of Death being the experience of the cessation of projection, or the death of one's projection, or the death of one's notion of existence, or experience of existence. And we also talked about Yamantaka. *Yamantaka* means "the conqueror of the Lord of Death." And our study is based on those two principles.

How we approach this *bhavachakra* is again two-fold: seeing the vividness of confusion and also seeing the possibility to cut through that confusion, so therefore we talk about Yama and Yamantaka. The interesting word we have here is becoming, *bhava* in Sanskrit, "becoming." We talked about mind as confusion. We talked about how the whole notion of existence began, and tonight we are going to discuss how it continues to fortify itself, solidify itself, and that is the notion of becoming. From that instant of flicker, there arises ignorance, ignorance in the sense of bewilderment. From bewilderment there is a panic, and from panic, perception and projection—we talked about that. That whole process is the nature of Yama or Yamantaka, either way.

But how to cut through the panic which arises from the flicker—or the bewilderment, rather, that arises from the flicker—flicker meaning the notion of existence of oneself—how to cut through that is by understanding the process, understanding the creation of this whole wheel, whole picture of so-called existence: *bhavachakra*. This was taught by the Buddha. The teaching here is to point out how we continually confuse ourselves and remain in the state of bewilderment, or confusion, and how we compound that confusion so it becomes the solid notion of self, or existence, the solid notion that existence is permanent and ongoing.

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So, becoming. The sense of becoming is perpetuation of ignorance. The sense of becoming is impulse or tendency to grasp. The tendency to perpetuate ignorance by creating, projecting, manifesting our supposed world, our notion of the world, our version of world—in other words, our tendency to create an outside in order to confirm the inside. In order to confirm the bewilderment, we have to create a world. We have to create something to rely on. That happens very quickly, in rapid succession in terms of mental events, in terms of a flicker of thoughts and the continuation of that flicker and bewilderment. That basic ignorance, basic confusion is based on speed. How fast we can recreate our panic is how solid we think we are. This speed or jumpiness, shakiness, whatever you would like to call it, the tendency to jump at whatever, at what we think is there, takes place in the realm of mind, as we talked about yesterday. And that realm of mind is the self-created world of confusion, and that self-created world is also the creation of pain, or suffering. And we could say that the whole picture, representation, of the wheel of life, the wheel of becoming, rather, is the self-creation of continual pain, or continual suffering, self-inflicted suffering.

If you look at that representation, you see the continuing circles, which indicates the notion of creating something to sustain the basic ignorance, the basic notion of bewilderment, creating something further, and further, and further. And creating it so fast, projecting it so fast that there's no chance actually to stop and see the process of projection, the process of self-created pain. So this process is based on the tendency to create something out of panic, and to perpetuate it with the speed of one's panic. And what we create, once again, on the whole, is the notion of existence.

How we do that, in a very fundamental way, how we do that fundamentally in terms of creating the relationship between mind and its projections, is three-fold, and the three-fold process is called the three poisons. I suppose you've heard about that: passion, aggression and ignorance. How we do that is by a flicker of thought beginning to arise in the mind, which is, mind in this case is we're talking about the basic notion of being confused and bewildered. The flicker of thought begins to arise, and from that, the tendency to grasp at the thought that arises is the first thing that solidifies our existence. The thought arising and the notion of grasping, or the feeling of grasping at that thought, trying to hold on to it, which gives rise to another one, and another one, and another one. And that's called passion.

And the basic feeling of what's happening is trying to attract one's own projections back to you—that's what we try to do. Something arises and we try to bring it back and possess it. Do you understand what I'm saying? Goes on in your mind? Arises, thought arises, pleasant or unpleasant, and you try to possess it, bring it back. Try to solidify the existence of oneself by the thought that arises, try to bring it back, hold on to it and grasp it. Attraction. That's kind of the first way we solidify our ignorance, our bewilderment, by holding on to the flicker, which we talked about last night.

The problem there is that the flicker itself is our own projection, the thoughts are our own projection. So we try to possess our own projection, which comes up rather empty. Because they are our own projections, they are basically unsatisfying. "They" meaning feelings, concept, consciousness, all the skandhas we're talking about...you've heard about. The result of perception and the

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conclusion of our perceptions are unsatisfying because they're self-created, like masturbation. Playing with oneself and creating a fantasy about that doesn't quite work, somehow. And then we feel dissatisfied, which produces resentment, and the next: aggression, anger. Because our projections weren't satisfying, we get angry about that, so angry that we tune out, become numb, which is called ignorance. Not basic ignorance, but ignorance in the sense of ignoring what just happened completely.

Now if you look at that representation of the bhavachakra, passion is a rooster. It's kind of going like this [gestures], and aggression is a snake, trying to get out of it, and ignorance is a pig, kind of a [makes snorting noise]. The whole notion here is each one is feeding on the other and creates a perpetual, continuous confusion. The rooster is biting the tail of the snake, the snake is biting the tail of the pig, the pig is after the rooster, and on it goes. So what we do all the time is because we are so bewildered, we try to attract our bewilderment, basically, and then when it's not satisfying we throw it off, and when that doesn't work we try to ignore the whole thing.

So that little wheel turns in our head all the time, all the time, keeps spinning around, passion aggression and ignorance, spins around, creates bigger wheel, because that in itself is not satisfying. We have to enrich that, you know, make it more, because we're still worried about existence. Spinning around. It's like loosening the rope—gets bigger, starts to escalate. Just like those three feed on each other, they produce a spin-off of further emotion, a further escalation of passion, aggression and ignorance, a further sense of how to "deal" with it. You know that? People say, "How are we going to deal with it?" How are you actually going to relate with it? Deal with it? Well, we fall for that too; fall for it completely. "There must be a way to deal with it. How am I going to deal with it? Let's see, how can I deal with it?"

Very quickly we learn how to deal with it by what is described as the six realms. How we deal with it. And again, those six realms are divided into three: passion, aggression and ignorance. And each one has two realms involved with it. The whole idea of realm here is the spinning of one's desire, aggression and ignorance becomes so fast that it begins to widen itself. So speedy that it begins to widen itself, becomes more and more interested in one's projections as real. You see? Our friend Yama is becoming more and more real to us, death is becoming more and more present. The more we spin, the more we start to create Yama, that fellow who's at the end of the whole thing. Remember, we talked about last night? At the end of the whole process, with teeth and claws, holding on to everything, we're creating that, right now, as we go along, creating our own death. How do we do that? Because we're so clever at perpetuating passion, aggression and ignorance, so clever at inflicting pain on ourselves, torturing ourselves.

The realms of passion are the human realm and the hungry ghost realm. The human realm is characterized by desire and lust. Chasing after our projections as something desirable and better than what we are. That's the realm of passion: something better, always, so we go after it. And hungry ghost is that when we're unsatisfied we get greedy, and want more of it. Greed and envy, that we can't have enough of it. So that's the realm of passion.

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The realm of aggression is the jealous gods and hell realms. Because we can't have enough of it, we become jealous of something we don't even know exists. But we imagine that there's something better, and we become jealous about that. That so and so has it, we don't have it. And then we begin to dislike. We begin to have dislike of the others, so-called others, who have it. More than that, we become threatened by them, the ones who have it. We're talking about our projections right now, I hope you understand that. An extension of that aggression realm is that, because we're threatened we get angry, and we begin to hate, and we develop aversion to anybody else, and we're constantly inflicting pain on ourselves because we have such hatred for everybody or anything that's outside. The whole thing, at this point, is thinking there's something outside and dealing with it in these ways, relating to it, dealing with it. Hmm? Okay?

Then there's the other realm of ignorance, which has to do with the animal realm, that just completely turn off to the whole thing, just act stupid. The best way to exist is to act stupid. Not notice any of that passion and aggression, and just plod along, act stupid, and be obstinate about being stupid. Continue to be stupid, and therefore just be dull all the time, so we don't have to feel any of that other stuff. And it takes its epitome in the god realm, of making ourselves so immune that we actually experience forgetfulness, we forget about pain completely. We're so immune that we forget about pain to the point where we become dull and lazy and self-involved, so much so that we actually don't hear anything, see anything, any more.

So that's how it begins, and that's how it progresses. What we are talking about is a sense of conquering that extension of ignorance by the practice of meditation. The practice of meditation is, in a few words, not giving ground to bewilderment. You know, last night I heard, actually I heard from several people that people heard the talk, said it was "groundless." Yes, I hope so. Groundless is not giving ground to this whole process, actually making some sort of halt, not giving ground to the whole process, which involves the practice of meditation.

Because what we're talking about is not perpetuating bewilderment on a very basic level, and further, not perpetuating bewilderment's extension into form, being, as belief in existence. Being, you know? We feel we really are. We don't think we think. I mean, we don't think our thoughts are all important, you know, you know we think and that's okay, because we think, and we label them thinking, thinking, you know, then we feel better about that. But basically we're talking about this notion of being. It's okay to think and all the rest of it, act and, you know, have friends, not, make love, not, have a bank account, not, all the rest of that is pretty much arbitrary, but we still feel that we are. We cling to the notion of being.

So practice of meditation is not giving ground to mind's sense of being, because, generally speaking, our sense of being occurs in mind. It occurs as an afterthought, so to speak, an echo of the flicker. So by the practice of meditation we begin to cut that pattern, sense of pattern, which is called *karma*, cause and effect. Pattern, developing a pattern so that it becomes a solid thing. We talked about last night: you look at a thing from far away, it looks perfectly solid, you get up close, it has cracks. That sense of patterning is called karma. And by sitting practice we actually stop patterning. We'll talk about karma more tomorrow.

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So I think that's all for tonight. If you have any questions, we could have a discussion.

QUESTION: Last night you were talking about how, what you were just talking about now, the moment to moment thing, when you get up close to an object, it's full of cracks, and we're each made of individual...well, I wasn't there last night, I just heard the tape. Do you want to clarify that, is the moment-to-moment thing that was separate, it's not the one thing that we think it is, right? Ourselves.

VR: Yes.

Q: Well, you're mentioning karma.

VR: I mentioned karma, yes.

Q: Well, let's say in a fit of rage, okay, I shoot someone. Now, would-

VR: Okay, did you say? [Laughter]

Q: -that mean I could just, you know, let that moment go because that was that moment, and then...

VR: Well, that's what we're talking about tonight, you see. That's what aggression is all about. You shoot someone, and then you get more aggressive by doing that, which leads to shooting someone else. It builds on itself, feeds on itself. Or you shoot someone and kill them, and then you get numb about the whole thing, and then you get passionate about your gun. And then you have your gun as great, and then you shoot someone, and then you get numb about the whole thing. [Laughter] It's not all that funny. Why are you laughing? That's actually what happens. When you are angry, right, when you're angry at somebody, happens just like that, because you want something. You want to grasp at something from them. You get so into it, and they say "no," and then you get angry and you fight, and then you just block the whole thing out, and then you start all over again, very fast.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Well, I think you're welcome.

QUESTION: I'm a little unclear about the connection between the pig biting the tail of the rooster. Does the ignorance...?

VR: Does it look like that on the thing? Has anybody seen that? Does the pig actually bite the rooster? Yes, yes. Okay.

Q: Okay. And then...does the ignorance fall back into the basic flicker-ness which gives rise to passion directly...

VR: That's right. Directly.

Q: ...so the ignorance doesn't give rise to passion...

VR: Yes, yes.

Q: Is it a circle or does it go up and then come back down and then...

VR: It's a circle. The whole thing is a circle. Samsara is called a wheel, you see? When you think you're on it, like, you know, that little mouse going on the treadmill? The circle is going around, but you're standing still. And you think you're going around.

Q: Could the pig bite the tail of the snake, or is it all...

VR: Not generally, generally it goes that way. Passion, aggression ignorance, passion, aggression ignorance, generally goes that way. Just think about your own experience.

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Q: It feels better to bite, to be passionate first, that's true. Because it feels better.

VR: Yes, passion comes first, then you feel disappointed, then you feel stupid, and then you feel passionate, disappointed and stupid, you know.

Q: Okay. It feels better that way. Thank you.

VR: Father Brown?

QUESTION: You talked at one point about that basic confusion is based on speed and how fast we can recreate our own panic. Could you explain that a little bit?

VR: That's the whole notion of flicker. That something occurred and there's kind of [gasp]—just like that. It happens very fast. There's kind of—the notion of existence occurs in such a small space, such quick space, that that creates the panic, you see. Something arises very quickly and there's an echo involved there, space involved there. In other words, egolessness is involved, right there.

Whenever something occurs, egolessness is involved.

Q: But I don't understand how we recreate our own panic. Because of egolessness?

VR: We?

Q: That's what you said.

VR: Yes, we.

Q: We can recreate—how fast we can recreate our own panic.

VR: Right. How fast can we do it? That's the whole notion of continuation of pain. How long do we stick in our pain? How long does it take us to realize that we don't have to do it this way? Well, how long? Somehow our memory is very short. That's why I'm talking about speed, you see? The speed of the whole thing. That we actually feel the whole sense of panic and bewilderment, we feel it, and then suddenly we forget and start all over again. Very quickly.

Q: Okay, now you're talking about forgetting and starting over again, but this is before passion, aggression and ignorance, isn't it?

VR: That's right. That's how we continue it, though. We continue it by just giving up. I don't know if that answers you, Mr. Brown.

Q: I think it does.

VR: I hope so. Well, we can try again if you like.

Q: Well, I had...

VR: Another one?

Q: ...another question about pain. Where's—you said the self-created world of mind is the result of pain.

VR: No—that is pain.

Q: Okay.

VR: Yes.

Q: Thank you.

QUESTION: In relation to that question on panic, I've previously thought that in some ways panic was sudden awakening. And then we do things to cover it up, we do things to somehow deal with our panic.

VR: Mmm-hmm.

Q: ...so that when I first heard you say that about recreating panic, I thought maybe there might be some sense there of how we continually cover up our panic. How fast can we cover up our panic. As opposed to how fast can we recreate it. But maybe I'm not understanding.

VR: No, you're understanding. But what I'm saying is that panic is secondary.

Q: After first skandha or [inaudible] that is?

VR: No. No, no. First skandha is the result of panic.

Q: Yes.

VR: Yes. How we begin to believe in our existence is the result of panic, at a flicker.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Middle way.

QUESTION: So if we continue by giving up, and we're not giving up from something, then there's no particular point at which it's more preferable to give up than any other point. Is that correct?

VR: [Laughs] Well, I'll tell you, Ben. If we continue to give up, I think we're making a big mistake.

Q: [Laughs] I'm sorry, what was that?

VR: [Laughs] I said, if we continue to give up, I think we're making a big mistake.

Q: Hmm.

VR: Continuing to give up is very fishy. Who's continuing to give up?

Q: Did I say that?

VR: I don't know. I just said it.

Q: Oh, you said it.

VR: I just said who's continuing to give up. What did you say? Memory is short.

Q: Yes.

VR: You said, if I might remind you, you said, "by continuing to give up"...and I said, if you continue to give up, that's very fishy. [Laughs]

Q: Well, maybe it didn't happen.

VR: What do you mean, maybe? You think it didn't? Ooh. Such a short memory. Maybe the whole thing didn't happen. Well, let's forget it. I mean really, what's the point? Shit. Oh, but on the other hand...maybe we could pursue it further. But there's no point, actually. So let's forget the whole thing. Well, Ben, there's no way you can continue to give up. That's sort of flirting with existence. Wonderful, isn't it? Could be. [Laughs] Primordial gentlemen in the back?

QUESTION: Hello. Since I think perhaps some of us think that we can escape from this wheel, could you comment a little about how passion and the human realm gives us, perhaps, this opportunity?

VR: Well, first, I would like to comment on escape. That there is no possibility of escape from this wheel. Because escape in itself is perpetuation of that. But there is possibility of conquering. How does passion do that, did you say?

Q: Right, well, you related passion...

VR: You mean, like a human realm?

Q: Right.

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VR: Yes. How does human realm do that? Well, I suppose if you stick to your guns, so to speak, basic instinct, then if you practice meditation, sitting practice of meditation, then instinct always comes up, and you can actually cut the whole process of going further. We talked about passion being the first instinct, first impulse to hang on to your thoughts. So if you practice meditation, say, don't hang on to your thoughts and let them go, just label them thinking, you see. So you're working with passion to begin with, the first impulse to hang on to something. That's it.

Q: Thanks.

VR: [Inaudible] in the back there.

QUESTION: I'm a little confused about by what you mean by giving up as opposed to dropping the attachment.

VR: I didn't say anything about giving up.

Q: Well, What did you mean, giving up?

VR: Are you talking to me or Ben? I was talking to Ben, he brought up giving up and I was giving up that and giving and giving and what, what. Did I talk about something about giving up in my talk? What did I say?

Q: I believe so. I don't quite remember.

VR: Mmm. Neither do I.

Q: Well, could you clarify giving up and dropping attachment?

VR: Attachment. Attachment is—that's a whole other thing. We'll talk about attachment tomorrow. You see, what we're talking about tonight is we haven't quite gotten to the sense of attachment yet. We're talking about how we actually blast out and sort of vomit on the world, on the space, actually. Vomit our world on ourselves and on space, all the time. Attachment comes a little bit later on, how we'd like to stay there, you know, in passion, aggression and ignorance. How we'd like to stay there and make it comfortable. That has to do with karma, we'll talk about that tomorrow. But what did I say about giving up?

Q: Well, you said something about...

VR: Does anybody remember? Marcie? Over here. At least somebody has a longer memory. At least a note pad.

Marcie: I think you said meditation is not giving ground to...[inaudible] not giving up.

VR: I never said anything about giving up, I don't remember giving up. Oh, Mr. Brown—oh, Mr. Rome. Something about giving up.

Mr. Rome: Well, I think you did say something about giving up, but it was a bit obscured [laughs; laughter].

VR: What was it?

Mr. Rome: Well, I think you said that the realms are created because of giving up, and so it sounded like giving up—

VR: Oh, my goodness.

Mr. Rome: —on awareness, or giving up on basic space.

VR: Ooh, oh. What is it you have to say, Mr. Brown? There's Mr. Brown. He has some notes there.

Mr. Brown: As I remember it, we were talking about panic, and you said at that point you give up.



VR: Oh, oh. Is that what you meant? Karl?

Karl: Well, it sounded like giving up was surrendering.

VR: Oh, that's what I thought you meant. No, no, no. That's not the giving up I was talking about.

Q: That's my question.

VR: [Laughs] Giving up in that sense, we're talking about giving up, it's defeat. Constant defeat. And constant grasping because of being defeated and not holding on to your bewilderment, you see. Because you can't hold on to being ignorant because it's so fleeting, it has not ego. And so you grasp at something, and you give that up because it doesn't satisfy you. That's the kind of giving up... thank you. [Laughs]. I was wondering if I was talking about...giving up. Gentleman behind there? Giving up. [Laughs]. What?

QUESTION: From the point of view of meditation...

VR: [Still laughing] Yes?

Q: I was wondering if there's a similarity between passion, aggression and ignorance, that...

VR: What? From the point of view of meditation is there a similarity between...

Q: Yes, from just sitting that there's some kind of aspect about all three of them that they're similar, you know, that it's some kind of...

VR: Yes, definitely, definitely, very similar [continues laughing]. Yes, what was the similarity, did you say?

Q: I didn't say yet.

VR: Well, go ahead, Gary.

Q: Well, maybe just in terms of them being energy, you know, some type of ...

VR: Right. [laughs] What? Energy?

Q: Well, there's some kind of quality of them being...

VR: Energetic? [Continues laughing.]

Q: No.

VR: What, what?

Q: Well, some kind of catch, there's some kind of catch involved with all three of them that a...

VR: Catch?

Q: Well, that your relationship to your world is improper.

VR: And that involves energy?

Q: Well, for lack of a better term, you know.

VR: Let's think about that some more, okay, before you use that word. Anybody else? Gentleman over here? [Continues laughing]

QUESTION: What is the effect of meditation and intelligence on the three poisons?  
Like how-

VR: Meditation and what?

Q: Intelligence.

VR: What intelligence are we talking about?

Q: Enlightened intelligence.

VR: Did we talk about that?

Q: No, that's why I'm asking you.

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VR: Yes, we didn't talk about that. We're talking about this whole process of imprisoning oneself, creating one's own pain. Right? That that's precipitated by something which occurs, a flicker, which is interpreted as existence, and then interpreted as "me". First flicker, existence of "me", and then the whole strategy develops from there. The point of meditation is not giving ground, we said that, not giving ground. Okay? That the first panic is called ground, right? What we call our sense of existence, ground. Okay. Meditation doesn't give ground to any sense of existence whatsoever. Meditation... have you practiced?

Q: Yes.

VR: It doesn't give any ground to existence particularly.

Q: No. Wouldn't the three poisons begin to spin, then?

VR: They spin all the time. What do you mean, "then"? You mean while you're sitting? Sure, they spin while you're sitting.

Q: I mean when you get caught. When you get caught by trying to grasp and then being frustrated and then getting angry, and then saying, oh, what the hell, forget it. Would you begin to experience that more and more as you meditate, in terms of space-

VR: Yes, that whole thing-

Q: Would it sort of spin in your mind, you would want to grasp something and then see-

VR: Yes, absolutely. And then you get angry about that, you know, like the way you practice, you'd like to grasp the technique, right, you'd like to grasp it, and then you can't, and then you get angry at yourself. You say, "I'm not practicing properly, so forget it," you know, it goes around like that? Huh, what is it? It's kind of like one of those revival meetings, "Amen, amen". Don't believe in things so easily. [Laughter]. That happens, but the whole process of meditation is that there is no ground to that whatsoever, what's spinning around, you see. That's just simply breath, which you believe is there. But if you try to... What's breath? That's very good. Thank you. Over here. Ho, ho.

QUESTION: I'm confused about last night-you talked Yamantaka, that's holding the wheel...

VR: Well, yes, no, I was a little bit of a mistake. Was a problem with the notes. Yama is holding the wheel. Yamantaka is the conqueror of the whole thing. In other words, egolessness and personification of ego. See, personification of ego is death. okay? Yamantaka is absence of death, death-less. No ego. Death involves ego, you see.

Q: Who's holding the wheel?

VR: Nobody. Yama is holding the wheel, Yama.

Q: Death.

VR: Right, death is holding the wheel.

Q: Where's the conqueror of the Lord of Death?

VR: That's the whole sense of the space around it, see? The whole sense of space around your notion of existence.

Q: Thank you.

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QUESTION: Back to panic, and experientially, it seems lately I've been feeling a lot of panic, just, you know, in everyday life. Is that like stepping back through that process from the flicker to the panic and on?

VR: Well, what kind of panic do you feel?

Q: Um, just kind of scared.

VR: Yes. You mean generally, or specifically?

Q: Fairly generally.

VR: Well, that's kind of like sophisticated notion of panic. On the other hand, it's plugging into the real thing, you see?

Q: Yes.

VR: Mmm. So you have some notion of what I'm talking about? Yes. That whole sense of our notion of panic is very sophisticated. Very much involved, evolved, rather, produced. At the same time, even though our sophisticated notion of panic plugs into the whole thing.

Q: Kind of trying to keep it together but knowing that there's no way.

VR: Which is very sophisticated process, you see.

Q: Yes. And then working back through that will somehow eventually come to a real feeling of groundlessness?

VR: Who knows?

Q: Who knows. Okay.

VR: We will work back through that, that's what we are doing. But whether or not we come to a real feeling of groundlessness is very suspect.

Q: Right, okay, got it. Okay. Thank you.

VR: Let's work back and see who remains.

Q: Right. [Laughs].

QUESTION: As this wheel of passion, aggression and ignorance is going on and on and on, is the flicker continuing as well?

VR: Yes.

Q: All the time?

VR: All the time. Flicker is the kind of sense of... let's say you have your hand on a string with a weight here, that goes around like this. This is a flicker. Basic notion of existence, and it produces passion, aggression and ignorance, it produces six realms. Gets wider.

Q: Well, you talked before of something happens, and then there's [gasp],

VR: Yes.

Q: And that's the flicker?

VR: No. Flicker is something happens.

Q: Oh, there's something happens, so there isn't anything other than the flicker?

VR: No.

Q: All right. [Laughs]

VR: Not at all. If you sit and practice, you'll realize that. There isn't anything other than that. Well, you see, whole point is realizing that, we can go further from that, but unless you realize that, the whole thing keeps going wish, wish, wish, wish, spinning around and around.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

QUESTION: At the point when there's a flicker, what makes the difference between conquering and defeat?

VR: Who knows at the point of the flicker?

Q: Nobody knows.

VR: That's right. Therefore, we panic, and we say, "Can we win? Can we lose?" At the very point of something occurring in one's mind, or, I should say, at the very point of mind occurring, we begin to wonder, "Is this threatening or is this not?"

Q: Well, can you talk about it in terms of asleep or awake?

VR: No.

QUESTION: I think my question refers to that quotation that you mentioned last night.

VR: The what?

Q: The quotation that you mentioned last night.

VR: How does it go?

Q: I'm not sure right now, but I think it was related to it.

VR: Well, you have to be sure, or otherwise...[whispering]

Q: There's a world that does not exist in your mind.

VR: Which...

Q: Ah! Well, my question is...

VR: Say it again, slowly...

Q: There is a world...

VR: Slowly...! You're English, you can say it slowly. [Laughter]

Q: There is a world which does not exist in your mind.

VR: Right. You want to break that down?

Q: Well, I was going to try and ask a question about it, actually.

VR: Well, let's break it down first. There is a world, which is existence, which does not exist, which is nonexistence, in your mind, which does not exist. Anyway, what was your question?

Q: Well, I was going to ask is there a world independent of our perception or projections-

VR: Yes, the whole thing I'm talking about.

Q: -or is the world, what we term the world merely a projection of confused mind?

VR: There is a world which does not exist in your mind.

Q: Is that basically saying the same as the whole world is a product of mind? Is mind?

VR: Well, we could break that down, actually. We could say that there is a world, which is notion of first flicker, which does not exist in your mind, which is the notion of recognizing that, nonexistence.

Q: Once you've recognized nonexistence, does that make it exist?

VR: Then there is a world which does not exist in our mind. [Addressing Joshua Zim] What would you say, Mr. Fitzgerald? [Laughs] You don't have to say anything. Listen, please, ladies and gentlemen. Let's not look for the whole thing. That's not what we're talking about. Anybody else?

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QUESTION: I'd just like to clarify the point of Mark's question.

VR: Whose?

Q: Mark.

VR: Yes.

Q: When the flicker occurs, and the choice...

VR: Choice? Who said anything about choice?

Q: We all do.

VR: I didn't.

Q: We shouldn't?

VR: I didn't.

Q: Okay.

VR: What do you mean by choice?

Q: Well...

VR: Flicker occurred. Yes...

Q: Then...

VR: Then...?

Q: Bewilderment?

VR: Seems like that. Seems strange.

Q: No.

VR: No? Seems not strange?

Q: Not at all-

VR: Then flicker occurred...

Q: Then flicker occurred.

VR: Then? Then what?

Q: Nothing. That's my question.

VR: Then? Well, nobody has the answer.

Q: But the choice did not choose.

VR: Who?

Q: Did not panic.

VR: Who? What? Well, we shouldn't inflict any pain on ourselves that way. I mean, it's really not necessary. But, you know, you have to practice, it's the only way. Otherwise, you say who? what? But I didn't, I did, I didn't really mean it, but I didn't mean it, I did. I didn't do it. I ... who? Me? You? Heavy. [Laughs] Let's see about that.

Oh, ladies and gentlemen, it's very late. It seems to be, anyway, from this point of view. All right, we're trying to go through with our study in an orderly way, according to our mind, which you should not be afraid of at this point. It involves some sense of trying to, or practicing sense of cutting the whole process of becoming so and so. Stubbert, Zim, Watson, Springer, Green-how many of you there are. Just cutting that whole process of becoming so and so, which happens through sitting practice to begin with. You realize that while you're sitting, Stubbert begins to arise, then drifts around a little bit, and then fades away. And then arises again, drifts around a little bit, fades away. And then you begin to think, now what is a Stubbert, anyway? It starts up, drifts around, and it goes away. And it continues, continues. That's called the bhavachakra. Continually becoming Mr. and Mrs. So and So, Miss, Ms., Mr., It-whatever you want to call it-this. You experience

that when you sit and practice meditation, you experience that. You experience the whole sense of becoming, the whole formation of this big thing, which is not so big after all. Seemingly big, but you look at it, no big thing.

Well, I suggest that you continue to practice. I'm sure everybody works or something like that, or people don't work. Tomorrow's Friday? Yes, so on the weekend we're going to sit a lot, hopefully, or else we're talking just nonsense. Those of you who work tomorrow and can sit in the evening, please do. But the whole point is to sit on the weekend and experience what we're talking about at least as an echo to oneself so you have some idea who's talking to whom. Or some non-idea of who's talking to whom. The best thing is practice. Other than that, it's handing out coupons and trying to pick a winner. It really doesn't matter, it's very arbitrary that way. [Long pause.] Let's not fight with ourselves. Please practice. Let's continue with our study. Thank you very much.