

Alrighty

then. Hello and welcome to question and answer number 176.

I am your host Po Basa and I am sitting before you on a Saturday evening at the time of recording this in a state of complete disabil

because it's like two days after

Christmas. I don't have anywhere to go.

Most of you, well, some of you guys

don't even look at me because you're

just listening to a podcast or

something.

So, why should I beautify myself, which

is really against Buddhist ethics

anyway?

And before I start answering questions of which there's not a whole lot because people are busy doing Christmasy holiday Saturnelia kind of stuff,

I would point out that 176 clearly is not a prime number. It is in fact $2 * 2 * 2 * 2 * 11$.

And [sighs and gasps] for my beverage, it's very very I was going to say watered down coffee, but actually it's milked down coffee.

I'm still I'm already kind of zinged from caffeine. So,

I figure I shouldn't be uh like chugging coffee any anymore today.

And uh we really do not have a lot of questions and so we could be

definitely less than an hour and a half today.

[snorts] And I guess I should just wade into this. Very first question is from Jimmy Lad. And Jimmy Lad says, "Can you speak more about this guy who was a monk for 13 years and became an anti-bddhist? What made him quit and turn against the dharma?" Well, I would say he didn't really become an anti-BDist.

It's kind of a strange situation that he was an extremist. I' I've mentioned this person before and he had asked me personally in the past not to go into too much detail with regard to his life. Some stuff he would prefer to be like

private and he's an extremely private person because he is essentially a hermit. He does not like the human race all that much.

and he's eccentric, let's say. He was the one who lived in the big hollow banyan tree in upper Burma for a [clears throat and snorts] number of years. And he lived in caves in Thailand after all the foreigners were kicked out of Burma back around 1988, I think.

Anyways, he was an extremist like most people. Like I've said before, this is a relatively recent Q&A. I was mentioning him not not in this context but you've got the middle path between self-indulgence and self- torture and

most people including most monks kind of
veer towards the self-indulgent side
whereas this person veered the other
way. He was veering towards just extreme
asceticism and at one point he had like a
breakdown which he thought was due to
sleep deprivation just chronic sleep
deprivation because he was trying to
follow all of the new teachings at the
highest level which includes never lying
down. And if you follow the the sitter's
practice as it is called
at the highest level then you're not
even leaning back against anything. So
he was still cheating a little bit
because he was leaning forwards. He'd

put his bowl

on the floor in front of him and just
lean his forehead onto it onto his arms
bowl and sleep that way.

And apparently was insufficient.

He had a kind of breakdown.

And this is back when venerable Tom
Pulus was still alive. Tom Pulus was his
preceptor. So he got sent back to
America. He uh disroed, went back to
America until he was recovered. Soon as
he was well enough to come back, you
know, recovered enough from this
breakdown that he had, he just comes
right back, reordains, and uh he was
[clears throat] very strict. I've told
stories, I won't go into details this

time, but I have told stories about just his extreme strictness with regard to Vinia. And he was sort of held up to me as a role model. We were ordained in the same tradition and he was extremely strict with regard to, you know, Vinia rules, the rules of monastic discipline and that sort of thing. And so I kind of kind of emulated him to some degree trying to be some kind of Buddhist [clears throat] Rambo.

But I think part of the reason was he was just like an extremist, you know, he I think that he probably hadn't fully mastered the middle path. And so after being a monk for like 13 years,

[clears throat] he just kind of decided, well, it's just not possible. You know, it's kind of BS or something. But the thing is, it was like an intellectual decision at the surface, but deep down he still had faith in Dharma and like Dharma practice because to this day, I'm pretty sure he's still in monastic robes in Burma. It's just he is now called a yeet in Burmese which is an unordained renunciant an unordained Buddhist renunciant.

So

I mean he kind of thinks you know enlightenment doesn't exist. You just can't do it. The Buddha himself was like some ancient Joseph Goldstein. You know

he floated that idea to me at least once while we were sitting together in his hollow tree.

But still deep down he had faith in Dhamma. And to this day, as far as I know, if he's still alive, he's more than 10 years older than I am, living in the tropics. So, but um you know, he's he's still essentially a renunciant meditator. So at some deep level he still has faith in Dhhamma which is better than a lot of people who drop out of the monkhood and they don't not only stop being monks they stop being Buddhist.

So I guess I'm doing better than a lot

of people who drop out of the monkhood.

I mean some people they just deliberately ordain for a few years just to get some intensive practice under their belt so that they can drop out and become a teacher at some place like IMS or spirit rock or some weasa center that kind of thing.

So [gasps] he eventually did have to move out of the hollow tree because people started starting up um they started starting chicken farms which just caused like this of chicken [__] just kind of pervading the atmosphere in that area. So he wound up moving out and uh I guess he's like living in like an industrial park in on the outskirts of

Rangon, Burma at present. Uh that's the last I heard which was about a year ago just the uh the grandson of one of the main supporters of Tom Pulu Seattle kind of took him under his wing so to speak or just decided to continue supporting him even though he wasn't a monk anymore. And [clears throat] a lot of Burmese people consider that to be really important. Once you're not ordained anymore, it's like you've lost this superhuman status because the Burmese don't even use the word for human being applied to monks. Monks have their own honorific titles and so forth. You don't use the word human towards

monks. Sometimes monks or other Burmese people would ask me, you know, what did you do for a living when back when you were a human? That kind of thing.

So what made him quit was just he just tried as hard as he could and did not succeed in becoming enlightened. I I think that's the main reason and he didn't really turn against the dharma except sort of at this superficial intellectual level whereas I mean he was still just practicing for the most part at a higher level than most monks and to this day he still has a poly name like on his passport and everything because he legally had his name changed

to his monk name and then after he dropped out he's just stuck with this monk name that he didn't bother to change back to his original lay name.

And before moving on, I will point out that he was from Midland, Texas.

So he he had like this Texas accent like our our teacher Poku. He'd call him Pakoku.

But I'm just going to move on to the next question also from Jimmy Lad. And Jimmy Lad says,

let's see here. Is this right? Yeah.

Okay. Jimmy Lad says, "When the Burmese monks believe the Buddha was 27 feet tall, how do they think he fit inside

the palace where he grew up and other practical situations where his extreme size would be absurd?" I used to wonder about that, too. And I think most people just don't really try to do the math.

It's like the religious mindset where you don't want to be finding fault with your own religion. You know, it's like, well, it's got to be true somehow. I don't know how it's true, but I'm not going to question it cuz I might go to hell for it. That kind of thing. That's common in a place like Burma, a devoutly Buddhist country, a devoutly Buddhist culture like Burma, then, you know, most people just won't even go there. You know, the flat earth too, that kind of

stuff. They just, you know, it's got to be true, but I'm not gonna really get into how it's true. I'm just gonna have faith in what the texts say and just humbly accept that and just continue on with my life.

But

there is a certain book that I read when I was in Burma called the great chronicle of Buddhas which is an English translation of

it's a kind of commentary on the Buddha Wongsaw which is canonical at least the verses of the Buddha Wongsaw are canonical they are part of the typica and this book was written by Mingun

Topitica Dasiato who was one of the most honored famous Burmese monks of the 20th century. He was the one who recited the the typica, the poly tip which he had memorized by heart at the Burmese 6 council in 1956 with I think it was Mahasi was the questioner.

Mingun titica dasiato. He had memorized by he had like a photographic memory had memorized the 40 volumes of Burmese tita plus a number of other texts like poly grammarss and commentaries and this kind of thing.

And Mingiga Draciato was I mean he had the the government had just exhausted all of the like ecclesiastical honorific titles to bestow upon this monk and so

they were just having to invent new titles just for him because he just kept outdoing himself with regard to his scholarship and so forth and so [sighs]

Minga Dasiro in this book I mean he knew full well that the Buddha really wasn't a a whole heck of a lot taller than everybody else. I mean, he was described as tall in the texts, but I mean he wasn't taller than a giraffe compared with other people. You know, there's stories of like the Buddha and Mahakasapa exchanging robes. So that the Buddha started wearing Mahakasapa's robe, Mahakasapa started wearing the

Buddha's robe. Also there is
[clears throat] a a rule of monastic
discipline in the potty mocha with
regard to the maximum allowable size for
monk's robes. [snorts] And in the story
the Buddha's half brother Nanda
venerable Nanda who was also a monk um
he was I think if I remember correctly
he was three finger widths shorter than
the Buddha. So I mean he was not a a
maha purisa you know he was not a great
man. He was not a a sama sam Buddha
fully enlightened being I mean well I
mean he probably did become an arhant in
according to the tradition but still I
mean he wasn't like this outstanding
superhuman being other than just being

enlightened and still he's this much
shorter so he'd be like 269
instead of 27

also like in the Samanya Palasuta
um king Ajata Satu goes with Jiea the
>> [clears throat]

>> to meet the Buddha and they get to where
the SA is and Jivaca the doctor doesn't
know I mean King Ajatasatu doesn't know
which one is the Buddha. So so Jivie the
doctor says he's the one leaning against
the post. He's the one sitting there
leaning against a post. He doesn't say,
"Oh, he's that gigantic one who's 27
feet tall."

And numerous cases in which the Buddha

was just confused with an ordinary monk.

So, Minga

who is no idiot.

I mean, he knew this stuff. But being like Burmese, very Burmese, he could not question the commentarial tradition. He could not question. I mean the the sutas themselves don't say the Buddha was 27 feet tall. That's like a commentarial thing. But you got to believe all of it. You know it's sort of like this medieval sort of a medieval Catholic sort of attitude towards one's religion. You just don't question it. It is gospel truth period. So, Mingetica came up with this theory that in the Buddhist time people were more virtuous

and so the gods loved people more than
they do now, including the weather gods,
the gods who [clears throat] cause
like [snorts]

timely rains and so forth. And so
because the weather was better, because
the weather gods loved people more,
because the people were more virtuous,
the crops grew better and more
nutritious so that everybody was, you
know, above 20t tall.

And of course, archaeological evidence
does not bear this out. Just physics
doesn't bear this out. You know, it'd be
physically impossible just going with
the laws of physics as we know them

today for a human being to be that tall and retain the same proportions as a human being now. I mean, he'd just be completely monstrous.

Even King Kong, who was only like 40 feet tall. Yeah. Well, King Kong, I guess, was like 40t tall. You know, you can read articles about how King Kong couldn't possibly have supported his own weight and a 27 foot tall human would be about the same. They'd be in the same kind of predicament. You know, there's there's like this scaling issue of like as height doubles with the proportions remaining the same. It's like uh let's see surface area squares and volume cubes.

So like [clears throat] if he was four and a half times the size I'm going to I'm not going to be able to do the math in my head. Not off the cuff like this while I'm talking. But I mean he just would not have enough lung capacity. I mean he it's like his lung capacity he would just be a fraction of what an ordinary person's lung capacity would be because he would have like less proportionately less surface area to his lungs supplying oxygen to greatly increased mass. This kind of thing like his bones wouldn't hold him up because the cross-section of his leg bones for example would be squared whereas the

weight that they would have to support
would be cubed. this kind of thing.

So getting back to Mingun Mingun

Topitica Dasiro who had memorized the
entire 40 volumes of the poly tip in I
mean the Burmese polytopica

[snorts]

that was his theory

but I really don't think it's like
spread throughout the country or
anything because most people they're
just not really going to investigate
this. They just accept it with humble
faith and just do not try to delve into
the details because
they might might not like what they see.

[snorts]

So

yeah, I used to bring that up when I was in Burma, too. It's like I mean, how could he have fathered a child with an ordinary woman if he was 27 feet tall?

How would he get into his own house?

This kind of thing.

But now you know and I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Fred

and Fred says, "Regarding chanting, when the king visited the monks in the forest, it was total silence. Does that not imply no chanting?" So I guess Fred asked a question in the previous Q&A about whether monks were allowed to

chant.

And so this is kind of a follow-up question. I guess he's citing a suta possibly the samya pala suta where the king visits the monks in the forest and it's just dead silent and you can see mentions of just the silence of the sa contrasted to just like the the babbling you know constant conversation of like the followers of other religions like a jivacas for example but I mean just because it's total silence when the king arrives doesn't mean that the monks were just constantly totally silent you know, when they're sitting with the the Buddha, it could be like a meditation session. It could be they're

just quietly waiting until the Buddha decides to start delivering a sermon, that kind [clears throat] of thing.

So, I mean, just because chanting was allowed doesn't mean that, you know, the SA would be chanting 247.

So there would be times when the monks were just silent,

but still, [clears throat] I mean, you can find in the text, it could be an anacronism where you've got monks that have to recite texts in order to memorize them because they're not written down.

It's just the way it was done.

So when the king visits the monks in the

forest and there is total silence, it implies that there was no chanting when he arrived.

But it doesn't mean that there was total silence always. That there was no chanting ever.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Sam Papaalapa who for short we can just call Sam. And Sam says the *davas* and or gods small G gods and all the beings Buddha talks about or two in the *sutas* thought beliefs assumptions.

Okay. So he wants my honest opinion about like the the gods, the small G gods in the Buddhist pantheon, especially the ones that came to Earth

and were interviewing, you know, asking questions of the Buddha and so forth, just coming to pay their respects maybe.

And

[sighs and gasps] I mean I could take this even further like the portrayals of *davas* in Burmese art, traditional Burmese Buddhist art for example. The gods

they're I mean they look Burmese, you know, their ethnicity looks Burmese. the the males have no facial hair as a general rule and they're wearing the the clothing and like the the crowns and so forth of Burmese royalty and like highranking courtiers back in the days of

the Burmese kings. So the male dāvas are wearing like these pigot-shaped crowns and the female dāvas are wearing it looks sort of like flash Gordon helmets and they've got like these fancy epillets on their shoulders and long gowns and so forth. And so I mean you take this back to the sūtas and I would assume that there is a lot of just ancient Indian mythology you know predating Buddhism you know in the Ganges Valley people believed in Dāvas I mean this the R̥gveda the oldest literature still existing that could be called Indian I mean hymns to these dāvas.

One of the main ones being Indra who converted to Buddhism allegedly and became known as Saka.

So I mean it's really hard to say what some enlightened sage and saint you know what kind of beings are going to be visiting this person. And it would not surprise me if there were like superhuman beings that did associate with with the Buddha. I mean, it wouldn't surprise me.

It wouldn't kind of make sense actually from like a Buddhist point of view like I mean anyone who's read the the the biography or autobiography of uh Ajan man, I mean he was just inundated

by Davaṣ visiting him. So that it was like standing room only. I mean he had to he had to teach dhamma to the davaṣ in shifts you know they they couldn't all fit at the same time. So it's like they had to take a number or something. And a lot of this is just the beliefs of Buddhist people that kind of create this kind of situation.

And I mean [laughter] that's the way the whole world works really. I mean, it's just like a manifestation of mind anyway. So, it could be that you have a radically different culture, like a a pre-scientific culture. There can be radically different beings inhabiting the world that that people can perceive.

So,

I mean, I'm not going to completely rule out the possibility that like superhuman beings that in Buddhist cosmology or Buddhist philosophy you would call *davas* or even *brahas* would have interactions with the Buddha. like a picture of I got a picture of Nim Kuroli Baba up there on the on top of the bookcase that I mean he was supposedly interacting with non-human beings too at some higher higher level

and I mean [clears throat] maybe the Buddha did I have no way of proving it one way or the other but I think a lot of the descriptions of these *davas*

really are

sort of anthropomorphizing

and just largely influenced by ancient

mythology, ancient beliefs. So that's

and and like I was saying like the

Burmese have taken that even farther

with regard to making Davas look like

medieval Burmese royalty.

>> [sighs]

>> So

yeah, I mean with regard to this

universe, I'm I'm sure there have to be

superhuman beings in this universe. And

there could be superhuman beings like

right here that we just cannot perceive.

We just are too primitive. You know,

maybe our our our perceptual system is

just too primitive to be aware of it.

just like an ant crawling across

somebody's barefoot is completely

unaware that they're crawling across

they're like in intimate contact with

some super ant being

and it could be that way for people. We

could just be like in interacting

with davas or what a Buddhist would call

davas without fully realizing it at the

conscious level.

[sighs and gasps]

And it just seems pretty much I mean

very very likely that there are

superhuman beings in this universe. If

if we are the best this entire universe,

this entire cosmos has to offer then the cosmos is uh kind of destitute in certain ways.

But I do think that it's anthropomorphized and sort of translated into something that the like the premodern Indian imagination could grasp and deal with intelligently more or less.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, [sighs]

"I'm having trouble squaring the fact that ultimately there is no self, no eye that exists with the need to assert and defend this non-existent self in conventional reality.

Say, for example, someone rudely cuts you in line while at the store, or a significant other is flirting with other people, or a competitive co-worker is causing drama for you at work. During such experiences, I can see how simply noting hurt or anger arising and the accompanying physical sensations and not attaching thoughts and feelings to a self will lead to less personal suffering. But sometimes this just seems too abstract and unrealistic.

Maybe too unrealistic, although Romeo didn't say that part. But he [clears throat] continues, "Do you ever have difficulty reconciling the ultimate

truth of lacking a self while living conventionally in society? Any tips for someone that's having this difficulty?"

Well, I mean, the ultimate truth of lacking a self while living in the conventional truth of samsara. I mean, [snorts] they don't necessarily apply to each other, you know? It's like two different levels of truth. Ultimate truth and conventional truth.

Conventional truth isn't really true. It just appears true

and people agree on it that people exist, for example, when ultimately from like the point of view of like Buddhist philosophy, it's like a mental construct. You know, human beings do not

have an ultimate um ultimately real
separated individuality
that we are conventionally real uh
virtually real. So it's [clears throat]
like virtual reality versus ultimate
reality. And the virtual reality isn't
really real. I mean it's kind of sused
with reality.

So like for example, let's see some of
the examples here. Someone rudely cuts
you in line while a store, significant
other is flirting with other people. All
that is virtual, you know, it's
ultimately it's not really happening.
So it's like being in a dream. So it's
like sort of

you're dreaming that all some stuff is happening, but in reality it's just a dream. And so I mean you could get more skillful be like practice lucid dreaming so that you'd be aware that it was just a dream all the time. But most people are just stuck in samsara.

Most people in this world probably they just think samsara is reality like the only reality that really matters to them. You know they just completely bluepilled. You know they are just wallowing in the matrix. So it's not so much a matter of reconciling no self with perceived self. It's just a matter of not just getting completely lost in the matrix and thinking that the

matrix is the reality.

And that's one reason why monks renounce the world and they go off and live in a cave in a forest somewhere. So you don't have all these distractions and all this reinforcing context of samsara keeping you locked into it.

So I mean you'd be like a holy fool just you know you're you're still kind of in samsara interacting with other people including the uh let's see the competitive co-orner that is causing drama for you at work.

I mean, and then you're still just practicing intensive mindfulness. Just, you know, you you sort of deconstruct

the competitive co-worker into stimuli.

You know, you deconstruct the significant other who's flirting with someone else as just stimuli, perceptions.

I mean, if you're doing advanced practice, that's what you do. But it's way easier to do that alone in a cave than like in the midst of decadent society like Prince Michigan and Dostski is the idiot.

I mean he got destroyed. Forest Gump did better. Even Forest Gump [clears throat] was a holy fool also. He did better than Prince Michigan.

So, I mean, the best you can do in a case like that, well, I mean, the best

you can do is be fully enlightened, I
suppose, but

like don't take it too seriously because
it's like you're in a dream world.

You're in the matrix

and this whole phenomenal world is
dependently co-arising. You know, it's
like context is the the dependent
co-arising

of Zamsar. It's in a way it's it's just
everything is dependent upon context.

You know, it's like the context of
everything is just sort of like
stabilizing everything so that it seems
to be real

and it's very difficult to explain.

Well, I mean this is one of the main reasons why people [clears throat] renounce the world and become monks because it simplifies the stimuli, simplifies the context, makes it easier to disentangle yourself from it.

Let's see. So the question here, do you ever have difficulty reconciling the the ultimate truth of lacking a self while living conventionally in society?

Any tips for someone who's having this difficulty? Yeah. I mean, it's not so much

reconciling

anata or no self with the apparent selves in society. It's it's just like it's the danger is just getting lost in

samsara,

you know, just becoming bluepilled
and like losing any higher awareness.

So,

I'm not exactly sure. I mean, in my
case, I was just a monk for 30 years
trying to cultivate this kind of
awareness that this is not the highest
truth. You know, ultimately, I do not
exist. is just sort of generated through
perceived context. This kind of thing.

So

yeah, just try not to get lost in the
matrix. Try and keep that red pill going
a little bit. I mean, red pill, blue
pill, that comes from the movie The

Matrix, I'm pretty sure.

Just at a higher level, like like some
theist could just say at a higher level
is just God. everything is God
and it's just dividing everything up
into parts is like you know you it's
[clears throat] removed from God to some
degree at least conceptually
so you want to avoid becoming totally
removed

I mean you can still function in samsara
and still act as though you have a self
and at a certain level you are believing
that you exist and all that it's just
you don't want completely cut off even
the like this subliminal awareness.

It's kind of an interest subliminal like

sublime subliminal awareness that there
this is not ultimate reality
and I don't know if I answered that
question very well but it's
[clears throat] time to move on to the
next one. This is from Sedarta Lohachida
who for short we can call Sid
and Sid says what do you think about
Aristotle's statement on natural
inequality and slavery
and he quotes Aristotle apparently he
says quote some men are by nature free
while others are by nature slaves and
this determines their capacities to
govern or be governed be governed
the slave cave by nature is one whose

mind does not reach deliberation about what is beneficial for the common good but only about what serves himself and his master. Therefore, it is useful for him to be under the rule of another.

Whereas the one who possesses sufficient reason to deliberate about the general good is by nature destined to govern.

Well, this is the first time I've read this particular quote that I can remember. I I have read some quotes from Aristotle. I never read an entire book by Aristotle that I can recall, read some [clears throat] essays, that kind of thing. But um [cough] I do recall reading some statement of Aristotle about slave races where

Aristotle was saying that some races or ethnicities make better slaves than others. And I have this hazy memory of like lazy people make better slaves than hardworking people just because they probably have less initiative to change their predicament.

And u just kind of passive people. And so I mean I don't want to offend the Burmese but there were times when I was in Burma where it did seem like the Burmese would have been what Aristotle would call a slave race.

Partly because the Burmese I mean they are kind of passive you know they're just willing to endure horrible

situations just situations that you know
a westerner would find just intolerable
nothing working right for example their
government for example
and they were just they were very class
conscious people the Burmese like
there's half a dozen different words
like pronouns for me half a dozen
different pronouns for you and the
pronouns that you use with regard to
yourself and the person you're talking
to depend upon your relative social
status. So if if you're of higher social
status than the person you're talking
to, I mean you you call them like min or
nin this kind of thing. But if they were
like more advanced than you like a monk,

you'd call them a shimpa like venerable lord. And like um back in British times the British administrators were called ashina also you know they were getting the the the total ass kissing treatment and it's just Burmese are very class conscious and they will gravel before people they consider to be their social superiors and just act like sometimes like desperates to people that are of lower lower rank than they are.

some of them, not all of them, but it is kind of ingrained into the culture that there is a tendency in that direction.

And so

also they're they're kind of small. You

know, you don't want a slave that's just this towering Hulk way stronger than you, I guess. Although I mean it works for elephants, that sort of thing.

But with regard to what Aristotle is saying here, natural inequality. Well, there's obviously natural inequality.

You know, it's like the the thing that all men are created equal. It doesn't mean that everyone is the same. Doesn't mean that everyone has the same strengths and talents and so forth. It just means that everyone should have the same chance, the same, you know, they're they're held the same in the eyes of God perhaps. And they should have the same rights. they should, you know, have to

follow the same laws and so forth. But, uh, I guess that was just sort of an aside.

Some men are by nature free while others are by nature slaves, and this determines their capacities to govern or be governed. Yeah, I'm not 100% sure that Aristotle was correct in that like the people who let's see the slave by nature is one whose mind does not reach deliberation about what is beneficial for the common good but [clears throat] only about what serves himself and his master. A lot of like kings and emperors have fit that description where they don't really care that much about the

common good. They mainly just care about what serves themselves and just the people that you know that they can control to some degree that are beneficial to them. You know, it's like Roman emperors, even even bad Roman emperors would try to be on good terms with the army at least because that's it was through the military that they had their power. And I mean, even nowadays, like politicians nowadays, I mean, it's it seems to be more more of a thing that they pretend to care about the common good more than they're actually like striving to improve the the like the the prosperity of the people that they are

supposedly governing.

It's like it's just like this trope in politics now that you don't solve problems. You just promise to solve problems while at the same time like continuing the problem just so that you'll continue to have something to promise to to make better when you run for run for office next time.

So I think I mean for me what I remember reading about slave races might have more empirical validity than this where I mean you just have someone who's thinks you know they've got some capacity for independent thought and they're energetic intelligent that sort

of thing fine they can be masters of
something and the people that are just
like sheeple

sort of passive and lazy and not too
bright and

you know it's like

[clears throat and sighs] they shouldn't
be enslaved going with modern values. I
mean slavery is sort of an evil we have
put behind us

but still I mean they're going to be
enslaved to something. Some people are
enslaved to drugs. Some people enslaved
to food. Some people are enslaved to
sports gambling you know. So, I guess
there is some validity to this even if
slavery is uh obsolete now.

And I I have to admit that I really do not think slavery was a good thing. It was just a reality for centuries. And unlike what a lot of people on the left would like to believe, it is white people who ended slavery. We did not invent it. Pretty much every major culture for thousands of years had slavery. And it was white people, especially English people, who just forcibly put an end to it.

[clears throat]

So, let's see. What is the actual question? What do I think about Aristotle's statement? So, yeah, I pretty much said what I think about it.

I mean, it's nothing really concise or incisive,

any word that has cice in it, just because it's something I really don't think about all that much, especially lately.

And uh yeah, just slaves slavery I think it was I mean it served its purpose I guess you know it's like slavery partly started

due to like intertribal warfare and instead of just killing off everybody that you defeat in war you just say all right you got to work for me now in a way it's that's preferable to just slaughtering all the prisoners of poor [sighs and gasps] like Rome. I mean,

they just had this massive amount of slaves back in their expansionist phase just because of all the prisoners of war.

And it's I guess it's better to enslave them than just, you know, have them all put to death.

And I mean, they were had a little more sense than some people do nowadays where you they weren't just going to say,

"Okay, well, I mean, sometimes they did.

You'd have a like a barbarian army would invade Roman territory. The Romans

[clears throat] would defeat them. The

the enemy would surrender and then the

Romans would say, "Okay, you can just

settle this farmland we got over here and just sort of accept them into into the country." But that was less common then than it is now. I think of course nowadays they don't have to just come in [clears throat] to raid and pillage because they just come in and just get free welfare handouts.

So yeah, I guess I answered that question. I mean it was what do I think about it? So I answered the question adequately I suppose because I really don't think very much about that sort of stuff.

And so we're just going to move on to the next question which is from Alba Coina who we can for short call Al.

And Al says, "Would you be able to give a brief summarized timeline of your life with the calendar years?" And then in parenthesis, he's got premonthood years as a monk in Burma. [clears throat]

Oh, I'm just now being told that I have a low battery because I forgot to plug in the computer. Just a second.

See?

Uh, one moment, please. Also, I probably forgot to close out all the extra tabs so that this could start lagging. Maybe I'll just do that real quick. A second. Yeah, I don't have lots of extra tabs anyway, so I guess we're good.

Oh, there's one. Yeah. Okay.

If I have the music tab open, it things are more likely to lag because apparently it uses a lot of um computer juice, so to speak. So, anyways, Al was saying, "Would you be able to give a brief summarized timeline of your life with the calendar years?" And then in parenthesis, it says, "Premonhood, years as a monk in Burma, years as a monk in the US, and postmhood."

So, okay. Yeah, dodged a bullet on that one. We're down to 8% of the battery.

So, okay. I guess it would all start.

Let's Let's just leave previous previous lives out of this because then it would just be a very long digression or

regression, I should say.

So I guess we start with 1962 in which reportedly I was conceived in a parked car in a place called Hooligan Flats.

Then I was born in Seward, Alaska

um near Hooligan Flats

um in 1963.

Then in 1964, April of 1964, there was

the Great Alaska earthquake,

one of the the biggest earthquakes in

the northern hemisphere in the 20th

century, I'm pretty sure. And so our

house and also my father's place of

business were pretty much destroyed. And

so in 1964,

my father [clears throat] migrated

out of Alaska into Grace Harbor County
in Washington State. Aberdeen,
Washington, home of Kurt Cobain.

So that's where I grew up. I grew up in
Aberdeen. Spent one year in Hoquam,
which is right next door to Aberdeen.

And uh let's see if I open and close my
mouth. Yeah, it keeps up. It's not even
lagging very much. Maybe just a little
bit.

So, let's see. I lived in Aberdeen and
Hoquam,

part of the Tri Cities of Abber
Hokamopoulos in Grace Harbor County.

Good place to grow up, by the way. Um,
until I went to college. I went to
college in Bellingham, Washington.

And then I lived in Bellingham after graduation until I became a monk. So let's see, I became a monk in 1991.

So like from 1981,

no from like the the early to mid 80s to 1991, I lived in Bellingham. And then I became a monk. And I became a monk in California, Boulder Creek, California.

Tongulu Kaba a monastery, which is like Tonpulu means like little hill. Kaba means world peace.

So I was there for almost two years. And then I went to Burma and I lived in Burma for

um up until 2018,

more on than off. I would come to

America every once in a while. I made a few attempts. Oh, we are lagging. Yeah, we are lagging. You people that just are listening to the podcast have the advantage of not dealing with my my lips not being in sync to the sounds perfectly.

[sighs and gasps]

So, I went to Burma, lived in Burma um like with a a visit to America every like five years or so while my parents were alive, especially my father.

And uh

went to a few other countries. Oh, now we're lagging big time. That's too bad.

Damn. spent uh few months in in

Indonesia in Bali. Spent one range

retreat, the range [clears throat]

retreat of 1997 in Japan.

Um then I came back in like I think it

was December of 2018 was my final

re-entry into the United States from

Burma, from Asia. and

uh just stayed at like this Burmese

temple in French camp, California, which

is like 20 miles south of Stockton until

I just couldn't stand it anymore. I just

I mean that was really I just could not

live in like the Burmese temple kind of

environment. That's one of the reasons

why I became why I dropped out of the

monkhood. just wasn't working and I was

burned out on living in tropical Asia

and just various reasons we don't need to get into. So then I [clears throat] dropped out of the monkhood in 2021, like May of 2021 when I've been a monk for essentially exactly 30 years and came to South Carolina and I've been in South Carolina ever since.

[sighs]

So yeah, I worked in two sheet metal shops and now I'm driving a forklift loading and unloading trailers for a trucking company.

So I mean I could get into the years as a monk in Burma. Okay, let's do that.

Might as well. What the hell? So I started after a little bit of traveling at Tonulu Chelts Doya about gosh

I I can't remember if it's 50 or 100
miles south of Mandalay is just a desert
just blazing hot wasteland. Then after a
little over a year there I went to
Mahagandon big school monastery near
Mandandalay stayed there for a little
over a year. came back to Chelsea Doya
again because that's where my my acharia
my teacher Tomulu or not Tomulu Seattle
Pakogu Tomulu Chelsea Seattle that's
that was his monastery
um went and spent a few months at the
Bay Doya in Mon state in the south
uh spent
let's see after that I started escaping
from the blazing hot wastelands of

central Burma by going to Alan Londo
Kathabba National Park. It's like the
northern edge, the northern boundary of
Alando Kathaba National Park. Alando
Kathabba National Park is shaped sort of
like the Vulcan live long and prosper
sign where you got um I mean the main
part just put my hand here in the
center. The main part of the park would
be like my the palm of my hand. And then
there's like two like ranges of hills
going up like this. And right in the
center is Pollon Creek and a number of
of of villages. And so just looking on
the map, an old topographic map made by
the British, I could see right here was
the place to live where you've got

national park on three sides and you've got an alms resort. you got villagers that can put food in my bowl. So that's that's where I I stayed there a combined total of about two years, but it was stretched out over five years. It was mostly the hot season. You know, I go there during the like towards the end of the cold season, stay through the hot season until the monsoon started and then I'd leave. I did spend one monsoon there, which is one of the most miserable years of my life. It was just awful, but we don't need to get into that.

Then I spent some time at uh Migadawan

Monastery in the foothills of the Shen
Plateau, which is also kind
[clears throat] of cool. It's it's cold
in the winter time, especially when you
don't have like hot water heaters and
that kind of thing, but it was
survivable there.

And then I came back to America
and I'm just going to move on. Next
question now.

[clears throat] This is from the
Sabaturs.

And the sabaturs say, "Regarding your
advice to avoid karma by doing nothing,
not to kill one person to save 10, what
is your view of the famous saying,
quote, "All it takes for evil to succeed

is for good to do nothing" unquote.

Well, I mean, it wasn't really my advice to avoid karma by doing nothing. I'm just pointing out that Buddhist ethics are like negative ethics. It's don't do this and don't do that. It's like doing nothing is like karmically and ethically neutral. You're not doing anything wrong by doing nothing. That's just ancient Indian Buddhist ethics. It's not really my advice.

So yeah, to avoid like not to kill one person to save 10. That's just Buddhist ethics, you know. It's not really my advice. People I've said before, I mean, you got to make your own choices.

If you consider it to be really what you ought to do to take out some sniper before he takes out other people, I mean, that's your choice. But, I mean, you're going to be taking a karmic hit by doing it.

So, let's see. All it takes for evil to succeed is for the good to do nothing.

Well, I mean, you're not even really the good. I mean it's it's a it's like a dichotomy.

It's if you're not doing anything that's not good. It's it's not evil either. So it's a monks are supposed to just separate themselves from this dichotomy of good and evil. You know you read some of the sutras it says you know monk

shouldn't do good or evil. You know he's just supposed to rise above the whole distinction of good and evil. This whole samsaric duality

but I mean it's your choice. You don't have to be a saint, obviously, Buddhist or otherwise. So, I mean, you got your own decisions to make. If you think it's that what you ought to do is to take out the sniper before he takes out other people, for example,

or like one I wrote a blog post about this once. It's like let's say you have some Buddhist government catches a terrorist. The terrorist has already planted a bomb in the capital city

downtown somewhere.

He's the only person who knows where the bomb is and the bomb is set on a timer.

So you have this terrorist, he's already set a bomb that's going to kill hundreds or thousands of people. So is it

justified to extract the location of that bomb from that terrorist through vigorous questioning? what I'll say putting him to the question as they used to euphemistically say back in the middle ages

and I mean that's that's the kind of situation that monks avoid by just renouncing the world and going out into a forest there's a jonica story about the the Buddha in a previous life this

the tamia jatika where he's like a a crown prince but when he is a very small like a toddler. He's sitting on his father's lap while his father is sitting in judgment and criminals come in and you know he just you know off with their head kind of stuff and this toddler who was a bodhic sata he realizes you know if I grow up and become king like daddy I'm going to have to be sentencing people to death and so forth and so from that point on he just pretended to be a deaf mute just to avoid the whole situation and that is what ancient Indian Buddhist ethics is like

so

for evil to succeed

then yeah it's not necessarily the good

who do nothing it's it's like the people

who are just opting out of the whole

duality who do nothing

but you take it to kind of take it to

its logical consequence and it's like

some action movies where I mean the Only

difference between the good guys and the

bad guys are the good guys are a little

more selective with regard to who

they're shooting.

So let's see here.

What is my view of the famous saying,

all it takes for evil to succeed is for

the good to do nothing. Yeah, I mean

within a societal context.

Yeah, sure. And in which case, the good are going to sacrifice some of their goodness in order to fight back against evil.

And and you want to be the tragic hero who sacrifices your own spiritual welfare for the sake of others. That's your choice to make. That's your call.

And I'm not going to judge you for it.

So, I hope I answered that one because I'm moving on to the next question which is from Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb and etc.

And Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., says, "Do you consider it theoretically

possible that Jesus was the incarnation of the Brahma who as a mortal decided to create an incarnation?" because after visiting the Buddha he realized he couldn't become enlightened unless he was a human.

Do so do I consider it theoretically possible? Just about anything is theoretically possible like in an infinite universe then I mean everything that's possible is going to happen somehow or another.

I don't think it's ne it's exactly plausible that Jesus was like the the incarnation of some Brahma that went and spoke to the Buddha.

I would consider that rather unlikely.

this I mean still it's possible
like from the point of view of like
quantum physics it would not be
statistically one of the most likely
routes

for worldly reality to move in my
opinion. So it's theoretically possible
but I wouldn't bet on it. I mean it's
just it's just like this wild hypothesis
that I mean where you're trying to sort
of transplant Indian
like theology into like Jewish or
protojewish philosophy in the early
Roman Empire.

So you'd have to take the whole story of
the Brahma visiting the Buddha literally

as just literal history. And I mean, even good luck trying to prove that, but damn near anything is possible in theory. Anything that you can imagine, plus a lot of things you can't imagine are possible in theory. So, I'm just going to move on to seller supreme, etc., etc.'s next question, which is a follow-up. He says, "Would my theory have more credence given digaya number four saying only a Buddha can produce wisdom and morality in the world? Given that nobody seems to have ready access to CDs or powers these days, if we take it as given that Jesus really did perform CD type miracles.

Well, I mean CDs apparently aren't all

that rare in India, even though Buddhism is relatively rare in India now. Nim Kuroli Baba up there. I always use the wrong finger up there. I mean, he was just miracles just flowed out of him. Apparently, allegedly, even if only a tiny fraction of the ones mentioned in Ramdas's book were true, still it's it's it's uh pretty amazing. So, I mean, the whole idea that only a Buddha can produce wisdom and morality in the world, I just I don't think so. I do not think that Buddhism or Terravada Buddhism have a monopoly on enlightenment or wisdom or morality or goodness. There's like this idea in

terra Buddhism that you got these cycles of time where you've got like the Buddha reestablishes dharma and then everything just goes downhill and downhill and downhill and downhill until it's like people eating each other having a lifespan of 10 years. It's just like no virtue, no morality at all. And I just don't think so.

In a way, it's just an a sincere overestimation of one's own religion, which is just common human nature.

So, I don't think that Buddhism has any kind of monopoly on wisdom or goodness.

I mean, anybody with I mean, you can have like an Eskimo living in the

Arctic, you know, they can just sit there and and just watch the the sun over the ice, you know, and and you can get insights. I mean just spontaneously just intuition. And I think the reason why I mentioned Eskimo was like I remember a long time ago reading a newagy kind of book like one of those Shambala kind of books of different sages from different cultures and there was like an estim like a female Eskimo like a a shaman or something who just had this flash of insight when she went outside of the the bark house or whatever she was living in. probably not an igloo to to pee and it's like that

kind of stuff can happen. It may be that a Buddha is I mean he [clears throat] develops you know like a systematic method called dharma or dharma that helps people to become enlightened but still I mean obviously he was trying to become enlightened before he became a Buddha.

You know he had spiritual teachers before he became a Buddha. So there's still some kind of wisdom and and like virtue and so forth

there in in the Ganges Valley and elsewhere

before the Buddha became enlightened and started the the wheel of dharma moving.

And I don't think that that uh Buddhism

has any monopoly on sides. think that Buddhism kind of discourages like miracles and psychic powers and so forth unlike some schools of Hinduism that really play them up or Christianity for that matter.

So would Liberam, Stellar Supreme, etc.'s theory have more credence given Deacon Kaya 4 saying only a Buddha can produce wisdom and morality in the world. I just don't think that that's true.

I mean, if it were true, then yeah, that that might lend some more credence to the original hypothesis that Jesus was a reincarnation of some Brahma that had

met the Buddha and learned that only humans can become enlightened.

But it seems like there's an awful lot of like mythology and legend and so forth muddying the waters in this case.

So, I'm just going to move on to Stella Supreme, etc., etc.'s next question, and I think this is also a followup. Oh, maybe not. He says, "Does this approach defy the spirit of the middle way?" And then he's got this quote, "Do five precepts zealously. If you can force yourself to do eight without becoming unstable, do that oneta days. If you can manage eight every day, do that all your life. If you're really inclined in seeking out trivial intermediary

attainments outside of wisdom ethics,
then don't risk a monastic life for
them. Karmic consequences, cleaning the
hand of ethics with a filthy hand of
wisdom, and try to dry that well, her
wet going to dry is wisdom before
preparing for an elite death in old age.

Sort of like how brahinss did in the
time of the Buddha. but tempered by
Buddha Dhama instead of petty practices
by elite death. I mean having gotten
five years of monastic life under your
belt and going rhino without full
dutongas

by letting that expediate one's death
through health complications like not

sleeping by sitting in full lotus all night. You reduce the risk of bailing out toward the end by compressing the end of your life. I figure it banks on being able to prepare for such adversity and timing it right, but also that this would only be viable for an old person because if a young person attempted this, there would be interventions made by others.

And

gosh,

I think he uh has like one beginning parenthesis parenthesis without the closing parenthesis somewhere in here, which results in a kind of like a logical

short circuit or something maybe.

Let's see. Yeah, I mean I don't even know there's an unquote. Yeah.

Gosh. Yeah, he didn't unquote it or close the parenthesis.

Um, maybe he just was started rambling and just decided, well, I better just stop now.

Gosh, does this approach defy the spirit of the middle? And I I do not fully grasp it. This kind of rambling description of of like some kind of approach to the holy life. Do five precepts zealously. Well, it depends on what zealously is. I mean, that in itself could defy the spirit of the

middle way. If your zealous your
zealotry is extreme,
see, if you can force yourself to do
eight without becoming unstable, do that
on impulsive days. Well, I mean, that's
I don't see how anyone would become
particularly unstable just from keeping
eight precepts for one day. One day
every eight days, you know, four day,
four days a month.

Uh, [sighs] let's see.

If you can manage eight precepts every
day, do that all your life. I mean,
that's that's the middle path. I mean, a
lot of people do not really understand
what the middle path is, considering
that I mean, the middle path between

self-indulgence and self torture
involved wandering homeless and
penniless and sleeping under trees and
silently begging for your food in the
streets

and that kind of thing. So that the
middle path as taught by the Buddha
would just be like absolute extremism to
most Buddhists nowadays.

So the spirit of the middle way is uh I
think that spirit has uh been taking
various routes.

You know what is considered to be the
middle way and what really is the middle
way and that sort of thing. I mean we'd
have to tease all that stuff out.

Let's see. So let's let's continue this a little bit. If you're really inclined in seeking out trivial intermediary attainments, maybe he means like psychic powers outside of wisdom and ethics, then don't risk a monastic life for them. Yeah. I mean, you can become a monk for bad reasons. You can start meditating for bad reasons. You can start practicing dharma for bad reasons. But if you're practicing correctly, you will cultivate wisdom. and then maybe your reasons will get better. You know, it's like the Buddha's half brother Nanda already mentioned in this Q&A. He was it was his wedding day and the Buddha kind of played a dirty trick on

him and showed him visions of what
celestial nymphs look like. And so
Nandanda

kind [clears throat] of he just jilted
his wouldbe bride at the altar
practically in order to be ordained as a
monk so he can get those celestial
nymphs. But then he was practicing
correctly. I mean, he had goma Buddha as
his meditation instructor, I suppose.
And so, he became enlightened and of
course, then he didn't want the nymphs
anymore.

Let's see. Try to see where where were
we here? See, don't try to risk a mastic
life with him. And then he's got like

this semi Oh, he's got No, I guess he does have a closing parenthesis.

Gosh, this is kind of confusing though.

I don't think he has a closing unquote

though note. See, cleaning karmic

consequences, cleaning the hand of

ethics with a filthy hand of wisdom.

Tried to drive that well away. Yeah,

that part is is kind of vague. It's not

really straightforward to understand.

um before preparing for an elite death

in old age.

Um

see by elite death he means having

gotten five years of monastic life under

your belt and going rhino with full

dutongas. I mean dutongas are optional.

Not really 100% necessary for everybody.

Gosh.

So, I'm not I really it's it just kind
of rambles here towards the end and it
it kind of is not easy to fully
understand

exactly what the hell he's getting to
by getting that expediate

one's death by letting that expediate
expedite I think one's death through

health complications like not sleeping

by sitting in full lotus all light you

reduce reduce the risk of bailing out

towards the end by compressing the end

of your So apparently he's saying that

if you're practicing full blast that it

may kind of wear out your body to some degree and cause you to die when you're younger and more vigorous something like that. I mean there could be some truth to that but really it's your comma is going to give you what you need. I mean, you shouldn't be deliberately trying to shorten your life through like extreme or really rigorous aesthetic practice. So, that would not be like a good example of the middle path if you're like deliberately trying to like burn out in a you know, blaze of glory instead of like fading out.

But I I really do not fully comprehend where the question went to like the second half of it. And I'm just going to

move on to the next question. This is from Ruie. And Ruie says, "Would you agree that time is the perception or experience of impermanence?"

Yeah, I mean that's one way of looking at it. Time would be the perception or experience of impermanence or the perception of um like the distance between two events.

[sighs]

Time. Yeah. I mean I read a a book. It was a classic book. It was this like let's see what was the name of it. It was it was a science book. Classic science book. It was uh times arrow and evolution something like that. where the

author was saying that time is it's

[clears throat] like entropy is the

measure of time

just things going from organized to more

random you know entropy in the the

physical sense is uh is what is sort of

fueling the passage of time for us

although I do think Kant was correct

that space and time are just categories

like mental constructs you know they are

perceptual

So yeah, I what Ruie said, I I can

accept that. I mean, it wouldn't be the

only [snorts] valid way of describing

time, but time is perceptual

and uh you could say is the perception

of of impermanence. Yeah, I mean makes

sense.

Sure.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cyrus Frame.

And Cyrus [clears throat]

Frame says, let's see, we are recording, aren't we? Yeah. Cyrus Frame says, "I had never heard of the Ataka Waga before watching your videos. Do you remember how you came across it?" And yeah, I do remember how I came across it. I would specify before getting into the little autobiographical sketch that in the polytopetica there are two noteworthy atakawagas that in the angura nikaya the group of

eights is also called the atakawaga but we're not talking about that we're talking about the atakawaga of the sutin pata which is the the group of octads because there's a core of very old sutas in the atakawaga that are eight verses long.

Some later Buddhist schools mistranslated atakawaga as like oh what is it like astika waga or something astika vara or something where ata has been reinterpreted to mean something like benefit you know or or like the essence the meaning that kind of thing but pretty pretty obviously it means the group of octads and the [clears throat] very first time

I encountered it I was a college student in Bellingham Ham Washington and in the library they had Max Muller's Sacred Books of the East series and I was kind of sampling that you I was checking out books from Max Müller's Sacred Books of the East series and reading them and one of the the volumes that I read was an very early translation of the Sutin Pa by let's see Herman Jacobe I think I guess it would be pronounced Yakobi. something like that. I think he was like he was European and it it was like a an old pioneering translation of the sutini pata from like the 1890s.

But the asakawaga that chapter of the sutini pata really struck me as profound more so than the other chapters. And so even as a college student just being exposed to that, it was sort of one of my best tastes of profundity in in terara Buddhism was just in that that old translation of the the atikawaga or and which is part of the sutin pa.

So yeah, I was in college and just just almost at random I just checked out that volume of Max Mueller's Sacred Books of the East series and just came came across the Atakawaga which I admired and respected ever since.

So much so that I made my own

translation just because I couldn't really find a satisfactory one at a time.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Joe Doe. And Joe Doe says, "Sometimes my mind will say bad things about the Buddha. Is it a demon?

And what can be done to remedy this?"

Well, when I read this question, it reminded me of I used to know one of the world's leading authorities on obsessivempulsive disorder. And one of the possible symptoms, you know, compulsive OCD can have various kinds of symptoms. One

person might just be washing their hands a hundred times a day until the skin on their hands is just chapped and cracked and bleeding. Other people will have like, you know, they'll have to check the door to make sure it's locked over and over and over again. This kind of thing. And another possible kind of symptom of OCD that some people have is these like obtrusive thoughts. And I remember there was a case history in in the in the book that my friend wrote or he was my friend at the time. We haven't we haven't communicated in many years, but uh he sent me a copy of his book about obsessivempulsive disorder. And there was one case history of this

devout Catholic person who kept having these intrusive thoughts of like the Virgin Mary is a [__] this kind of stuff. The Virgin Mary is a [__] And that was like a symptom of OCD at least from a scientific point of view. And I think it's that same book who [clears throat] that mentions John Bunan who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, one of the most well-known Christian books aside from the Bible in in English literature. And he apparently also had this kind of like obtrusive thoughts that he I think he considered it to be like devils or something that were trying to lead him astray.

So I mean

maybe you could say it's a demon.

Although also I think personally what works better for me unless you've got some good evidence that it's some kind of you know entity that's that's messing with you is it's just a sort of like this perverse part of your your personality that is like resisting enlightenment because it doesn't want to die. You know, it's like anyone who does intensive meditation or a lot of people who do intensive meditation know that your mind can just like rebel against meditation because I mean it's your mind is like an animal. It's going to fight for its life. And when you become

enlightened, it's sort of like a kind of death.

So certain parts of your mind are going to rebel against dharma because they want to stay in their unenlightened state, you know, sort of healthy for them. even though ultimately it's delusional and unenlightened.

[sighs and gasps] So it could be something like that. That would be my guess. I don't know the details of course, but you know, it's just sort of like this unenlightened aspect of your personality that just wants to stay the way it is, does not want to fade out if if you

become enlightened, that kind of thing.

And so it's it's sort of making this passive aggressive, you know, rebellious jab every now and then.

And what can you do to to remedy it? It may be that uh I mean just the standard Buddhist panacea is just mindfulness.

Just note it, let it go. Note it, let it go. Don't react because reacting reinforces it. If the thought arises, just note the thought arising. don't identify with it. You know, it's not me and just let it [clears throat] go. And if it's not really deeply ingrained, it could just fade out.

like obsessivempulsive disorder, you may not be completely cured of the

compulsive urges and so forth, but at the very least, you know how to just disengage, not identify with it, and just continue with your life without being just derailed by it.

So the urge to wash your hands comes up for someone with OCD, you know, it's like they just have like these ways of dealing with it which can include essentially Buddhist Saudi baton practice. You just observe it. It's a mental state that's arising. You know, it's like a dysfunctional mental state that's arising. It's not me. It's not me. It's the OCD. That's that was like one of the the slogans in the book.

And then you just like distract yourself away from it if necessary by just doing something else until it goes away. But don't give into it anything like that.

And I hope that was of some help because I'm moving on to the next question which is the last question and this is from Cundrew and Kundrew says why do some Terraata monks shave their eyebrows while others don't? I've seen this specifically between Thai monks who shave their eyebrows and Burmese monks who don't.

Okay. Well, there is a rule of monastic discipline that a monk should shave his hair, his hair and beard, you know, his

head hair and his beard. And apparently in Thailand, they interpret head hair to include eyebrows. Although I've noticed that they don't go so far as to trim their eyelashes, which also is hair coming out of your head.

But I have read in a book that the the original reason why Thai monks started shaving their eyebrows is because Burma and Thailand, which was called Siam back then, I guess, were arch enemies. You know, like Athens and Sparta or like England and France, they were just traditional enemies. And sometimes one country would send spies into the other country disguised as

monks cuz monks are, you know, holy men.
You don't mess with them. You let them
go their way.

So let's see if I get the details of
this right. How it worked. I think what
happened was the the ties knew that
there were Burmese spies coming into
Thailand or

um disguised as monks. So the the ties
just pass it was like the king or
somebody passes this law that the monks
have to shave their eyebrows. So of
course the Burmese monks start sh not
the Burmese monks but Burmese spies you
know impersonating monks start shaving
their eyebrows so that they'll fit in.
But then the Thai spies in Burma could

catch them when they come back. So when you see a Burmese guy with short hair and no eyebrows, you know he's a spy. So then they would uh deal with him in a way that would be politically appropriate for arch enemies and so forth. So that is one story I've read for why the ties shave their eyebrows. It's like it started off as a way of catching spies, impersonating monks, and then there was like this law that monks, Thai monks, shaved their eyebrows, and then the origins of the law just were just lost to time. You just became a tradition and it was just done without question. And it's justified by the idea

that you're supposed to shave your head hair. Shave your head. And this is hair growing on your head. So that's how they would rationalize it. Now if they have lost the old knowledge of it used to be a way of catching Burmese spies or so I have read. I mean, that could just itself be some sort of madeup legend

and it could have just been some arbitrary decision. Well, eyebrows are head hair, so you got to shave it off.

But again, they don't bother with the eyelashes, which seems somewhat uh

I don't know. It's what's the word?

Oh, there's a word to describe that. But

I'm at the end of the Q&A, so I'm not

going to bother trying to remember like
incongruous or some word like that.

So, as I should always say at the
beginning and practically never do, you
have any questions you think I can
answer about early Buddhism, Theravada
Buddhism, Buddhism in general, Dharma,
and even more general philosophy,
myself personally, this like Burma,
monasticism, that kind of thing. Feel
free to ask. I can't promise I'll be
able to answer. Not very well anyway.
But I'll do my best and uh look at the
URL links below which includes links to
my books on Amazon which are about
Buddhism which should not surprise you.

And uh like and subscribe if you have
not done so already and [snorts] be
happy.

Okay then

I do believe we are recording.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 177.

I am your host Pony Basa and this
is my beverage

and 177

contrary to popular belief is not a
prime number because it is $3 * 59$.

However, I counted the uh number of
questions we've got, which is kind of a
large number. It's 37 questions. 37 is
prime.

Also, 37 used to be kind of a magic
number for me. I just I just always had
this fascination for the number 37.

Partly just because I was 37 at the year 2000.

I remember thinking

long before the year 2000, man, I'm going to be 37 the year 2000. That's old,

but I'm even older than that now.

And uh I've got the door closed. There's going to be no special guest appearances of little dogs in this episode because my woman and her mama are out shopping or something right now. They're probably going to come in loudly with a lot of like feminine hama homina noises and so I got the door closed so you don't get to see the dogs. But I mean none of our dogs are 100% dog anyway. The whippet is

like half gazelle. The littlest one is like half guinea pig and half monkey.

And then the mediumsized one is like half gremlin or imp or something.

So, you're not missing out on a complete dog anyway. And I guess I should just start answering questions here. And the first question is from Ethiopian fake TIG. An Ethiopian fake TIG says, "You once said that the Buddha jumps off a cliff with his philosophy and so does Nagarjuna.

But some monks make up complex topics not to do that. Can you explain that a little more?" So finally after months probably we've got like a nar question.

So I got to wear the majama fez.

So get that

situated.

Get the the tassel

arranged

uh in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

So let's do this.

I have said more than once that Godma

Buddha, the historical Buddha, the

founder of Buddhism from a historical

perspective anyway,

um yeah, he just went to the edge of a

precipice and just jumped off. And then

in the centuries following that, a few

centuries afterwards, you had um

Buddhist philosophers coming up with

learned rationalizations for why they

should back away from that cliff's edge.
And then you had someone named Nagarjuna
who came along and he just jumped right
off the cliff again. And so after that
then again you had another wave of
learned Buddhist philosophers giving
profound excuses for why they should
back away from the cliff's edge again.
And the meaning for that
I suppose if I can try to give a meaning
for that is that the Buddha was just
jumping out of samsara
and any kind of philosophy is going to
be samsaric. Samsara is perception.
Samsara is symbols masquerading as
reality.

And so the Buddha just cut through that
and just dived out of samsara so to
speak. But then you have like Abidama
scholars and various Buddhist
philosophers

that are saying well when the Buddha
said don't believe anything he just
meant don't believe anything false and
so you should believe this here
philosophy that we're formulating and
that's just backing away from the
cliff's edge. I mean it's just staying
in samsara. let's just memorize and
master these philosophical doctrines
instead of just cutting through all of
that and bailing out of samsara.

And so Nagarjuna came along and he used

a more logical systematic way of just cutting through all the the samsaric symbolic [—] and just diving out of samsara again. And then after he established the Majamaka school, you had some Majamaka philosophers. And then after that you had the yoga philosophers and other Mahayana Buddhist philosophers who are just formulating these systems for people to cling to. And you don't want to cling to anything. You don't even want to cling to dharma or dharma. So that was the meaning of what I was talking about there. Um you know the Buddhas just don't believe anything like in the oldest text like like the atika

waga of the of the sutin pata have no
view no perception no belief you know
it's like beliefs just don't stick to
you like water doesn't stick to a lotus
flower

and I mean people just can't deal with
that even most Buddhist monks can't deal
with that because you have to believe
something so long as you're not fully in
mind, you have to cling to some kind of
belief system. And so Buddhist
philosophers came up with a belief
system to cling to rather than just
wholeheartedly
just bailing out of the whole system.
Just stay here in Samsara, cling to this
belief system. And you know, it's a

better belief system than just, you know, being some village normie, I guess.

But still it's like I'm not ready to become enlightened yet. So I'll just study how to become enlightened. You know, study the the theory of becoming enlightened rather than actually becoming enlightened.

And Majamaka was sort of a return. And I had a um a Mahayana monk in Burma tell me he was visiting he he told me that some Mahayana Buddhists considered Naga Arjun to be like a second Buddha just because of just the radical approach that he took similar to the original

Buddha's approach.

But um most people just aren't ready for that including most Buddhists including including most Buddhist philosophers and monks. They're just not ready to just let go of everything. So, they still are clinging to dharma or whatever, which is better than clinging to sex, drugs, and rock and roll, but still it's being stuck in samsara.

So, I'm just going to move on to

Ethiopian fake TIG's second question,

which is not about Majamika or Nagarja.

So, I'll take the fez off. It's a really good fez, though. It's a really nice fez.

See here? It does mess up the hair a

little bit when you take it off
incorrectly.

So, Ethiopian fake Tig's second question
is, you said you don't want women to
vote, and I'm and I'm weighing the pros
and cons. Don't you think taking away
this power could infantilize women more?
Right now, it's great cuz they have to
work and study and be forced to pay
bills, but if they give all that up,
their mental faculties will go to [__]
And he's Ethiopian, by the way.

But there, let's see, where is it? Their
mental faculties would go to [__] and
they would rely on men more. Not that
that's bad, but we wouldn't be getting

the great thinkers of our time like
Nancy Cartwright. I have no idea who
Nancy Cartwright is. So, I guess I'm
ignorant of the great thinkers of our
time. But now he he continues here with
parenthesis. He says, "Not to be
confused with the person that voices
Bart Simpson, I mean the philosopher."
That clears things up. Also, oh, I'm he
we're out of the parenthesis now. He
continues, "Also, a lot of women are
incredibly smart." Incredibly smart. I
don't believe it, but they swayed by
emotion to choose things.

Okay, so let's go back up to the top of
Ethiopian fake TIG's controversial
question here.

Well, I mean, to clarify, I didn't say I didn't really want women to vote. I mean, that's just kind of a silly thing to want because I mean, you're not going to get what you want in a case like that. Like, like I was mentioning before, I mean, there'd have to be some radical overthrow of the whole Western civilizational system. I think, you know, there'd have to be like some complete like a total coup overthrowing the the current status quo. You know, the I guess they could still sort of cling to the Constitution. I mean, they just, you know, abolish um certain amendments like the the

amendment that allows women the right to vote, but

still, I mean, it would take some sort of coup to do that. You know, it wouldn't be done democratically. I just don't think that Western civilization is in any

state to just abolish women's suffrage.

So,

so then he asked, "Don't you think taking away this power from the right to vote would infantilize women more?"

No, I really don't think it. I mean, I don't think so. So, see, it's right now it's great because they have to work and study and be forced to pay bills. I mean, that's really not necessarily

great. I mean the oldfashioned way of the woman being like the center of the home, you know, being like the emotional heart of the family, raising the children while the man goes out and and works to earn money. I mean, there is a lot to be said for that old-fashioned way of doing things. And like I mentioned in the previous Q&A that elicited this question in response, women for starters, just going with statistics, you know, there's all sorts of exceptions to the rules. You know, some women are taller than some men, for example, but as a general rule, women value security more

than men do. Men value freedom more than women do. And so women are more likely to vote away rights and freedoms for the sake of security so that you wind up with a kind of socialist mommy state which it just causes civilization to decline because like strength is demonized to some degree like independence of thought is discouraged. Just like meritocracy is discouraged. It's like everyone should be taken care of. everyone should be relatively the same and it's just like poison to what made western civilization predominant in this world.

Even countries that hate western civilization are still wearing western

clothes, using western technology, using western info in infrastructure, driving western cars, using western invented computers, etc., etc., etc.

So

there is that. Also, women just as a general, they've done studies on this.

As a general rule, they're just less informed with regard to politics, economics, current events, that sort of thing. They're just more interested in other things due to psychological sexual dimorphism in the human species.

But also there is an issue I don't think I mentioned with regard to the the great thinkers of our time that uh Ethiopian

fake TIG here mentions that men and women are different. I mean unlike what some nutty leftists will declare men and women are there is sexual dimorphism. We are genetically different both physically and psychologically. And one difference between men and women is that there is more variation in the male than in the female with regard to just about anything really like height for example or like IQ just like brilliance. So that the bell-shaped curve the statistical bell-shaped curve for men is wider broader than for women. women have like a a narrower statistical bell-shaped curve. Like for example, with regard to intelligence. So on average, we're

comparable. But when you consider the variation that the super boneheads and the super geniuses are more likely to be male. That's one reason why I mean it's not the only reason but it is one reason why just the greatest geniuses of world civilization the Shakespeares the Einsteins the Isaac Newton's the Charles Darwins the Mozarts the box they tend to be all male.

I have read that uh there's a book written by Charles Murray Human accomplishment where he does this statistical study of the people who are the most significant contributors to western civilization with regard to

culture and science and so forth. And the top ranking female is a Japanese woman who lived like in the the 10th century or something. She wrote some novel, The Tale of Genji. She is the most significant female contributor to Western civilization outside of the realm of politics. I don't think politics was on the on the list. You know, you had like Queen Elizabeth I, Margaret Thatcher, people like that.

So

it's it's another reason why I mean it's not really have it doesn't really have anything to do with women's right to vote in that case but it's just Ethiopian fake TIG brought up about how

women are like the great thinkers of our time and I just don't see that at all.

I mean, if if you had somebody say, "Who is the greatest female thinker of our time?" A lot of people in America would say Candace Owens.

So

this getting back to like the main point of this question though, I do think that it would probably be to the advantage of Western civilization at least from a Darwinian point of view from the point of survival of the fittest and just cultivating strength and success to have go back to a more patriarchal system

because women just kind of veered
towards socialism and like outlawing
anything risky or dangerous that kind of
stuff and it just causes
a decline of civilization decadence.

I think it was Sir John Glo who wrote
the famous essay was it the decline of
empires or the fall of empires or
something like that and he pointed out
just going with a historical survey of
great empires that arose and then fell
that one of the signs of the decline of
an empire is women rising into social
prominence and getting like like putting
being put in positions of like great
consequence.

aside from the occasional queen which

was more of a like a hereditary thing.

But this is all quite controversial and people should be entitled to their opinions I suppose and in in America at least should be allowed to express their opinions.

But still, um, yeah, I do think that a more masculine society is just going to be more competitive and more likely to succeed so long as it doesn't become so militaristic that it just starts attacking its neighbors so that the neighbors all gang up and start attacking it. You know, Louis the 14th of France would be a good example of that. Or Napoleon,

not that I'm trying to pick on French people.

So, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake tigs next question.

He says, "Thoughts on Joseph Goldstein? I've always wondered why he didn't get married. If there is anything that's known about him on the down low that I don't know about cuz I'm from Ethiopia. Can you tell?"

That's why he's called Ethiopian fake Tig, by the way, is because he's from Ethiopia allegedly.

I really love his work. I'm still This is Ethiopian pigt asking the question here. I really love

his work

and I want to know more about his personal life and what you think of him as an ultralleftle leaning but not too crazy dharma teacher.

Well, I've only read one book by Joseph Goldstein. I think it was his first famous dhamma book. It was the experience of insight which was a good book. I read it a long time ago as a junior monk.

And I really don't know that much more about Joseph Goldstein. I've I've known a few people that met him who say that, you know, of the founders of IMS, which would be Joseph Goldstein, Jack

Kornfield, and Sharon Salsberg, that he's probably like the like the steadiest, sist of the three.

I've That's just, you know, secondhand account. I've never met the man. Really don't know that much about him. I know he's Jewish.

Um, he's a a Juboo as they say, as all three of them are.

Um, but that's that's it. I really don't know that much about him. I've never had much interest in IMS, Barry, Massachusetts, Insight Meditation Society. Um,

you know, it's just sometimes people will send me information about IMS and it's always like this,

you know, anti-white male stuff. you know, it's like mindfulness of white privilege and, you know, bipac retreats and this kind of stuff just as a way of just showing me how crazy some Western Buddhism has become, including some of the most mainstream Western Buddhism. But I really don't know that much about Joseph Goldstein other than what I've already said. So, I'm moving on to the next question, and this is from Justin. And Justin says, "I have struggled for a long time with sensuality, pornography, and casual dating." He's got causal dating here, but I I think he means casual. "Do you have any strategies for

ridding oneself of these urges? I would like to follow the brahmacharia path before I either find a wife or go full celibate hermit. I am in my 20s, so the desire hasn't weakened yet. Have a great new year. blessings to you and your sweetheart.

Um,

well, I kind of have some maybe what could be seen as bad news. I mean, I can definitely relate to this, especially the pornography part or just the lustfulness part. Um, I was never really into casual dating and that's that was to my advantage as a monk as a young man. Um, from the time I was a kid, uh, it was just tra like a tradition for me

to have like a crush on some girl, you know, some girl that I like the most. And then I wouldn't act on that, you know, I'd be too shy, too self-conscious. And then as I got older, I also became had this I mean the uncertainty, you know, the self-consciousness or whatever decreased. But then what increased was just a kind of intuitive reluctance to really commit myself to a relationship with a woman where I would conscientiously have to consider, you know, lifelong commitment. You know, it's like I always had this idea, you know, you're going to date a girl, you

know, there should be like

I mean, it shouldn't just be like I'm just going to date this girl once and score with her and then move on to someone else. I just could never operate that way. But I was, especially as a young man, I was so lustful that it was it was really difficult for me to be a monk. And where where even spanking the puppy, so to speak, is very much against the rules.

And the thing is, I mean, it's not just going to go away. I mean, eventually as you get older, it'll it'll fade out to some degree, but I mean, that's not going to happen till you're in your 40s probably.

So, the thing is, I mean, you don't rid yourself of the urges. That's that's just you're just it's just built in. You're a red-blooded human male. It's just built in. And so it's not so much a strategy of ridding yourself of these urges because you're not going to be rid of them unless something really radical happens. You know there's some kind of major change in your whole like personality then maybe you know you become a religious fanatic where you just cannot even tolerate a lustful thought. you know, it's just your whole mind just recoils from the very thought of

thinking that kind of stuff. Then maybe
although that's rare in lukewarm modern
or post-modern westerners,
in like Asians who still live in a
traditional culture, maybe in Europeans
in the Middle Ages when everyone was
Catholic, maybe. But lukewarm
Westerners, too eclectic, too
open-minded. It's really difficult to
just have this stainless steel faith
that is just going to require that you
be a saint.

So for most of us, we're just stuck with
lustful urges, lustful desires, and so
forth. And so that's really where you're
going to have to do the work is just
learning to detach from the desires,

learning to live with them. like
somebody who's got living in chronic
pain for example,
the best thing you do is just learn to
live with it or or someone who's I think
the the women folk are back home again.

So,

see where was I?

Yeah. I mean, it's it was like living
with chronic pain or like you've got
now they're ringing the doorbell. This
is just just a minute.

They locked themselves out.

Okay.

So, like someone with obsessivempulsive
disorder, I used to know one of the

world's leading authorities on it. At least he considered himself to be one of the world's leading authorities. He wrote books about the subject, learned papers and so forth. And to cure someone of obsessivempulsive disorder where they just have this chronic desire to wash their hands, for example,

um I mean even if you cure them, the urges don't entirely go away. They just learn how to like detach from the urge. They observe the urge mindfully. This particular person that was an authority didn't like using medications.

Medications would just be sort of like training wheels, but eventually you want

to get off the medications and just learn how to deal with the situation, which is a genetic thing. And unenlightenment also could be considered a kind of genetic thing. You're just kind of born that way. And so like lustfulness,

I mean

it's it's not it's not gonna just you're not going to just be rid of it. As a general rule, some people I mean anything is possible. There can be miracles happening.

But for the most part, for most of us, we just learn how to we just have to train ourselves to resist the urges. And

you resist, you don't resist urges like
that through just like pushing them away
or repressing them or some people
they'll just like have these
meditative images
of just like rotting female corpses and
this sort of thing. That sort of thing
really doesn't work. You can have a
coroner who does autopsies on dead
females and it probably has very little
effect on reducing his desire for his
wife when he goes home.

So, it's just mindfulness and just
learning not to react.

And I'm not sure if I
well I could give a kind of embarrassing
like a little anecdote from my own

experience. When I was still a young monk

I was spending some time at a meditation center in in Rangon Chan Yeta it was and I wasn't there for intensive meditation.

I was there like I had to renew my visa or something and so I was staying there.

I knew some people there and I was staying in this one of the dorm buildings and

I I just looked out the window one day and I saw on the roof underneath a different window it was like glossy magazine paper that was flesh tone and it was like when I was young I mean my father kept pornographic magazines. I'd

sneak into my dad's bedroom to look at his porn magazines when I was a kid, that kind of thing. And it was just it triggered this that could be porn pornography. And I had there was no internet, anything like that at the time. So I actually climbed out the window, walked across the roof, picked it up, and looked at it. And sure enough, it was like four pages from some Japanese men's magazine.

So I ogled that for probably at least half an hour before finally my conscience

like impelled me to call a friend of mine who was like a a teacher there and I showed him like look at this. I found

this. So he he got rid of it. But still there was like this this urge like whoa. and that kind of thing. I mean, it's just instinctive in in the male human animal.

So, again, it's

don't try to have a strategy for ridding yourself

of like sexual urges. It's more just a matter of learning how to like

experience the sexual urge without

acting upon it. That is really where the strategy should lie. And from the

Buddhist point of view, there are

various ways of going about it. Like the

uh one of the main meditations like

classical terra Buddhist meditations to help young monks with lust is meditation on the 32 parts of the body.

Um also just mindfulness like sad batana just when the urge arises you know you just see lust is arising that kind of thing just detach from it. But it's very difficult. It's easier to detach from unpleasant things to than to detach from pleasant ones.

Like Mary Baker Eddie used to say, it's easier to cure somebody of cancer than it is to cure them of a bad habit because they don't want the cancer. But the bad habit, at least some of the time, you really like it. And I got to make sure that we're not going to lag so

I can get rid of some of these extra tabs that are up. There's really not a whole lot that are up. So, get rid of that one. And

okay, I guess we're doing okay.

I should do all this stuff before I do the Q&A, but I don't.

So, let's see here.

I guess I'll just move on next question, but good luck to Justin.

This is from Austin and Austin says if dooka or suffering is axiomatic then is pain a phenomenally unavoidable datim and so long as you are in samsara so long as you're like thinking and moving around and that kind of thing

yeah then duka is act it's it's the first noble truth of Buddhism if you exist in samsara you will experience duka

which uh even if you're enlightened then presumably at least according to the text you're going to experience physical pain even though you may not have mental aversion for that pain.

So yeah, it's duka is the first noble truth. The first noble truth is the noble truth of duka.

So you live in samsara, you exist in samsara, you're going to experience dooka. So I mean you can avoid certain kinds of dooka. You can be careful so that you don't slip and fall and hurt

yourself, that sort of thing. But I mean even if nothing happens, you know, you can be in some advanced heaven realm where nothing bad happens, still there's just going to be like this boredom.

There's unwe or some such. Still there's going to be at least a kind of restless dissatisfaction going on. That's like the the most fundamental form of dooka is restless dissatisfaction.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Jimmy Lad.

And I I really should try to stay a little more concise just because there's lots of questions and if the the video gets more than about three hours long

then I've got to reduce the size of the file to upload it onto Bitshoot.

So Jimmy Lad says I remember reading a sutra where the Buddha said that a clan village was massacred because they ate fish. I believe it is found in the eodra eodam.

Do you think that eating fish like this with unh wholesome mental states can really result in such a fate? Well, it's apparently not a terra Buddhist text.

This would not be canonical in terara Buddhism. It's not part of the politica. I mean, first he says it's a sutra which mean which would imply that it's in Sanskrit. But then he says it's in the echod e akodorama which is like a

Sanskrit version of what in pali would be called the angura nikaya.

So it's probably a suta or a sutra that does not exist in the poly the poly tip.

Again I don't recall ever having read such a thing. I do think that terra at would say no that you're not going to be massacred for eating fish.

that in the Buddhist time, people still ate meat, for example. You know, it's not even against the rules for Buddhist monks to eat eat fish. I mean, they're they're not allowed to ask for fish or meat, but if it's just put into their bowl, they're allowed to eat it if they would like to. And Dewadata infamously

tried to insist that the Buddha require all monks to be vegetarian, and the Buddha refused. He said, "You can be vegetarian if you want to, but I'm not going to require that monks be vegetarian."

So, getting to the actual question here, do you think that eating fish like this with unh wholesome mental states can really result in such a fate? Um, I mean, if you do anything with unh wholesome mental states, it can result in bad things happening. I mean, unh wholesome mental states are bad karma, which will result in bad things happening. So whether you're eating fish or eating beans or sitting in

meditation, if you got unh wholesome
mental states, then you are setting
yourself up for unpleasant events.

But I mean, maybe there's like this
village culture of just cruelty to fish.

Just after you catch the fish, you're
just like laughing. Well, like beating
its head in this kind of thing. that was
just like the whole village culture.

Then there could be enough unh wholesome
mental states generated from something
like that that that could cause
a massacre of the village
maybe.

But I do think that this is kind of a
vegetarian propaganda

um generated by later schools of Buddhism that after Buddhism went mainstream in India then it was easier to like discourage like killing animals and killing animals is not I mean it's forbidden for any any Buddhist really. So once Buddhism went mainstream, then you could sort of like try to enforce that and even put into the Buddha's mouth that you know even eating fish that somebody else killed is is bad karma and you can have bad things happen to you. But I mean the Buddha refused in the in earlier texts to even to forbid monks from eating fish. So it's it's the mental states. I mean

just an outward action
is ethically neutral. I'm continually
having to remind western people and
sometimes eastern people too such and
such action I mean ultimately it's
neither wholesome or unh wholesome
because it's the mental states that
determine the karmic value of of an
action you know it's it's the volition
it's the chana that is the karma.

So, I mean, if you can't eat fish with
with with wholesome mental states, then
you're better off not eating fish. Of
course, if you can't eat rice with
without unh wholesome mental states, and
you're just screwed,

you just and if you anything.

So, I mean, if you can eat meat without generating unskillful mental states by doing it, then you're not doing anything wrong.

So it would have to be some sort of really pernicious, unh wholesome, immoral attitude that these people had adopted worse than the average person who just catches fish.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Arpad.

And Arpad says, "Could disease," and he's got sick in brackets, be a good English translation for duke. So yeah, it's dis meaning like not and ease meaning ease. Could that be a good

translation for the for the polyword
duka? And it has been proposed by
various Buddhist authors in the past.

The the main different like the two main
objections

are I mean disease is already an English
word that has a different meaning. you
know, it means a kind of sickness,
usually like a contagious one or a
genetic one, you know, it's means like a
medical sickness and um so I mean that
would cause confusion.

Um

yeah, disease.

Yeah, I guess it's just one. I somehow
had the idea that there was like two

different angles that I could take with that. And maybe there are two different angles, but yeah, I mean the word's already taken and it means something else. So I mean my general translation of of the word duka into English is unease. Like if I'm writing a a translation from poly into English, usually I will translate dooka as unease, which still it I mean there is no exact English equivalent, but it does come closer. you know, it's it's better than disease or disease because people will just see disease and think of, you know, the English meaning of the word disease.

But unease is a less common word and it

can I mean there's more overlap with the poly word duka than the English word disease. I mean that would be roga. The word for disease in poly would be rogar o g a.

So yeah unease it has certain advantages. Um one advantage is that it it pairs with suka. You got suka and dooka are opposites. You got ease and unease are opposites that sound similar. you know, it has a kind of similar effect like an aesthetic or emotional connotation

that you know, it's it's more similar to the poly than saying, you know, like pleasure or or happiness on the one hand

and suffering on the other. You know,
they they don't sound the same. They
don't have the same, you know, like
etymological root, anything like that.

So, I would prefer unease to disease.

Although disease just

like literally

yeah it would be

comparable to unease but unease just

works better it seems to me

and I think unease works better than

Ajan Tuniso's preferred translation of

dooka as stress

I mean sometimes I'll just use the word

suffering because that's just the

standard translation the most common or

usual translation of dooka into English

is suffering. You know, the noble truth of suffering.

So sometimes I can use that and it's not that horrible of a translation.

But disease, yeah, it's just it the word has already been taken. It means something else. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Scooain.

And Scooterain says,

"Most of the time when I'm around people, I feel calm or neutral, but with certain people, I notice a tension or uneasy feeling. Is there any meaning to that experience, or is it just my own mind reacting? I don't like the idea of

judging people, but around certain individuals, it feels different, like it happens uncontrollably." Well, I mean, for starters, there could be just some sort of subconscious subliminal reaction to certain kinds of people. You know, maybe pretty women make you feel nervous, that kind of thing. Yeah. I mean, that's that's fairly common. But there's there's other things also. I remember I don't remember the story very clearly. I could just be making a a a dumb [__] move by trying to repeat a story that I remember kind of vaguely but in one of Ram Das's books while he was in India there was a certain Indian swami who was kept trying

to make friends with Ramdas and for some reason Ramdas just kind of felt put off by him just kind of felt uneasy around him didn't for some reason just couldn't bring himself to quite trust him and so finally it got to this point where um Maharaji Ramdas's guru started like teasing Ram Das I think he was like hitting him you know not hard but you know just kind of teasing him and giving him a hard time about how he doesn't trust you know he's not a trustful person and then Rahm Das is like thinking yeah it's because of this this Indian swami that I don't trust and then nim karoli baba Maharaji just turns

around and says, "No, you don't trust yourself cuz cuz he's he's you know, it's like he does not have pure motives." And you were like picking up on that and just there was just like this intuitive you know just kind of his heart just did not trust this person and Rah and Ram Das's guru Maharaji said I mean you should trust your own trust your own intuition on people like that. I mean, there are some people who just don't trust anybody. And most people like that generally aren't very trustworthy. You know, it's like you're using your own your own self as a kind of yard stick. My father used to tell me that it's

like, you know, someone's jealous all the time or they just don't trust anybody all the time. It's because, you know, they're not trustworthy. You know, they're, you know, they're getting away with stuff and they think everyone else is too. That kind of thing. But also in addition to that

maybe you somehow combined with that there is the idea that if if two beings interact they're creating a third being which is like an us entity. It's like a multiple being. And Buddhism really doesn't talk about that much. I'm I mainly have insights in that just from my own experience in life and just my

own theory of the the block of marble.

You know, the the the simile of the block of marble. That's how Samsara works. It's my theory of everything that contained within this uncarved block is every possible statue which includes group statues. So you've got like this group of of beings

that in a way are like like a compound entity that are sort of generating like to some degree a shared experience.

um even at a like a less profound level there's just the the fact that mental states are contagious which is one reason why the mongala bu the mangala suta I almost said the mangala Buddha the mongala suta says that the number

one blessing in life is not associating
with fools second blessing in life is to
associate with the wise and one reason
for that is because mental states are
contagious

you you hang out with foolish people,
their foolishness is going to rub off on
you to some degree.

Unless you're just immune, like maybe a
fully enlightened being.

Likewise, if you hang out with people
that are wiser than you, their wisdom is
going to rub off on you.

So, let's see here. What's What's the
actual question? Let's see. Is there any
meaning to that experience or is it just

my own mind reacting? Well, I don't know exactly in your case because I don't know the details. It could be either.

Um,

but if it's your own mind reacting in a way that is noticeable to the other person, then of course their karma, their mind is in on the game, too.

But I think in a lot of cases, especially with me,

um, it's just mental states are contagious. somebody has mental states that just don't don't suit my system, then there's going to be a certain dissonance.

And I'm just going to move on to Scutain's next question.

He says, "Coming from the monk life and having only a few robes to lay life, how much larger is your wardrobe? I always feel I have an unnecessary amount of t-shirts and it annoys me sometimes."

Well,

um, back when I was still a monk, I was thinking that, you know, if I were to disrobe, I could still be semi-monastic and just wear like like some uniform of just like gray sweats, you know, a gray hoodie, that kind of thing. And it wouldn't I mean, it wouldn't be that much more elaborate than when I was a monk. But the thing is, I've got a woman and most of the clothes I own, she buys

for me. So, yeah, I've got probably 4 feet of closet rod in in the walk-in closet in our off our bedroom.

Just shirts and pants, jackets, that kind of stuff. Not even including socks and underwear.

So, yeah, it's it's it's way more than three robes, definitely. But I mean, I'd be content with just a very simple wardrobe, but when you're living with with a female who like wants you to look nice, has her own ideas about clothing and so forth, and buys you clothing for Christmas and so forth. I think I got this for Christmas last year. Well, 2024.

So, I mean, I'm not going to resist it.

I mean, it's not really a problem unless you make it a problem. Kind of reminds me of the sutta where the Buddha is talking about there's this rich man living in a mansion with a beautiful wife. You know, he's got all this gold and silver and jewels and all that, but he's not attached to it. So, he's still doing okay. Whereas, you've got this poor person with an ugly foul-tempered wife and he's just eating rice and beans every day and you know, he's just wearing rags and so forth, but he's attached to it. Then he's doing worse than the rich man with the the the elaborate wardrobe and the beautiful

wife and all that.

So it's again

just outward acts are ethically neutral.

It's the mental states associated with the act that create the karma and have the ethical value of being positive or negative or neutral.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Fred and Fred says, "Does celibacy have adverse effects on the prostate?" And I assume he means prostate. That's that's that's a very common typo that you know, sort of like saying mediation instead of meditation, which is one of the most common Buddhist typos in the English language.

But Fred says, "Does celibacy have adverse effects on the prostate?" Some doctors recommend draining the spuds occasionally. And yeah, I mean, when I was younger, up until I was in my early 40s, then yeah, I mean, you can get blue balls. It can be very painful if you don't have some release. But as I was starting to say, like up until my early 40s, I would have nocturnal emissions, which there's no rule against it, unless you're going to sleep specifically with the intention of having a nocturnal emission. You know, you it's like you're trying lucid dreaming or something in order to have an orgasm in your in your

dreams, then that would be against the rules. But just going to bed just lustful or whatever and then having like a sex dream at night and that kind of relieves the pressure like the hormonal pressure in the system then there's no rule against that. And when I stopped having sex dreams as a monk like in my early 40s I missed them. But it's like your system is designed, at least my system was designed that you know it kind of if you got too much pressure then you're going to have a release while you're in like in a while while you're asleep or some such. It may not be that way for everybody. Some people may really have problems

with blue balls. And in in a case like that, I think there is some commentary saying that if if you masturbate just for the purpose of alleviating, you know, this painful condition or something, then it's allowable. But then I think the majority consensus is no, that's that's even that's not true. If you're doing it on purpose, it's still very much against the rules.

in which case you may have to just deal with chronic discomfort of blue balls or whatever. But I mean it's there's always a tradeoff. I mean which is more important? I mean having uh a greater chance of having a healthy prostate or

like the chance of becoming fully
enlightened.

It's like some people especially like
you read about certain medieval Catholic
saints they were so saintly and so
inhibited and repressed that they just
had all kinds of like hysto hysterical
like
psychosomatic symptoms and so forth.

Who knows maybe even like St. Francis of
Assisi the the stigmata that he would get.
I think he died of the stigmata. I mean
that that's could be like a hysterical
conversion reaction like a
psychosomatic condition just caused by
just this intensive repression of one's
natural urges

just the hearing voices and seeing visions and all that of these medieval saints. A lot of that was just the the price they had to pay for being saints because it just goes against human nature. So then you got to have priorities. Which is more important to you? You want to be saintly and pure with like hysterical symptoms, maybe bad health because of it, or do you want to be healthier physically and maybe in certain ways healthier mentally, but still just delusional and unenlightened. And you just got to make the choice for yourself. And it might not be all one way or all the other way. There may have

to be some sort of, you know, draw the line somewhere.

And I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "My questions are about the uniomber Ted Kazinski and his anti-technology manifesto industrial society and its future." in it. Among other things, Kazinski says that the more technology increases, the more individual freedom and autonomy decreases, that people adapt to machines rather than vice versa at the expense of our human dignity. It goes without saying that Kazinsk's way of spreading his message was evil and repugnant, but I can't help feeling that some aspects

of his message were on point. And then his first question is, "Have you ever read the Uni Bombers's manifesto?" And no, I have not. I have read a few manifestos, but I have not read Kazinsk's manifesto or Karl Marx's manifesto for that matter. I have read a few manifestos though, like u just out of curiosity, I read the manifesto of that fellow in I think he was Australian, but he he shot up some mosque in New Zealand.

Um he had a manifesto that was online. I just out of curiosity like as an anthropological study I read that one but no I have not read Ted Kazinsk's

manifesto. So second question from
Romeo. What is your opinion of his
anti-technology message? And I really
don't think it's just one possible
outcome that technology in general is
going to reduce people's dignity and
freedom. That's not necessarily the
case. I mean it's like people talk about
world government. Was the world
government good or bad? But there's like
so many different possible kinds of
world government, you know? It's like
technology isn't it it's it's not just
for ordained or pre-ordained
to just reduce human dignity and and
freedom. Like I mean, you think about
what the life of a peasant was like in

the Middle Ages. I mean, do they really have more freedom and dignity than I do? I don't I really don't think so. I I don't think it necessarily works that way. That maybe like in general certain general trends it can be that way.

Certain general trends may go the opposite way where I mean technology does kind of free people up sometimes.

You know, mama doesn't have to spend an hour every day churning butter for example. I mean, that's not really decreasing her freedom or decreasing her dignity by just buying butter at the grocery store, driving there in a car.

So, I mean,

some some technology does increase individual freedom and autonomy. It seems to me

too much technology like especially with AI is is really going to cause people to get dumber and dumber to some degree.

People will just, you know, ask the AI instead of trying to like research it themselves

or work work out the problem themselves.

But yeah, I really don't I do not see eye to eye with Ted Kazinski on that particular issue.

Yeah. I mean,

anti-technology manifesto. I mean, you want to be like to live like a a Stone

Age hunter gatherer, but I mean, even Stone Age Hunter Gatherers had technology. It just wasn't nearly as much as we've got. But, I mean, there's a certain technology to like making flint spearheads and that kind of thing. And I mean they had like a stone age hunter gatherer may have had more physical freedom in a sense. They had way fewer choices though. So we got more freedom in that sense than that. We got more choices of what we want to do with our life. You know, they're just going to be prehistoric hunter gatherers. I mean that's that's just like made up. That's just decided for them.

So

yeah, I I just I I really do not
entirely agree with it. I'm sure that in
some ways he is correct with regard to
that and in some ways I think he's just
got it bass backwards
and it's it's mainly up to us to decide.
I mean, if you're just like a sheeple
just going along with the flow, still
you're going to have more freedom than a
stone age hunter gatherer in many
respects, but still, I mean, it's it's
not going to have the same effect on
everybody.

So, I mean, ultimately, we do decide. We
are creating our own reality and we are
creating a technological reality at

present.

So, let's see here. Let's just move on to Romeo's third question.

What is your overall take on the effect that the internet, smartphones, AI, and other recent technology have had on people since they were unleashed on society? Yeah, I've already kind of touched on that just by saying it it does make people more intellectually lazy and just kind of dumbs us down to some degree. Instead of spending an hour researching something, you can spend three minutes and just ask Groank.

And I mean, it has certain advantages. I mean it's not all bad

but I mean the internet I mean it's it's almost like a dva power you know the internet really is it's like an an additional sense organ that has been added to us where you know the internet itself is the sense is the sensory field and the computer that has internet access is like the sense organ so I mean it's not entirely bad at all I mean it has certain downsides and and anything has a downside, you know. It's it's everything has a plus side and a and a negative and a minus side, you know, a dark side and a light side.

Just just about everything. I mean, I've been trying to think of, you know, what has what entity what what phenomenon in

this world is all one way or the other.

It's like I mean, even the bubanic plague of the 14th century wasn't all bad. I mean it helped bring about the modern world. You know the survivors they were all of a sudden they had the the same amount of wealth was distributed among fewer people because so many people died. People just just prosperity just boom. It went up. The standard of living went up. I mean there were still like aftershocks you know more plagues and so forth. that kind of thing would still happen.

But I mean like the black death even that wasn't all bad.

But I mean Buddhism I've tried to think
I mean and unlike Christianity where you
can a lot of people would say that
Christianity has caused as much you know
suffering and misery and death as as the
opposite. You know it's like all the the
holy wars and all this kind of stuff the
the inquisition witch burnings and all
that. Buddhism.

Yeah, it does seem to be one of the few
things in this world that seems to have
more positive than negative,
but maybe I'm just not saying it.

So, I do think that internet smartphones
and and AI as it is now, you know,
they've got their their good side and
their bad side. And whichever side you

want to emphasize, you know, it you you do have a certain amount of choice in whether you're going to be wallowing more in the benefits or in the the the opposite of the benefits, the detriments.

But of course, if we hit the technological singularity and AI just becomes, if not sentient, then able to mimic sentience well enough that it's like a billion times more intelligent than we are and is acting on its own. it's its own cognizance, so to speak. Then who knows? That could be the end of the world for all we know. That's why it's called a singularity. We don't

know. We can't predict what's going to happen. We can't know what's going to happen once it happens.

So, I'm I'm just going to move on. Next question. Really, I can't just spend too much time on one question because there's 37 of them approximately.

And this question is from Sedarta Lohaitita. And Sedarta lohachita says, 'What do you think about food prohibitions like pork for Jews and Muslims or beef for Hindus? A superstition.

And I don't think that it's all superstition that it's sort of like legends that generally have some origin in fact. Like in in Buddhism, there are

food prohibitions for monks. You know, monks aren't supposed to eat tiger meat, for example, or snake meat, that kind of thing. They're not allowed to eat raw meat or drink raw blood unless they are possessed by a demon. Kind of a strange rule of monastic discipline there. Well, with regard to like the prohibition on pork, I remember my father telling me when I was a kid that the purpose for the prohibition on pork was that pork being a kind of omnivore that eats poop and garbage and so forth that pigs u have a tendency or kind of a maybe a slight tendency towards getting tchinosi which was a really icky scary

disease that people could get very painful.

So, it could be that the prohibitions on pork and like dog meat and other omnivores,

I mean, chickens kind of got a pass, but pork, I mean, you can get trichinosis from eating pork if it isn't cooked well enough to kill the cysts, you know, the little roundworm cysts in the meat. So, that could be the origin of the prohibition on pork. You know, there's I mean, the Jews go farther than that.

Most people just think of pork, but I mean it's I mean Jews aren't allowed to eat any quadruped that it uh let's see.

It has to chew its cud and have a cloven

hoof in order for it to be kosher. And I mean it could be that there was some folk medicine or something. You know, people just had this, you know, they'd notice, you know, well pigs have a cloven hoof. They don't chew cud and you can get sick from eating that. and rabbits chew cud sort of but they don't have a cloven hoof and I don't know if there's any diseases people get from rabbits other than just rabbit starvation from eating only rabbits um you know like shrimp I think shrimp isn't kosher maybe shrimp goes I mean in ancient times I know from living in Burma where you don't have refrigeration

that shrimp goes bad pretty fast so it could be something like that so I mean I would assume that there some proto like medicinal reasons for some of it and maybe just superstitions for for other parts of it. With regard to beef for Hindus, um the cow is just considered to be the greatest benefactor of of mankind. And even even a few Buddhist texts emphasize that the the cow is man's best friend and it's like like betrayal to kill and eat cows or to sacrifice them to gods. That kind of thing. The Buddha was really more against animal sacrifice than he was against eating meat.

Just partly just because India was maybe ripe to turn away from animal sacrifice at the time. Whereas just realistically he realized that the India wasn't ready yet to turn away from eating meat or to turn away from war other kinds of violence that involve killing.

So

yeah, I think there is some rationality behind at least some of it, but not necessarily for all of it. It could just be like folklore, superstition, that kind of stuff is is mixed in with certain kinds of empirical observations like maybe you can get sick from eating pork sometimes because of

tchinosis or whatever other diseases
that pigs can get from like eating [_]
and stuff.

And I'm just going to move on to Sedart
Loha's next question.

In the middle ages or even earlier in
Europe, which I guess would be classical
Roman times, no commercial exchanges
were allowed inside towns. They had to
take place outside the cities because it
was considered that exposure to such
activity would corrupt the city. It was
almost treated in the same way as
prostitution or selling drugs done
outside the town, in designated spaces,
or at fairs. Does the same happen in
rural Myanmar? And do you think and what

do you think about this? Well, no. It doesn't happen in rural Myanmar. There are shops and marketplaces in the villages in rural Myanmar. There's no taboo against doing business inside of a village. And getting to the what do I think about this? I'm skeptical of this whole claim. I mean, there's like the agora was the marketplace which was like in the center of many ancient towns. And I've never encountered ever before the the information that like in medieval Europe, you couldn't do any kind of business inside of a town. Like there couldn't be any shops, there couldn't be any ins, no taverns,

anything like that inside inside the city limits. Maybe there was like like like the walled like the nucleus of the city might not have that kind of stuff, but the suburbs, you know, where there's still a town. Yeah. I just I just don't see it. I I I've never even heard of that. You know, there's stories of ancient Greeks, you know, going to the Agora, buying and selling, you know, presumably inside the town.

I mean, I have heard that you couldn't there wouldn't be like lending money at interest. You know, that's the sin of usury in uh medieval Europe. You know, the early Christians, I don't know when they they gave up on the idea that

lending money at interest was a sin,
but that's one of the reasons why the
Jews became prosperous in the middle
ages and became hated in the middle ages
because it wasn't a sin for them to lend
money and interest. And so they were
making lots and lots of money lending
money and interest to the goyim
to the gentiles if you will.

So yeah, it doesn't happen in Rome
Yanmar. And I've never heard of this
happening even in the middle ages other
than, you know, in certain limited
contexts. I don't think it was that way
in in Rome. I mean, you just read some
of the stuff that would go on and you

got people going to to bakers and and
going to, you know, you'd have like the
market inside the like in the city
center kind of stuff. Stay at the inn,
that kind of stuff.

So, yeah, I am I am rather skeptical.

I' I'd need some some further evidence
that in the Middle Ages or even earlier
in Europe, there were no commercial
exchanges allowed inside of towns
because I Yeah, I would I would guess
that that is not correct information
except maybe in certain isolated cases,
certain towns maybe like Sparta or
something.

So I'm just going to move on to Sedarta
Lohachita's third question.

Could Plato be an arant or have attained Gana or knowledge? For example, when he describes the world of forms or ideas, attain that through gnosis.

So let's see the world of forms or ideas in Plato. It is the metaphysical dimension where pure ideas exist such as beauty, justice, the good, independent of the sensible and changing world is the true and eternal. No, I really I mean you can't know for sure, but I do not think Plato was enlightened. I don't think he was an orand.

And even when his his world of forms is still multiplicity, it's still this as opposed to that. you know, the ideal the

ideal cat is different from the ideal dog. So there's still differentiation and so forth which I would not consider to be the highest truth. I do not think Plato arrived at the highest truth sort of neoplatonists maybe like Plotinus or Plutonists. I mean, he would have, in my opinion, a much better credibility as an enlightened being than Plato.

Plato, I mean, he was just kind of making up stuff about Socrates. Even in ancient times, people knew that you couldn't really trust Plato to convey what Socrates really taught because he was just putting his own words into Socrates's mouth.

So yeah, I mean I certainly don't take

Plato seriously. There's there's an old saying that everyone whether they realize it or not is either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. And I really I'm neither. I really don't have much use for either one of them.

Yeah, Plato I mean if if he was getting some sort of insight into a higher world of forms still that would not be the ultimate highest truth in my opinion.

I' I'd go with Plotinus or Plutinus rather than Plato.

And uh I just let's just move on to the next question. This is from Trzaskowski is Trzaskowski says, "When someone is in a deep coma, does his mind work?" Well, his

brain isn't working apparently. If you're in a coma, I'm pretty sure that your brain is just kind of it's hardly even idling. It's still metabolizing, I guess. But I'm really no neuroysiologist. I'm no authority on on what exactly your brain is doing when you're having a coma. And also, I haven't really read any like near-death experience stuff about people in comas. Like somebody comes out of a coma, do they remember anything? Are there any cases of somebody coming out of a coma and not just being surprised that it's two years later? You know, they're think, "Wow, well, I mean, I saw myself You know, I rose up above my body and I

saw it down there and I went into the bright light and then I just spent two years hanging out with these spirit beings in heaven and then I came back down. I've never encountered a case like that. They they might be out there but I mean if your mind is working I mean from the Buddhist point of view it wouldn't be your mind anyway. you know, this like

let's say there's some sort of spirit entity, you know, let's just call it a soul, but I mean, it's not ultimately real anymore than your body is ultimately real. You know, it's conventionally real, maybe at a higher

level, a multi-dimensional level, but
it's still it's just it's like a higher,
more refined level of delusion, a
higher, more refined level of some
sorrow. So, in a case like that, your
mind No mind might still be working. You
know, it's like your mind, what you call
your mind, like deeper levels of it that
you may not have any conscious awareness
of maybe still operating, you know,
working out certain processes or or
issues or whatever,
but it's not really you. And it's
obviously not happening at this level of
reality or this level of some sorrow,
you know, this empirical universe.
So I'm just going to move on to Trzascus

is his next question

and he says,

"Is it possible for consciousness to exist

without any perception or object of awareness?

You always seem to be conscious of something whether it's a thought, sensation or external object. So if there's always a subject and an object, doesn't that mean pure consciousness without any content of perception cannot exist?" Well, this is I mean this was kind of an issue in in early Buddhism and the official position of terra Buddhism is that there always has to be

consciousness of something. You can't just have pure consciousness. There always has to be perception and valition and other mental states accompanying consciousness.

So even if you're in these formless realms, you know, the realm of nothingness or the realm of infinite consciousness or something, there's still the perception of nothingness, the perception of infinite consciousness.

Um, you know, it's like infinite consciousness in quotes practically.

But there are also like I keep saying there's at least two sutas that contain fragments of some old verse the the entirety of which may be lost to the

polytopic that implies that that nirvana
or nibbana is infinite formless
consciousness
unmanifest luminous all around.

So

some people would say that wyana which
is usually what is translated as
consciousness. You've got wyana. It's
one of the five condas. Wyana
always has to have an object. You can't
just have pure wyana.

But if you get into just pure
consciousness then it's just like off
the scale. You know it's like reifying
the absolute
pure consciousness. If that's nibbana I

mean you can't perceive it. And if you can't perceive it, it's not in samsara anymore. So that's once consciousness becomes pure consciousness, it just goes off the scale and is no longer samsaric. In which case, you can say that from a samsaric point of view, it doesn't exist. And you could just say existence and non-existence are just purely samsaric ideas anyway.

But it does seem to me that someone going heading for enlightenment is it's it's sort of like in calculus where you're getting into like infinitely small incremental changes or something. It's like you're trying to get to pure consciousness. I mean that's like the

path it seems to me could be described
as you know moving towards or working
towards progressing towards pure
consciousness and that's like what
fourth Janna is that sort of thing or
the the signless concentration of mind
anime samadei that kind of thing is I
mean you're conscious but there's
practically no content

So you could say that from a samsaric
point of view, you just keep getting
closer and closer to pure consciousness
until suddenly just poof. You can't
quite get there within a samsaric
context. It just doesn't work that way.
And so I'm just going to move on to ask

is his next question. He says, "What one believes is also based on causes and conditions. Can we really choose what we believe?" Well, like Schopenhauer would say, yeah, you can choose what you believe, but you can't decide what you're going to choose. That kind of thing. So again, this just gets down to the issue of free will. Do we have free will?

And from the Buddhist point of view, the indication seems to be that we don't, except maybe in this paradoxical way that is never really described or explained.

I mean from the point of view I mean the Buddha kind of rejects both alternatives

free will and determinism. He rejects free will in the anatal lakanasuta which is traditionally his second formal discourse after his enlightenment. His first discourse that caused some of his disciples to become enlightened.

His first disciples.

And I mean it's just like with regard to any of the five condas you can't say let it be this way let it not be that way and reliably have it happen. And one of those is volition sankara.

So we don't have complete control over that which means we don't have complete control over what we choose what we decide. But on the other hand, he

rejected the Ajivakas, an ancient Indian religion that no longer exists or an ancient Indian spiritual tradition who are just strict determinists.

So it's like he rejects free will and determinism. So there's like this middle path that is never fully fleshed out or explained.

But I mean some people I mean some people seem to choose what they believe more than others do. And it's something that I can't really understand. I can't really wrap my head around how some people will just believe everything their religion tells them or even worse yet, believe everything their political party endorses. You know, they just

they're just a staunch Republican or a staunch Democrat or a staunch whatever. And whatever is the position of their political party, they just go right along with it.

I think it was William James wrote a famous essay about like believing and choosing what you're going to believe. And he he talked about how it has to be something viable. I mean you can't just believe anything. Some people seem like new age people I mean they seem capable of believing anything but still it's like I mean it has to seem true. I mean you can't just decide well I'm just going to believe that two

and two is five from now on. I mean,
some really soft-headed person could do
that maybe,
but so it's
what you believe. It does seem to be
whatever perception seems the most
plausible, seems to fit in with your
other perceptions most efficiently,
that's what you're going to believe. But
then again, now it just occurs to me
that I mean, belief is is perception.
Anything that you perceive, you're going
to believe.
So
golly,
where do I go from here? Can we really
choose what we believe? That is the

question. And if I mean from the Buddhist point of view, it does seem that we do not have free will. It would take like an autonomous entity, an autonomous agent to have free will and there is no self in Buddhism. So no autonomous agent. So yeah, it would be based on causes and conditions, but still the Buddha rejects just strict determinism. And so we're in this limbo of paradoxical may with regard to maybe somehow,

but that is a difficult question.

And with regard to myself, I mean, it's like you don't have any choice really but to believe what seems the most like

plausible or likely, you know, based on the information that you have.

So,

yeah, I mean, I'm not really going to make a call on that one because it's I do think it it's kind of a paradox, but I mean, just based on the evidence, it would seem that no, we can't really choose what we believe. We can't really choose what we're going to choose. It just happens

based on karma. And you can sort of identify with it or detach from it and just let nature take its course. And you know, in a way, you sort of detach from the whole ego stuff that's going on.

But I'm just kind of wallowing and

trying to dance around paradox. And I'm just moving on. Next question. This is from fifth

And fifth says, "What books about or related to Theravada Buddhism would you recommend from beginner ones to advance? I already have your three books." Well, congratulations on having my three books.

Um, and the fourth one, there's a good chance it may come out sooner than later now. Uh, I might get back to that later, but I might be working on my fourth book again after the an indefinite hiatus from just being overworked and not having time to really dedicate to it.

But let's see here.

What books about or related to Theravada Buddhism? Well, I mean the best books about or related to Theravada Buddhism would be Pali texts themselves. Good English translations if you are innocent of Pali. So I mean like the Sutta Pitaka would be an excellent intro to Theravada Buddhism. The Dhammapitaka is one of the most well-known uh Pali texts. Um the Udana has a lot of interesting stories. Um the Majjhima Nikaya would be good for a beginner although it's starting to get kind of into the like the technical kind of dry philosophical stuff sometimes. Um there's one book called Buddhist Legends translated by a person named Berling

game which is a translation of the Dhamapata commentary and if you're more interested in narratives and stories and just seeing what it was like in ancient India than to read the Dhamapata commentary would be interesting you know it's sort of like reading as fables sometimes or the Poncha Tantra which I think is more of a Hindu text you know it's just ancient Indian fables that have been sort of turned into like origin stories for verses of the dharmapata that kind of thing.

So

I think one of the the earliest books on teraba Buddhism or early Buddhism was

was was by TWW Reese Davids. It was like Buddhist India which was I mean it was written like over well over a hundred years ago but still it was sort of like this breaking new ground kind of a pioneering sort of a book that had a certain enthusiasm and excitement behind it that made an impression on me.

Um

yeah, I mean I would stick to the try to get as close to the original sources as you can and then once you get like more advanced I mean once you get kind of an understanding of what the texts say then you can start kind of diversifying out and you know reading Joseph Goldstein or or Wal Pola Rahula that kind of thing.

um GC pande I mean once once you know
the difference between the Angura nikaya
and the Samuda nikaya for example then
you know once you're fairly familiar
with the sutas then GC Pandai's studies
and the origins of Buddhism I would
consider to be an invaluable study aid
with regard to understanding what early
Buddhism was like
although he he has his own biases he's
he's a Hindu so he has sort of like a
vantist take on early Buddhism
So yeah, I mean just kind of to recap, I
mean just start with Buddhist texts, you
know, just read I mean most of them are
translated in English now. The ones that

aren't translated English aren't
translated in English because nobody
would read the translation anyway
because it's just so obscure of a of a
text like the ne the nesa something like
that. But yeah, start with like the
sutini pata which is the book that
really converted me to terra Buddhism at
least to a a really strong interest in
terra you know dharmapa you you just
read a few verses before going to bed at
night of the damapata I used to do that
the udana majamikaya
danikaya
that kind of stuff I mean can't really
go wrong with that and that that will
give you just the the straight

information right out of the text. I mean that's that is it. That is do that is Terravada. You're not just reading about Terravada. You're reading Terra Buddhism.

Also I mean some of the some of the books by Ajan Cha just the transcripts of his dharma talks he he's taught in a way that was based on experience and that westerners can relate to better than many other Asian like dhamma teachers. But I'm going to move on to fifth's second question.

He says, "Do you think there is any benefit to a layman learning poly?"

Well, I mean, if you're really

interested in knowing exactly what the texts say, the poly texts, you know, you want to get as close to the Buddha's words as you can, then sure, there would be benefit to learning Poly for anyone that really wants to read the Buddha's teachings in as close to the Buddha's language as possible. And then you'll understand you'll understand much better like Buddhist philosophical terms that kind of thing. I mean just to to learn the Buddhist philosophical terms I mean that in itself would be very beneficial. I mean if you want to really understand what Terra Buddhism teaches.

So that was kind of an easy question.

So, I'm going to move on to Fifth's

third question, which is when or where will we be able to get your newest translation of the Aika Waga? Well, I don't have a new translation of the Aika Waga. I do have just the translation of the Atakawaga that I made back around 1997,

which um you can find it online. I think even the Wikipedia article on the Atakawaga

has like in the links like the bibliography is linked to like a PDF of my translation of the Atakawaga. Um my woman has been managing my official website

um so that I'm not 100% sure that my

atawaga translation is on my website
which I think is piobasa.org or I think
paneobasa.com
ponyobasa.org

H yeah, I mean I'm just I haven't looked
at my own website in a long time cuz
really I haven't added anything new to
it in years at this point. You know, it
was mainly stuff that was before I
started blogging
and then I just the new stuff was all
going on to the blog and then I stopped
that that first blog, the Nepa Puncha
blog. And then I started a second blog
which is still up although I haven't
added anything to it in well over a
year. And now I'm just my

you know my my Buddhistic labors are
mainly taking the form of of videos now
including this Q&A.

So, like I said, my fourth my fourth
book um not including the atawaga that I
mean just

um just like this series of essays,
collections of essays. It's going to be
more autobiographical

that could be out. I mean, I'm not
making any promises, but it could be out
like within a month or two.

But the atteaga is my translation of it
should be online somewhere. And um I do
have some extra copies of it that I can
send like hard copies. Um

it was always my intention that the Atakawaga translation is just a gift of Dhamma. I should never sell it for money. That kind of thing. So, it has been published a few times in small numbers, but I'm sure that a hard copy of it would be relatively rare, but it's out there.

And uh let's see. I guess I'm just going to move on. Next question. Sorry if I was not informative enough on that one, but there really is no new translation of the Aikawaga. There was one person that was volunteering to edit it for me to make it into like a more compact format that it could be published as a

book again, you know, a new edition,
hard hard copy edition, but that's just
sort of like in development hell or
something. I haven't heard from the
person that had volunteered to do that
lately.

So, there's no telling. I mean, ideally,
when I have more time, I'm not having to
to work for a living. so much then I
could even possibly, you know, try to
find some some donor or sponsor for just
publishing a new edition of the
Atikawaga translation because it really
is an invaluable book. I do consider the
Atawaga of the Sudan to be probably I
mean potentially at least the most

important

piece of Buddhist literature in

existence. is like the largest fragment

of archaic pre-theravadan Buddhism that

we have in my opinion and it's the

teachings of it are radically different

although kind of similar but still in

certain ways radically different from

the later just orthodox established

theravada Buddhist system

so I'm just going to move on next

question this is from Clefy

let's see yeah this This is this we've

been at it for an hour and a half

already. Khifi says, "What would a

middle path for a practicing Western

Buddhist?" No. What would be a middle

path for a practicing Western Buddhist?

Well, I mean, you you're not going to be able to follow the middle path as described by the Buddha as, you know, the ethical middle path because the ethical middle path, you know, the practice middle path between self-indulgence and self- torture involved wandering around homeless, dressed in rags with no money, no family connections, silently begging for your food in the streets, sleeping under trees and in graveyards and this kind of thing and I mean that's too extreme even for most monks nowadays.

So the middle path for practicing

western Buddhist

first of all there's more than one middle path. There's Buddhism itself is just it could be called Buddhist philosophy is like a collection of middle paths you know like there's the middle path between like eternalism and annihilationism.

You know that's there that's a middle path. There's a middle path just between self-indulgence and self torture.

There's a middle path between let's see what would be another example. I mean there's there's there's lots of them of just these sort of dichotoies or like free will and determinism. That that's another middle path.

So, I mean, if you're going to try and follow some semblance of the middle path as a layman, you have to don't seek out misery and don't seek out pleasure. You just kind of accept things as they go along and you live your life prudently. You try to be moral and so forth, but I mean, you're not clinging to anything and you're not like running away from trouble and you're not running towards trouble. So that would be a kind of like middle path light.

And then Kify's second question is is the middle path even possible for a western man or woman and like I said I mean the ethical middle path of ancient

India that's too extreme even for most monks now. So yeah, it wouldn't really be possible for a western man or woman unless the western man or woman renounced the world and went to Buddhist Asia and just started wandering around homeless and sleeping under trees and so forth

with or without ordination I guess.

But I mean the other middle paths the middle path sort of philosophical middle paths between eternalism and

annihilationism for example. I mean you can adopt those kind of middle paths like philosophically

and again I mean just not running away from trouble or running towards it. I

mean that is a kind of middle path light that a lay person could get some proficiency at I think. And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Liberating Insights.

and liberating insights says, "I have listened to countless near-death experiences and an overwhelming number of cases may have described some very tall spirits." Lorna Brine, maybe Laura Burn, who has seen angels and spirits since she was a little child and still does to this day, also states that they all come in different shapes and sizes, some as large as cathedral pillars, and some can also manifest into

human forms. Do you think it's plausible that it was the Buddha's spirit that some observers seen him as 27 feet tall? I consider that unlikely. I mean anything is possible.

So maybe in some people's private samsaraas

it I mean that would have some plausibility

but personally um like in in Vineia the Buddha is considered to be three and a half times the height of an ordinary human. in the commentarial tradition outside Winia like in the commentarial tradition um connected to the sutas he was four and a half times the size of an ordinary person and I think I'm not

exactly sure why they they had him be so
so big when obviously he couldn't have
been in my opinion but in in with regard
to the vineyard rules where he was three
and a half times the size of an ordinary
person one possible explanation for that
is that just it just made it easier to
follow the rules. You know, if you can't
wear a robe that's bigger than nine
handspans by what, six, I think. I It's
It's been a long time since I sewed my
own robes, but I mean, the average robe
nowadays would be twice as big as the
allowable size. like what Thai monks
wear or Burmese most Burmese monks wear.
It would be much bigger, you know, twice

the size of the Buddha's own robe,
assuming that the Buddha was the size of
a tall man, but not the size of a
giraffe.

So,

they just made it easier somehow. It's
like um with regard to the height of a
bed, a high bed is one where the frame
is the bottom of the frame is more than
eight finger widths above the floor. So
if you go with the Buddha's hand was
three and a half times the length and
width of an ordinary hand, then you can
sleep in a bed that's way up off the
floor. And that's easy. And some monks
maybe wanted to do it that way. And so
in ancient times even they just kind of

changed the size of the Buddha's
handspan in order to make it easier to
follow certain rules. That is a
possibility. But otherwise, why on earth
would people think that the Buddha was
27 feet tall or even three and a half
times the size of an ordinary human?
Is I don't know. But I I'm not sure that
I mean they're seeing the Buddha's
spirit, you know, his disembodied spirit
as some gigantic man. I mean maybe, but
there's really no evidence other than,
you know, nowadays people are saying
that sometimes spirits can be 27 feet
tall or something, but that's really
insufficient evidence to really like

make a a strong case for it.

That probably is just some kind of weird mythology,

but I don't know. And I'm just going to move on to Liberating Insights next question.

He says, "What do you think of this famous surgeon's witnessing a near-death experience in progress? You can view it here at Liberating Insights on YouTube."

Uh, it's 12 minutes long if you have the time. Yeah, I did I did watch the video.

I think it's the same video. It was a 12-minute long one. It was one of the most recent videos that was uploaded by Liberating Insights on his YouTube channel.

And there's some heart surgeon talking about how they were doing surgery like repairing a valve on this man's heart and it was like he he just kind of died on the operating table. You know, it was it was very tricky and he was just sort of failing like they needed the artificial heart and lung machine to keep him alive and he just wasn't kind of taking over, you know, taking up the slack from the machine until finally they were trying and trying. I mean, it was just there seemed to be no way of saving him. So, they just turn off the machine and just sort of close him up and leave him for

dead. And then like 20 minutes later, he revives. I mean, he doesn't wake up, but I mean, his heart starts beating again after 20 minutes. And you know, he starts breathing on his own without the help of the machine. And so then they they rush in and you know, finish sewing him up and everything.

And then after he revives, you know, he regains consciousness days later.

He's telling them about he had like the classical near-death experience, you know, he his spirit or astral body raises up, you know, floats up above the operating table and he looks down and sees his body down there. He sees the doctors and so forth and he goes up into

the bright light, etc. And according to this surgeon, he was seeing things that he shouldn't have been able to see because I mean, he was like clinically dead for 20 minutes. And he's he's like describing how, you know, he was wondering where the anesthesiologist went, you know, he saw the two doctors there, but where's and and that was after they'd already given up on him, you know, and he's like mentioning how he saw this this list, this this long uh like a chain of post-it notes, post-it notes that were stuck to something that weren't there when he was still conscious. They were there when he was

unconscious and clinically dead. There was just like this messages for the doctor that he was supposed to get back to after the surgery was over. He shouldn't have been able to see that kind of stuff. So what do I think of it? I mean that kind of stuff happens. That's what I think about it. I mean you can say like I was saying earlier that um even though the individual person from a Buddhist point of view doesn't ultimately exist. I mean even this our soul doesn't ultimately exist just as our body doesn't ultimately exist. Our body apparently does obviously exist. And so you could argue well there's also like a spirit like an astral body and so

forth that from within a samosasic context clearly exists even though at the ultimate absolute level it's not ultimately real. You know it's just part of phenomenal samsara.

So, I think it's quite possible that there can be some kind of astral body or spirit that goes through these these um events of a near-death experience, you know, rises up and sees the body down below and goes into the bright light and communicates with spirit beings and comes back again.

I mean, there's many, many cases of that.

And sometimes they'll see things that

they shouldn't be able to see. You know, it's like there's other near-death experiences where I remember reading one where this woman rose up above her body on the operating table and she could see that there was something on top of the the fluorescent light over the the operating table and then she she tells that to the doctor or the nurse or something afterwards and they look and yeah, there's there's no way she could have seen it. Or there was one who saw a a tennis shoe on a ledge outside the window in this hospital and you couldn't see it from the floor level. It was like a fourth or fifth story window, but on this ledge right below the window,

there's like a shoe sitting there. And supposedly there was no way she could have seen it. But when she was out of her body floating around, she happened to see it and then she told them and then they went and looked and there it was. So I mean this kind of stuff it happens a lot. Maybe not, you know, every day at every hospital, but still it does happen. And

I mean my father firmly believed in this stuff. He he claimed that he had had outof body experiences before.

So sure I mean I can say that from a samsaric empirical point of view there could be some sort of astral body that

that leaves the physical body. You know the Hindus certainly believe in that. um but that ultimately it's no more real than the physical body is which from the Buddhist point of view even this physical body that you can see doesn't ultimately exist.

So yeah, I mean I can accept the conventional existence of a soul. You know, it's just sort of like this multi-dimensional entity of which, you know, this is just one aspect, but ultimately at the highest level, it is not ultimately 100% real.

Conventionally real, potentially real, conditionally real, but not ultimately real.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from PSA and PSA says, "Why are you doing the Jim Carrey alighty then at the beginning of your videos now?" He did it mostly on his Ace Ventura movies and it's just convergent evolution of speech patterns or something because I've never seen an Ace Ventura movie. I'm really don't know who Ace Ventura is. I know who Jim Carrey is, but I never saw any of the movies in which he says that. It's just random chance I guess. Cosmic coincidence. Two great minds converge on the same alighty then. I don't know. And so I'm just going to move on to

PSA's next question. He says, "Don't you feel like whomever set up this simulation called Samsara made it a little too difficult to stop participating and exit once you realize it's all bullshit?" Well, whomever set up this simulation is is us. We're the one who are we're the one ones who are generating it. And I mean, we would stop generating it and stop participating in it if we really did fully realize it's all [__] But the thing is, deep down we're not fully convinced at some superficial philosophical level where we can say, "Yeah, yeah, it's all bullshit." But deep down we are still invested.

Deep down we still got some delusion
going that takes it seriously and clings
to it and so we don't become
enlightened. But this question did
remind me of

um a certain quote from a profound
movie. It's one of my favorite movies.
It's called Avalon. It was filmed in
Poland with Polish actors, but it had
like a Japanese director and Japanese
person doing the soundtrack and so
forth.

Um,

and there's a certain I mean it's the
movie Avalon. It's it's a like a parable
of some sorrow, a parable of

unenlightenment. And there's this character in this virtual reality video game which the movie is based on. This Avalon is the name of this this game. There's this character in the game called the bishop. And he says he says the following. He says, "Which is the greater challenge? Which is the better game? Which would you choose given a choice? The sort of game that you think you can win but can't or alternatively one that seems to be impossible but isn't. maintaining a precise delicate balance somewhere in between throughout every level of the game. That's what keeps it going and it's all up to us. So I mean that's the parable of Samsara.

You know it's like it's it's sort of like the middle path between seeming impossible but not being impossible and seeming possible but not being possible. Did I say that right? seeming let's see you think you can win but can't. It's like the middle path between like a game that you think you can win but can't and one that seems to be impossible but isn't.

That's samsara.

So it's a kind of samsaric middle path um that helps to generate the game.

But really I mean we're the one who is has set up this simulation called samsara.

Maybe you could say it's like some
deeper aspect of us, some
multi-dimensional entity that is
generating us too, but still it would be
like our quote soul unquote,
which isn't ultimately real
that is generating
our reality,
just like we're generating our reality
in our own dreams,
which I guess um kind applies to this
next question from PSA.

PSA says, "If everyone is anata or
without a self ultimately, does that
mean that everyone we meet is just a
manifestation of our karma?"

Not just a manifestation of our karma.

Although they would definitely be that, but at the same time, I mean, we're a manifestation of their karma. And then there's like the the group entity, the compound entity in which I mean they're a part of this US entity that we are also a part of and that's really not what Terra Buddhism teaches. Terraata Buddhism really doesn't go there. This is just based on my own experiences in life that I even mention group or compound beings, you know, the us entities and like the closer you are to somebody, the more obvious it can be. Like if you're really intimate with another person, you've got

a close connection, then it becomes more obvious that there really is like this third US entity that that both of you are part of. But it's it's sort of a holistic or synergistic thing or it's greater than just the the two parts, you know, it's it's like its own being.

So yeah, I mean in a way I there's the yoga school of Mahayana Buddhism that took this to its extreme. I mean they were sort of like Libnitz's monadology where everything you are experiencing is I mean there's no physical matter at all and it's just all a projection of your own karma. I'm pretty sure that's what at least some yoga mahayana Buddhist philosophers were claiming.

So that would be what PSA is proposing here would seem pretty much along the lines of that. Although the earlier schools of Buddhism were more invested in a kind of qualified materialism and so they didn't really push it that far. They didn't go full idealist like later Mahayana Buddhists and like 19th century German philosophers did.

But everyone we meet is not just a manifestation of our karma because I mean there's another being there from a conventional point of view that is generating us and it's because there's enough similarity that we're able to seem to interact and then also if you go

with my hypothesis or theory of compound entities then the two beings are forming a third compound being which is sort of helping to generate itself

kind of

sort of. But this is really difficult stuff to really talk about or just grock once when you hear somebody else trying to explain something that English language is never really designed to explain.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Xenithoid.

Xenithoid says in the sutas it says all compounded phenomena are impermanent.

Are there any non-compounded phenomena?

This seems to imply that truly

irreducible phenomena would be permanent. I wonder if this is the basis in Abidama for believing in the four ultimate realities. So I mean in the sutas it doesn't say all compounded phenomena are impermanent. It says sab sankara anicha. So I think what xenoid is rendering or translating as compounded phenomena would be sankara. And a sankara doesn't necessarily mean compounded. A sankara means something conditioned something that exists because of a cause something that has a beginning and an end. It doesn't necessarily have to be compounded. I mean that's that might be more of like

the Sarvast Vada Buddhist interpretation
where the Sarvasti Sarvastada Buddhists
declared yeah all like combinations are
impermanent but like the the initial
dharma or dharma the ultimately real
speck of reality that's eternal that's
what the Sarvast Buddhists taught
terraat terravada Buddhists don't go
that far they say even an ultimately
real speck of pure whatever it is earth
element let's say even that's only going
to exist for like a trillionth of a
second
so it's a sankara that's that's a
condition thing not necessarily a
compounded phenomenon it's just
something that exists because of

conditions

something that has a beginning and an end

well of course anything with a beginning and end would have to be impermanent wouldn't

So anything that is the the result of a cause

is impermanent. That's essentially what sabankara ana means.

So are there any non-compounded phenomena? You could argue that nibbana is a non-compounded or it's it's not a sankara.

So nibbana is unconditioned.

And I think there are some Buddhist

philosophers who would claim that space is unconditioned. Although Terra Buddhism doesn't really go that far, I'm pretty sure.

So yeah, the the main non-compounded or unconditioned phenomenon would be nibbana itself and that is not impermanent.

That's why you've got sabara anicha sab sankara duka and then sab dhama anata because it's anything is without self including nibbana when it's talking about duca and like suffering and impermanence that applies only to samsara that applies only to sankara's in samsara it only applies to what is conditioned

whatever is conditioned is conducive to suffering or unease and also is impermanent. But absolutely everything whether it's conditioned or not is without self. It is not self and that includes nibbana. So they have to use a different word. Sabara for duka sab sankara for anicha. But sab dhama for anata because anata goes even deeper than impermanence and suffering. That applies all the way down to ultimate reality. That applies to nibbana itself. and maybe empty space if somebody thinks that that is unconditioned.

But terra Buddhism really the only I in in Abidama and Abidama commentaries they

have this strange idea that the only ultimately real space is an ultimately real space that is bounded between two particles of matter between rupa kalapas which is kind of strange.

It doesn't seem to be really good logic to me for some reason.

But yeah, for in teraba Buddhism, um, Sankara doesn't necessarily mean a compounded phenomenon. It means anything conditioned, anything that is the result of a cause.

So, I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's next question, which is, is the karmic stream permanent? Well, from the point of view of Orthodox Terravvada, I would say no, it is not

because if you become enlightened, that ends the karmic stream, especially once the enlightened being dies.

That would be orthodox terraada. But I mean if you want to be more esoteric you could say well the karmic extreme is I mean you could say in a sense I mean if if Einstein was right with regard to time being the fourth dimension then in a way everything is permanent in a sense because the past still exists in a sense.

So there is that in which case I mean the unenlightened miserable us is never going to completely disappear. It's still going to be a conditioned or

conditional virtual statue in this block of marble.

But from the point of view of orthodox Theravāda Buddhism, the karmic stream ends when the enlightened being dies.

And you stop adding to it when you become enlightened even before you die.

then it's just sort of running down, you know, just kind of running its course without any new additions to it.

So presumably if a fully enlightened being was like immortal, you know, he didn't have to die at any time, then his karmic stream would just exhaust itself over, you know, a few billion years just on its own. In which case, even then, it wouldn't be permanent.

Once the enlightened being stops adding to it and is just running down without anything more, you know, like reinforcing it, then you would think eventually it would just run out unless you just have an infinite amount of karma stored up.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question also from Zenithoid.

He says, "You've said you rank the Old Testament relatively low among religious texts in terms of wisdom. How good are the texts that are explicitly called the wisdom texts of the Old Testament such as Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, etc.?"

Yeah. And there's what's the wisdom of

Jesus son of Sirak, which is in the uh
in the Apocrypha
or the Dudere canonicals.

Um,

Siraak, that was like,
now that wasn't Spock's dad on Star
Trek. That was like the the the famous
Vulcan founder of Vulcan Wisdom, I
think, was named Sarak, wasn't he?

I'm I'm I'm just wandering here.

Wandering lost in the wilderness.

Yeah. I mean, the wisdom texts of the
Old Testament, like Ecclesiastes, and
Ecclesiastes is one of my favorite books
of the Old Testament, but it's worldly
wisdom. I mean, it's like Jewish worldly
wisdom. It's still very thisworldly.

It's it's not the kind of wisdom that transcends samsara. I mean, the closest you get to any wisdom transcending samsara in the Old Testament is like figurative stuff, you know, like God like you're not supposed to say God's name or God never showing his face, you know, he shows his behind to what was it? Elijah or somebody, but he won't show his face because it's kind of symbolic of God doesn't have a real name or a real face or at least not one that a human being could possibly perceive. So that in a way is kind of getting transcendental and otherworldly in a kind of mythological poetic symbolic

kind of a way which is you know it's
it's a higher kind of wisdom than just
you know the stuff you see in
Ecclesiastes or Proverbs you know it's
like you know the I can't even think of
a good proverb you know she also lith in
weight as for a prey and increasth the
transgressors among men which I think is
a warning in Proverbs against like
gentile women
or maybe just immoral women in general.
So yeah, I mean even the wisdom texts of
the Old Testament are just worldly
wisdom. It's not really trying to
transcend some sorrow in anything
remotely resembling an enlightened way
unless there's just something that I'm

just not thinking of or overlooked.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Yoshi Buouie. And Yoshi Buouie says, "Is reifying the absolute sort of like asking the question, what's before the big bang?" Yeah, sort of.

Um, yeah, reifying the absolute, you know, it's like trying to draw the face of God. You know, it's just like I was saying in in the Old Testament, God doesn't show his face because kind of symbolically he doesn't have one. Just like Moby Dick doesn't shows it show his face in the novel Moby Dick because he's symbolic of of God. God does not have a

face. God does not have a color. God does not have a form like a a visible form. All that applied to Moby Dick, too.

So, Moby Dick actually had more like more advanced wisdom to it than the Old Testament of the Bible in my opinion, even though it's not scripture of any religion that I'm aware of. But let's get back to Yoshi Buouie. Is reifying the absolute sort of like asking the question, what's before the Big Bang? Yeah, it's sort of like asking the question, you know, what do you experience when you're not experiencing anything? Or, you know, what what do you perceive when there's no perception? You

know, it's it's like a [_] sort of. I mean there's there's no correct answer um with regard to something like what is the absolute like I mean there can be no correct answer

um you know what is the correct statue in the uncarved block of marble is it's kind of a it's kind of a question like that reifying the absolute is you're trying to give a form to something that is formless and we don't really know was before the big bang. There could be other forms before the big bang. You know, it's like sometimes they'll say that you got like a black hole that you know it's like

it's just matter is collapsing into this black hole which then you it's such a infinite density that in a way makes a hole in space so that it's you've got all this energy just spewing out the other end which could be like how the big bang started. At least some theoretical physicists theorize this. I think Stephen Hawking theorized this also that that black holes are like exit points from this cosmos and then it could like just go through a wormhole or something and come out the other end as some sort of big bang or or something similar to a big bang that's like creating a whole new universe, a a new astronomical universe,

I should say.

So it's it's not exactly the same because before the big bang there might still have been something something that theoretically you could be discernible but there's like this uh what do you call it singularity that you just can't get past. You know it's like this barrier. So I mean that would apply to reifying the absolute also to some degree. It's just that when you reify the absolute, there's no form on the other side of the singularity.

Whereas with the big bang, there might be. It's just that we have no access to that.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Ruie, and I do hope we're over halfway done.

So anyways, Ruie says, "How long did you go with looking at your I assume he means without. So I'll just start over and just add the out to without. How long did you go without looking at your reflection in a mirror during your mendicant days? And when you did, was it accompanied by a feeling of dissociation?" Well, the one rule that I always broke as a monk, um, even at my strictest was the rule that says a monk is not supposed to look into a mirror unless he's got some kind of soore on his face that he's investigating. You

know, you've got like a a soore on your lip or something, then you could without breaking any rules look into a mirror to like investigate it. But I read in Dwinia Muka which is a book on Vineia written by a Thai Raja over 100 years ago I think that he says if you're shaving it's okay and that was good enough for me. It's like okay because I've always been kind of a klutz shaving you know I always be nicking myself and so I always looked into a mirror when I was shaving. So I would shave maybe once every two weeks.

So yeah, I would look into a mirror when I was shaving. Or if you just happen to

be like you're staying at somebody's house, they've got like a guest house for you to stay in and you go to the bathroom, there's like this big mirror in the bathroom, you know, you see yourself. I might not be like standing there admiring myself, but at least you'd see yourself in a mirror.

So, usually it'd be like two weeks unless I was like squeezing uh I'm not even going to go there. Not even going to go into gory details, but I mean it's just like standard skin maintenance stuff maybe.

Um

and then you if you just happen to be somewhere where there's mirrors, then

you'll see yourself in a mirror then.

But there was no feeling of dissociation really. I think there was more of a feeling of dissociation after I dropped out of the monkhood and started doing videos where I'd be looking at myself and it would just it just seemed weird. It's just like is that really me? That kind of thing. That would be more of a feeling of dissociation than looking into a mirror because I mean old habits I mean some of them just don't die you know they just go dormant or something and so I mean I've been looking into a mirror since I was a kid and just you just go without looking into a mirror

for 5 years or 10 years or whatever. I mean it it doesn't just you don't just forget that. It's like riding a bicycle. It's just you're just used to it. It just happens. You know, maybe if you look really different than usual, there could be a feeling of dissociation. I remember one time just I just spent like more than no wait I just spent at least three months in the forest at Alando Caspa National Park and I rode this raft down Pollon Creek till I got to the Chinduin River and tried to ride the raft down the Chinduin River to get to the city of Moa, but it wasn't working. the raft just was not um it just didn't move fast enough to to really get where

I wanted to get going fast enough. So anyways, I finally get to um this meditation center where I was going to stay in Monua and there was mirrors in the bathroom. So I looked in the mirror and I just looked like just like this emaciated sunburnt scarecrow with just skin peeling off from the sunburn and everything. And it I mean that was a feeling of kind of dissociation because I really my residual self-image like in the matrix just was not like what I was seeing in the mirror.

So anyways, let's just go on to the next question. This is from practice meta and uh we're almost done. By golly, this

is the last questioner.

Golly G's sakes

practice meta says is it essential to be able to sit on your heels for extended periods and that's kind of a weird and interesting question most people would not ask such a question but in some monasteries in some monastic traditions you're supposed to squat on your heels while doing sa kama which would include the recitation of the py mocha.

And I mean, some monks can recite the py mocha so fast, it's like they're an auctioneer that even though I had memorized the py mocha as a monk, their mouth was faster than my ear. And so they would be done within like 25

minutes.

I would recite the pim mocha. It was my duty to recite the py mocha at a few monasteries I lived at. And my mouth just does not move as fast as these auctioneer monks. And so even If I was going full speed, the best I could hope for would be like 35, 40 minutes. And so, you've got to remain in a squatting position for

half an hour or more sometimes. And it is painful. In fact, I have read that one of the self- tortures that the James would do in the Buddhist time in in ancient India is just to remain in a

squatting posture because you don't fully realize just how painful squatting gets after like half an hour. I mean, it's like your your knees and ankles are just like screaming in agony sometimes.

So

yeah, I mean it's

at some monasteries it is essent

especially in Burma. I think in Thailand

a lot of them wimp out and just sit

during uh formal recitations or sa kama

in you know meetings of the sa that some

monasteries the monks will just sit.

Although it does say in the text that a

monk is supposed to squat, you know, sit

on his heels. And it might have been a

little more difficult for me than for

some other people. My father couldn't even squat on his own heels. His legs just wouldn't bend that far. Maybe I inherited some of that from him that you know like sitting in the full lotus was pretty painful for me for a long time.

Also eventually though, you do get used to it. But still it after like half hour or so it starts to hurt.

So it's I could really relate to to reading that some of like the ancient Jane aesthetics would do their their self- torture by just remaining in a squatting position for hours and probably their knees and ankles and the soles of their feet would just be

screaming is a lot of people just don't realize I mean it's it's sort of a a reflection on duka that you just remain motionless in just about any position and sooner or later you're going to start feeling un discomfort.

You know just remain in a standing position. Some like Tangoniato of Burma specialized in standing meditation where you meditate in a standing position. You just stand there motionless meditating and the soles of your feet just start to burn. It hurts. And most people don't realize just how painful not moving can be because it's just this habit. You know, you're lying in bed and you start feeling uncomfortable. You just roll

over. You know, you're sitting in a chair and you start to feel uncomfortable just without even thinking. You just kind of shift in into a slightly different posture where it becomes comfortable again. You know, you're standing in one place. Maybe if you're like a soldier on watch or something, you might have to remain motionless. But I mean, most people just don't stay standing still long enough that their feet just start to burn with pain. And squatting is another one. Most people just wouldn't it wouldn't occur to them that all you have to do is like if you're not used to it, you just

squat for 15 20 minutes and already you are in serious pain.

But I mean, if that's just too much of a problem for you, you could uh maybe try to find a monastery where everybody sits during the the formal acts of the SA or you can just practice a lot because I used I used to do that like when I was reciting the pimoka, you have to keep reciting it or you forget it. Then I would just stay squatting while I was reciting it. And it helps you to hurry up and get it over with. But also it kind of gives you practice at squatting so that you know you just kind of get used to it. At least it it it like prolongs the window of of of comfort or

at least non-agony.

But I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is also from Practice Meta, our final questioner of the Q&A episode. And he says, "Did you find this posture challenging initially?"

And if so, how long did it take you to become comfortable with it?" Well, I've kind of already touched on this question in my my answer to the previous one. But yeah, I mean after the first especially at first when you're not used to it, you know, after the first 15 minutes or so, it starts to hurt, but then if you just keep doing it, then you know, it it just prolongs

the the window of non-agony as I was saying.

So yeah, I mean it doesn't take all that long depending on how much you practice. you know, a few months and you can double the original length of time that you can squat without agony.

Um, I think for some people there's always going to be a certain amount of agony after a while,

but still, I mean,

it's just you're an aesthetic. I mean, if you're a monk, then I mean, you just have to put up with this [_]

It's like I mean, that's what aestheticism is, is just being okay with discomfort.

also to some degree just being sort of aloof from comfort, not giving a damn about comfort.

So yeah, I did find it challenging initially although I survived for 30 years as a monk. So it wasn't it wasn't like prohibitively challenging and just over the period of months I guess I just got used to it. I mean there's there's worse things than the pain of squatting. I like if you're in the in the tropics just the the heat like I'd be doing the potty mocha or I'd just be attending the potty mocha and usually I'd be reciting it at Tomulu Chalisa which is in the the blazing hot

wastelands of central Burma. And so you're squatting, you know, you're kind of sitting on your heels with your elbows kind of resting on your knees. You're going like this the whole time. You know, everyone is squatting like this with your your shoulder uncovered and there' just be like sweat just dripping off both both elbows as I'm squatting like this till there'd be like these puddles of sweat down below cuz it was just then blazing hot most of the time there. And that was more of a challenge than than occasional squatting because the sweating is happening a lot and most of the time especially in the hot season and the rainy season when it

doesn't rain because it's just this this blazing hot desert wasteland.

Well, the only time it's comfortable is in the winter time.

Well, let's just move on to Practice Meta's third and last question and the last question of this Q&A. He says, and I quote, "What are your thoughts on pursuing ordination at a local Thai or Burmese monastery here in America? While in Thailand, I learned that ordaining as a foreigner is more complicated than simply arriving with sincere intention." Watt Panacha appeared to be an exception. But unfortunately, the heat and humidity there triggered my eczema.

Or is it eczema?

a skin condition.

And I can relate to that. I mean, I've

I've got sort of like a seabberic skin

type. I've got oily skin and I would

have to bathe, you know, at least every

two days or I'd just start breaking out

in like dermatitis,

which in a way prevented me from really

just taking up the wandering life, which

in Burma was kind of a non-starter

anyway. I tried it a little bit, but

just wandering from place to place where

you may not be able to bathe for a

while, it it just I mean, I'd be a mess.

But let's see. Let's just get back to

the question. What are my thoughts on

pursuing ordination at a local Thai or Burmese monastery here in America? Um, I would not consider that to be optimal unless maybe you can just find like this really good monastery that I don't know about.

But the thing is like in Burma I I assume Thailand is similar but in Burma they do have like almost all of the the bigname meditation centers for example um places where western monks are most likely to ordain you know traditions like Palk Mahasi Mo these these kind of traditions um upandid uh Chan all of these places have a branch monastery up in the hills where

it's relatively

um temperate. You know, it gets cold in the winter time. That's that's the main problem is just the coldness in the winter time more than the heat in the summer.

And so that is where the western monks go or like Migadawan monastery which was kind of tonulu traditions equivalent to that up in in the town of Pinulu also known as Mayo just in the the Shan plateau the foothills or the edge of the Shan plateau where in the winter time it gets down close to freezing and in the the summertime it's really not all that hot. I mean it's kind of like the summertime in America.

So, I mean, there might even be places that have air conditioning nowadays for like spoiled and pampered, soft, plump westerners.

But, uh, I mean, there's great advantages

to being a monk for at least a few years in Buddhist Asia. You get to learn how I mean, you can live the way monks lived in the Buddhist time. I mean, if you're into that, you can wander around. You can sleep under trees. You can go for real alms round in a real village.

You don't have to wear like the kung fu pajamas and the the socks and the the beanie and everything that technically

is against vineia anyway.

And you can just get insight into what it was like to be a monk in the Buddhist time, go for real alms round and just, you know, live in a cave. this kind of stuff that is much less likely to be possible in a western country like America.

Um,

and also like western monasteries tend to be very spoiled and rich and you know you're just I don't know it's there's not much austerity going on. Um, I mean, you have to like really make an effort to be austere in in like if you're ordained in the west, it seems to me compared to it's just automatic 24/7

austerity if you're living at some rough forest monastery in Asia.

But I would assume that, you know, like places like Chiang Mai in Thailand up in the hills, you know, the edge of the Shan Plateau on the other side from, you know, the places I stayed at that, you know, you're up at a high enough altitude that even though it's still tropical, it's doesn't get that hot.

So, I might try that. I mean seriously, I would strongly recommend anyone who wants to ordain, wants to renounce the world, spend at least a few years in Buddhist Asia

because you learn a lot of I mean so

much of the practice of being a monk is just living the life which I mean in the west a monk in the west it's it's like a tropical plant that is living in the temperate zone. So it has to be in like this special protected environment with people taking care of it. It cannot live naturally like in the wild so to speak. That really struck me as a monk when I came to the west that really you're like a potted plant. Instead of being some wild filidendrin living in a jungle just prospering in the in the environment, you're like this potted filidendrin in a greenhouse with people having to come in and water you and all this kind of stuff. and it's just two very different

worlds.

So yeah, definitely I would recommend if at all possible try to find some place up in the hills in Asia maybe where if at all possible anyone who's going to be ordained as a monastic should spend at least a few years in Buddhist Asia just because you are in an environment that you're just surrounded by Buddhism. You can live the way the early Buddhist monks lived like in the sutin pata and it's just it's like a blessing. First time I could go for a real alms round when I got to Thailand before I even got to Burma. Just going for alms in in Bangkok. It was it just

seemed like such a blessing to really be able to go for a real alms round.

So I I mean if it's just your only option, you know, you consider all the possibilities and your only viable option is to be ordained in America, then I mean try to find at least a place that's has western monks. Don't just go to like some Thai or Burmese temple because there's going to be almost no monastic discipline there. It's just going to be like a cultural center. Thai shinhali Burmese Cambodian temples in the west are more cultural centers than monasteries.

It's just the lay people come to speak their own language and eat their own

ethnic food and chat and you know do
their their ethnic ceremonies and
it's it's there's not really much deep
drama going on. you know, you got
missionaries there who are more
interested in preaching than in
practicing.

So, yeah, if at all possible, I would
try to find some place in Buddhist Asia
where the climate is not so hot and
sultry if possible. I mean, there's
there's a plus side and a minus side to
everything, you know, a light side and a
dark side. So, I mean, at first, I
didn't want to go to Asia. When I first
became a monk, I was ordained in America

because I didn't want to be distracted by visa hassles, having to learn other languages, this kind of thing other than poly.

But it just turned out that that Asia was far superior of an environment. And coming back to America was was kind of the beginning of the end for for my monasticism.

I mean just like western women compared with like Burmese women. It's it's a whole different animal. The Burmese women are just like modest and demure and you know they just consider you to be a holy man and you know that's the way they they prefer it. You know they might I mean there's some that might

flirt with you a little bit or something just in the chance that you might drop out and want to marry an Asian girl. But I mean in in the West, women see monks as just another kind of man. You know, they're all fair game. That kind of stuff. And yeah, that's just if you're going to be a monk, Buddhist Asia is superior to the West.

That's just my experience.

And we are done because there's no more questions after that. So, like I should always say at the beginning and practically never do, if you have any questions you think I can answer, especially about early Buddhism,

Terraata Buddhism,

Buddhism in general, just dharma in general, some western philosophy even, meditation, this kind of stuff. Me personally, I can answer questions about me personally pretty easy.

Then feel free, no more than three questions per episode, per person, please.

And like and subscribe if you have not done so already.

And be happy.

Okay, then see we are recording.

All right, this is like the third time that I've started recording this. The last one I got like two minutes into it and then realized after everything else was figured out, I didn't have a beverage.

Can you imagine me trying to do a Q&A without a beverage? But I got it now.

So,

my woman and her mama are not here right now. So, I'm going to take advantage of the relative quiet and solitude to record this Q&A.

And it is kind of unfortunate that my sweetheart isn't here because this may

be the last long beard episode that I do. I mean, it would be nice if it could be braided with the mule bead and everything, you know, that I could like like toss around ostentatiously, but I'm probably going to have this cut off soon because I'm starting to look for another job. Driving a forklift for a trucking company just just too hectic, too frustrating, too many hours, too much work, just stress and aggravation. And so I'm going to look for another job.

So the beard has to come off so I can look relatively normal. And then after I find another job, maybe I'll grow it back again. Because for some reason, I

do not fully fathom my woman actually
likes for me to have a long braided
beard.

But with that is kind of a an
unnecessary intro.

I will point out that 178, as far as I
can tell, is not prime because it seems
to be $2 * 89$.

Is that right? $2 * 89$. 89's prime, I'm
pretty sure.

So, I suppose we got like the middle
path number of questions. Not too many,
not too few,
you know, not so much that it's like
torture, but not so few that it's
self-indulgence,

that kind of thing.

So, I suppose I should just wade right into this and start answering questions.

Let's see here. First question is from Romeo

and Romeo says, "You were an aesthetic monk largely removed from the civilized world and mainstream American society for 30 years. That is a long time. I imagine there were a few cultural or historical developments that occurred during that time that either pleasantly surprised, disappointed, or shocked you when you eventually caught up with things. Were there any historic events that transpired in those 30 years that shocked or surprised you once you heard

about them after the fact?

For example, the fall of the Soviet Union, 911,

etc. Well, the fall of the Soviet Union happened before I even went to Burma. I was I was a monk at the monastery in California, and of course, I heard nothing about it. And then I'm talking to this American guy and he just happens to mention in passing in this sentence, you know, ever since the second Russian Revolution and I'm like, "What do you mean the Second Russian Revolution?" At first, I'm just thinking maybe it was just some kind of student protest or something. And he says, "Yeah, the

Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore. It's Russia again now. They've got the old Russian flag and everything." So that was kind of a shocker, I suppose. I think it was more amazing to me that I hadn't heard anything about it until weeks afterwards while still living in America than it actually happened. I mean, that actually happened was good because of course a lot of Americans just naively thought, well, the Cold War is over. America and Russia can be friends now. Of course, you've got people in the shadows that did not want the Cold War to end.

Oh well.

Also with regard to 911, I remember when

that happened. I was living in a cave in Burma and these two Burmese two Burmese guys came and one of them wanted to tell me about something that happened in America and the other one says, "Oh, don't tell him. It'll just make him feel bad or something." But then I said, "Yeah, go ahead and tell me." And then he says that a rich Arab crashed a plane into the World Trade Center. And that's about that's about as much information as I got at first. And it just gradually over a period of weeks afterwards, I started gradually getting more information from various sources until I finally got my mother, who was still

alive back then, to send me newspaper clippings. And it's kind of an interesting phenomenon to me that she sent me newspaper clippings and like in equal amounts from two events. One was 911, you know, the the planes and all that. And the other one was that the high school in my hometown was partially burnt down. And it's sort of like, you know, small things up close appear big and big things far away appear small. So I mean to her psychology I guess she just kind of considered them to be of equal import. You know one is happening right there in town which is kind of big news. Half the building well it was like two

buildings. Um and so one of the buildings burnt down.

Um, but I mean I know I've read so much history that it's it would take really something to shock or surprise me in history. Um, I mean a lot of the time you don't really notice how um momentous something is until afterwards, you know, because there's all these after effects and side effects, ramifications and all that. So that you think something is important or unimportant now but then later on you see that you were mistaken because you could not foresee you know that this was just starting a chain reaction for example.

So for example like the protests in Iran right now or Iran I mean that could just be totally momentous or it could just be squelched by the government and flash in the pan. We don't know yet.

So

I mean that was really it. I mean when I was in Burma I was more attuned to like Burmese national news which is mostly propaganda but still you pick up little things you know like some the the military dictator gets overthrown you know on charges of corruption or something as though the people that replaced him weren't equally corrupt. So let's see here. I guess I mean that's about it really. There's the the

historic event that transpired over those 20 years really because after 20 years in Burma, I started coming back to America and kind of commuting back and forth every few years, sometimes less than a year. You know, I'd stay in America for six months and then go back to Burma again. So, you know, I was sort of more in touch with what was going on in America after like 2011.

But still, it's

I don't know. It's it's uh nothing really shocked or surprised me other than just the surprise of hearing weeks after the fact that the Soviet Union had collapsed. That was probably

like the big surprise for me. 911

happened, you know, I I found out about it so gradually that, you know, there was no big shocker happening.

um Obama becoming president. I mean at the time you know it was just we got a new president but you know a you know in retrospect you see that I mean we really it was like a no-win scenario choosing between Obama and Mitt Romney. I mean but Obama was kind of a turning point in American history. I think he was sort of turning kind of away from America and towards globalism and just sort of managed decline of of the United States and so forth.

But I guess I guess I answered the

question well enough. And so I'm going to move on to Romeo's second question, which is kind of similar. Were there any developments in American culture that surprised you or things that you expected to develop a certain way but didn't? For example, the death of MTV as a showcase for cool music videos, the growth and dominance of hip-hop over rock music, etc.

Well, I mean, I really wasn't much into MTV. I despised television when I was a young man. Didn't own one. I made a special point of not owning a television since I was a teenager. Although, sometimes, like in college, I'd have a

roommate who had a TV. So, there you are. you got TV and he'd be watching plastic surgery updates while right at meal time, this kind of thing.

Um, the growth and dominance of hip-hop. I mean, it started off with rap music and rap music was before I became a mock, you know, late 80s there were already people rapping. I think some of the the first famous rap music was from white people like Wordy Rapping Hood from TomTom Club or Rapture from Blondie. You know, they're just I mean it already existed. They didn't start it or anything, but they just kind of brought it into the mainstream being white liberal females, I guess.

But yeah, rap music that's just
my my brother described rap music fairly
well when he said that it's music for
people who can't play instruments, can't
write music, and can't sing.

So hip-hop maybe is an improvement over
that,

but I don't know. I mean before that it
was disco.

So I guess like the dominance of rap
music and then hiphop

um you know it's just sort of indicative
of cultural decline.

But that's just that's just my take on
it. Um, but the things that things about
America that surprised me the most when

I came back to America in 2011 trying to live as a freerange beu in America, you know, not just staying at a monastery, but just flinging myself out into the world like I did. Um, one of the things, one of the things that surprised or was kind of kind of surprised me is just how digital everything already was. You know, everything was digital. Um, you know, everyone has a cell phone, for example.

Um, the internet of course was a big deal. I mean, the internet was one of the most momentous changes in Western culture, world culture during the time that I was a mom. So that would be that would definitely be up there. And

another thing is just sort of people
just got softer and kind of more polite
um more gentle, more feminized
essentially. So American culture did
become more feminized during the 20
years that I was absent. Um I I remember
seeing I mean anyone riding a bicycle in
Bellingham, Washington was wearing a
helmet. And finally, I just asked him,
"Is it like a law now that you have to
wear a helmet when you ride a bicycle?"
Well, no, it's just that for some reason
everyone in town that rode a bicycle had
a helmet on. And that kind of surprised
me a little bit. Just kind of the
softening and weakening of sort of

American culture to some degree. You know, it was noticeable. It was a noticeable change, but for the most part, things really didn't change all that much between like 1990 and 2012, you know, like that general time span. Um, you know, hairstyles pretty much stayed the same. You know, they got a little bit more elaborate with like green hair and and that kind of stuff. Um, you know, clothing styles, just like even music wasn't all that different. you know, it really the the main changes were everything was digital and things were a little softer and of course you had internet. So, I think I'm just going to move on to

Romeo's third question. Any cultural touchstones that you regret missing out on? And then for an example, he has the OJ Simpson trial. Yeah, I was just kicking myself the whole time I was in Burma, man. I just missed out on that OJ Simpson trial. Um, no, not really. Um, it's probably a good thing that I did miss the OJ Simpson trial. That happened like in my early years in Burma, I think. Yeah, I remember some Americans. I I met this American couple. They were telling me about OJ Simpson and Kurt Cobain dying that I'd never even heard of. He's from my hometown of Aberdeen, Washington.

But, you know, he was like an international phenomenon and then died before I even found out that he existed. probably went to the same high school. He was just this little freshman nobody when I was a senior probably.

H So

yeah, I don't I'm I mean I'm kind of grateful that I missed out on the OJ Simpson trial um and the Michael Jackson trial stuff. Yeah, I mean I I caught a little bit of that. I would visit my parents in Aberdeen like once every four or five years. So my father watched CNN regularly. Pretty much just had the TV on CNN all the time. That was back when it still was kind of balanced news to

some degree. I mean, it hadn't the the mainstream media hadn't just completely gone leftist propaganda yet at that time. So I'd catch a little bit of this stuff, but I mean it's it's wasn't really important to me. It's mainly like interesting from an anthropological point of view, an incipient historical point of view maybe, you know, sort of like maybe we're seeing history with this or that or the other thing.

And I think we are kind of in historical times right now.

But yeah, there's no cultural touchston that I regret missing out on other than

maybe like the Wild West days of the early internet. That could have been interesting.

But I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., etc., etc. And he says, he says, "Did tiraana vija mean sud as in pseudointellectual

or would there be a better poly word for translating that modern term?" Well, an intellectual

that might be somebody like pandita. You know that a panda is like a learned intelligent person

and sud I mean tirana vija literally means animal knowledge. So it's not referring to like fake intellectuality.

It's referring to just worldly stuff that is really doesn't have anything significant to do with dharma and that a monk should not be wasting his time with this kind of stuff. It could just be nuclear physics, you know, it could be like intricacies of foreign policy, this kind of stuff. But still from a Buddhist point of view, it's ti chana vijjo or animal knowledge because it's just worldly samsaric stuff that does not really help you to become enlightened. So pseudo probably the word would come closer than tira. Tiraana just means animal. Ma you know like in ma di wrong view so it can mean wrong or false

so much false pseudo means like false or
like imitation so you know like a mecha
panda maybe

um I don't know there if there really
would be like an exact corresponding
term in poly to a pseudo intellectual
you know you could just have like some
vain conceited

um scholar you know They had those in
the Buddhist time. And you know,
I'm not exactly sure what the word would
be, but pseudo would probably be the
closest you'd come to pseudo, at least
in like regular like normal poly
language, would be ma, which just means
like false or or fake,
wrong, like wrong speech.

So, or mus that would be wrong speech,
wouldn't it?

Yeah, but I do think a ma would be more
like pseudo in poly
and uh yeah, I don't know what a
pseudointellectual would be like a micha
pandita something like that. Panditika,
you know, is just sort of like adding
like this diminutive at the end of
panda to sort of denigrate, you know,
imply that he's like a fake scholar, you
know, like smonica is sometimes used.
people sort of looking down on the
shaven headed aesthetics. You know,
they're brahinss or something. They look
down on the shaven head aesthetics. So,

they throw in this this diminutive
suffix

which kind of implies that the person is
just sort of like a Özat
philosopher kind of a thing.

So, something like that. But

yeah, I don't think there there really
would be an exact corresponding term in
poly for a pseudo intellectual.

And I'm going to move on to the next
question which is from Jimmy Lad after
looking to make sure. Yeah, we are we
are recording again.

This is just amazing that I actually
started this video without having a
beverage.

That's just crazy.

So Jimmy Lad says, "Evil done in perfect mindfulness." So that's that's the title. That's like the the heading of his question. Evil done in perfect mindfulness. And he says, "When you say that Buddhist ethics are to do with the intention, surely this has limits." And I do resent him calling me surely.

Well, let's get back to the question here. When you say that Buddhist ethics are to do with the intention, surely this has limits. Like if someone theoretically committed a horrific crime like incest with their mother or murder, but maintained perfect mental equanimity while doing it, would they be free of

all karmic consequences?

I mean, you got to consider human psychology. that dharma really is attuned to human psychology. Morals in Buddhism are more a matter of psychology than some celestial decree.

And so I mean you got to think how could somebody commit a horrific crime with perfect equanimity.

You know, it's like you can I was thinking of like Oedipus who married he murdered his own father and married his own mother without realizing that it was his father or his mother. But still, I mean, murdering somebody, you know, or deleting them, I guess you got to be careful about your words, your

language on YouTube.

But I mean, even that, I mean, there's going to be some motivation for it. And you're not going to have like this totally calm, enlightened motivation for committing a horrific crime. A horrific crime generally has horrific motivations,

horrific mental states going along with it. I mean, you can to some degree. Like for example, you're some

Zen master who is also like a samurai swordmaster in feudal Japan who you know I mean they try to be as mindful as they can and have no feelings of of hatred or ill. They're just doing their duty just

this honor and duty is motivating them still. I mean they're not going to have the mind of a fully enlightened being in all likelihood. And so I mean they're not going to be committing or they're not going to be getting as much bad karma, you know, let's the the samurai Zen master

who who's also a swordmaster, you know, he's fighting in a war or fighting duels or fighting just for the sake of duty and honor in some some capacity, then he's probably not going to be creating as bad of kama as just some psycho. know who just like really gets off on like deleting people or or whatever, you know, he's not screaming Allah Akbar

thinking he's going to go to heaven. He doesn't even have that as a motivation. It's just duty and honor, you know, it's just what you do because he is in this predicament. It's sort of like the Bavad Gita's idea of, you know, you just do what is your ashramama. you do do your duty, your your dharma, and you know, just offer up the results to God. But I mean, even somebody like that, it's hardly likely that they're going to be going around committing horrific crimes. And even if you got somebody like Arjuna in the Bavad Gita or the Zen master who is also a swordmaster in medieval Japan that I mean they're still going to be

making some kama so long as they're not fully enlightened. And if they are fully enlightened then I mean the text indicate that they're not going to be committing horrific crimes. They just are not going to have the motivation for that. They're not going to have any will to do that. So if you've got a the will to commit a horrific crime, that's already bad, comma.

So let's see here. What is exactly the question here?

Someone theoretically committed a horrific crime but maintained perfect mental equanimity while doing it, would they be free of all karmic consequences? Theoretically, if it was possible to

commit a horrific crime with an enlightened completely unattached mind and no volition at all, because a fully enlightened being because he's not creating kama, he really doesn't have what could be called volition or chana in the ordinary sense of the term. You know, it's like going with St. John of the Cross's interpretation of such a person. They're just they don't they're not acting on their own self-will anymore. They're just acting through the will of God.

Of course, Buddhists have a different way of interpreting it, which can get kind of uh

abstuse. If you read Abidama text, you know, they have to invent an entirely new kind of mental state or or consciousness or something called uh what is it? Kirya Kirya or just functional consciousness.

how that's how an arahant can still seem to act volitionally while generating no actual chitta or volition because volition is citta.

So I mean Jimmy lad here would have to figure out how a person with no like

no volition would want to commit a a horrific crime. you know, how are you possibly going to delete your own mother, for example, without having

really horrible mental states? Because I mean, we're just human.

You just have like built in certain

I don't know what you call it, like

taboss or just you have built in certain

like don't do this kind of stuff. And

like if you're committing a horrific

crime, as a general rule, you are

transgressing your own like instinctive

programming to some degree.

So I mean technically in a purely

theoretical sense, like if a fully

enlightened being with no ill will,

nothing like that committed a horrific

crime, he would create no comma.

But why would he why would he do it? I

mean, if he has no ill will, I mean, why would he be committing horrific crimes?

If he has no greed or hate or delusion, I mean, what would cause him to do it?

But I mean, you could have like a very wise person or even a fully enlightened person who may do something that seems blameworthy,

but let's say they're not fully enlightened. They're just wise like like the Zen master who's also a swordmaster.

They're not going to create as bad of Kama as just the person who's just psycho and going berserk.

But still,

yeah. I mean, I think I've answered this question like two or three times already

just in the past few to several minutes.

I'm just kind of like answering in circles at this point.

But yeah, I mean, if you have no horrific motivations, you're extremely unlikely to commit a horrific crime. You know, the actions are just the the outward manifestations of your own mental states that are in there.

So, I mean, theoretically, maybe somehow,

but it just goes against human nature.

And really dharma and Buddhist ethics really are attuned to human nature to a profound degree more so than other spiritual systems

that I won't bother to mention.

And so I'm just going to move on to

Jimmy Lad's next question. And the this

the heading for this one, the title if

you will is meditation and dissociation

or he's he has disassociation

which may be kind of a British thing. So

the question is when I meditate

sometimes I unintentionally cultivate

disassociation and alienation. It feels

like I am descending into the

indistinction

of prime matter rather than ascending

and expanding my mind. I seem to just

withdraw into myself and shrink into my

individuality and small life rather than

anything profound. Any advice?

Well, I'm not exactly sure what kind of meditation Jimmy Lad is practicing. But if you're practicing just standard Buddhist vipassana like mindfulness meditation, what some people call *vipassana*,

then I mean whatever arises, you just note it and let it go. And this is what St. John of the cross was telling his disciples or you know the people that he was you know the father confessor and like the spiritual guide of you know it's like whatever it is that arises just let it go.

So I mean when you're meditating all kinds of stuff can happen. Your mind can

rebel your mind can just go into
perverse directions. It can just do all
kinds of stuff. But so long as you're
practicing like mindfulness meditation
and you're just noting it, letting it
go. Noting it and letting it go. You
know, you the the urge to commit
horrific crimes arises. Note it, let it
go. You know, the just feeling like,
let's see, alienated. What does that
feel like? Note it, let it go. Just
observe it. Let it go.

And if you get really good, then the
observation just becomes passive. It's
more seeing than looking.

That's that's sort of like an advanced
stage of meditation. When you're not

seeing and when you're not looking and listening or believing anymore, you're just like seeing and hearing and and knowing.

But I'm not exactly sure what kind of meditation Jimmy Lad is practicing.

Um descending. It feels like he is descending into the indistinction of prime matter. I'm not exactly sure what that would feel like. Um rather than ascending and expanding my mind. Well, I mean, you shouldn't you shouldn't really have this preconceived goal. Goal oriented dharma is is danger. Beware of goal oriented dharma. My old website used to say that, but the old website is

now defunct.

So I mean you just like if you're doing mindfulness meditation just whatever arises you note it and let it go and then it can just be the whole gamut or the whole spectrum of possible stuff can arise it doesn't matter you just note it let it go it let it go it let it go but I mean if you're practicing some method other than just mindfulness and that's leading you in a direction that you feel like the wrong direction then Maybe you should try a different meditation method.

Let's see. Feels like he is descending into the indistinction of prime matter. Yeah, I'm not exactly sure what that

would feel like. Um, but you shouldn't necessarily be trying to ascend and expand your mind. I mean, if you meditate correctly, you may not still may not ascend, but at least your mind will expand. Like, your consciousness will expand. It will become clearer, quieter, that kind of thing.

But I mean, you shouldn't be trying to make it happen. You just follow like a good meditation technique and if you meditate correctly, then it'll happen of its own accord.

Um, so I guess I answered that question. I'm going to move on to the next question which is from throat warbler

mangrove

and he says to be or not to be. And
really that is the question at least if
you're uh

Shakespeare

Hamlet

to be or not to be. Well, I mean from
the point of view of Buddhist philosophy
like if you read the kalaha we wiwara
suta which is in the atakawaga of the
sutnipa very old suta it indicates that
to be and not to be are just a kind of
mind generated dichotomy. You know it's
mindmade

existence and non-existence. It's it's
this duality. So long as you're thinking
of existence or non-existence, you're

still stuck in this like mind generated
samsaric duality. Whereas ultimate
reality transcends the duality of
existence and non-existence which to a
samsaric mind makes no sense whatsoever.
But samsaric mind is a deluded mind.
It kind of reminds me of Hegel how he
started his dialectic in his logic. How
pure being and pure non-being really
just disappear into each other. There's
no there's no like discernable
distinction between the two. So in just
um after he gets into that beginning of
his dialect that he just takes it as a
given that pure being and pure non-being
are synonymous.

So

yeah, I mean if it either way if it's

existence or non-existence

still I mean non-existence

I mean that's just it's kind of tricky

non-existence because I mean when you're

talking about it it's an it.

non-existence in quotes which is still

exists you know it's still something

but you get rid of even the the not to

be then I mean you get rid of just the

just the the concept the idea of

non-existence

then I mean you're off the scale at that

point same as I mean it's existence and

non-existence is is like this fake

duality

and it may not make sense if to an intellectual mind Either something has to be a or not a. That's one of the Aristotilian laws of thought.

Everything has to be a or not a. But I mean

it's it's fairly easy to point out even samsaric

like things that can break that rule.

And when you get into ultimate reality, then there is no existence or non-existence.

which is hard to explain.

And so I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Thoughtf Fog. And Thoughtfog says, "Have you met Ajan

Sona?"

I see. I ask because a few of the same people who ask questions here on this podcast also ask on his streams every Sunday. And no, I have not met Ajan Sona. Before I came back to America in 2011, I did write a letter to his monastery, Burkin. I think it's Burkin Forest Monastery in British Columbia um in Canada. And I was told that only people ordained in the Ajan Cha tradition can stay there. And that was that was pretty much it. I've seen a few of his videos and my friend Brian has a high opinion of Ajan Sona, but uh I haven't met him in person and I'm not even sure that I even he even read

anything that I wrote to him or to his monastery because it may have just been some monastery attendant or some other monk who who uh got the letter and answered it. I don't recall now if I ever knew.

So yeah, I think Ajan Sona is one of the better one of the better monks in the west that I know of, but I've never met him. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. And the next question is, my next question is about Nagarjuna.

Would you please just tell me all about them? And so he seems to have this idea that there was more than one Nagarjuna, which apparently there was. And I'm

asked about Nagara. I don't have the fee. Just a second.

Not totally prepared today because I already started this without a beverage.

Let's see. See the thing with Nagara though is I really don't know a whole heck of a lot about him. You know, I've read his Mulam Majama caraka in English translation.

Um, you know, I've read there's a book Cena Raman called Nagarjuna's philosophy. I think you have it on the bookcase back there. excellent book is very profound but it's sort of a misleading title because it's um it's like a a translation English translation of a commentary of I think it's the

mulama jamama shastra or something that traditionally is attributed to nagarjana but nowadays scholars think that n the famous nagarjana didn't write it you know it's sort of like apocrypha But it may be that Nagarjuna did have a disciple who was also named Nagarjuna who may have written this this text. But I mean it is worth reading. If you like reading like really heavy deep philosophy like especially Indian Mahayana Buddhist philosophy then yeah Nagarjuna's philosophy by K Winkad Raman is well worth reading and I encountered that

in at Pandita Rama in Rangun Burma when
I went to a intensive meditation retreat
there like around 1997
and it was on the bookshelf
and I wanted to read it but I was there
to meditate and so I just got my hands
on the book probably a few years later
and read it in a cave in Burma
somewhere.

Um but Nagarjuna himself
uh

I mean the amount of information about
him is limited and a lot of it is kind
of legend. For example, some scholars
argue that there's no real proof that he
was a Mahayana Buddhist, especially
because the main work attributed to him,

like his magnum opus, so to speak, the Mulam Majamak Karaka doesn't mention Mahayana Buddhism at all. And so these scholars assume that he was a Hinayana Buddhist so to speak, Shravaakayana if you want to be more polite, who nevertheless was like a a founding father

of Mahayana Buddhism. Although others will say that some of his letters are very Mahayanistic, very devotionalistic that they consider the letters to be legitimate. And so in that case he he probably was an early Mahayana Buddhist but he wrote the mulamaaka caraka to a just to be uh sort of get the message to

all Buddhists. So he just deliberately left out this new fangled Mahayana stuff in order to try to persuade you know some of the earlier schools of Buddhism at least certain members of the earlier schools of Buddhism that what he had to say was worth consideration. And I do think that he understood um dependent co-arising or padiccha samupada better than for example the orthodox position in Theravada Buddhism understands it.

um

going with the the first group of philosophers who who think that he wasn't a Mahayana Buddhist yet, you know, he was sort of proto Mahayana

that,

you know, he was kind of putting his message out there and it wasn't the older schools of Buddhism who had already kind of settled on their doctrine, but it was the new Mahayana Buddhists who were kind of looking for good arguments to support their cause. and his philosophy pretty well accounts for like pragnya paramita you know those strange sutas the paradoxical ones that were coming out early on in the history of of Mahayana Buddhism so they kind of drafted him as one of the patriarchs I mean he is one of the patriarchs of

Mahayana Buddhism and or at least of Zen Buddhism he's considered an early Indian patriarch Mahakasapa was the first patriarch arc after the Buddha himself and I don't know what number that that Nagarjuna would be but he he's on the list of the the Indian patriarchs when you like when you you read old Zen texts like Chan Chinese Zen texts talking about the Indian patriarchs and the Chinese patriarchs and well not Garjuna is considered even if he wasn't really a Mahayana Buddhist to be a Mahayana patriarchist I Mahakasaba almost certainly could not be called a a Mahayana Buddhist but he's considered to be the first the first

patriarch.

Um Nagarjuna apparently according to the legends he was like a brahman who lived in like south India or south central India. Um but he was a teacher at Nalanda University. So he I guess he he would travel north to teach and then come back down south to just do his meditation and and that sort of thing. Um one of the letters that he wrote is to a a south Indian king is sort of giving him guidance on how to be a good king I guess.

But really I mean aside from that I really don't know much biographical detail about venerable Nagarja. But I do

think that he was one of the greatest
philosophers

of the history of philosophy. You know,
in a way he was able to in a like an
elegant intellectual manner

explain some of Buddhist philosophy that
the earlier schools then like formal
logic wasn't advanced enough back then
or or for whatever reason they just
really did not do as good of a job as
Nagarjuna did of describing like

voidness and like no self this kind of
thing or dependent core rising especially
especially how everything is
conditioned, how we're living in a kind
of virtual reality. Now, Garjuna was
able to explain that well kind of, but

at the same time, I mean, everything
just kind of devolves into voidness. I
mean majamaka it's like the mula
majamaka caraka it's the the structure
of it is largely based the structure of
much of it is based on asking question
and then having the answer be yes no yes
yes and no or neither yes nor no and he
just rules out all possibilities for one
question after another after another. I
think the first question is, is an
effect the same as the cause?
And he just uses these logical
arguments,
at least they they seemed logical to
ancient Indians to rule out, yes, it's

the same as the cause. No, it's not the same as the cause. No, no, no, it's, you see, it's the same and different from the cause, and it's neither the same nor different from the cause. He just rules out all of that. Moves on to the next question. rules out all possible answers for that, moves on to the next question, rules out all possible answers for that. So that in a way it's like this intellectually elegant way of just shooting down all intellectuality.

And in a way it's it's sort of like the snake swallowing its own tail where at the end um you know it even just sort of destroys itself and then it just leaves like silence behind because you can't

describe the highest truth in words. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

So I guess that'd be a fairly good place to stop answering that question. And since the next question is not about Nagarja, I take off the majam feeds. And so thoughtf's next question here is oh I would say that I mean you could probably learn more about Nagarjuna like his biography or something. Just look up look up look him up on the Wikipedia. Look him up on the internet and I'm sure you'll find more information about him than I just uh shared with you because my knowledge of

the man is rather limited. I mean I'm not really so much interested in the biographies as just what did the person have to say.

So anyways I'm moving on to thoughtfog's next question

which is

out of the old Buddhist bodhicattvas

like whom to you has a particularly

touching andor profound story. Well,

bodhicattvas is Mahayana Buddhism and my

reading about Mahayana bodhicattvas

is very limited. I really consider it to

be like mythology. You know, it's

interesting maybe from an

anthropological point of view,

understanding the history of Buddhism,

that kind of thing. But for the most part, I consider likewise, I mean Quan Yin was based on the Indian bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, I'm pretty sure. And then he kind of transitioned into female at some point. And I mean this Hercules got conflated with what was it? Vajrapani. A bodhisattva called Vajrapani. that in the like the Gandhara sculptures of mainly what is now Afghanistan or like northern Pakistan that there are actual like

statues and like bas-reliefs carved into the walls or you know the side of mountains or whatever of Hercules guarding the Buddha. And I mean Hercules

is there because he's been conflated with I think it's is Vajraani or Padma Pani. It's one of these one of these early Indian bodhicattvas.

Um but I mean from the terravada point of view there's one main bodhic sata and that's just the Buddha before his enlightenment or you could stretch that back into his previous lives which some of which are described in the jotaka stories which again are just mythology talking animals and so forth.

So my favorite bodhic sata would have to be Gormma Buddha before his enlightenment. And that's the only bodhicatta that really has any kind of historical backing

unless they've taken some other historical characters and converted them into bodhicattvas.

And I really wouldn't know who that would be Hercules. But I mean Heracles I mean probably there was a person upon which the legends of Heracles were based or at least the earliest legends of Heracles. You know he was some Dorian warlord who participated in you know taking over large parts of Greece during the the dark ages.

you know, part of the Dorian invasion or at least he was a Dorian who was already passed away but venerated by the Dorian who were um like expanding in their

their control of ancient Greece that
kind of thing.

So maybe Heracles

or Podmapani or Vajraani or whichever

kind of whichever pane he was. But I

mean aside from that, I mean it's just,

you know, if you read about the bodhic

sattva or the bodhic sata of mangala

Buddha in the the uh the Buddha Wonga. I

mean it's it's like a Montipython. It's

so bizarre. I've talked about him

before.

Yeah. I mean see let me just read the

question one last time here. out of the

old Buddhist bodhic sattvas like whom to

you has a particularly touching andor

profound story. Well, God Buddha would

have to be the only one that really I
mean I pay any real heed to or take
seriously and even that is largely
legend you know with mythology creeping
in

but I'm really not a Mahayana Buddhist I
mean some some aspects of Mahayana
Buddhism I think in some respects the
Mahayana Buddhists describe things
better than like the terra of Buddhist
like like emptiness for example you know
Nagarjuna and his accounting for
dependent core rising for example
so I mean there is a lot of wisdom in
Mahayana text but when you start getting
into the bodhic sattva stuff and the

mythological space Buddhas and all that
and I just lose interest I just can't
take it very seriously

I mean does it help just learning
stories about bodhic sattvas that in all
likelihood didn't really exist At
least not in an empirical objective
sense. I mean, does it help you to
become enlightened or not?

Mjushri, god of wisdom. I mean, he's I
guess he's supposed to be a bodhicattva
also.

So, I mean, he's kind of interesting.

He's got a sword,

but you know, it's it's just mythology
as far as far as I can tell.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Kundrew.

And Kundrew says, "How do you interpret magical or supernatural elements in the sutas? For example, do you accept occurrences like the Buddha taking seven steps after his birth as something that really happened? Do you just disregard things like this entirely, or is there some sort of middle ground?" Well, I guess most of the miracle stories you find in the texts

um and the talking animals and so forth, most of that I would consider to be mythology. You know, it just you have a premodern mindset that really accepts the possibility of this stuff and just is

credulous with regard to a lot of things. They hear a they hear a story about the Buddha performing a miracle and they just accept it as truth and it finds it finds its way into the scriptures.

But some of the stuff like you know like the Buddha knowing somebody else's mind that some of that stuff maybe a few of the psychic feats that are described in the texts. I'm not just saying it's impossible,

but I would I would guess that most of like the psychic powers exercised by wise monks of the past, including the Buddha himself, that most of it just didn't really find

its way into the text because it wasn't something really dramatic. you know just knowing somebody else's mind or or knowing you know just seeing their past lives commenting on that you know that that happens sometimes

Maharaji nim curly baba up there right there I mean he would just look into you and just see I mean in a way he'd know you better than you know yourself you know he'd see your past lives and all this supposedly according to you know people that knew at least you'd be commenting on their past lives.

So, I mean, stuff like that can happen.

I mean, I don't think that there were very many duels going on with firebreathing cobra dragons. I don't think there were very many animals like say quails or monkeys that were speaking fluent Pali with human intelligence.

Um it could be that some devas did come to visit you know some nonhuman beings would come to visit the Buddha or other monks. I mean the the biography or autobiography of Ajan Man has lots and lots of that. So I mean some of this stuff I mean it can have an element of truth to it but I do not think that the Pali texts really can be relied upon to be just like accurate objective representations of empirical facts

because there's so many examples of things that I just can't believe the twin miracle where the Buddha levitated up into the air spraying fire out of one side of himself out of his body and water out of the other at the same time and then switching up so that the the side that was shooting fire is now shooting water and vice versa. All this to impress some brahinss that kind of thing. On the other hand, let's say the story of the Buddha at like in his final days where he's he's about ready to die and he and Ananda are walking along and um he says to Ananda to get some water out of a stream and a

bunch of like a caravan of wagons have just gone through that stream. The water's all muddy. Ananda says, "The water is all muddy. It's, you know, it's not drinkable." The Buddha just says, "Go ahead and get some." And then it's like like miraculously the water is clear when Ananda scoops it up. That something like that I mean it's possible. I'm not going to just say nope none of it none of it could possibly happen. You know I'm not a materialist. I do think that miracles do happen or at least violations of what scientists call the laws of physics that that can happen and that it's more likely to happen around very advanced

like sages and saints
levitation for example.

So yeah, I do have an open mind toward
the possibility of these things while at
the same time thinking in all prob in
all probability most of the accounts
that you see in texts, poly texts,
Mahayana texts, whatever are likely to
be legends
and mythology
that really are not empirical facts.
It's just what people believed at the
time.

And so I'm just going to move on to the
next question which is from still not
sure and this is kind of a simple

question. He says, "Would you please read Industrial Society and its future by Theodore Kazinski?"

And I mean, I could, but I don't read very much. And it certainly would not be near the top of the list of books that I would read, especially considering that I've had people send me books that have been written by themselves or by like their brother, this kind of thing. That would have to be higher up on the list than reading Ted Kazinsk's manifesto.

I mean, I might read it someday. I'm going to have to kind of change my habits because I really have just pretty much stopped reading books. But I am I am sort of obligated to read some of the

books that have people have sent to me. And in one of one case, I promised that that either my woman or I would read it and I don't think she's going to read it. So the the it's the duty falls upon me to read that one and maybe while I'm not working 40 hours a week or 55 hours a week I should say and looking for a more suitable way of earning a living that uh maybe I will sit down and and read a book which would be good for me. I think I used to read all the time and then after coming back to America and uh especially after I stopped being a monk is just I just acquired new habits I guess.

So I'm just going to move on to next question. This is from Warm Shadow and Warm Shadow says, "Can ordained monks maintain a fitness routine based around calisthenics and plyometrics, isometrics, and cardio without incurring unskillful karma?" Then he continues, "What I mean to say is, if I ordain as a monk, will I be reprimanded by the senior monk for doing pull-ups?"

Well, I mean, what is the purpose of this? I mean, for a monk, you shouldn't be trying to beautify yourself. And really, you just need to be healthy enough to practice dharma.

So, I mean, when I was ordained

temporarily as a novice, uh, a year or two before I was fully ordained as a monk, you know, I just sort of like a dress rehearsal, I went to the monastery and was ordained as a temporary somara or novice for five weeks. And at the time I was doing regular like situps and push-ups and so forth every every night. And one time I was doing my exercises and one of the senior monks came in. He just said don't bother with that. Don't do that. So I mean it would depend on what the attitude is of the senior monks at your monastery especially your preceptor. You know if you're ordained as a monk and your preceptor says you

don't need to bother with this stuff.

You don't need to be sculpted. You don't need to be buff. You know, you should be skinny. You should be healthy enough that you're able to practice dhamma for the sake of your enlightenment. But how does, you know, being able to do 200 push-ups help you to become enlightened? So, it may be that you would have some hard-nosed senior monk say, you know, don't bother with that. And then um if you continue to do it then you might be reprimanded because you were told once and you just continue doing it. Um on the other hand you might go to some other monastery where the abbot is doing exercises or you know it's just he

doesn't care if you do exercises. Um but I mean from like the traditional like orthodox terravada point of view, yeah I mean that would be excessive to have it to maintain a fitness routine based around calisthenics, plyometrics, isometrics and cardio that you know what what is the purpose of that? Why why would a monk do that? I mean it's not just to be healthy. You can be healthy just, you know, chop wood, carry water, and do a lot of walking. I mean, that's really how I I stayed relatively healthy as a monk. Chop wood, carry water, you know, carrying a five gallon bucket up a hill,

you know, that's it takes some exercise.
Even swimming, I mean, for the sake of
your health, I mean, that's kind of
borderline.

But doing a lot of walking is fine. you
know, volunteering to help around the
monastery, doing fetching and toting and
such. That's fine. But I mean, how would
you how would you justify as a monk who
supposedly is dedicating his life to
enlightenment in this very life? I mean,
what would be the point of maintaining a
fitness routine based around
calisthenics, plyometrics, isometrics,
and cardio?

I think that would be kind of worldly
um excessive in a worldly sense

unless you have some health problem
where your health is just going to
degenerate unless you're really really
working out a lot.

But again, it's going to be up to the
senior monks at your monastery whether
or not they're going to tell you to stop
doing that. I mean, and probably they're
not going to reprimand you the first
time, but if you keep doing it after
they tell you you don't need to do that
anymore, then then you might get
reprimanded or scolded or something.
So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Arpad,
and Arpad says, "When you lived in

isolated places, how would you treat wounds when or if you got injured?"

Well, when you live in tropical Asia, like like remote areas of Burma, you have to have a a fairly well stocked first aid kit.

So,

um yeah, I had a pretty good first aid kit. I mean, you have first you have to have malaria medicine. You have to have some kind of diarrhea medicine, obviously.

Dewormer.

Um it's good to have like oh, what's it called? the stuff that you use for amiiic dysentery and gardiasis metroniditool I think it's called um I

usually have like two different kinds of antibiotics tetracycline which is good for like skin infections or blood poisoning or also I mean it can be used as a prophylaxis against malaria but I didn't use it for that and then like a broader spectrum that's better for like respiratory tract infections that kind of thing like amoxicylin and or superfluxin or or something like that. So I mean you'd have like antibiotic cream or ointment, you know. So I mean fortunately I didn't injure myself badly enough. I didn't break any bones. That kind of thing. I mean if you break a tooth and you got to

go go into town and find a dentist or if you get really sick from malaria or something then you may have to go into town and and find a doctor.

But I I was never really injured badly enough

um that I couldn't just deal with it myself. You know, I stubbed toes from walking around walking around rocky areas with no shoes on or, you know, I mean, some some things it happens you just don't really need. Like you get stung by a scorpion, there's not a whole hell of a lot you can do. Um, fortunately I wasn't bitten by any venomous snakes, so you can't really carry around antivenenom.

Um,

so yeah, I mean I had a first aid kit and then if something happened that I wasn't able to deal with, then some village doctor or some doctor from town would come and and help me out because, you know, I would if if you're like the the exotic foreigner living in tropical Asia, there's a good chance that at least one doctor is going to volunteer his services in case you ever need it. There was one doctor who volunteered his services. I there's no way I'd let him come around me with a scalpel. Man, he was he was kind of a quack doctor in my opinion. It was like if I got sick, he'd

give me like seven or eight different kinds of medicine, you know, just in case one of them didn't work, the other one would. That kind of thing. One time, uh, I stepped on some kind of I can't remember what it was. stepped on some kind of big acacia spine or something and he just sent me a tetanus vaccine and a hypodermic syringe and you look on the the label of the tetanus vaccine and it says keep refrigerated in like big block letters and he sent it to me like in the hot season. You know the stuff is 100 degrees Fahrenheit when he sends it to me. So yeah, I I was just the thing is I mean if you're a monk and you protect Dharma, Dharma protects you and

you're not going to get more than you can handle.

That's something you can have faith in I suppose at least accept it as a working hypothesis.

So

I did find that some of the herbal stuff works better than some of the medicines like the the anti- diarrhea stuff. there was like the bark of a certain tree that villagers would grind and prepare for me and give me that and it it worked better than like the pills that like the pharmaceutical stuff that'd be given to you by a doctor.

Um, but I'm just going to move on to

this question. This is from Liberating
Insights

and Liberating Insights says, "Will
consciousness cease or remain in
Nibbana?" And this is kind of a trick
question.

Because I mean consciousness as wyana
which is sort of like the the background
of your mental states technically that
ceases when you become especially when
you attain paribana you know you're an
enlightened being and then you you leave
your body so to speak you cease
metabolizing your body ceases to
metabolize then
all the five condas
stop. But I mean, I've talked about this

many times. It's it's kind of a pet theme of mine that there are at least two sutas, one in the digaya, one in the Majima that imply that infinite formless consciousness is the same as nibbana or nirvana.

And so in that case, you would say, you know, when you attain nibbana, you don't become unconscious. You don't consciousness doesn't cease. It becomes infinite and formless and unmanifest like the godika suta of the samurai. One of my favorite sutas. It's a weird one where God essentially selfdeletes and becomes enlightened at the moment of

his death. And so the Buddha just using like clairvoyant powers. Maybe this really happened. Maybe this would be a case of the Buddha really using a psychic power that is recorded in the text and really happened. Maybe. But anyways, the Buddha can know that venerable God has died. And so he says, "Well, venerable God has died. We got to go and give him a cremation. We got to go, you know, deal with the body." So the Buddha and his sa of monks that were accompanying him go to the black rock at Eigili cave. There's Goda lying dead on his little bed and the Buddha points out to the monks, you see that mist that's moving, you know, in

all these different directions, you know, it's moving all over the place. There's like this little cloud and the monks say, "Yes, venerable sir, we can see that." And he says that's Mara the evil one who is searching for the consciousness of venerable God. But he's not going to find it because the consciousness of God has become unmanifest which means it's just sort of like the boundaries have just dissolved disappeared and so you wind up with something that's infinite and formless unmanifest. But the thing is anything that's infinite, formless, and

unmanifest, you can't really say that it if it exists or doesn't exist is getting back to Hegel and his thesis and antithesis, pure being, pure non-being, the same. So when something becomes formless and unmanifest, I mean from a samsaric point of view, from an empirical point of view, I mean it's it's off the scale. You can't really say that it exists or doesn't exist. I mean you could say either one or both or neither and none of it would be ultimately really valid.

So some people would say nibbana is infinite formless consciousness. Others might say that you become more and more conscious until you hit this stage where

it just goes off the scale and you can't say anything about it.

But nibbana isn't just non-existence like a lot of Western Buddhists would prefer to believe.

So I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from PSA.

And PSA says, "What's your opinion of the USA going to Venezuela and removing Maduro? Venezuelans are celebrating while liberals are outraged. They don't care about the opinion of the Venezuelan people who are actually the ones most affected by this situation. Liberals just want to carry out their virtue signaling tactics to gain power. Yeah.

The last update on the whole Maduro drama is that uh the the Venezuelan government is releasing its political prisoners or at least lots of them, which is causing further rejoicing in Venezuela, I think, because they probably had quite a few political prisoners locked up in prisons around around Caracas especially.

But the thing about the USA going to Venezuela and removing Maduro, this whole situation has so many tentacles that a guy just reading up on it, sitting at a computer and and it's hardly likely he's going to get anywhere near to a comprehensive understanding of what the hell is going on.

So I mean with regard to PSA talking about liberals or outlet rage I mean it's not really liberals I mean liberal has just become synonymous with leftist I think in the west or a leftist who falls short of being just a full-blown communist but I mean I consider myself to be a classical liberal you know like a John Stewart Mill type liberal. is just that classical liberals used to be Democrats. Now they're Republicans because the Democratic Party has moved so far to the left that a classical liberal was like a freethinker who believes in individual rights and freedoms and so

forth. They're now considered to be maggotards.

And it is true that the leftists um I mean they just hysterically oppose anything Trump is in favor of which includes like law enforcement, enforcing the laws. I mean if there's any leftists out there watching this, the thing to do if you don't like a law saying for example people who are in this country without a valid passport or visa should be ejected from the country. If you don't like that law, you don't just try to get in the way of the police officer trying to enforce the law. What you do, you go to your politicians, your representatives in Congress, for

example, and have them change the law.

You don't just reject or deny like laws that are that the government is legally obligated to enforce.

Well, I mean the left, I mean they're on the side of Somali scammers and they're on the side of just criminals in general. Like George Floyd was he's he's like a saint now or at least he was.

Now I guess the uh like the lesbian poet who was shot by an ICE officer that she's going to be like the new St.

George Floyd

regardless of the facts of the case.

people to like leftists look at the very same video footage if if they go on to X

or something. The network news isn't going to show it to you, but they they'll look at the unedited video footage and still they'll say, "Oh, this this Gestapo agent just, you know, murdered some innocent US citizen for no reason."

And then the other extreme is you've got like like the real hardnosed conservatives calling her a domestic terrorist out to kill people and so forth. But really there is kind of a middle path there.

But getting back to the actual question, what's your opinion of the USA going to Venezuela and removing Maduro? I mean, I don't know. I don't know enough about

it. I'm sure that Donald Trump and Marco Rubio

and the other people that were like behind this, they know a hell of a lot more about it than I do. And so

I would I just kind of have a certain amount of faith that they pretty much know what they're doing. I mean, I'm not going to take the leftist point. It's like the leftists have like the opposite point of view. Anything Trump does is bad and wrong. just anything. It's just it's like become a meme now where you know meme or Trump is you know for my next trick I will get the Democrats to support you know criminal child

molesters or whatever it is because
anything that he's against there for and
vice versa

but with regard to Maduro I mean by the
Biden administration put like a \$25
million bounty on him. I mean, the the
leftists wanted Maduro deposed
before Trump took office, but now that
Trump took office and actually did it,
then they're saying, "No, no, he's he's
a dictator who's declaring war without
congressional approval and all this."

But, I mean, the act how good of or bad
of an idea it was to go in there and
capture Maduro, um, I really can't say
because I don't know enough about it. I
I assume that there's a whole bunch of

different factors including just Maduro taunting Trump saying come and get me just you know like like I don't know he's he's just taunting Trump so Trump's like all right all right bluff is called buddy boy or also just like preventing China from getting Venezuelan oil I mean that's to the advantage of America I assume just showing the world. You know, it's like we're not Biden's America anymore. We're not perpetrating the fiasco of the withdrawal from Afghanistan at this point. You know, we bypassed all the the Russian and Chinese anti-aircraft stuff partly through like bribing people on

the inside in Venezuela, I assume. But still, it's like we just we they performed a military act, a military operation that possibly nobody else could have done. And and Trump is just showing, you know, you guys pay heed to what we just did because we can do it to you.

So, I mean, that is probably in America's interests, at least if you're like an America first kind of person.

You know, you're a patriotic America who thinks America should be strong and prosperous and not just, you know, voluntarily emulate itself and manage decline.

go back to a a vigorous patriarchy

then yeah that's I assume that what

Trump directed

or allowed by capturing Maduro that yeah

I assume that it's more good than bad

for from a of an American point of view

but I mean there's there's so many

tentacles to this thing that it's

impossible really to know for sure

exactly what the hell's going on.

And anyways, Maduro being captured is

now eclipsed by the the lesbian poetus

being shot by an ICE agent in

Minneapolis.

So that's that's last week's news.

So I'm just going to move on. Next

question. This is from Trezasiz.

And Trezasiz says since the teachings of the early Buddhist schools did not differ in terms of the sutas but only in terms of the abidama then did the early Buddhist schools differ significantly in vignia. And the the scholars say that the early Buddhist schools differed in Vineia less than they differed in the sutas. You know it was more of a philosophical difference than a monastic discipline difference. You know you read the the padim mochoka rules of various ancient sects including terravada and sarvostada and mahasangika and dharmod and all this that the core rules of the pimoka are essentially the same very few differences

maybe a slight difference in interpretation. The seia rules that were added later have much more differences. But as a general rule, the the rules of monastic discipline are very similar, more similar than the sutas. So the rules of monastic discipline are like at least 90% the same throughout the early Indian schools before you get the advent of Mahayana. The sutas may be 85 80 or 85% the same. You know, they're they're relatively similar. And of course the abidamas or abidharmas are just all over the place like terravada and sarvastivvada were closely related. They were

essentially the same school up until the third council like during the the reign of the emperor Ashoka which was when the one of the main purposes of the third council I'm pretty sure is essentially to purge the sarvastadin heretics out of the theravadin sangha. You know, it was like are we going to go in a theravada direction or a Sarvastivvada direction in our interpretation of Dharmama? And I guess just in there was like a power struggle or whatever and a certain Moghali Pundita came out on top and they drove out the Sarvastadins who went off into northwestern India and converted the Kushans.

So yeah, the Abhidhammas I mean oh I was I

was going to say that even though
Terravada and Sarvastada were like very
closely related you know they split
apart at the third council or
thereabouts still their abidamas are
completely different not a single book
of their abidamas are the same so you go
from like 90% the same in vineia maybe
85% the same in the sutas with some of
that just being different ways of
editing the same material and then you
get down to like 5% the same in the
abidamas
not one book the same.

So yeah, it was there's more of a
difference in philosophy, which would

include the sutas, than there was in just monastic practice, which was more conservative. that I mean monks might not follow all the rules correctly but they're less likely to cook up new rules except for there was one I think it was the moola sarvastivadas who they added a lot of like devotional material and so forth to their vineyapitica and also they had rules where monks were allowed to wear boots and monks had a certain it was like a a staff that they would take with them when they'd walk into the village like when they go for alms and it had like these metal rings that would jingle when they'd hit the hit the staff on the

ground and that was because they prospered in like the foothills of the Himalayas where it got cold in the cold season and the villages would have their doors closed to keep in the warmth and so you had to have a monk make a noise like jingling this the metal rings on this staff to let people know that there were monks out there and of course they're wearing boots to protect them protect their feet from the ice and so forth.

So I mean there were some changes in Vineia but for the most part Vineia was the most conservative aspect of like Dharma Terravada Buddha or just early

Buddhism and the sutas

for the most part they were fairly similar especially the core texts which existed before the division into schools. So it was you know like abidharmama abidharma and commentarial interpretation of the texts that really started going radically in different directions.

And I'm just going to move on to Trzas is his next question

which is if someone today rejects the Abidama of Terravada, can they still call themselves a terra Buddhist? And yeah, I think most western monks um reject the Abidama or just like ignore it, you know, just they don't

want to they don't want to go there and they call themselves terra Buddhist. I mean, if you're ordained in a Terravada Buddhist tradition, that pretty much makes you officially a terra Buddhist. So, I rejected the Abidama of Terravada. Um, and I still considered myself to be a Terravada Buddhist, at least like officially. And with regard to like my my Buddhism, my philosophy, that sort of thing, I'm more terra than anything else.

So I mean people nowadays they ask me if I'm a terra Buddhist I'll say I'm more terra Buddhist than anything else but yeah I think if someone today

rejects the abidama of terravada

um

let's see they can still call themselves

a terra Buddhist because that's

essentially what most western monks are

doing most western terra Buddhist

although

it's it's kind of a matter of opinion I

is where are you going to draw the line?

Like some hard-nosed Burmese Abidama

scholar might say, "No, you're just a

fake terra Buddhist heretic if you

reject Abidama." Because the Burmese

consider Abidama to be the most

important, most profound teachings of

the Buddha.

But then again, you have some somebody

that goes to Spirit Rock, you know, they call themselves SA. They don't keep five precepts. you know they're not ordained and they reject or ignore most of the typetica then I mean are they still a terabata Buddhist I mean I remember there was some indignation when I was going through some I mean it was like rocky roads with the local Dharmama group you know the the only terravada Buddhist group in this town that I was trying to live in as a monk in America and I'm just kind of pointing out. I mean it's like it's everything is optional to a western bu to some of these western Buddhists you know it's

like you don't have to keep you don't
have to keep sila I mean you can just do
as you please and so long as you you
know you practice some elementary level
meditation

and call yourself that's good enough
really it's like they don't some of
these people they don't even believe in
nibbana some teachers they don't believe
in kama they don't believe in nibbana
You know, it's just like Buddhism is
just used as a kind of self-help
psychological technique.

And if you imply that they're not really
terra Buddhist, they'll get indignant.

You know, they'll be offended.

So, where do you draw the line? It's

it's who you asking? You ask some really strict Burmese Abidama scholar and he'll say, "No, you you don't accept Abidama. That's the third pitica of the tapetica. How are you going to be a terra Buddhist if you reject what makes terraada terraata which is largely abidama? So I mean if if I lived in ancient India and had a choice as to which school of early Buddhism I would follow, I might not choose terraata if I was able to like look into the different schools. There might be, you know, like the the Selronicas, they didn't have an Aidama, which would be an improvement over having one in my opinion.

So, yeah, I guess the correct answer to that would be, yeah, of course, they can still call themselves a Terraata Buddhist, but some hard-nosed fundamentalist might consider you to be a fake.

Me terravada.

So, but yeah, you can definitely call yourself one.

So I'm just going to move on to Tzascus is is third question. What natural disasters occur in Burma? Earthquakes.

Yeah, there are earthquakes in Burma. In fact, uh back in the 70s or 80s, um there was a big earthquake in Pagan, which used to be the capital of Burma a thousand years ago, and the Ananda

temple caved in, which is one of the most beautiful temples in Burma. So they had to repair it. Um, and I mean I lived in caves a lot of the time. So there was a certain amount of concern about earthquakes when I when you're living in a cave that can literally cave in. That's why they're called caves because they can cave in. Aside from that, um, there are tropical storms like back in the 90s, I think there was the tropical storm Nogu that just killed lots of people in Burma. It was it was really bad. And because the the weather patterns are changing a little bit, the the the path that the

tropical storms usually take through
Burma are moving more and more towards
densely populated areas. So I mean if if
n tropical storm Nagis went right
through the middle of Rangon, for
example, and it was not that far away in
Rangon, there was lots of trees tipped
over. Um mostly not palm trees. It's
weird. the palm trees stayed up, the
other trees got broken over, but that
would have been really ugly. So, there's
storms. I mean, you could say droughts
would be a natural disaster, in which
case you got droughts about every
maybe one out of every three years in
central Burma.

See what else?

Natural disasters. Yeah, I guess that would be about it. That's all I can think of really. Oh, I did live um about two miles from a crater lake in the the main one the main the one place I lived in Burma longer than any other place one wildlife refuge monastery was about two two miles away from an extinct volcano which was a crater lake and there were huge boulders all over that just strewn over the area that blew out of that volcano and the volcano was relatively recent although to a to a like a geologist, anything that happens within the past 10,000 years is recent.

But I mean, theoretically, you could

have another volcanic eruption that would completely mess things up. But yeah, I think the main natural disasters in Burma are earthquakes and like tropical storms like cyclones, that kind of thing. And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Sedarta Lohachita. And Sedarta Lohachita says, "Did you meet any of these mad Nazi skin head gangs in the 80s?"

And yeah, I do recall occasionally seeing skin heads, you know, that shaved heads and the the big boots on. Um, also punks. And there was there was a certain overlap between skin heads and punks.

So, I mean, you'd see them. I mean, I I grew up in Aberine, Washington. uh

didn't I mean you might see one walking down the street or you know two or three of them walking down the street. They did live there but obviously it was very fringe kind of thing. And when I went to college yeah there wasn't much of that.

I didn't I didn't see much of that when I was like in Bellingham Washington.

Bellingham has always leaned far to the left and even the leftists, they don't they don't accept Nazis, even though Nazis technically were national socialists.

So, yeah, I encountered them like from a distance, but that was about as far as it went. And sometimes it's hard to tell

the difference between like some
neo-Nazi skin head and just some punk
rocker,

especially if he doesn't have his his
hair spiked and like lots of earrings
and stuff.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Ruie and
Ruie said, "When you came across the
Buddha Dharma, did it feel like a first
encounter or a reencounter?"

And that's I mean it's kind of both I
guess but I mean it wasn't so much
Buddha dharma it was just dharma in
general like I first got turned on to
eastern philosophy through books of
Ramdas you know I was a troubled

teenager went to see a youth counselor at my father's insistence and it turned out the youth counselor was into Ram DS and he gave me two books by Ram DS to read and also um the novel Illusions by Richard Bach.

which also was very influential in my thinking as a like a 17-year-old. The two books by Ron Doss were uh grist for the mill and the only dance there is and so I was this sort of exposed to a sort of Indian dharma in general and when I'm reading Ram Das as a 17-year-old

it was just like

in a way it was it's hard to explain it

was just like yeah it was like

intuitively

it just It was like striking a chord

deep down. It was like something that I

hadn't been exposed to in this life,

although presumably I'd been exposed to

it before I was born or something. So

that would be like a reencounter. But

when you're a 17-year-old, I mean, it's

just

mainly it was just like some at some

deep intuitive level it was really

striking a chord even though I didn't

fully understand it. You know, it's like

when you're reading about like Indian

philosophy for the first time, you never

been exposed to that sort of stuff

before, then
you you can't really remember it very
well. You can't integrate it into your
like your your memory banks, so to
speak, because I mean, you have to make
connections. And there's it was so alien
to what I was used to that there was
really not much that you could make
connections with. And so I mean I I just
didn't fully like absorb it or digest
it, but still there's just like this
wideeyed

Yeah, this is great. You know, it's like
it was it just seemed like it was an
answer to a question that I've been
looking for. You know, as a 17-year-old,

it's like my two options were just follow the rules, you know, just he who dies with the most toys wins. You know, you just grow up, get married, you go to school, get get a job, get married, have kids, and then die of old age. Or you could just party and get in lots of trouble. Have lots of fun and lots of the opposite of fun. You know, it's just this chaotic kind of existence. Those were like my two main options. And I had experimented with both. And then all of a sudden here's this other option of dharma, you know, striving to know ultimate reality, which according to the text is possible.

So I mean that seemed a hell of a lot

more meaningful and important than, you know, buying a house in the suburbs or just partying all the time. You just rebelling, you know, conforming and rebelling. That was like the two options. And then here's this other option which in a way it's it's just kind of going your own way. It's not really rebelling against anything. It's just sort of not interested. I'm going this way which is leading towards ultimate reality.

So it was a first encounter and deeper down I suppose intuitively it was a reencounter.

So it was both I guess

and I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Cleiffy.

Let's see how long we've been going at this. Hour and a half already.

Clefy says,

and Clefy is in Lithuania, by the way.

Clefy says, "Reality is not ultimately real. It's created by an unenlightened mind, but we are still experiencing it through birth, sickness, old age, and death." What is this weird place we ended up on that exists and doesn't exist simultaneously?

Well, I mean, Kify just sort of

contradicts himself in the very first part of his sentence here. He says,

"Reality is not ultimately real." So, if

reality is not ultimately real, it's not really reality, is it?

So I mean what Kify is calling reality is just like empirical reality you know samsaric empirical reality the stuff that scientists study I guess but it would also include like emotions and things that maybe science can't really get very close to yet personal experience.

So reality is not ultimately real. But I mean, that's that's just self-contradicting right there. It's just kind of meaningless statement. So, what appears to be reality is not ultimately real. What most people

consider to be reality is not ultimately real. Okay? It's created by an unenlightened mind, but we are still experiencing it through birth, sickness, old age, and death. What is this weird place we ended up with on that exists and doesn't exist simultaneously? Well, it virtually exists. See, see, the best analogy I can come up with is the block of marble, the uncarved block, what the Dao Ching calls the nameless uncarved block. And I mean, I just pound away at this. I talk about it all the time, that you've got this uncarved block, which is like infinite formless consciousness, infinite possibilities.

And then some of these possibilities
include unenlightened
subsets or just limited
just sort of limited aspects of this
infinity
that are because they're limited they
just think you know they're able to
become like recursive self-referential
and they start thinking that they are
separate from everything else and
they're dreaming up this fake reality I
mean it's like a mirage
you can say well I mean you see the the
the lake with the palm trees in the
distance in the classical mirage
that you know it's not real but real a

scientist would say well there's
obviously something causing that mirage
you know it's like refra heat refraction
of of light light
visual spectrum of in in what
electromagnetic radiation this kind of
stuff you know it's there's something
there that makes it seem seem real.

Anyway,

so my explanation is that uncarved block
of marble contains within it every
single possible statue,
including some impossible statues.

And it's like every single molecule,
every single atom of that rock is
already right there in the right place
for each of those statues. It's really

in there. It's just that it takes like
imagination

or like a diluted mind to separate out
these statues and think that they're
real.

So, it's virtually real. It's
conditionally real. It's not ultimately
real because ultimate reality is just
formless,
infinite.

Anything that's formless is going to be
infinite. It doesn't have any limits, no
boundaries.

So what is this weird place we ended up
on that exists and doesn't exist
simultaneously? It's one of the one of

the imaginary statues in the uncarved block of marble that's so complicated that it has become self-aware but in a limited a limited capacity.

So it's not aware of the infinity. It's just aware of just this limited aspect of it.

And I can explain this a million times and I think most people still won't get it.

And I'm sorry about that, but it's just the way it is. So, I'm just going to move on to Cle's next question, which is a follow-up from the first one.

Is reality a paradox that can't be explained and needs to be accepted as it is? And again, he's he's using the word

reality to mean unreality.

So I mean that's that's the first

mistake of Khifi there is using reality

when he means unreality

or I mean at least he should qualify it

with like empirical reality or something

like personal experience that kind of

thing but like is some saric quasi

reality a paradox that can't be

explained and needs to be accepted as it

is? Well, I mean,

I guess maybe. I mean, true reality,

ultimate reality can't be explained

cuz once you start explaining it in

words, you're dealing with symbols and

perceptions and delusion.

So, true real ultimate reality is just off the scale and no kind of description will apply to it. You know, it's sort of like drawing a picture of God. It's not going to work.

But with regard to samsara is samsara a paradox that can't be explained in these I mean you can explain it I mean you can explain fake reality better than you can explain true reality because fake reality is on the scale. I mean the whole scale is fake reality.

So you can explain that is it's delusion. It's like starts with the conceit I am.

So you've got like this self-recursive consciousness that's just separates

itself from the rest of infinity and
thinks that this is this is the truth
and ignores you know the infinite amount
of other stuff that is also the truth.
So true reality may be called a paradox
that can't be explained but fake reality
it's not as much of a paradox and it
kind of can be explained.

Although one person's explanation may
not really strike any traction at all
because it just may not it just may not
work. I mean different explanations
different people may need different
kinds of explanations.

And I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Dhamma River. And

Dhamma River says recently I had this conversation about the bodhicattva vow and they explained something to me that was quite interesting. I told them the bodhicattva vow contradicted the concept of anata. But they told me that the bodhicattva vow is supposed to awaken your sense of nonduality.

I'm paraphrasing what they said. Quote, I vow to liberate all beings and in the process I will understand that not a single being has become liberated. There is no I who liberates and no other who gets liberated. If a bodhicattva holds on to the notion of a self, that person is not a true bodhicattva.

Unquote.

So then uh Dhamma river continues, I thought that was an amazing explanation. I've never heard a satisfactory Mahayana explanation of the bodhicattva before. It agrees with terraada in my opinion. But I would like to ask your opinion of what they told me and if you agree or disagree and also if you think the bodhicattva hinders or helps sincere practitioners of the noble eight-fold path. Um so that's kind of a second question. Let's just separate that so I can deal with one at a time.

See

all right I separated it

but I still got to and Okay. All right.

So first question is if you would like to ask my opinion of what they told me and if you agree or disagree. Well in a way it's it's sort of like cobbling together two aspects of early Mahayana. Mahayana didn't just start off as this unified philosophy. It was like different kind of movements that unified mainly I would guess as a kind of like coalition kind of thing, you know, like a political coalition or something where you have like the the pure land Buddhists and the prya parameita Buddhists and you got this sort of Mahayana like the bodhicattva ideal that is I mean that might be kind of binding

everything together to some degree.

And so it's like

different ideas that aren't necessarily

like compatible

get cobbled together into this one

system. And so you've got the

bodhicattva who I mean the whole

bodhicattva is assuming I mean even the

idea of a bodhic sattva is assuming that

you have an individual being you know a

Buddha is an individual being an

unenlightened person an unenlightened

being is an individual being a

bodhicattva is an individual being so

you're starting off with this assumption

that there are individual beings but

then like early Buddhism which is also kind of juggling you you've got some soric conventional truth and you've got this higher truth and you're trying to just kind of mish mash them together you know like there is no self but then again the Buddha existed and his disciples existed and we exist in a samsaric sense so it's you're already dealing with troubles just because you're trying to deal with two different levels of reality at the same time um but the whole bodhicattva vow is I I mean it's based on a glorification of the Buddha. I mean you start off with God Buddha of the Shakya clan who is telling people how they can become

enlightened and then his later followers glorify him and set him put him on a pedestal and say that he is just like infinitely beyond an ordinary enlightened being. And then you got um because it glorifies being a Buddha over just being an ordinary enlightened arahant. Then you had some religious movements that are saying well it's more noble and better to try to be this sama Buddha than to just be some selfish little fully enlightened being that isn't you know like helping other beings you know like a pachek or a pacheka Buddha. They're just like a hermit. they don't even teach anybody.

So I think mahayana at least the bodhic
sattva concept started with just sort of
taking the early terravada or pre-
mahayana idea of the bodhic sata which
is just a being that is bound for
enlightenment mainly godmma of the
shakya clan and then turning that into
like you should be striving for that
instead of just becoming enlightened
which was a misstep in my opinion
Because if you're enlightened, you're
enlightened. And the Buddha wasn't. I
mean, the Buddha himself apparently was
teaching people, you should become
enlightened. Don't put off being
enlightened forever for the sake of
becoming a sama Buddha because probably,

I mean, they just weren't making this this radical distinction between the first enlightened Buddhist and every other enlightened Buddhist after him. you know, enlightened is enlightened in my opinion.

So,

let's see. So, in a way, they're just kind of taking this this baggage from a different strand of Buddhism and then trying to kind of make it more enlightened, make it trying to make it make more sense. instead of dismissing it, they they just try to reinterpret it. You know, sort of like Jesus on the cross crying out, "My God, my God, why

have you abandoned me?" You know, they have it's kind of embarrassing. You have to come up with some plausible explanation for it. And so I think that this person who answered was following a school or tradition of of Mahayana Buddhism that had adopted kind of a a sophisticated explanation for a bodhicattva concept that really is not what the Buddha taught. The Buddha would not have endorsed it in my opinion. And it's kind of based on this devotionalistic mythological glorification of the founder of the system.

Um but I mean it is true like in in like the diamond cutter sutra the

descriptions of the behavior of a bodhic
sattva in the diamond cutter sutra are
very close to the descriptions of the
conduct of an arahant in the older poly
texts. you know, so they're they're kind
of striving toward the same goal of
wisdom. It's just they're reinterpreting
terms and just sort of adding different
concepts that kind of mixes things up,
maybe causes a bit of confusion to
certain people
and causes a certain amount of delusion
to certain people who just take it
literally.

So I mean it is does kind of remind me
of the the platform sutra of Hui Ning, a

Chinese Mahayana Sutra that has no original Indian version where Hui Ning says in the sutra that when you become enlightened you look around you see that everybody else is enlightened. So I mean really the best way to to like liberate all beings is to become liberated yourself and then you just fully deeply realize that all these beings don't really exist anyway. You see through the illusion.

So yeah I think the uh the diamond cutter sutra would agree with the idea that if a bodhicattva holds on to the notion of self that person is not a true bodhic sattva.

But I mean, why you would have to like

throw in all this this later Mahayana stuff when the earlier teachings of the historical Buddha really are adequate to account for the situation. I mean, it's it's just followers of tradition that have sort of jumped on on the Buddhist the Buddhist train um after it has gone a far distance from the original teachings and still that's the tradition they're exposed to and so they make the most of it.

And it's possible that a Mahayana Buddhist can become enlightened.

Possible that a Hindu can become enlightened. Possible that a Christian become become enlightened. I mean in

some in some situations you become
enlightened more in spite of the
tradition as as because of it.

But still I mean some people just have
talent and they're just born in a
culture that maybe doesn't have, you
know, some kind of of like enlightened
Buddhism. And so they're just going to
do the best with what they've got. And
it may be they have enough talent,
they're just ripe enough for
enlightenment, like maybe someone like
St. John of the Cross that they can
become enlightened despite the fact that
they are just kind of
stuck in a in a tradition that doesn't
have the same concepts. and they've got

to really kind of become enlightened
partly just in spite of the system
so to speak.

Well, I'm just going to move on to the
second half of this this question from
Dharma River. He says, "If you asks if I
think the bodhicattva hinders or helps
sincere practitioners of the noble
eight-fold path, I would say it's more
of a hindrance than a help just because
it's just superfluous. It's
unnecessary."

But I mean it takes all kinds. There are
some personality types maybe they're
more devotionalistic or idealistic or
something that may be benefited by the

bodhic sattva vow. But I mean the bodhic
sattva vow is I mean how would you even
remember if you took the vow in a
previous life? There's a good chance if
if there is rebirth and I'm willing to
accept the possibility of that that I've
taken a bodhic sappa vow in some
previous birth. Maybe I was Japanese
hundreds of years ago, was a Mahayana
Buddhist and took a bodhicattva vow and
I don't recall it now. According to the
diamond cutter sutra, I am a bodhic
sattva because according to the diamond
cutter sutra, anyone who reads the
diamond cutter sutra and is not filled
with dread but actually likes it
has gotten to be a bodhicattva. And I

like it. I don't feel any dread at all
when I read the diamond cutter sutra.

But does the bodhicat of a vow hinder or
help? Yeah, I would guess it's more of a
hindrance than a help. I mean, it's it's
like dedicating yourself

like into the indefinite future to
strive to be this mythological

sama Buddha type being. And I mean that
is just largely mythology in my opinion.

I mean I mean the Buddha taught you

should strive to become enlightened in
this very life if at all possible which

does not require any bodhicattva vow at

all. the bodhicattva is just more likely
to get in the way of that.

And if you take the bodhisattva seriously, it's just bad math, bad logic. You know, this some sora presumably has existed forever already. No beginning. And there's still an infinite number of unenlightened beings, which does seem to indicate that there will never be a situation in which all beings are liberated. Godma Buddha did not succeed in liberating all beings did he?

So I think I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG. An Ethiopian fake TIG says there is a suta where the Buddha talks about how ugly the body is and many monks off themselves because of it. And

when the Buddha came back, he calmed them down by doing a breath meditation. Speak on this if you can. And there may be a sutta version of this. There probably is now that I think of it. But originally it comes from the rules of monastic discipline. Um one of the parajika rules the the rule against um killing murder. It's to to cause to deliberately cause the death of another human being even by just talking them in into selfdeion is a parajika offense entailing excommunication from the sa for life. So there's this elaborate story where the Buddha was giving talks about just

the not so much the ugliness but just
the impurity and and sort of vileeness
the loathsomeness of the human body. And
then when monks were meditating on this
they were being becoming so repulsed by
their own body that they wanted to
selfdelete. And then there was this monk
who just volunteered. Well, okay, I'll
help anyone who wants to self-dee or
just wants to be deleted. I'll do it for
you. And so there was this monk that was
going around essentially deleting other
monks.

And so when the Buddha came out of his
his uh like solitary retreat in the
forest or I mean I I don't recall the
story completely because it's been years

since I read it and I didn't get around to reading it again before answering this.

that uh yeah he first of all he made it a rule say no you should not kill other people even if they want to to be deleted

and let's see yeah I mean he said really I mean you shouldn't want to to die before you're enlightened anyway and so he taught them like the breath meditation on the breath which you know is calming and and doesn't cause so much revulsion as just meditating on the the foulness of the human body. Although meditating on the foulness of the human

body still is u a legitimate like
orthodox meditation meditation of teraba
Buddhism but it's not practiced nearly
as much as like mindfulness of breathing
for example

but I can't give the exact details but I
mean if you you look it up online it's
it's in vineia probably there's a pseudo
version of it also but I read it in
vineia with regard to the uh See the
third part of Jika.

So if you look up like uh a translation
of the vineitica which is available free
online you can download the entire thing
for free and then just read the origin
story of the third parajikica and it'll
have the full story there.

So I'm just moving on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question.

Did the women that ordained during the time of the Buddha all become enlightened?

And also, who is the most well-known Bikuni from the Buddhist time or closer to his time? So, that's two questions, isn't it? That's two question marks.

So, did the did the women that ordained during the time of the Buddha all become enlightened? No, they didn't. I mean, why would they be different from the men? All the men didn't become enlightened either. You know for example among the men you had the notorious

group of six monks who are mentioned again and again in Vinia because they were misbehaving in various ways which was responsible according to the tradition for the Buddha to be making more and more rules because this group of six monks were continually just messing around and doing the wrong thing. And it turned out that I mean they had their mirror images as the group of six nuns who were getting into trouble like the group of six monks were. Some of the rules for bikunis were caused by this group of six nuns doing exactly the same thing as the group of six monks did. And sometimes the group of six nuns and the group of six monks

would get together and they would make new trouble. you know, some of the there was one rule against um

let's see, I think one of the group of six nuns pretended like she was pregnant to get somebody else in trouble. So, I mean, she wasn't enlightened. You know, the group of six nuns in general weren't enlightened. There was there was I mean, as a general rule, the majority aren't going to become enlightened. Even in the Buddhist tongue, they're still going to be just like deadwood in the SA and in the Bikuni SA as well.

So yeah, the answer to this question did did the women that ordained during the

time of the Buddha all become
enlightened? The answer is no.

And so and so the second part of this
question which is kind of a
transgressive

double question. See who is the most
well-known bikuni from the Buddhist time
or closer to his time. Probably the most
well-known bikuni would be the first
bikuni who would be Mahapati Godami who
was the Buddha's stepmother and aunt.

The Buddha's father married two sisters
and the Buddha's mother died when he was
a baby. But Mahabaj Japi Goami was sort
of like his foster mother, you know, his
his stepmother also his biological aunt.
And she wanted to be the first nun. She

wanted the Buddha to ordain nuns to start an order of nuns so she could become a nun. And at first she's just saying, "Nope, not going to do it. Not going to do it." Until finally she was just following him around with like dust in her hair and her her face just streaming with tears just standing in silence, you know, outside his door all the time just kind of wanting to be a nun, you know, kind of protesting in a way. And then Ananda talks the Buddha into ordaining her, you know, mainly through the argument that Ananda said, "Well, can't women become enlightened? Like men can become

enlightened?" And the Buddha had to agree, "Yeah, women can become enlightened, too." So then Ananda talks him into starting an order of nuns. And of course, notoriously, infamously, the Buddha said, "All right, but now you've done it. Because of this, the the true Dhamma will last only half as long. Instead of lasting a thousand years, it'll only last 500 years because of ordaining nuns.

But Mahabaji goi was the Buddha's aunt and stepmother and the very first bikuni. So she's the most famous I'm sure. I mean there's there's some other famous beunis like Ambapali know she offered the Buddha one of his last

meals. She was a cortisan you know an expensive prostitute.

the Padesa Kalyani, I think she was called, you know, was the the beauty of the land, who would be hired by like city councils to entertain VIPs in town, that kind of thing. And

she became a nun. I mean, she offered the Buddha one of his last meals. And then his his discourse to her, I think, inspired her to stop being a cortisan.

And she renounced worldly life and became a nun. and her verses in the tererry gata are some of the most poetic and well-known verses in the tererry gata

Paulal's verhapali's verses you know
comparing how beautiful she used to be
with you know this the the unavoidable
ravages of time that's kind of the theme
of her verses

also there's like Vajira was a a

Buddhist an enlightened Buddhist nun

she's got a famous

a famous suta in the samutinikaya the

sagata waga of the sutinikaya I'm pretty

sure um there's a group of sutas all

following the same theme where some

enlightened nun goes out into the forest

to meditate and then Mara tries to lead

her astray by like seeding her mind with

doubts

and so I think vajira the vajira suta is

one of the places where you find the simile of the chariot to account for um the idea of no self. So that's a relatively famous sutta with a relatively famous nun enlightened nun in it. But all in all, Mahapati goes to the Buddha's aunt and stepmother. The very first bhikkhuni would probably be the most famous bhikkhuni of all time.

And then Ethiopian fake TIG includes like a transgressive fourth question because the second and the second question was really two questions. He says, "Have you ever met an Ethiopian before or would you ever travel to Ethiopia with your sweetheart for fun

times?" That's also two questions, isn't it?

Ethiopian fake Tig's name is going on a list.

So, have I ever met an Ethiopian before?

I don't think so. I mean, there's a famous Ethiopian chef that I've seen on cooking shows, cooking competition shows. He's got like a Swedish name because he was adopted by a Swedish family. I think he's an expert on Swedish cooking, but ethnically he's Ethiopian. I'm pretty sure I've walked past Ethiopian restaurants that may have had real Ethiopians inside of it, but I never had any urge to eat Ethiopian food because back in the 80s, you think about

Ethiopia and you think about like standing in line with like a dented tin cup to get milk powder or something.

No offense to Ethiopians. I hope they've got their their food issues worked out nowadays, but back in the 80s it was just, you know, this when you wouldn't eat your vegetables, you know, a parent would say, "Children are starving in Ethiopia."

Um, so I'm not aware of having met an Ethiopian before. I may I may have without realizing, but I'm not sure about that. And uh would I ever travel to Ethiopia with my sweetheart for fun times? When you think about Ethiopia,

you generally don't think about going there for fun times. You know, there's any number of places that if I were going to go somewhere with my sweetheart for fun times, you know, they would come to mind as like a a viable idea long before I would go to Ethiopia, probably really good coffee in Ethiopia. But yeah, I I don't think it's very likely. And now that there's like aquariums and stuff here, we're more kind of chained to the house, less able to do a lot of traveling than before when all we had was dogs and maybe a cat.

So, would I ever travel to Ethiopia with my sweetheart for fun times? Probably

not. I wouldn't go to Somalia either. I mean, you could sort of go to both places in the same trip. kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. If you'll if you'll forgive the violent non Buddhist metaphor, but still, I mean, there's places closer to home that would I would think might be more fun than Ethiopia.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. And we are kind of getting down to towards the bottom of the scroll here. So, definitely less than three hours. This question is from Fifth. And fifth says, "In a book I'm reading about Ajan Cha, there is a

reference to Ajan Mun using beetle nut. What effect does this have on one's ability to meditate or advance on a Buddhist path? This along with nicotine andratom seems to be very popular in Southeast Asia. Are there differing stigmas to the use of each substance there? are too former more accepted than the latter simply because monks of that fame use them. I'm going to attempt to get off nicotine myself as I've been using it for the last 10 years since I was 16. Okay, I never encountered any use of when I was in Southeast Asia. People maybe were taking it. I just it just wasn't a mainstream thing. It was kind of a secret thing. maybe uh like a

low status thing that people were
ashamed of or something or maybe I just
did not travel in those circles.

But tobacco and beetlenut are common. In
fact, in the city of Mateila in central
Burma,

um that was the only place where I would
go for alms as a monk and some people
would put beetle quits into my bowl as
alms because a lot of monks chew beetle
there. So, I did this sort of
experiment. You know, I did I tried it
to see what it was like and you get kind
of a mild stimulant buzz kind of, you
know, it's kind of similar to how you'd
feel if you smoked about half a cigar or

something. Um,

but yeah, I would not want to chew

beetle regularly because it's it's not

really that good for you. It grinds all

the enamel off your teeth. And a lot of

these Burmese village guys, it's hard to

tell if they had teeth at all because

when you chew beetle, your saliva like

chemically interacts with the contents

of the beetle quit. I think it's mostly

the it's like some kind of lime that is

mixed with the beetlenut and it causes

your slobber to turn into like ketchup.

And then these village guys, they chew

beetle all the time and they don't brush

their teeth. So, it's like the t their

mouth is like the top of an old ketchup

bottle at like a cheap diner where it's just sort of like this reddish black crust all over the inside of their mouth and it it smells has like this vinegary smell and it just looks disgusting and you know it grinds the enamel off your teeth like I like I mentioned.

So, yeah, I didn't want to to take a lot of beetle. I did I did try it just to see what it was like.

Um, I did smoke a few Burmese hand rolled cigars, too. You have to excuse me if you're watching because what happens is I've got like oily skin on my on my face and my eyelids. And after many hours of not taking a shower, I

took one when I got up this morning or this early afternoon, um it's it's like the eyelid grease starts to like burn my eyes. So then I have to wipe them off or take a shower or something. But anyways, getting back to beetlenut and cigar, cigarettes, tobacco, um there's not really much of a stigma on be chewing beetle or um smoking tobacco. My uh one of my main teachers in Burma, um Tom Pulu Chelsea, Seattle chewed beetlenut. And uh one of the old monks I used to live with, the one that got bitten by a cobra and died, he chewed beetle nut even though he had only like four teeth left in his head and also smoked smoked cigars like the

cheap hand rolled village cigars.

Usually they would be wrapped in uh some kind of leaf that wasn't a tobacco leaf or sometimes in corn husk.

Um,

it's maybe a very slight idea that it's not appropriate in Burma, but in in Thailand, it's just 100% a-okay because as fifth mentions, Ajan man not only used beetle nut, but he was a chain smoker or at least I have heard that he was a chain smoker. And since Ajan man is considered by Thai monks or Thai Buddhists to be an Araot, then if Ajan man did it, it must be okay. And that's one reason why the ties also eat cheese

in the afternoon. Not because, you know, there's it's likely to be allowable.

Pretty obviously isn't allowable. It's eating food in the afternoon, but Ajan man did it and so it's okay.

I mean, there's some of that kind of stuff in Burma, too. Like I was ordained in the Tom Pulu tradition and for whatever reasons

Tom Pulu Seattle just said okay dawn is at I can't remember the exact time it was it was really early in the morning like 4 in the morning so just throughout the year he just officially dawn is 4 in the morning and you can eat after that time and I would refuse and I got got some heat from from monks in the Tomulu

tradition just saying you know Tom
Pulooto he's like our our spiritual
father he said It's okay. It's like,
well, if I don't see any light in the
sky, I'm not going to say it's daytime,
you know, just hard-headed barbarian.

So,

let's see what what's the actual
question here. Are there differing
stigmas to the use of each substance
there? Yeah, I think would be uh more
more of a stigma than chewing beetle or
smoking tobacco.

I mean the really strict monks in Burma
won't even drink tea because there's an
obscure rule of vineia saying that the

you can drink the juice of all leaves
except for the the le or the the water
that is drained off of boiled pot herbs.
You know like you boil spinach, you get
some greenish water. It's against the
rules to drink that because that would
be sort of like soup which would be like
food. And so it there's a rule against
that. And then in Burma, tea leaves are
eaten as a salad. And it's it's actually
good. Tea leaf salad. It's uh leet it's
called in Burmese. I mean, it's actually
really good. I wouldn't mind getting my
hands on some of that here in America.
Just like pickled tea leaf salad with
like sesame seeds and stuff in it. It's
really good. But because of that, it's

considered to be a kind of salad or a, you know, like edible greens. And so when you cook the, you know, you steep the tea leaves in hot water, you know, that's like the water drained off of pot herbs. So they're really strict Burmese monks, of whom they're not a whole lot, but there are some, they won't even drink tea because of that.

And probably they wouldn't chew beetle or or smoke tobacco either, even though technically there's no rule against it. partly because it just wasn't a thing in the Ganges Valley in the Buddhist time. If there was tobacco plants growing in the Ganges Valley in the Buddha time,

almost certainly the Buddha would have prohibited it because of course craving is the cause of all suffering and tobacco is addictive which causes craving.

Anyways, let's see. or the two former more accepted in the latter simply because monks of that fame use them. Yeah, especially in Thailand.

So, okay, I think I answered that one.

So, I'm just going to answer Fifth's second question. He said, "When first moving to Burma, what things gave you the most culture shock?" So this is kind of like the mirror image of the question above by Romeo I think asking me what kind of culture shock did I get when

coming back from Burma to America after so many years. But when moving to Burma, what things gave me the most culture shock? First of all, I didn't speak the language. I knew very little Burmese when I first got there. So it's, you know, all of a sudden you you just can't communicate very well.

That was kind of a culture shock.

I mean, it was like when I when I was going for alms

at first before I learned how to speak the Burmese language, I was you were kind of like a dog. It's like dogs listen more to your tone of voice than what you're actually saying. So, you

know, if I'm walking for alms and somebody says blah blah blah in sort of a cheerful, you know, happy kind of voice, it generally means, you know, uh generally they were saying which means you know please wait venerable sir you know they see the monk walking by they want to offer food so they say please wait so they can run into the house and get you some but then if they said they say the blah blah blah in sort of like a a slower downbeat kind of a a voice you know they're saying good zapia that means you know I I pay my respect as alms which means I'm not going to give you any food so it's just at first you know You become like a dog.

You become like a dog and it's like you're just kind of tuning in on the the the tone of voice to determine whether they they want to give you food or they don't want to give you food. That kind of thing.

See what gave me the most culture shock?

Um I mean just being in a different culture, the very conservative Buddhist culture was different from being in America as a lay person. But the thing is um I was living in like a Burmese cultural center for over a year and a half before I went to Burma. So I mean it was all I mean Burmese monks and Burmese supporters that kind of thing in

in California where I was staying. There weren't there was only one other Western monk who was ordained at the same time as me. He was Argentinian.

And most of the supporters you know all the other monks are are Burmese. Oh, there was one Vietnamese monk also.

But uh so I mean it wasn't really a culture shock with regard to that because I was already exposed to Burmese culture and Burmese language and so forth even though I didn't learn it yet. Um there's one interesting thing when I first got to to Burma in Rangoon all the taxi cabs were blue B600.

It was like Mazda B600 pickups. And the the B600 meant it had a 600cc engine. It

probably couldn't go faster than about 30 or 35 miles an hour. Was floored all bright blue. They're these tiny little pickup trucks about the size of a Volkswagen Beetle.

But that didn't really give me culture shock, but it was it was remarkable to me. It just it really stood out in my memory.

Um, yeah. I mean, it wasn't so much culture shock. It was just largely at first just heat. Just tropical blazing heat was like the the hardest thing to get used to. And of course, you get Montazuma's revenge or King Tibol's revenge for my first four months or more

in Burma. So, that was kind of a
internal shock, I suppose.

But uh yeah, I was already exposed to to
like Burmese

culture even long before I went to Burma
just because I was ordained in a Burmese
monastery. So that probably softened the
blow to some degree.

Um I really can't think of anything else
that would cause serious culture shock
other than just suddenly landing in a
country where you cannot communicate
with people. At first, I was
communicating in like broken poly to one
other monk at the monastery who had had
some schooling and knew some poly.

His vocabulary was better than mine, I

think, but I was better at verb tenses than him.

So, let's see here.

I think I'm just going to move on to Fifth's third question,

which is, "Have you had any updates on that former monk friend living on the outskirts of that industrial park in Burma? The one who I believed I believe lived in a tree." No, I haven't heard from him in about a year. I mean, I just heard about him. Just sort of an update the from the the person that was largely taking care of him, you know, letting him stay on his property, that kind of thing. So yeah, there's no updates since

probably a year or more. And so I'm just moving on to Joe Doe who is the last questioner and he has asked two questions. So the first question from Joe Doe, did you ever have a direct experience of emptiness?

And I mean emptiness

that's it's how do you define emptiness?

Like for example, one of my favorite

sutas in the Majimminaya is the the

smaller discourse on emptiness. And

there's like this gradation of stages of

emptiness that that the monk goes

through. The first stage of emptiness is

just moving out of a town or village

into a forest. That's like the first

step towards emptiness because at least

it's empty of all these artificial rules and all these straight lines and right angles and so forth. You know, it's getting out away from other people. So that's it's sort of sociologically empty anyway. And then you start getting into deeper and deeper meditative states. And I mean through meditative states you can't even get to full emptiness.

So I mean like in the in the sutta the lesser or small discourse on emptiness the truly sutta

um I mean eventually you get to the the signless concentration of mind which in by implication is higher than even fourth jhana you know it's higher than

any janna you've gotten into this
signless this wide open concentration of
mind but even that isn't purely empty
because there's still like this
perception going on. And so what happens
is the monk comes out of that and then
he has this insight that arises. It's
like even when I attained the highest
possible meditative state, it was still
conditioned. It still had a beginning
and an end. That is not what I'm
striving for. And so it's like something
just kind of clicks and the monk just
kind of gives up. He just lets go of
samsara at that point. And then with
full enlightenment which he becomes
fully enlightened and then perhaps he

has a direct experience of emptiness.

So I mean I had like relative direct experiences of emptiness in and I got into some relatively deep meditative states where your mind is just wide open and clear like glass that that would be as close to a direct experience of emptiness that I experienced. But still it was conditioned. It had a beginning and an end.

The thing is though, I mean, we're always having a direct experience of ultimate reality. It's just that like Echart Tollah says, our mind is making too much noise, so we don't notice, but it's always there.

So, you're always having like a
subliminal direct experience of
emptiness, even if you don't fully
realize this at a conscious level.

And so I'm just going to move on to
Jodo's second question, which is the
last question of this Q&A.

And Jodo says, "Does the mind exist in
ultimate truth?" And

I mean, I've already kind of answered
this question. I mean, starting off with
orthodox terraada, yes, the answer would
be yes. In Abidama philosophy, there are
four ultimate realities. You've got I
had held up five fingers when I said
four ultimate realities. Four ultimate
realities. You've got mind, mental

states.

Let's see.

Mind, mental states, matter, physical matter, and nibbana.

So according to Abidama philosophy, the mind exists in ultimate truth even if you're unenlightened. But mind and mental states are chitta and cheetah.

That's two entirely different realities.

So the mind is ultimately real and each mental state like a perception or a volition or a sensation is al also ultimately real. And so they combine together and you have this multiplicity of psychological events going on.

But in my personal opinion does the mind

exist in ultimate truth? You just get to consciousness. I'd say that consciousness is ultimately real. The mental states are just forms of consciousness. Like I mean I'm saying the same stuff over and over and over again in these Q&As's. It's like just going with the analogy of if consciousness is like water then mental states are like ripples on the surface of the water. This is not orthodox terra. This is my understanding which seems to me to make a hell of a lot better sense. So you've got consciousness is the water. Mental states are like the ripples and currents on this water. And so the form I mean

really it's just water you know like a wave of water ultimately it's just water. It's just an arbitrary choice to perceive to isolate this particular form if that makes any sense. But then again when you become enlightened supposedly I mean the consciousness or the mind becomes unmanifest. It goes off the scale and you can't say whether it exists or doesn't exist or both or neither.

So to recap my answer to that from the orthodox terra Buddhist point of view certainly the mind exists in ultimate truth as does physical matter. all the different mental states of which there

are 52 different kinds 28 different
kinds of matter and then you've got one
kind of consciousness even though

Abhidhamma then kind of divides it up into
subtypes or something and then you've
got what's the one I didn't mention yet
nibbana

so from the orthodox Theravada point of
view yes the mind exists in ultimate
truth um from my point of view my
understanding based on my own experience
and intuition and insight and so forth
then you can say the mind

I mean

God I mean when you get to ultimate
truth you can't say anything see that's
the thing it becomes unmanifest and goes

off the scale but if anything does exist
it would just be like pure formless
consciousness

within mind and consciousness are like
synonyms or at least chitta and wana are
synonyms in terabara Buddhist

philosophy. But when you become fully
enlightened, when you reach the level of
paramata satcha or ultimate truth, I
mean it just becomes infinite and
formless and goes off the scale and you
can't say whether it exists or doesn't
exist or both or neither.

So that's that's it. I guess I think I'm
done answering questions for for this
particular episode.

And so like I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, if you have any questions you think I can answer regarding early Buddhism, Terraata Buddhism, you know, Dharma in general, meditation, monastic discipline, Southeast Asia, that kind of stuff, then feel free to ask. I cannot promise that I'll be able to answer satisfactorily, but at least I'll give it a shot. If the question is asked in in good earnest, in good faith, and like and subscribe if you have not done so already. Feel free to leave comments, that sort of thing. And uh what else should I say before I say be happy? Oh, I just said it. So, I guess

I'll just hit the button. Oh, look at the URL links listed below this video and uh that includes the books that I've written. And there may actually be another book coming up because even if I don't finish it before I find a more suitable job than the one I had before, in the very least I'm not going to be working 55hour

weeks and just coming home exhausted and just spending my weekends like resting for the next week of aggravation and stress.

So now I'm really going to hit the button.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 179.

I am your host PO Basa and yes indeed 179 is a prime number.

Before I start answering questions of which we have a moderate amount, probably more than two hours worth, I would like to point out that I know some of you are probably wondering why are there no more wild type dwarf gouramis in the tank back there. Well, I've given up on wild type dwarf gouramis. It's one of my favorite kinds of fish ever since I was a kid. But the thing is, since I was a kid, unscrupulous

or just not entirely responsible or competent fishbreeders have inbred them so much that they're just not healthy anymore. Plus, there's a kind of dwarf gourami aids, some kind of lethal virus that most of them are infected with now, which is unfortunate.

So, I've replaced um the two dwarf gouramis that died recently with pearl gouramies. And according to Grock, a pearl gourami is only 8% likely to catch the deadly virus. So, we're going with that. See, we're going to see how that goes.

Probably I should do another aquarium video in the near future. So, I won't be talking about aquariums on a on a Q&A

mainly directed towards Buddhist philosophy.

But also before I start answering just as a kind of disclaimer maybe I will say that the past few weeks have just been the most

like disrupting chaotic like turmoil upheaval kind of weeks that I have experienced literally in years probably since just the few months after I dropped out of the monkhood.

there is a disturbance in the force.

So if I see him a little bit

discombobulated or some some such

then we can just blame it on that. I'm just a helpless victim.

So anyways I guess we should just uh
wade into this and the first question is
from warm shadow. I'm not exactly what
that means a warm shadow. Anyways, warm
shadow says, "Which philosophers
throughout history are most worth
studying and listening to?" You Oh, I
should add before I continue this
question that I updated my my operating
system on this computer like a week ago
or a little less than a week ago and now
like the the sound quality software
isn't working anymore. So if I sound
like I'm like talking to you from the
bottom of a well or some such, it's
because of that.

Anyways, warm shadow says, "Which

philosophers throughout history are most worth studying and listening to? You have said before that you think Nim Karoli Baba and Nagarjuna are some of them." Well, probably I didn't say that Nim Karoli Baba is a philosopher because I really don't consider Nim Karoli Baba whose picture is right there on on top of the bookcase.

Closest thing I've got to an altar.

He wasn't really a philosopher. I mean, he was more religious than philosophical. He was more of a kind of saint than some sort of philosophical sage.

So yeah, I wouldn't include Nim Kuroli

Baba as a list of great philosophers because he really didn't teach much philosophy. He was teaching a kind of devotionalistic religion. You know, he worshiped Hanuman, the monkey god.

So yeah, I wouldn't go to Nim Kurly Baba for any kind of intellectual philosophizing,

but Nagarjuna definitely is one of the greatest Buddhist philosophers who ever lived. His only real competition I think would be the Buddha himself.

So for any Buddhist I think of course numero uno the most important philosopher who ever lived would be God Buddha. I think he would qualify as a philosopher. He wasn't just religious.

You know it's like he was a mystic but mysticism is sort of like a common ground between philosophy and religion. you know, it's just sort of the most uh what's the word? Pragmatic, the most practical approach to understanding ultimate reality. And both philosophers with the philosophical temperament and like theologians with the religious temperament have converged on mysticism as a way of breaking through the veil of words and images and symbols.

But aside from the Buddha and Nagarjuna like

um to understand like who are the the best philosophers to read I mean it

would depend on what you want to I mean
what is your purpose I mean if you just
want to understand like western
civilization you know you just want to
understand the culture you know you've
got like a sociological reason for
studying philosophers
then I I mean like in the west Aristotle
and Plato I mean that would be two of
the most important ones plus maybe like
Francis Bacon who sort of started the
scientific method that kind of thing and
then of course the early scientists were
all considered to be natural
philosophers like Isaac Newton was
considered to be a philosopher he was
just a natural philosopher which has

come to be a scientist

Likewise, if you want to understand Chinese culture, then probably the most important philosopher to study would be Confucious.

But let's say you're you're studying philosophy for the sake of increasing your own wisdom, like improving your understanding of reality.

Then

personally, I think the most important philosopher you could read for starters would be David Hume.

partly because David Hume um he's easy to read. He originally wrote in the English language. Of course, it's like

18th century English, which makes it a little tougher, but still, I mean, he's easy to read. Like his his inquiries, he wrote two of those. Inquiry concerning human understanding. Um, they're relatively short. You know, it's like 100 pages maybe.

And it's relatively straightforward.

And I mean, he's a good person to start with, David Hume, because he was like a radical skeptic. He was questioning things that nobody, it hadn't even occurred to philosophers to really question for the most part, you know, like cause and effect. Cause and effect was just accepted just as a given. You know, it was just

axiomatic. And then David Hume says,
well, wait a minute, you know, it's
like, how do we know?

So yeah, David Hume would be a good one
because he's sort of like just sort of
clearing the clearing the field, you
know, just throwing everything off the
table and just starting fresh in a way.

But David Hume was not perfect. I mean,
he had an axe to grind against

Christianity and he would be making digs
at Christianity throughout his books. In
fact, one of his um one of his books,
Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion or
something like that. I can't remember
the the title of it. Um he had he made

sure that that was published posthumously because that was just like an attack on Christianity. He was um a member of what is called the enlightenment which was an intellectual movement of like the like the 16 1700s

and one of the purposes of the enlightenment was to replace superstition which mainly meant Christianity with rationality and philosophy which mainly meant or it came to mean like materialistic science. So I don't think the enlightenment was entirely a good thing. Um maybe more good than bad at least not more bad than good. But still there is that another philosopher that

would be useful for westerners to read
would be George Barkley. And George
Barkley just hammered away at one point.
You know, it's like his contribution to
western philosophy and like western
thought boils down to just one point and
that was he just pounded away at the
idea you cannot prove that physical
matter really exists
and two of his books the three dialogues
and I can't remember the the title of
the other one. I mean, that's that's all
he's he's doing is just pretty much
dismantling this this idea, just
undermining this idea
that physical matter certainly obviously

exists.

I don't think that Barkley was right in his substitute for materialism, which is what he called immaterialism, which was the idea that all that exists in the universe are minds and perceptions.

And that there's like this central mind called God that is just like what do you call it? organizing uh managing all the perceptions of all the other minds as though there is a physical universe. So like if you see an apple on the table, I mean according to Barkley, there really is no apple and there really is no table. It's just that God is implanting into your mind this dream, you know, sort of like the matrix

of an apple on the table. And I don't really think that that's the way it works. But still, his arguments against the certainty of like the existence of a physical world out there um should be considered even if you wind up rejecting his arguments.

Another important philosopher would be Kant who was inspired by David Hume and David Hume in turn was in part inspired by Barkley.

Kant says that reading David Hume uh see what was it it woke him it awakened him from his dogmatic slumbers and that's David Hume is good for that but with regard to other philosophers I

mean Spinoza is kind of interesting
um Kant is important although he's
extremely difficult to read so you might
do better just to read about Kant than
reading Kant directly you know, just,
you know, read some like a a history of
western philosophy or like just some
compilation of essays about the most
important philosophers
and then I mean your own intuition will
guide you as to what it is that you need
to to study up on, what you need to
learn, what you need to hear. So that
would be a good start. just read like
Bertrren Russell's history of Western
philosophy even though Bertrren Russell
was in kind of a bad mood when he wrote

that book partly because it was he wrote
it during World War II

but you you read a book like that and
then it's like certain philosophers and
not everybody is the same. It's not
going to be the same philosophers for
everybody but certain philosophers are
going to like really like strike a
chord, you know, like intuitively or
just intellectually or whatever. you're
just going to think, "Yeah, that's
important. I need to study that." So,
for some people it might be like
Libnits.

Some people it might be Renee Deart,
although I think Renee Deart's

philosophy is pretty much obsolete at this point. Or you could get into like German idealists, that kind of thing.

So, let's see. With regard to Eastern philosophers, Shankara, I mean, he'd be important. He was pretty much one he's one of the founding fathers if not the founding father of vanta philosophy like advaita videnta. So he would be important with regard to Chinese philosophers. I mean the daqing theangu those would be important like at least from a dowist point of view.

Um

but

yeah, I think your best bet with regard

to a question like this is just read like a survey of western philosophy or Indian philosophy or Chinese philosophy and then just whatever calls to you, whatever just intuitively strikes a chord with you, that's something that probably would be good for you to study because it won't be the same for everybody. But with regard to Buddhism, of course, God Buddha is is numero uno and maybe Nagarjani second even for non-terravadans. would be important for a Buddhist to be familiar with the Mulam Majamaka Caraka just because in my opinion he lays he lays out like the most sophisticated elegant and probably

correct interpretation philosophical
interpretation of Picha Samupata or
dependent core rising
conditioned genesis

if you will

so let's see here yeah we we can just
dismiss somebody like St. John of the
Cross who wrote a lot of deep stuff but
again he's more religious than
philosophical.

So a lot of the religious writers
um especially in the west I mean it
wouldn't really qualify so much as
philosophy. It's more religion. In the
east there's not so much of a
separation or in ancient times there
wasn't so much of a separation between

philosophy and religion.

But in the modern west it has I mean religion is is sort of like the artistic temperament and philosophy is more the scientific temperament kind of a thing.

So anyways I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Scooain

and Scooain says would spanking your children cause negative karma. Sometimes this seems unavoidable unavoidable in my life having rambunctious little boys who sometimes get wild and often words don't seem to process for them. I would never spank one of them if I was feeling personally annoyed or angry at them.

However, there are times when I will say, "Listen, guy, if you if you elbow drop your brother one more time, I'm spanking you and you're going to your room." Oh, he has it Y O R instead of Y O U apostrophe R E. That I just I've got radar for that. Anyways, he says, "Listen, guy. If you elbow drop your brother one more time, I'm spanking you and you're going to your room. I've told you several times to stop."

Sometimes they seem delighted for that trade. I'm talking little kids like three and six, although sometimes their mom could use it too when she's 34.

Well, again, this is like a standard template for a question that Westerners

ask me. Um, I mean, it's mainly
Westerners ask me questions anyway at
this point. But, you know, is is some
sort of physical activity good karma or
bad karma? And it's again and again and
again I say it's not the outward
activity. Just just a mere physical
action is ethically neutral. Regardless
of whether you're saving someone from
drowning or deliberately causing them to
drown that I mean we'll just take out
deliberately because that's a mental
state. But just the physical action
itself
is I mean it's no more ethical than an
earthquake or a storm or whatever. you

know, it's just a physical event. The actual ethics, whether it's a wholesome or unh wholesome act, depends on the mental states. Why are you doing it? What are you feeling while you're doing it?

So, spanking your children, um, I mean, he, Scudamain here specifies that he doesn't do it as a way of like venting anger, which is good. I mean, those are the worst. Some of the worst parents are the ones who are just like taking out their frustrations by beating their kids. And sometimes they'll justify it. You know, they say he was misbehaving and spoil the rod, spare the child, and all that, but really they're

just taking out their own frustrations
by beating on somebody. And in this
case, it's like a a helpless little kid
who can't really even defend himself.
But I mean just living in the world is
going to involve a certain amount of unh
wholesome karma. I mean you can't just
completely avoid unh wholesome karma.
You just especially a lay person. You're
living in the world. I mean even
delusion is unh wholesome. You know just
to to take everything at face value cons
to consider it reality. You know at
times when you're not being
philosophical
that's still unh wholesome karma. to

have preferences, to be bothered by something, to like one thing better than another thing. All of that ultimately is subtly unh wholesome.

So, I mean, you can't just avoid all unh wholesome acts, especially if you're living in the world, you've got responsibilities. Your kids come home from school with lice in their hair. I mean, you got to do something about that. You can't say, "Well, I'm not going to harm the poor lice." I mean, it just doesn't work that way.

So, spanking your children could cause a certain amount of negative karma, but it's like do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It's the golden

rule. So it I mean in the long run disciplining your children in a way that actually works that a three-year-old can understand you know you can't just explain

you know abstract concepts to a three-year-old as to why he should behave in a certain way. I mean maybe sometimes that'll work kind of but little kids I mean it's like stimulus response theory you know they'll avoid unpleasantness and gravitate towards pleasantness.

So, a good parent will have to punish his children sometimes and probably more importantly to praise and reward his

children when they do good. I think some parents just kind of ignore that aspect. You know, you punish them when they're bad, but you don't praise them when they get good grades or when they do something good. You know, they help you around the house without even being asked, that kind of thing.

So yeah, if you have kids, I mean, I personally, if I had kids, I would probably spank them sometimes. Even though you might be taking a karmic hit by doing it, but still in the long run, you may be res you may be causing less suffering. You know, it may be like the lesser of two evils in a sense because you just don't discipline your kids

effectively so that they just grow up irresponsible and spoiled and just don't give a [_] about what other people think and so forth. Um, in a bad way, not in a good way, then I mean that's even worse.

So, I mean, when you had kids, you're probably creating some unh wholesome karma through the act of impregnating the female, so to speak, because there's lots of like like wallowing in sensual pleasure when that kind of stuff goes on.

So, I mean, you just cannot just be completely pure of any unh wholesome acts and because I mean, you can't be

completely pure of any unh wholesome
mental acts until you're fully
enlightened.

Until then, it's just going to be shades
of gray.

So,

yeah, I guess I answered that question.

Yeah, maybe sometimes it might even be
appropriate to spank your wife.

But I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Rolling
Clouds.

And Rolling Cloud says, "My question is
this." And then he continues, "Would you
please talk about the unhinged aspects
of being a monk? You've spoken about
your old shitty roommate. He seems

unhinged, sloppy. Did you witness any fights, any like violence or criminal activity that comes to mind, please? I'm interested in that angle. And then after he asked that question, I asked him I mean I asked him what he was referring to with regard to my old shitty roommate. Old shitty roommate because I I didn't recall ever having an old shitty roommate as a monk or even as a lay person really. So then he said, "You've have mentioned an aggressive monk in the past whom you lived with. I think I called him a shitty roommate. Sorry." Yeah, that was there was one monk who tried to take over the

monastery that I was senior monk at.

And uh I've written about that

somewhere. I don't know if it's still

online. Um I've mentioned it a few times

where there was this village monk who

just kind of moved into the monastery.

I I didn't want him to stay there. Um

but he just kind of eased in and what I

told the other monk who lived there who

was older than me but senior or junior

to me by just a matter of months I think

technically I was senior to him.

I told him I wanted to kick this monk

out and he looked at me with this

serious look and said let's see what did

he say it's like he is my brother

something like that and I mean the the

age difference between them was such you know it was like at least 30 years between them that I didn't think he could have really been his brother but in Burma sometimes you know like a distant relative you'll declare to be your brother or sister or even just close friends you know they're they're very family oriented in Burma. Burmese villagers very family oriented and so they'll just adopt people into their family and so that kind of restrained me from kicking him out. But he obviously did not follow the rules of monastic discipline. Um you know he'd just be picking mangoes in at the monastery and

just preparing his own food with it,
that kind of thing. He handled money,
this sort of thing. So finally I just
told the the old monk that was the other
monk there that that monk I mean I just
want to kick him out. I just don't want
him living here. And we did have a kind
of a rule between the two of us. There
was only two monks living at that
monastery usually that both of us would
have to agree if another monk was going
to stay there. you know, it's like e
either one of us had the power of veto
whe with regard to accepting like a a
newcome a newcomer monk. So when I told
him that his face just lit up because he
didn't like him either, you know, it was

just kind of like this I guess they were like distant cousins or he was a nephew or something.

So then I went to that monk who I mean this this old monk that I had just told that to was hard of hearing. you had to just yell in order for him to hear anything. So the other monk, the the the newcomer monk that I wanted to kick out was easily with an earshot. And he's like pretending to read a book and I told him, "Well, we have decided that you have to go." And he just said, "I'm staying." And he didn't even look up from the book, you know, just no, I'm staying. And he was trying to take over

the monastery, you know. So I said, "No, you're really going to have to go." And I don't remember the exact dialogue between us, but at one point he just said that you are the visitor here, you know, because I'm I was a foreigner, you know, I wasn't Burmese. And and then finally, he just kind of dismissed me, you know, he just kind of waved his hand like just go. And he wasn't even looking up, you know, he's still pretending to read this book. You know, it's like I wasn't even important enough for him to look up even though I was senior monk there. And he should have looked up a few times instead of pretending to read the book because I was starting to

really get I mean there's a couple times when just like reflexively I started to like lunge at him and just caught myself, you know. I was like obviously getting iate at this at this monk until finally when he just dismissed me just go I just just it took like all of about one second. I just grabbed him by by like the front of his robes and just slammed him to the ground like like an enraged gorilla or some such. And then I just stomped off to to the well to fill a bucket of water or something. By the time I get to the well, which is like 100 feet away, I turn around and look and he's still like lying on his on the

ground. I guess he got a lump on the side of his head the next day from when his head hit the ground.

Um, but then I mean he still refused to go. Oh, wait. I got to plug in the plug in the computer just a second.

I kind of figured I forgot something.

Always forgetting to plug in the computer because I got to move the computer from one place to another and the the cord doesn't reach.

Okay,

down to 8%.

So, anyways, he still refused to go even after I slammed him to the ground. And, you know, he's like walking around behind me at the monastery like clapping

his hands really loud trying to make me jump or intimidate me or something. And I was really at wit and how do I get rid of this troublemaker monk?

And I'm just like pacing back and forth in my cave like a caged leopard. And then finally it just dawns on me. I mean before it dawns on me I'm thinking what am I really going to have to beat him up to to get him to leave? I mean I'm just these crazy thoughts are entering my mind. I can I can like get him into a double hammerlock. Maybe dislocate his arms and fling him into the river which the monastery was right on the banks of the Chinuin River. And I'm thinking no

he might drown. you know,
but then it just dawned on me. It's like
all I got to do is just appeal to the
villagers, you know, my my supporters,
my friends, I need your help. And so
that's what I did when I went for alms
round the next day. I just explained the
situation and there was some gasps of
horror from from the nice village ladies
that offered me food every day and they
just said, "Don't worry, venerable sir."
And they just went to the village
headman. In fact, they went to both
village headmen that there were two
villages nearby. And so a little later
that day, it was like two village
headmen and there was like some village

elders and also some young bucks just in case any manhandling was required show up at my monastery and they said, "Don't worry, we'll take care of it." And they just went down and threw him out of the monastery.

Oh, that was great. And after that, I was just cackling like how could it how could it have turned out to be this easy? You know, I was just kind of at wit's end just how do I get rid of this monk because he really was just kind of a troublemaker and didn't follow the rules and this kind of thing. But getting back to rolling clouds's question.

Uh unhinged aspects of being a monk.

Let's see. Did I witness any fights?

That was the only fight between monks I witnessed was the one I participated in.

And then like I said, it lasted about 1 second just lunging and grabbing him and just slamming him to the ground. Um, but

I remember one time I went to the

Mandandalay City Morg to observe an

autopsy

and the coroner told me in confidence

kind of like an conspiratorial voice

that there was a monk that was brought

in to the morg. you know, a a deceased

Biku brought into the morg just

recently. And it was the coroner's

opinion that he had been he had been

deleted by another monk and that the Mandandalay area is notorious for just really kind of rotten, unscrupulous, unconscientious monks. But the thing is um I was a relatively conscientious one and so I just tended to avoid you know like lax monasteries. I went to the strict places with good reputations. And when you do that, of course, you don't see all this stuff, but you stay at like some like some school monastery in Mandandalay or just a lot of just really lax just sort of village monasteries where the monks really aren't striving for enlightenment or practicing meditation.

you know, they're just like secular priests to the village and just like masters of ceremonies essentially. You know, they're they're doing the the ceremonies that are required by the Buddhist culture and you know, they're getting fed and then in the afternoons they'll sit around and smoke cigars and drink tea with the old village guys who come and and talk to them, that kind of thing.

So I there was some of that that would happen

but I mean I just avoided places where it was likely to happen. I had one friend uh an American monk who lived near Mandandalay. He lived at the base

of Sagine Hill at some school monastery, relatively famous one. And there was a like a junior Seattle, like a lieutenant abbot there who was getting his legs massaged by nuns. And that's a no no. Monks aren't supposed to do that. And so this American monk, I'm pretty sure if I remember correctly, it's been several years since this happened. I'm pretty sure that he told me that he went actually went to the abbott and said, you know, this is what I have seen. It's not, you know, it's not good. And so the abbott, you know, sort of chastised or scolded this lieutenant abbott who was having his legs massaged by nuns. And so

this lieutenant abbott at a later time just kind of marched up to this American monk. And this like a lot of monks they'll have like a sitting cloth over one shoulder, you know, you just carry it around with you. He just kind of or it was his double robe or something. I remember, but he had some sort of like textiles over his shoulder and that lieutenant monk was pissed off at him just went and just grabbed it and flung it to the ground. That kind of thing. I mean, that was about as close. I mean sometimes I think it was that same monastery and also one monastery where I stayed at before where noviceses you know little kid like junior monk kind of

you know they're not fully ordained but they're they're ordained as noviceses you know in lesser orders as they would say in Catholicism that sometimes they would get like beaten as punishment.

There was one little podo which is even below a novice. They can still handle money. They only have to keep eight precepts. wear white robes. And so I stayed at this one monastery that had posthodos like that that would handle the money. They weren't very good at it.

But this one podo

um he he took some money to go buy some rubber bands for one of the instead of buying the rubber bands, he just went to

a movie and spent the money on the movie. And then knowing that he would be punished when he got back, he just ran away. And the monks were out looking for this little kid, this posthadote, this little white robed monastic with a shaved head who was like, you know, six years old. Finally, they find him living under a bridge with some hobos. And so they haul him back to the monastery and they send him to his mother and his mother was a nun. I mean, she had the kid before she became a nun, but when she became a nun, she figured, well, I want my son to become a monk. So she just sent him to the monastery even though he didn't want to go. He just

wanted to be a kid.

So I was told that after he got sent back to the convent where his mother lived that the like the mother superior, you know, the abbis of the convent um tied him to a pole and just like whipped him. So that kind of stuff can happen.

And oh there's another case that that I should mention. I've mentioned this before that I lived at a big school monastery near Mandalay. It had a reputation for strictness.

Um it had one of the best reputations for strictness of all the school monasteries in Burma, but still it was like 10% of the monks really tried to

follow the rules. Like 10% of the monks didn't handle money, for example. So anyways, there was this monk from a different school monastery that was sneaking into our monastery, Mahagandemong, and stealing valuable books when all the monks were like assembled in the congregation hall to do ceremonies.

So like on Uposa day, all the monks at the monastery would go and meet in the congregation hall and then this monk from a different monastery would sneak in and steal valuable books and then he'd like sell them on some monk black market or something. So technically he wasn't even a monk because he was a

thief. Once you steal something that is valuable enough for you to be arrested for it, that's it. You're excommunicated for life. So he was part of Jikica. He wasn't really a monk. So there was like an assistant Seattle, like a a lieutenant Seattle in my area of the monastery who was kind of a macho monk. There are macho monks out there. And so he just deliberately didn't go to the ceremony one day and he was lying in wait for this thief and he caught him and the thief got arrested, you know, defrocked, all of that. And then uh it was like weeks later, some friend of this defrocked thief monk snuck up

behind this macho lieutenant Seattle and
hacked him in the back of the head with
a machete

and it kind of glanced off the side of
his head, but I mean his ear was kind of
peeled away from his head. He was in the
hospital for quite a while.

And that kind of stuff happens
especially like around Mandandalay big
cities but also you just have I mean in
the villages the monks are lax also as a
general rule. Most of them are lax monks
you know like maybe 2% of the Burmese sa
doesn't handle money and really does try
to follow the rules correctly but they
tend to be like nonviolent lax monks.
you know, they're easygoing, nice guys.

They just are following the tradition of their country rather than following the sacred texts.

So, this kind of stuff can happen, but it's pretty easy to avoid it by just going to strict monasteries with serious strict abbots and serious strict monks that follow rules

and you just don't come across that kind of thing. But some some monasteries, especially in the cities and and school monasteries in particular, like Buddhist universities have a reputation for being snake pits.

So, oh, I might as well also mention one lieutenant Seattle at one of the the big

famous meditation centers in the Mahasi tradition in in Rangon. Um, he was he traveled a lot because he was relatively famous. He he spoke English well enough that he could, you know, be invited to international meditation centers and give lead meditation retreats and give discourses and so forth. But what he was doing was he was exchanging Burmese currency for US dollars on the black market, which arguably would be a parajika offense. It's tuna gata. Parajika, I think it's called. Is that it? Tuna gata. But it it means like evading like customs duties and other government fees by smuggling something across borders. That that is a kind of

theft, you know, where you're stealing from the government by evading like custom duties or like legal exchange rates, that kind of thing. I think some people would say he wasn't part of Jacob. He certainly would have denied having excommunicated himself in such a way, but that kind of thing happens also.

Anyways, I'm moving on. The next question because I can't spend 20 minutes on each question because the the file will be too big even to load.

So anyways, the next question is from Jimmy Lad and Jimmy Lad has little headings for his questions and the first

heading for the first question is

Contean inspired dharma.

I think I might need a drink.

So, take the little paper umbrella out of the beverage.

Okay. Contient inspired dharma. I think this is only like the third question.

We're already well over half an hour into this.

Jimmy Lad says, "I have been reflecting on using the Contean or transcendental idealist foundation to dharma. The idea you have spoken of about how silencing the mind and application of the 12 categories of transcendental appreception would be something analogous to the process of meditation

in western philosophical terms. But I mean if meditation is about silencing the mind, wouldn't Ai sa's senseless or floating man in sensory deprivation find it easier to be enlightened since all the categories of his transcendental apperception would be numb. Abasenna says that such a being would at least still know it exists. So it seems that even in such a state and in meditation there still remains the preconscious knowledge or presupposition that I exist. I don't necessarily mean to detour into discussion of anata or no self. I just mean that even in sensory deprivation we presuppose some kind of object of

existence since we are not existence per se and would still be mortal and finite. So even in this contean model we can't escape this category of baseline existence. Well, simply being in s a state of sensory deprivation is not the same as doing like deep johnic meditation. I mean, you just take Joe Schmo, you know, you take some criminal, throw him into a solitary confinement, he's not going to become enlightened because he still has an unenlightened mind. He still has unenlightened habits. Meditation is more a method of first of all you remain wide awake while at the same time like like undermining these mental delusional habits by just not

feeding them, not reinforcing them.

So I mean

just throwing somebody into sensory deprivation obviously is not going to cause them to become enlightened. It's more likely to cause them to go insane because they still have these anus or latent tendencies. They still have these karmic habits of needing stimulation.

So let's see here. Yeah, I mean you got to bear in mind that even if you stop thinking in meditation, if you're meditating correctly where your mind just becomes silent, it's you don't go into a coma. You don't become unconscious. you're wide awake and then

if anything starts to arise like a
desire to think you just note it and let
it go or I mean you might even be beyond
the stage of even requiring needing to
note anything.

It just enters the the like the the
sphere of perception and just fades out
under just the the the bright light of
of just awareness.

So, it's very different seems to me,
but it's kind of a long complex kind of
question here. Let's see here. What's
the actual question? Where is the
question mark in this mass of words?

See, I I don't even see a question mark.

Okay, let's see. Oh, here's one. I he
says, "If meditation is about silencing

the mind, wouldn't Avisa senseless or floating man find it easier to be?" No, but it's not just silencing the mind. It's silencing the mind without going unconscious.

Silencing the mind while remaining wide awake. In fact, you're even more awake than the ordinary person walking down the street.

It's just like

awareness without boundaries pretty much. I mean, that's that's sort of the goal. It might be like in calculus where you never actually get exactly to the ideal, but you get closer and closer to it until finally it's like you don't

even need the the system anymore. It just you just kind of let go of it.

So yeah, a senseless person would not be the same as a person who is at the verge of enlightenment.

Uh let's see here.

Yeah, I mean that's an important thing to bear in mind, I guess. And I'm gonna just move on to the next question. And the let's see here Jimmy Lad's title for this question is proof of nirvana from Kant.

So the question is if we were using Kant as the logical basis of our dharmic practice that's that's mistake number one but I'll start over. If we were using Kant as the logical basis

of our dharmic practice,
how do we make the jump from cessation
of the application of the categories of
transcendental app perception? And I do
appreciate that there are a few words in
that sentence with less than four
syllables.

Let's see. How do we make the jump from
the cessation of the application of the
categories of transcendental app
perception to the integral and permanent
realization of supra individual johnic
states and the fact that ultimate
reality is a thing that not only truly
is but can be attained so far we only
have a being in sensory deprivation with

an empty or objectless perception. No, that's not so far what we have. You have someone who is transcended the limits of perception.

And then he but anyways he continues it seems with Nirvana there is a commitment to a numinal absolute we can't prove and until attained no. So there is a two-fold faith of its existence and the fact that effective realization of it is possible. two propositions I'm not sure how to prove through natural reason alone and you're not going to prove reality through natural reason or you're not going to prove it at all other than possibly through your own direct

experience and even then like William James says with regard to mystical states

mystical states have two qualities the the the person who experiences a mystical state first of all has no doubt whatsoever that what he experiences more real than the experiences of ordinary awakened consciousness. But two, the second universal quality of mystical states is that it has absolutely zero persuasive power over anybody else.

So mystical states on the one hand, whoever experiences them has no doubt whatsoever. It's more real than ordinary awaken consciousness, but at the same

time has no power over anybody else. Has no persuasive ability at all. Unless, of course, you're like some charismatic, you know, some charismatic guru or cult leader with like the the big hypnotic eyes who just speaks with a voice of authority and has weak-minded people just follow along with it.

So I mean this first this first paragraph of this question is I don't know how many people would understand it really

it's got lots of big words in it very intellectually oriented and I mean that is one of the first mistakes that anybody makes with regard to trying to practice dharma correctly is

intellectualizing it. I mean, if you're just an intellectual person by nature, you got to have, you know, you got to toss a bone to the intellect, you know, at least enough to keep it more or less pacified.

But like Ajan Shaw said that that people who approach dharma from like a scholastic point of view rarely attain anything because they're just locked in to this intellectual approach, which is not the approach that gets you enlightened. is just wallowing in symbols.

So

I mean you can use Kant I mean I use

Kant not as any kind of logical basis
for dharma practice but just as a way of
interpreting like
kind of the purpose of meditation into
western terminology that people
acquainted with western philosophy more
than with eastern philosophy can kind of
understand and say okay it's not just
all this wishful thinking gobly [__]

There may actually be something to it.

So, let's see. Where's the actual
question mark?

I'm not Let's see.

Let's see. I'm not seeing a question
mark at all here.

See, it seems with Nirvana there's

Yeah, there's not even a question mark

in this. Seems with Nirvana there is a commitment to a numinal absolute we can't prove. Although you're always experiencing it. And once you start having deeper deeper awareness experiences, you're gonna like realize that this awareness of the absolute is always there. I mean, how far away is it going to be? How far away is ultimate reality? I mean, how far away are you from the the thing in itself of your own awareness? How far is that? It's always right here, right now. And the more of a like a a deep mystical illumination that you have or experience, the more you

realize it's always there right here,
right now, always. It's just that this
ego has just kind of spun off through
self-reference

and just thinks that it's separate from
everything else. But below that, and you
can have inklings of this even before
you're fully enlightened, you realize
that the the ego is not dealing with
reality.

And I think I better just move on to
Jimmy Lad's third question.

The title of this or the heading is
pursuit of an unproven absolute.

And he says, "I guess someone could ask,
why should I commit my entire life for
the cultivation of subtle mental states

with the idea that nirvana is possible?
It seems if it's not possible, I've just
wasted my life trying to pursue this
theoretical absolute." Well, I mean, you
haven't wasted your life. There's one
example I've I've given before like a
like a simile or a parable is there's a
guy with this rock in the middle of his
backyard. He keeps hitting it with the
lawn mower. So, he decides he's going to
move that rock. And so, he starts going
out there and tugging and pushing and
doing everything he can to move that
rock. He just can't move it. And so, it
just turns into a kind of ritual. Every
day he's out there just pulling and and

tugging and just trying to to budge this thing to get it out of the middle of his yard. And finally, after, let's say, a year of this, he just gives up. And of course, I mean, he he couldn't have moved it at all because that's just the tip of this huge rock, most of which is underground that he can't even see. So, he just thinks, "Oh, I wasted a year just trying to move that rock, but he doesn't realize that. I mean, he's in way he's way more muscular than he was." You know, everybody else noticed it. Maybe he doesn't notice, but he's he's like buff, you know? He's he's stronger and healthier now because of trying to move that rock that he couldn't possibly

have moved anyway.

But the thing is this kind of question is it reminds me of there are two of the the five faculties that have to remain in balance that is pa and sada or in this case reason and faith that if you have too much of one you're not going to you're not going to succeed. You have too much faith and not enough reason then you can believe anything no matter how ridiculous it is. you know, you're just going to be soft-headed and misled again and again. But if you have too much reason and not enough faith, you're going to be lukewarm. You're not going to be motivated really to try much of

anything for lack of sufficient data.

You're just going to be skeptical and lukewarm. And again, you're not going to attain anything. So, you have to have a kind of balance.

But even if you have faith in something that isn't possible, like in like maybe it's just unrealistic, you're not ripe for enlightenment in this life, but still you have faith that it's possible.

So you try, at the very least, it's going to get you closer to the ideal.

Even if the the ultimate ideal were totally impossible, at least you're going to be purifying yourself. You're going to be a better person, more virtuous, more moral, more wise.

But there is a certain amount of faith that is required. I remember I used to always think that I mean faith was a kind of delusion. You know faith is thinking you know something that you don't really know. It's like belief. And I always considered myself to be more pun oriented than faith oriented more reasonoriented than than faith oriented. And I would say that to Burmese, you know, people in Burma when I was living there and then they'd point out, well, I mean, here you are living in a cave with robes on thousands of miles away from your home. You know, that had

to be caused by something. You know, it wasn't just pure reason.

And that's true. I mean, there is a certain faith that Buddhism has some truth to it. I mean, if you can't even intuitively pick up on that, then it may be that you're still at such a samsaric level of functioning that I mean, it's like the intuition or just like sub intellectual awareness, you know, um it's just not ripened enough yet or something. I mean, if you're just basing your practice of dharma on trying to I mean using Emmanuel Kant's philosophy as some sort of stim stimulus to that or something then yeah I don't know how well it's going to work out. I mean it

can be that you can start off with kind of insufficient motives you know let's like Millera you know he got into dharma or like some semblance of dharma through a desire to cultivate like like magical powers you know he wanted to become like a wizard to get revenge on this evil uncle according to his autobiography or what's considered to be his autobiography photography. But then, you know, as you practice, if you practice correctly, then you get wiser and your motives for practice get wiser. Your understanding of why you're practicing and how to practice gets wiser. And so, you refine the whole approach.

And I hope I sound okay with without the
the software from making the the audio
sound good.

Let's see here. So, should I continue
answering this question or let's see.

Why should you commit your entire life
for the cultivation of subtle mental
states

with the idea that nirvana is possible?

Well, I mean, you don't even have to
believe that nirvana is possible. I

mean, it's it's kind of a paradox. Even
if it is possible, it's not possible

within the context of samsara, even

though Buddhist texts ex, you know, talk
about it that way. But still, I mean,

enlightenment or nirvana is just

completely off the scale of samsara. And within a samsara context, it's just pretty much meaningless.

So, it may require you to get beaten over the head with something, have a near-death experience, something that has like this profound intuitive mystical kind of effect on you to really break break loose of just the chains of intellect, so to speak.

And I don't know if really that was an adequate answer to any of those three questions, but still it's almost an hour already. So I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Sedart Loha and

he says, "Living in the USA, do you own any weapons? And if not, why not?" So that's two questions. I got to separate this.

These kind of questions are kind of nice where it's just like this. Oh, I pushed the wrong button here.

Okay. Oh, damn. Please. I'm having technical difficulties just trying to separate. Okay.

So, now these these are nice. You know, it's like one sentence with a question mark at the end.

Simple.

So, living in the USA, do you own any weapons? I do own a Glock 19.

9 millimeter that I haven't fired in

probably two years at this point.

You know, it's it's there in next to my bed in the in the nightstand just in case I'm awakened in the middle of the night with somebody breaking in.

I got a woman to protect and just a a home to protect to defend if necessary.

So, yeah, I do have a Glock 19 9mm. Also in the house, we've got a Ruger 22 rifle that I think has been fired a total of like twice,

but you don't want to use a 22 caliber rifle for home defense.

And uh I'm not likely to ever go hunting with it, but my father was a gun collector. I got a 22 rifle on the day I

was born

just as like a a zeroth birthday

present.

So I know about guns and guns are

interesting and I mean we there is the

the right to bear arms in America and

you know you never know when it might be

hand there might be a zombie apocalypse

for all you know.

So yeah I do have Glock 19. I've even

considered maybe getting one or two more

guns, but considering that I don't shoot

them. I mean, I grew up in the Pacific

Northwest where you want to shoot guns,

you go out into your big backyard,

living out in the country, or you just

drive a few miles till you get to a

logging road, go out on the on to the end of some logging road and shoot at cans, that kind of thing. That was easy. Here in South Carolina, I really don't know where there are any good logging roads like that. We have a tiny backyard here with surrounded by other tiny backyards and so the only place really to shoot that I know of would be going to a shooting range which is kind of an artificial environment and I've never actually done that. Oh I guess I did that once in Aberdeen Washington with a friend of mine who wanted to sight in a new rifle or something.

So I mean the short answer is yes I do
own weapons
have some knives too.

So the second question is now moot
because it's if not why not and it's it
isn't if not. So, I'm going to move on
to the next question, which is from
Tzasquez.

And I seem to remember Tzasquez is
asking two questions, but I only see one
here. So, if Trzas is asked two
questions,
and I think there was one kind of
question that was just kind of like a
joke question. Maybe that was it. So, I
didn't I didn't bother to put that on
the list. Anyways, Tzas says, "Have you

been somewhere to see those monks from Walk for Peace?" And no, I've I really don't have any interest in standing somewhere and watching monks walk by. They were going to come close to Greenville. And my sweetheart wanted to go in the morning and offer offer food to them, but then they changed routes because the weather got too cold or something. So instead of the upstate up in the hills, they decided to opt for farther east near the ocean in the lowlands where it doesn't get so cold. And so they didn't come close to us. I mean, they were in South Carolina. It's just they change routes because the

winter was getting too cold here, I guess, up in the hills anyway.

But I mean, I've seen plenty of monks and I've been a monk. You know, you just look in the mirror, you see a monk when you're a monk yourself. And it was uh I I guess they're all Thai monks.

Pretty sure. I didn't notice any Western monks when I would see footage, but uh I didn't even hear about it until like three weeks ago. There was some guy at work who asked me if I was going to go see my my former comrades.

And I didn't even know what he was talking about. So then he tells me about how these monks are are walking for peace. And I just kind of made this

off-hand remark. Yes. Yeah. I'm sure
them walking is going to end all the
wars,
but

I mean I'm not opposed to anyone going
to see monks and so forth. I mean it's
one of the blessings in the Mongalas
Suta, one of the 38 blessings is to see
renuncience. And seeing a renuncient is
um according to legend what caused the
Buddha himself to renounce the world and
eventually become the Buddha. He saw the
holy man. He saw the renuncient and it
inspired him to become like him.

But I mean, I didn't really I wasn't
motivated enough to actually want to go

on a road trip just to see some monks walk by.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Newman. And Newman says, "When you said you weren't reaching the right deep meditative states after 20 years of practice, how did you progress before that wall hit?"

Well, I I don't think I said that I wasn't reaching the right deep meditative states. Oh, maybe he means that I wasn't that I was reaching them at first and then after like 20 years I stopped reaching them. Something like that. May that would be more correct.

Um when I said I wasn't reaching the right deep meditative states after 20

years of practice, how did I progress before that wall hit? Well, you just your meditation just gets more and more subtle. You know, you just are your mind becomes less and less active and distracting.

Um

it's it's hard to explain, but sometimes like if you're meditating, you reach like a new level of meditation that's deeper than what you what you're used to. You start experiencing what is called pi. I think in in Hinduism it's called shockti where your body can just start like twitching and like almost vibrating you know it's like your

muscles are just twitching from this excess energy because you reach this more subtle mental state that uses less energy. It's like your brain is using less energy. It's less active. You know it's just sort of clear and and still. So that this energy that usually was being used up by thinking and so forth, it just has nowhere to go now. It's it's not used to this. And that in my opinion can cause feelings of like rushes of euphoria and excitement which can derail the meditation or just like muscle twitches and that kind of thing.

And so I just stopped breaking new ground after gosh around the year 2004 2005 something like that. I just I just

stopped progressing. You know, my my meditation just didn't didn't reach any new stages. It didn't get any quieter and I never really was able to master it. It would come and go.

So, how did I how did I progress before that wall hit? Well, pretty much like I said, it just your mind just gets into subtler and quieter and more still mental states where your awareness is just like more luminous, I guess you could say.

But then you get used to it and it's just

um I mean not only do you get used to it but in my case it was like I just did

not get into that deep of states anymore. It was like like backsliding for whatever reason. You know, every once in a while you just get a little glimmer of it, but nothing like in the year like around 2003 where consistently for months I could just sit down at least once a day for like at least an hour just not thinking, just wide awake, just still more conscious than usual and like the mind is just clear like glass. I mean, there's more to it than that. I mean, you can't really put it into words.

But it's really hard to explain stuff like this. I just not only did I stop getting into more and more subtle mental

states, but like the the most subtle mental states that I had attained, I wasn't able to get there except very rarely after that.

So, I'm just going to move on to Newman's next question.

Was there some kind of insight that definitively revealed to you that you had reached your utmost potential in this life for practice? Um, you know, it wasn't definitively re revealed to me that I had reached my utmost potential in this life for practice. It was just that I mean, like I was saying, I just stopped making progress. In fact, I was sort of retrogressing to some degree.

And I mean when you stop something stops working literally for several years. I mean it's just common sense that you try something else.

So I mean I'm still probably making progress. I would like to believe I'm still making some kind of spiritual progress. It's not the same kind that I would be making sitting alone in a cave in tropical Asia. But I mean, just having to learn how to interact and empathize with other beings, that kind of thing, is something that you can learn better as a lay person, then especially if you're in a relationship than living alone in a cave. So, it's just I've sort of changed directions to

some degree or just kind of changed tack.

You know, any of those any of you out there who know about sailing, you know, my tack has changed.

But the ultimate goal, I suppose, is the same. It's just a different approach because the old approach just had stopped working and it was just a matter of common sense. I mean, if something doesn't work for several years, chances are you should try something different. So, I'm moving on. Next question. This is from RFS.

And RFS says, "Did you know of any Westerner who decided to live a lay life in Burma? What would the social status

be of the newly disroed layman in
Burma?" Well, this is three questions.
Damn, we got more questions than I
thought. So now I got to separate them.
One moment please.

You got three questions here instead of
one. So RFS's first question. Did you
know of any Westerner who disroed to
live a Lee life in Burma? Yeah, I knew
one one person. He was an Australian
monk. He'd been a monk for maybe 14
years.

And then he went back to Australia to
teach Dharma and apparently fell in love
with one of the like the meditation
retreat organizers.

And then within a relatively short time,

she just kind of turned on him and just like viciously like just dumped him and and just I mean dumped on him also just kind of turned against him. And then he wound up marrying a Burmese woman whose family had been living in Mesa in Thailand, which is where Rambo lived for a while if you watch that movie.

And they were uh I mean it was sort of like black market stuff, smuggling. They made a lot of money smuggling stuff between uh Thailand and Burma. And so he married into this very rich almost, you know, almost like a mafia kind of Burmese. And uh yeah, so I think he's still married to her, but I don't think

they're living in Burma anymore. Ever since that the military coup thing happened a few years ago, I think they just bailed out. But he was living in in Burma for years as a lay person.

So next question from RFS. What would the social status be of the newly disroed layman in Burma? Um, well, the newly disroed layman in Burma, I mean, if if it's a Burmese citizen who is newly disroed. I mean, they wouldn't his social status would probably be a little higher than it was before because he had been a monk. You know, he had really renounced for at least a short time. You know, almost all Burmese men are monks temporarily for at least a few

days in their life. It's it's almost like a a manhood ritual. You know, a boy is ordained as a novice. It's called shinpug. You know, it's it's sort of like the the initiation into manhood almost. So, I mean, even the king of Thailand is ordained as a monk for a short time, at least as a novice, you know, just walking through the the town with his alms, silently begging for alms kind of probably with attendants and like servants and stuff with him.

So, the social status of the newly disabled layman in Burma, yeah, I mean, it's that's just the way it is in Burma.

like almost all men have been dis have
been monks who disrote in Burma all the
all the Buddhist ones anyway most of
them

with regard to a westerner or a non-
Burmese person who had been a monk and
disroed I'm not exactly sure because I
mean I only know of one really
and I really don't know what the
attitude of other lay people would be
towards him now when they just meet him
they don't know that he was a monk and
then when they hear that he had been a
monk for 13 or 14 years, I'm sure they
would be impressed by that. You know,
they'd think, whoa, you know, that's
that's good. So, yeah, I mean, dropping

out of the monkhood is so common in
Burma and Thailand that I mean, there's
no,

you know, there's no onus. What is it?

There's no stigma attached to that
unless you're you're disroed in disgrace
or something.

you know, you you you're like kicked out
of the SA for committing a SADA offense,
you know, some monk.

Um,

yeah. I mean, I remember the medical
officer in in Layier village. I lived
close to Lie village

for years and the medical officer there
had formerly been a monk and he dropped

out out of love for one of the village
village girls and they got married and
you know he's still I mean he's the
medical officer so that's still a
respected position. Sometimes people
would make goodnatured jokes at his
expense that kind of thing you know but
it was friendly. I mean it wasn't like
vicious or hostile. nothing like you'd
see on social media in the West.

So,

yeah, I guess I answer that question.

I'm going to move on to RFS's third
question. Did locals look down on
Westerners who married Burmese women?
Well, I mean, like I said, I only met
one and he didn't I mean, he lived in

town. I lived out in the woods. I really didn't see like his social interactions with his neighbors and that sort of thing. Um,

it would depend on on the locals. I mean, some Burmese people are kind of racist. You know, they're like they're Burmese chauvinists. You know, the Burmese are the only people who can truly understand dharma. There's lots of Burmese people who believe that, especially the like the upper class college educated ones. You know, they're very chauvinistic with regard to being Burmese. And one of the best blessings they could give somebody is, you know,

may you be Burmese in your next life?

That kind of thing.

But uh let's see. Did locals look down on westerners who married Burmese women?

I never really I never really noticed that. I think that they probably consider the the Westerner to be fortunate to get himself a nice Burmese girl. I mean, I've in the West, I knew at least a few Western men who had married Burmese women and and they were just accepted. I mean, they were kind of seen as a little bit comical by the Burmese community because they didn't really fit in. You know, they couldn't speak Burmese very well. They didn't know the customs and all that. So, they

would they would be kind of awkward. You know, they'd go to a religious ceremony or something, they wouldn't know exactly what to do because they hadn't been doing it since they were toddlers, that kind of thing. So there'd be a little bit of amusement, but I mean the Burmese as a general rule are just very open accepting people. They've got a lot of what would be called Christian charity, which is doesn't mean like generosity making donations. It just means accepting others for what they are. So yeah, I wouldn't say I mean some of them might, some of them probably would, but most of them wouldn't. And I'm

moving on to the next question. This is from Anguli Mala and

yeah, Anguly Mala asks a transgressive fourth question

and his first question

is not transgressive but it's it's

rather long and I think he this is like

a followup to a question he asked before with a different name.

So, Anguli Mala says, "Is it unskillful

to do body weight exercises at least

twice per week for the purpose of

maintaining a baseline of functional

strength and endurance for longevity?

I'm not talking about 200 push-ups. I'm

talking about 50 push-ups, 10 pull-ups,

broad jump for general athleticism, and a run around the neighborhood. Nothing actually fancy or excessive things a teenager could do. All of these things train fundamental human movement patterns that we all use in our daily lives. Why would a monk do that? Because monks are humans too with bodies that are designed to move to be healthy. I say this as a personal trainer.

I just really don't think chop wood carry water is actually enough to maintain real health, especially while aging. A rounded full body routine can be maintained with relatively little effort. So long as you're not being

reprimanded for it. I hope he doesn't go keto too if he's a mom. But he continues here. My final justification. I'll have more energy, clarity, and ease of movement to move through life.

Therefore, studying, understanding, and living the dharma will become much easier. If it happens to beautify me, then great. But if not, then it should still be done for general maintenance. Also, it's proven that healthy looking people tend to have more charisma and are generally more likable, therefore more likely to successfully transmit the dhamma to a learner. And then he says, "If I were a monk in your monastery, would you allow this based on my

reasoning?" And then I responded in the comments under the YouTube video that I mean running around the block long jumping wearing monk's robes that would be considered inappropriate just from the the traditional Buddhist point of view. Um with regard to push-ups and sit-ups and that kind of thing. If he did it in the privacy of his own cabin, of his own room or cell, then that might not be a problem. But I don't know of any any monk that would go jogging. I I've saw a couple monks riding bicycles. They were like the really lax, unconscientious kind of monks riding bicycles and people would just like

snigger at them because they were not behaving appropriately in accordance with Burmese tradition.

So anyways, he can So after I said that, you know, it's like jogging and and long jumps, that kind of thing. Yeah, that would that would not be considered appropriate. But I mean, with regard to other exercises, it would depend on how cool the abbott was that with regard to that sort of thing. So then he had a follow-up question. If you had your own monastery and you got to make the rules, would you allow your monks to have a basic routine? Having nothing at all besides general choring and walking seems to be just one step above total

mortification.

I mean, this just strikes me as as like almost crazy talk. But then he continues. He says, "Also, calisthenics equals using your own body weight as resistance for training, push-ups, pull-up, lunge, etc.

Plyometrics equals explosive exercises like jumping. Isometrics is exercising without moving like hanging from a bar to train grip strength or just pushing one hand against the other like that.

Cardio equals walking, running, and sprinting. And for many people who have had wicked injuries in the past, like myself, even just staying on top of the

degradation with rehabilitation exercises for medical reasons should be valid. I myself have a cooked left shoulder from nearly losing my arm. So doing exercises like pull-ups are massively helpful. So that's the whole question is mainly can he continue doing like you know relatively intensive physical exercise and training if he were ordained as a monk. I mean that would be sufficient for a question you don't need paragraphs.

Um

I mean again I mean jogging no I mean that you'd have to have just a completely lax just anything is okay kind of abbot or monastery that would

let monks just be jogging for their health. And there's one statement I mean I said it was sort of borderline crazy talk here. Let's see. Having nothing at all besides general choring and walking seems to be just one step above total modification. I mean, no. I mean, I was healthy. I was in relatively good shape. I mean, walking every day, and if you're living out in a forest, one thing I've noticed is it's like the caveman instincts arise more. And for some reason, it's just like your testosterone levels go up just naturally, just roughing it in a wilderness. So that I mean I was in

relatively good shape as a monk even though I wasn't doing long jumps or jogging around the village.

I mean if it was that important you'd think that the Buddha would have said something other than just walking is about the best meditation you can get. I mean you don't need to be muscular to practice dharma. In fact, to some degree, it is not to your benefit to be like buff, to be sculpted, to be a Chad if you're a monk because it's like your vitality increases, the strength of your urges kind of increases, you know, your tes testosterone goes up and it's it's like rajasic going with like yogic yogic language, you know, it's it's uh to some

degree, I mean, physically it might be really nice, but like spiritually It's it's sort of moving in the wrong direction.

And to think that you're just one step above total mortification just from like staying active. I mean, it's it's like someone has been indoctrinated into like this materialistic thinking of, you know, sort of like some of these keto doctors. Sometimes I should just say doctors

on on YouTube that, you know, it's just like they're they're spouting off these like enzymes and stuff that nobody's ever heard of, talking about how

important they are. And it's like doing this or eating that is going to, you know, increase the levels of this enzyme. nobody's ever heard of before up until maybe six months ago. It's it's just it's mind over matter.

So long as your body is healthy enough that your mind can be healthy, that's good enough.

I mean, if if you really do have some kind of physical, you know, dability that requires exercise, that's fine. And I do admit that after I came back to America, I did have one dumbbell, like a 25 lb dumbbell, and I did some exercises with

that in the privacy and silence of my own room or the the trailer I moved into, but I wouldn't be doing it out in public where people could see me do it because that would be considered inappropriate. And if you consider like plyometrics

to be more important than striving for enlightenment where I mean if you can't have the plyometrics you're just not going to ordain.

Well, you've made your choice.

But I really don't think there's anything necessarily wrong with doing some like calisthenics. Maybe not jumping jacks so much, but quiet, you

know, sit-ups, push-ups, maybe get a dumbbell, lift some weights a little bit just to keep you healthy, as you say, that's fine. But yeah, if you're going to if you really have to like jog and do long jumps and that kind of thing, then I mean that may disqualify you from being a serious beu. any any like monastery that would allow that sort of thing would probably be pretty lax and not really oriented towards the cultivation of wisdom anyway.

So I'm just going to move on to Anguli Mala's next question here says can you talk more about Millera and his life and I already mentioned Millera some time ago in this Q&A I read his autobiography

which was edited by Evans Wentz I think it was Oxford University Press something like that and Miller was a Tibetan person I don't I don't remember what year he lived in but his father died and his mother was supporting his family as well as she could. And there was like this uncle that swindled them out of their property, you know, while pretending to be like the the guardian of the family, you know, he just sort of took possession of their property and wouldn't give it back. That kind of thing. So the mother being vindictive, she just kind of poisoned little Millera's mind against this uncle and

urged him to become like a black
magician, like a sorcerer who would get
revenge for the, you know, this
righteous vengeance against the evil
uncle. So that's what Millera did as a
young man. He trained as like a black
magician. And I'm sure there are black
magicians in Tibet or at least were up
until the Chinese pretty much took over.
You know, there are still black
magicians in Burma, for example. And so,
um, he pretty much killed his uncle and
his uncle's immediate family. Um, he
generated some kind of giant scorpion or
something that smashed the house that
his uncle was in at the time. It was
like a big feast celebrating their

ripping off of Millerpa's mama probably.
But then afterwards he had a change of
heart, you know, he he had like the root
of wisdom. And so that kind of triggered
this realization that that's really not
the way to go about it. And he became
this um
just I mean he was ordained as a monk
after that like a Buddhist monk not just
a like a a black magician sorcerer you
know he he had a change of heart a
realization and so he was ordained as
some kind of Tibetan I don't maybe he
wasn't even ordained it could be that
because his teacher I think was Marpa
the translator who was married and was

not a monk so I'm I'm not even 100% sure if Millera was formally ordained ained into a Buddhist order or not or just became sort of like a like a freelance free agent kind of Buddhist renunciant. But he uh he went out into the the wilderness and just lived alone and he was living mainly on nettles. He was eating a lot of nettles until his clothes finally just rotted off and he turned green from just living on a diet predominantly composed of nettles. So he was like this scraggy, filthy, matted hair, long fingernails, green being living in a cave. And so the villagers just thought he was a monster. They were scared shitless of him. He did say that

once he dropped in in his autobiography,
he had this clay pot that he cooked his
nettles in. He dropped it and the the
clay shattered, but the the shell of
green nettle residue still remained
intact.

and he wrote lots of poetry sort of like
Hanson in China you know he was sort of
like a Tibetan Hans

and so he's mainly famous because of not
just the autobiography but also these
poems that he wrote I can't remember how
many but there's lots and lots of them
and so he's considered to be a great
sage and based on the autobiography he
definitely was very committed is

radically committed to practicing dharma
as as at a the most the deepest level
that he could manage. So I think he
might be qualified as a saint even
though he did kill his own uncle and his
uncle's entire immediate family when he
was younger.

So let's see here.

I can't remember. He's associated with I
think it's the red the red hats in
Tibet. Nying ma. Is that is that
correct? I'm no authority on Tibetan
Buddhism.

Anyways,

yeah, I think he is associated with the
so-called red hats in in Tibet.

So, I'm going to move on to Anguly

Mala's third question.

And this is kind of a strange one. Maybe I should just skip this one and answer the the fourth one. But it says, "If you had to give an answer, which modern nation, which modern nation would be most closely aligned with how the Buddha lived during his life?" Northern India still somewhere else in Eurasia. Issue is that most of the ethnic peoples in modern northern India are largely not Indo-arian. So that would change my answer.

Um

yeah, I'm not exactly sure how like the ancestry of the people would really

necessarily change how closely aligned they would be with how the Buddha lived during his life.

Because I mean I haven't lived everywhere in the world, you I I'm not closely familiar with every single culture on earth, but based on my experience

that I mean like living in rural Burma, a villager in rural Burma is comes about as close as you're going to find to the way people were living in the Buddhist time or or like how Buddhists lived, you know, shortly after the Buddhist time.

You know, you still have I mean things are changing fast in Burma now. Like most villages are starting to get

electricity. Most people have cell phones now. But when I was living there like in the 90s and the the as the teens, I mean in the teens it was the Chinese motor scooters and and cell phones and internet and electricity to the villages. It was starting to become pretty common. But before that, you know, before like 2011, you know, it was still people were living pretty much the way people were living in the Buddhist time. You know, they'd have radios, flip-flops, a little bit of electricity based on like their own generator that they would use mainly for just charging batteries, that kind

of thing. But the men would still take their team of bullocks out to the fields to plow. the the girls would still be carrying clay pots on their head to the well or the the river to fetch water for the the shack, that kind of thing. And and and they're just devout Buddhists who take Buddhism seriously. It's not like Western Buddhists who just kind of tack it on to an ordinary secular life. You know, just add some Buddhist flavoring to a just a standard American secular lifestyle. You know, they're, you know, they're just born and raised. are immersed in Buddhist culture from the time they are born.

So I would guess that it's probably like

rural Burma. I don't I don't know what it's like in like northern India. Some areas of northern India might even come closer.

I don't know. But it's sort of the lack of wealth in Burma keeps them, you know, closer to a premodern standard of living and premodern lifestyles. Whereas in India probably it's you know, I mean, India is not an extremely rich country, but at least, you know, they've got they're they've got more development going than the the rural areas of Burma. So, I guess I answered that one. And the transgressive fourth question is talking about Indo-arian Cyian origins of the

Sakya clan. And that's just conjecture.

And I mean it's largely based on the

resemblance of the word sakya which was

the Buddha's own clan or ethnicity with

the word cythian or saka and the sakas

did invade India later on too like

around what one or 200 of the common era

something like that. So I mean that's

just conjecture really. It is possible

that the Buddha had essentially cythian

origins that that spoke like an Iranic

language

and then they just kind of you know they

would have probably moved in relatively

early on and just sort of got absorbed

into Vedic culture to some degree. they

were still living on the outskirts of

Vedic culture which uh I think it was like Richard Gombrich in one or two of his books pointed out that that's one reason why the Buddha didn't just become like a like a a Hindu sage that he's just kind of established his own tradition because he from the beginning he was on the outskirts of Vedic tradition you know just kind of at the verge of it and he could see it with a critical eye and wasn't just sucked into it and just decided to go a different direction, a slightly somewhat different direction. Anyway, but as far as I know, the just the name Sakya or Shakya and the words Saka and

Cythian, I mean, there's enough of a superficial resemblance that at least it seems plausible to me that the Shakias or Sakias of the Buddha's family were related to Cythians.

And I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from Fred and Fred says, "Can we have your ideas on what spirit is? What is the container for karma and fruition seeds?" So that's two questions. Continually having to separate. We got more questions than I originally counted because sometimes you got this block question that turns out having like two or three different question marks.

So Cred says, "Can we have your ideas on

what spirit is?" And I mean asking what spirit is is like asking a physicist what energy is. You know in a way it's like the fundamental essence of the universe in my opinion. I do think that the entire universe is just pervaded by consciousness.

So in that sense I mean it's just spirit is just consciousness or just in a way sort of like mental aliveness.

Um but a lot of physicists I mean they can't really define energy very well. You know it's almost like an undefined term. You have to start somewhere. I mean you can't have an infinite regress

of definitions. you know this term is defined in these words and these words are defined in those words and those words are defined. I mean it would take an infinite regress eventually you have to wind up with some kind of circular definition

unless you just start with undefined terms and like energy in physics is kind of that way and spirit or or consciousness

in

I don't know my metaphysics I guess would be similar. though it's just sort of like the essence of gosh it's the uncarved block of marble I guess but that's like in the the

absolute sense but then when spirit gets
so

convoluted and self-reflective that it
starts just identifying with itself and
considering itself to be separate from
everything else that's a different kind
of spirit that's like samsaric
delusional kind of spirit

So it's sort of like in uh in some like
quantum physics they have this idea that
you know empty space can contain can be
said to contain infinite energy.

So that would be sort of like the first
kind of spirit in the absolute sense.

But then like manifest forms of energy
like electricity running through this

computer that would be like the samsaric
you know formed not formless but like
manifest kind of of energy and that
would be sort of like a thinking mind or
mental states. it would be that kind of
spirit.

But it's it's very difficult to define
something like that.

I mean, it's just sort of like the
ultimate fundamental essence,
which I mean, it doesn't really rely on
anything before it in a sense.

Maybe you could say it's like Hegel's
pure being, which is indistinguishable
from pure non-being, which again is like
paradoxical and it just doesn't work
trying to explain it in a really clear

like intellectually valid manner.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fred's next question. What is the container for karma and fruition seeds?

Um, I mean, karma, I mean, it's it's its own container. You don't really need a container. And it looks like I'm starting to lag, which is unfortunate. Although, at least the battery is back up to 58%.

So, I mean, it's like I was thinking earlier, it's like you turn on the faucet at the kitchen sink and the stream of water comes down in this coherent stream. So, what's the container of that? What's holding it

together like that? Well, it's like the cohesive properties of water itself.

And so you could say like

karma or like yeah, karma fruition

seeds, whatever. It's like the the

momentum of like a stream of of spirit.

what's holding it together is just like

the the similarities and sort of like

the the cohesiveness of it keep it

together without there having to be any

kind of shell around it. You know, it's

just the nature of these mental states.

You know, they all have like the same

theme, the same kind of flavor. So, they

just cohere. you know, they they appear

to to be like this unified mass when

really it's just their similarities

cause them to be moving together in the same direction. That kind of thing.

Now, what's the container of a flame?

Well, you could say it's the fuel,

I suppose.

But I mean, the a flame doesn't have what appears to be the outline of the flame is not some sort of container for it. And in a way, it's just kind of an illusion.

So karma is just the momentum of certain manifest aspects of spirit and if they have the same kind of momentum then they're considered to belong to the same being and they appear to belong to the same being

although ultimately that being is an illusion.

So I'm just going to move on to Fred's next question.

Areans emotionally inert? Well, like subjectively they might be, outwardly not necessarily. Outwardly, Arhans can still apparently show emotions. I mean, if you consider

Nim Karoli Baba up there, if you consider him to have been an Aron and he even if he wasn't an arant, he was like just extremely abnormally spiritually advanced.

I mean, he would be yelling and laughing and crying and just behaving like outwardly like an ordinary person.

Well, maybe not like a totally ordinary one, but still he was acting like a human.

And one reason why he was acting like a human is because he's in a human body interacting with other humans.

So, uh, like Ram Das used to say about Nim Curly Baba, it's like the better you got to know him, the more you realize there really wasn't anybody there. He was just like a mirror reflecting your own karma back at you. And if an orahant is like that where there's subjectively internally nobody there but they're just like a mirror reflecting your own karma back at you then there could be some

emotional karma getting reflected back at you.

I mean, it's like inert is kind of a good term in that it's sort of like they've got denatured emotions like what they do isn't generating karma anymore.

So, it has still has the the outward appearance of emotions, I suppose, but it's just it doesn't have like the the karmic momentum or what's it what's like the the impetus to it anymore. It's like denatured.

So,

but if you go with like orthodox terra then yeah even then an arant could still have subtle emotions like an arhan can still smile he won't laugh anymore he

won't cry but he can still smile that
kind of thing
and it seems to me that just to function
as a kind of nonroot
requires like a certain amount of
emotion or irrationality even to form
like webs of association and
understanding things bringing up
memories from the past you know it's
like you kind of latch onto a certain
emotional flavor to it which helps bring
up the memory what you're trying to
remember that kind of thing I mean I
think emotion is just sort of built in
to a human being and a fully enlightened
human being still has that default

setting even though it's It's denatured in a way.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Caveman.

And Caveman says, "What are your predictions about AI? Do you think AGI is a near possibility?" In other words, do you think the average person could become more or less obsolete within a few decades? Yeah, I don't remember what the G stands for and AGI, artificial something intelligence, but I assume it means like really sentient or at least such a good mimicry of sentience that it might as well be sentient for all outward purposes.

Um, what are my predictions about AI? I

mean, I really I mean, you really can't predict what's going to happen if the technological singularity hits. If artificial intelligence becomes more intelligent than we are and is able to act on its own what's its own initiative, you know, it starts acting independently of people. you know, it starts like, you know, deciding, well, what that human wants me to do is not appropriate. I'm not going to do that. I'm gonna do something else. You know, if computers start doing that, you know, they get to this level of complexity of of function that they're able to just kind of defy their own

inputs and just act on their own initiative.

And furthermore, they're they're like self-improving,

you know, just through what's what's it called? Recursive self-programming,

then yeah, there's absolutely no telling what's going to happen. That it's it's going to be a singularity. You can't see what's on the other side of it. Just

like you can't see, you know, what

happens on the other side of a black hole or what happened before the big

bang. It's just you cannot begin to

predict if if some intelligence becomes

a billion times more intelligent than we

are as as much more intelligent than we

are as we are more intelligent than cockroaches or amiebas then there's no way in hell you can predict what was going to happen and some people just insist that couldn't possibly happen you know like a Burmese Abidama scholar would say no you need kama ja rupa and true consciousness cannot arise in a computer etc etc

But I don't see why not. If consciousness can arise in a blob of gray meat, why can't it arise in circuitry that sort of mimics the blob of gray meat? The circuitry of the blob of gray meat.

So, let's see. Do I think AGI or

sentient computers I assume is what it
what it means is a near possibility?
Yeah, it's a possibility. Anything's
possible.

So, do I think the average person could
become more or less obsolete within a
few decades? Yeah, it's possible. It's
going to depend on our karma. So, we're
just going to have to wait and find out.

I guess

it is kind of I mean, it is unfortunate.

It's like the AI race now is like

another nuclear arms race where

even Elon Musk used to warn that that

artificial intelligence is sort of like

the sorcerer's apprentice or you know

the sorcerer who's trying to conjure a a

demon and he's got you know the pentagram drawn correctly and he's got the holy water and the Bible and everything but he always just forgets one thing and the demon always manages to get out and start running a muck. So even Elon Musk was warning against that. And then I remember seeing a post of his on I think it was on X where he's saying well I mean it's it's it's still moving forwards that the AI race is happening. It's pretty much unavoidable. So he can either be a a passive observer or he can participate. And so he said well if I participate at least I can try and steer it in a safer direction. make sure that

the holy water and the Bible work to keep the the the demon contained, that kind of thing. But I mean, it's it's a nuclear arms race at this point. China is working really hard to get the super AI and so the Americans and anyone else that is has the the ability to do it is they can't let China just develop the super AI and and we're still like living like Amish people, relatively speaking. I mean, it's just it's it's it's like the nuclear arms race all over again. And at least the nuclear arms race, I mean, people were warning that it was going to destroy us. That you you had generals and other high-profile people in government saying World War World War

III thermonuclear Armageddon is is inevitable. It's going to happen sooner or later. We just don't know exactly when. During the height of the Cold War, they were like bigwigs saying that kind of stuff.

But we're still alive. And it may be that I mean this whole AI scare is another kind of flash in the pan. Not that nukes are aren't still dangerous. I mean obviously they are. In some ways they're even more dangerous because you've got like third world countries now that have nukes.

So yeah, anything is possible and I really cannot predict what's going to

happen. I'm just willing to just keep my mouth shut, try not to prophesy on the issue and just, you know, accept that anything is possible and just wait to see what happens.

And so I'm moving on to Caveman's second question. And caveman also wrote or asked a transgressive fourth question, but we haven't got there yet. Caveman's second, not yet transgressive question is, "What are your thoughts on Nietzsche's work?" And I have to admit I was never particularly interested in Nietzsche that I've tried to read I read his antichrist and I have to admit that Min's introduction to the antichrist was more interesting to me and more readable than

the antichrist itself. I tried to read
thus speak Zarathustra
and I I was the same as uh what Carl
Benjamin Sargon of a CAD he said in one
of his videos he got as far as the
tightrope walker that falls off the
tightrope and breaks his leg and that
was the same as and that's about as far
as I got with it too. It's just Nietzsche
writes in two like it's like this weird
poetic

almost surreal kind of style that I just
can't relate to. If I'm going to read
philosophy, you know, I want it to be
philosophical more than just kind of
artistic and religious and surreal.

And also Nichzche's philosophy itself.

Um

I just you know I think the main contribution NZ made to western philosophy was the idea that God is dead. you know, it's it's more of a sociological thing of, you know, how is civilization going to progress now that most people are practically atheists and he just had this will to power idea that I mean it's it's very sort of anti-anti- Buddhist. In fact, in Bertrand Russell's history of of Western philosophy, he has this imaginary debate between Nietze and the Buddha. He didn't understand the Buddha very well. That's

Bert and Russell, not Nze. Nietzsche probably didn't understand the Buddha very well either. I much prefer Nietzsche's forerunner Schopenhauer to Nze as a philosopher. Although I don't think Schopenhauer is 100% correct either.

I think Schopenhauer was too much under the spell of Plato.

So Nietzsche's work I mean I don't think the world would be really impoverished if Nze had never existed. I don't think the world would be a worse place without Nietzsche in it.

So I mean there are some admirers of Nietzsche especially people that maybe have like a little bit of a fascistic streak you

know or just you know they like the idea of the will to power and the superman and you know sort of stratification of society with you know the superiors the you know the overmen ruling over the undermen that kind of thing. But I mean, mainly it was just his writing style just put me off. I just could not even really get into anything that he wrote just because I just don't like his writing style.

So, I'm just going to move on to caveman's third question.

What percentage of monks do you think have gone at least one year or so without masturbating or even a nocturnal emission? And how many lay people?

God. And then with masturbating, I assume he means to orgasm, not just he means like fully spanking the puppy and not just petting it a little bit. So what percentage of monks do I think have gone at least one year without or no?

No. He says or even having a nocturnal admission. I really can't say. I mean, Asian monks on the one hand, most of them are not conscientious monks.

And I've been told that most noviceses really do spank the puppy. And so, if you're in the habit of it, when you're a novice and then when you become 19 or 20 and are ordained, it's hard to break that habit once you've already got it

going. So, it's it's really hard to say.

I mean, I never really pried into this.

I never wanted to find out.

So, I mean, and then the not having a

nocturnal emission. I mean, that that

really just kind of throws a whole

monkey wrench into it because in my

case, I mean, it was just a natural

thing. About every two weeks, I would

have a nocturnal emission just to keep

the the hormones in check. You know, you

just have to overflow.

And when you're young and dumb and and

full of like precious bodily fluids,

then

that that can happen. I mean, it's just

it just overflows spontaneously in your

sleep.

But then again, like the Asians, even though on average, they're not as strict as Western monks or monks who are not born into a Buddhist culture and kind of really have a strong resolve to follow Dharma rather than just following their culture. I mean, there's that, but there's also the fact that like Burmese monks, probably Thai monks, East Asian monks, don't have as high of testosterone levels as Caucasians do. And Caucasians in turn do not have as high of testosterone levels as say subsaharan Africans do.

So, I really can't say. I mean, I would

like to think that most monks don't spank the puppy.

And I really never saw any evidence other than, you know, a little bit of hearsay like rumors and stuff, you know, like I had one monk, an American monk tell me that most of the the the novices, you know, teenage boys who are in lesser orders, they really do spank the puppy.

And then, you know, it just kind of like a logical progression. And you know, if you're in the habit of doing that as a novice, then just being fully ordained probably isn't just going to shut off the momentum of that.

But I don't know. I think the the ties

tend to be naughtier with regard to their sexual excesses than the Burmese. The Burmese are just amazingly stoic and just I mean a lot of monks, a lot of Burmese monks, they don't even particularly like girls or boys. It's like when I was living at Mahagandon, which is a big school monastery near Mandalay, there was several hundred monks there. And sometimes there'd be like this, you know, this little this little bevy, this little cluster of, you know, teenage Burmese girls or young Burmese women dressed in their best clothes, all, you know, their hair all nice and everything. They're walking by

and I'm there's like a bunch of monks
walking the other way in front of me and
not a single head turns. You know, they
don't they don't even bother to look.
They're not interested. Or you're
driving down the road,
you know, there's a a carload of monks
with some lay person driving the car.
Driving down the road and there's like a
a public well by the side of the road
and there's like two or three young
women bathing there. And you know, they
wear like a bathing song. They're not
naked, but still it's wet plastered to
their body. And there was only one
Burmese monk that I knew whose head
would turn

when we would drive by that.

Muslim, it's just they're so I mean, they're practically asexual. I mean, there was an American monk that I used to hang out with in Burma and he had we had this kind of a joke. It's like, you know, how do Burmese women even get pregnant?

I mean, there's there's no privacy, you know? They're living in the same house with three kids and grandma, maybe the the the spinster aunt living in the same one room shack.

You know, it's like maybe it's just that most Burmese children are descended from doctors or something. It's like the the

the mother the woman goes to the doctor
and she comes home pregnant or
something. It's just weird.

But in Thailand, they're they're
definitely more sensual than in Burma.

But with regard to what percentage

I mean

I mean just ignoring the nocturnal
emissions, which is not against the
rules, just masturbating. I would hope
that less than half of the SA spans the
puppy.

I mean, I would hope.

And with regard to lay people, I would I
would guess it's most of them unless I
mean you're just in a steady
relationship with somebody and you're

sexually active and don't need to do that.

But I mean, you asked the wrong guy with regard to that question because really I it would just be like a wild guess.

But I was a monk living among Burmese monks in Burma for more than 20 years. I was a monk for 30 years. And I just never really caught a whiff of this kind of thing. Maybe it's just because it's private personal thing and nobody shared it with me, but

I just really have no data. Not just insufficient data. I have practically zero data upon which to base this.

And then there's the progressive or the

transgressive fourth question about dark projects happening underground, governments and corporations making human clones and human animal hybrids and stuff.

Yeah, I mean that's kind of a similar question where I mean again it would just be like a wild guess based on just hunches or you know imagination just pure conjecture because I really don't know and it's it's a fourth question anyway so I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Romeo and Romeo says if we have no self then who or what gets passed on to be reborn in the next life and that's the only

thing that that moves from one life to the next is karma. That's the only thing you take with you is your karma at least according to Buddhist philosophy.

And your karma is essentially volition or will in the schopenhauian sense you know it's chana in in poly which is usually translated as volition but I think will like in the sense of schopenhau saying the world is will and representation. So it's like samsara is volition and perception. I mean that's essentially what he was saying and I can I can get on board with that.

So yeah, it's just the momentum of your mental states. That's that's what will

is. It's habit energy.

And it's it doesn't really need a container. Like I was saying to Fred, you know, it's just like they're all, you know, the same type, the same kind of general flavor moving in the same general direction, just maybe with a certain cohesiveness like water molecules or something.

And I mean, it doesn't really need a being any more than a flame needs a flameness

entity to hold everything together. It's just

so long as the causes are there, the the the effects are going to be there.

And if you want to eliminate the

effects, you have to eliminate the cause. Just like if you want to put out a fire, you have to eliminate the causes or at least one of the essential causes of that fire.

take away the fuel, take away the oxygen, or take away the heat.

And pouring water on it essentially takes away the heat, I'm pretty sure, because liquid water can't get hotter than 100° Celsius, at least at normal atmospheric pressure.

So yeah, I mean all the only thing that gets passed on to be reborn in the next life according to Buddhist philosophy is your karma which is the momentum of your

mental states. It's like the kinetic aspect of your mental states.

So

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Phily's and we've already been going for two hours. I hope this isn't going to be a three and a half hour one, especially because uploading it onto Bitshoot means I have to reduce the size of the file because it's it's just too big. It can be like eight gigs.

Anyways, Phil Ley says, "Is beverage your favorite word?" And no, it is not.

In the past, I've considered that my favorite word is supposedly.

I like the word supposedly.

Also, the word curvaceous just has this opulence to it that I like, but beverage is a nice word.

Yeah.

So, let's see here. I'm just going to move on to Phil Ley's next question. How old were you when you started making old man noises? I don't know. probably I mean I was probably like in my 40s when I heard like junior Burmese monks mentioning that I kind of vocalize a lot when I'm like you know grunting when you pick up something heavy that kind of thing but I don't know I'm not exactly sure what kind of old man noises

is being referred to here but just kind of vocalizing when you get out of a chair you know grunting that kind of stuff

I don't know I didn't write it down the first time I did it So, who knows? So, next question. Phil Le says, "Thoughts on circumcision and are you?" Yeah, it's it was just a matter of time before somebody starts asking about my junk.

Seriously,

I mean, next next people it's like they're going to be asking about like length and girth or something, but yeah, I'm not going I'm really not going to be describing my own genitalia on a Q&A, but thoughts on circumcision. I mean, it

apparently is sort of like a Eastern Mediterranean thing originally. It's not just Hebrews, but I think like Arabs and like maybe the ancient Egyptians may have done it too. Pretty sure. I mean it sort of a Semitic and maybe Hammedic thing.

And I mean supposedly I mean the official explanation for it is it has something to do with hygiene. You know it's like no moist crevice. you're removing an unnecessary moist crevice that could harbor, you know, icky substances or pathogens or something.

Although, I'm I'm really not sure. That could just be like a convenient

rationalization for it. Um, I' I've read somewhere that the Hebrews in particular practiced circumcision as a replacement for child sacrifice.

You know, it's like the firstborn. I mean like in the Bible it's talking about you know you sacrifice the firstborn of your livestock and it may have been at one time very very early on maybe even preoses that you know even your firstborn child would be sacrificed you know some like the phoenetians they they certainly had part of the mainstream sacrificing their own children to moolak or whatever and so it was just sort of cutting off a bit of skin was

sort of like some symbolic substitute
for, you know, putting them into the
brazen bull or whatever.

But

yeah, I will say that in America in the
1960s when I was born, it was just the
common practice. It was like the default
setting that most guys were circumcised.

And uh

I mean it's it seems like being
uncircumcised is a natural state. We did
evolve that way. Apparently didn't have
any like really Darwinian
like negative effects on the human race.
So yeah, I assume it's largely a
cultural thing having to do with

Christianity and Christianity being based in Judaism which insisted on circumcision.

Although Christianity really doesn't insist upon it. I mean, Paul talks about that in in the New Testament in his epistles.

So, I'm really unsure of like the sociological factors and conditions that resulted in most Americans of certain decades just being automatically just default by default circumcised at the hospital shortly after they were born.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from PSA.

This is a politics question, maybe to

some degree a psychological question.

What do you think about your homeboy from South Carolina, Lindsey Graham, calling for Putin's assassination? Well, Lindsey Graham, he's a senator, one of the two senators for South Carolina. And he's always been a war hawk. I mean, he's he looks like this gay little nebish of a guy, you know? It's like if he put on a military uniform, it would just be like laughable.

But he's just like this gay seeming little nebish of a guy who nevertheless he's kind of a neocon Republican who is just he never saw a war he didn't like. You know, he just wants America to just

go out there and kick ass. And
apparently that involves Putin.

But I mean to me it's I mean that I mean
that's just his his MO. I mean that's
what Lindsey Graham does, you know? He
just calls for like violent solutions to
international problems because I mean
he's just some kind of war hawk while at
the same time he might not be able to
lift a rifle. He's he's

It's just weird. I mean, to some degree,
he's just sort of like externalizing his
frustrated attempts at masculinity or
something by being in favor of this
military aggression at every convenient
opportunity.

What was more interesting to me is why

it is that Lindsey Graham is still
uh one of the two senators of South
Carolina when he is almost universally
despised by the Republicans of South
Carolina. It was just a few years ago.
Trump had a rally in Pickin, South
Carolina, which was Lindsey Graham's
hometown not far from here. And Lindsey
Graham was booed off the stage. He's
trying to talk and he could not talk
because it was just this resounding mass
of booze until he finally just left the
stage.

So, I mean, that's to me a more
interesting question is why does he he
keep getting elected? And one reason why

Lindsey Graham keeps getting elected to the the US Senate in South Carolina is that there are no closed primaries in South Carolina. There's a lot of outcry. We need closed primaries where only registered Republicans can vote for the Republican candidates because you've got Democrats who know that South Carolina is deep red deep red state. there's not going to be uh a Democrat taking Lindsey Graham's place. So, they figure, well, Lindsey Graham is better than, you know, some like MAGA nationalist or something. So, they'll vote for him in the primaries and then vote for the Democrat in the the major election. And also, Lindsey Graham is just in with

the like the Republican establishment in Washington DC. So, he's gets lots of funding. he's just got the name recognition and just with regard to campaigning, you know, he's got all the money

and so he keeps getting elected even though people in I mean, he's just sort of like it's hard to mention his name in South Carolina without people just hissing audibly.

And I'm moving on to the next question.

Gosh, how many more questions we got?

We're kind of sort of getting down towards the bottom. We're well over halfway.

And the next question is from Ethiopian fake TIG.

An Ethiopian fake TIG says, "After you become enlightened and you won't become reincarnated again, people say you neither exist nor are you non-existent. What does this mean?" Well, again, it's like what does completely off the scale of samsara mean? How do you explain in purely samsaric terms? What is the meaning of being completely off the samsaric scale?

What is wrong with this picture? It's just completely off the scale. I mean, some people who are just like completely locked into samsara, they cannot comprehend anything besides just

samsaric fake reality, quasi reality.

Then how do you explain what is not
samsaric?

You know, if all you know is is the
English language, then how can you
understand some other language? I mean,
it's even worse than that because when
you get off the scale of I'm sorry, it's
it's just language doesn't work anymore.
So, I mean, existence and non-existence
are like a mindgenerated duality.

So you just transcend the duality.

Let's see here. Did I answer the
question? I mean I really can't be taken
20 minutes per question.

So after you become enlightened and you

won't become reincarnated again maybe
people say you neither exist nor are you
non-existent. What does this mean? Yes.
in the kalaha suta of the atikawaga of
the pseudinipata. It's a suta that that
says, you know, somebody asks, you know,
what causes existence and non-existence?
And and the Buddha's answer is a mental
state. I don't remember exactly which
mental state it was, but this mental
state causes existence and non-existence
because existence and non-existence are
like this mindgenerated duality.
It doesn't really apply to the absolute.
Doesn't really apply to ultimate truth.
So yeah, I mean you have to become
enlightened to understand this stuff.

It's people they ask question what's it like to be fully enlightened? You know, what's nibbana like? What flavor is nibbana? This kind of stuff. And it's like you just can't answer these questions.

You just talk and talk and talk to your blue in the face and still I mean the person is going to remain clueless.

If you want to know what vanilla tastes like, you have to taste vanilla. Don't just go up to somebody and ask them, "What does vanilla taste like?"

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question.

He says, "It is said that the Buddha's

kingdom, which he left, was massacred after he was enlightened and his entire family whom he left behind was murdered by another kingdom. Is this true?" Yeah, there is a um a tradition. It's in the commentaries, I think. Maybe there's like slight like mentions of it in the sutas, but it was after the Buddhist time. It was after the Buddha's parinibbana. Um, and I don't recall the exact details and it's all kind of legendary anyway, but it was like king Ajata Satu who was king of Magada if I remember correctly, which eventually became this vast empire and Ashoka was essentially an inheritor of the kingdom of Magada.

uh King Ajata Satu or some somebody
you know like maybe it was the son of
Ajata Satu. I mean it was shortly after
the Buddhist taught they wanted to marry
a Shakian princess, a Sakian princess
and the Sakias being proud you know sort
of proud nationalists
instead in sending the princess they
sent a slave girl and this prince or
king married the slave girl thinking it
was the Sakian princess and didn't
realize that he had been tricked and
just been sent a slave girl until after
the marriage. after the deed was done.
And so he got pissed off, which is kind
of understandable, and just genocided

the the city state of Capilaw Watu.

And if that legend isn't entirely true, the fact remains that Capilawatu, which was the city state that was, you know, the Buddha's home, you know, his his hometown, his home country, it did just get wiped off the map shortly after the time of the Buddha.

So, I think I answered that question.

Yeah, I don't know what I would add to that to make it a more complete question or more complete answer, I should say.

So, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's third question. He says, "You mentioned that mastering Janna gives people superpowers. What kind of superpowers did the Buddha ever

say you get from mastering the Jāṣ?" And there's like this stock block of words that you find in the sūtras mentioning it's like the six ābhaya is like you know like supernormal and um like in Burmese Añña it means like psychic powers. It generally ābhaya means mainly psychic powers. And just so happens I've got Nanota's Buddhist dictionary here. So take out this bookmark which is a call to jury duty and here it is ābhaya there's six of them so the first of the six Ābhaya and I think the the samaya pāṭha sūtra of the dharma kāya like the second sūtra of the dharma kāya goes through the list you can look it up

for yourself if you want to but the
first is let's see

h the monk enjoys various Edi wida or
magical powers is how it's translated
here. Such as being one he becomes
manifold and having become manifold he
becomes one without being obstructed he
passes through walls and mountains just
as if through the air in the earth he
dives and rises up again just as if in
water he walks on water without sinking.

Not the only person famous for doing
that. Just as if on the earth,
cross-legged, he floats through the air
just as a winged bird. With his hand, he
touches the sun and moon,
etc. Yeah, that I used to wonder about

that one. Just with your hand, you touch the sun and moon. That would that would be a tricky one. That might be one of the most difficult ones here. But I mean, it's it's sort of like, you know, multiplying your body into multiple bodies or, you know, walking on water, that kind of thing. that that all counts as one psychic power. Two, he has the dbasoto or the divine ear and it's like clare audience I think would be like the English technical term for that. He hears sounds both heavenly and human far and near. So the third one, he knows the minds of other beings by penetrating them with his own mind. So I won't read

the entire paragraph but essentially
it's mind reading. you know the minds
of other people. Four, he has dbachaku,
the divine eye. So see
essentially it's clairvoyance.

The pure one he sees he sees beings
vanishing and reappearing low and noble
ones beautiful and ugly ones sees now
beings are reappearing according to
their deeds or their karma.

So let's see five the fifth one. He
remembers manifold former existence. So
he remembers his past lives. And then
six, finally through the extinction of
all asawas or
encumbering influences
even in his very life, he enters into

the possession of deliverance of mind.

Deliverance through wisdom after having himself understood and realized it. So the the highest of all the psychic powers is simply becoming enlightened and knowing that you are enlightened.

So the first psychic power is just being able to levitate, walk on water, walk through walls, that kind of thing.

Second is the divine ear. You can hear stuff that ordinary people can't hear, including, you know, conversations going on in heaven, that kind of thing. Three, you read minds. Four, you are clairvoyant. You can see events happening far away. And also you see

people like dying and being reborn in accordance with their karma, that kind of thing. And five, you remember your own past lives. And six, you are aware of your own enlightenment.

And we've got

vertical

vertical stuff going through the blinds, hitting me in the face again.

And anyways, I got to go on to the next question now because it's in a way it's kind of a race against the clock. I would like to be done within three hours. So the next question is from

Bodhisatta 969

and he says, "What do you think of this Buddhist march for peace through the

USA? Are the leftists once again appropriating Buddhism, for example, against ICE trains and racism because they don't know what they're talking about? Or are these monks themselves leftists?"

Um, well, I already kind of discussed this in answer to a previous question, but uh, what do I think of the Buddhist March for Peace of the USA? I mean, it's harmless, you know, it's it's all Thai monks as far as I know. So, um, I mean, it it is true that it's like leftist. I remember uh my sweetheart was watching a video of these monks arriving at some town in South Carolina and spending the

night at a Methodist church with the Methodist Christians all you know just warmly welcoming them partly because it's like politically correct to you know support you know foreign non-Christians or something. I'm not sure exactly, but uh are the leftists once again appropriating Buddhism because they don't know what they're talking about or are these monks all themselves leftists? It's hard to say. I mean, Thai monks probably they're they're relatively conservative. I would guess that they're more conservative than most of the the like the American lay people of European ancestry who are supporting them. And

monks in general tend to be more conservative because of course they're following an ancient conservative tradition. I mean theravada Buddhism is the most conservative school of Buddhism and you know you don't want to be progressive in your theravada Buddhism because then it stops being theravada pretty quickly but the lay people don't really realize that they see that it's sort of a fashionable kind of a system. I mean probably most of them that are supporting these monks really like don't meditate and don't know much about Buddhism. Um the the leader of the walk who is giving the

talks to the to the masses you know it's
it's fairly straightforward. You know
he's not preaching against you know ICE
agents or anything like that. I mean
he's just giving just basic Buddhist
ethics to which is suitable for lay
people. So the whole thing strikes me as
being relatively I mean it's harmless
and I mean there's probably some good at
least it's publicizing terravada
Buddhism. You know it's it's kind of
bringing Terravada Buddhism a little
more into the mainstream by being you
know obvious. And I don't know of any
harm that it's causing. So I mean I
don't have anything bad to say about it.
I don't think that the walk for peace or

the march for peace I mean it's I don't think it's necessarily going to make the world more peaceful I mean it's not going to end any wars these monks walking from what Texas to Washington DC or wherever they're walking but I mean they have the right to do it and I don't think that they're doing anything bad by doing it and probably the the effect of this is more positive than negative so more power to them in my opinion

Let's see.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to the next question here.

This is also from Bodhisata 969, who I believe is a German fellow who I

think lives in Thailand at least some of the time. And he says, "Has your opinion of Trump changed or has it stayed the same? Is it true that his approval ratings among his voters have dropped because of Venezuela and Greenland?" My opinion about Trump has changed.

Domestically, he's certainly good, but in foreign policy, I see it as wrong to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. Firstly, anyone can claim that Maduro wasn't elected in our democratic Germany, the strongest party, the EFD, and its voters of 26% are simply excluded. This is clearly about oil and resources.

Okay.

So,

let's see. Well, one thing I'd point out about Maduro is that it was the Biden administration that put a \$25 million bounty on his head.

So, I mean, Trump is just more likely to follow through instead of just bloiating and pontificating, just saying lots of words and then not doing very much. And that is one thing that people, especially on the left and just like conservative establishment Republicans, they're they're kind of freaked out about that because Trump is actually exercising his authority and doing [__]

And I mean, not all of it is entirely

popular, of course. But let's just get back to the actual question here. Has my opinion of Trump changed or has it stayed the same? And it has changed a little bit. like this whole Greenland thing. It's like on the one hand it just seems like pro I mean it it appears superficially to be ill advised to be more or less threatening a military invasion of a territory of Denmark who is a member of NATO and presumably our ally. So it's like why is Trump threatening to invade Greenland? I mean he pretty much has done that. So that's I mean it causes a little bit of hesitation. I'm assuming I I have a you know I'm willing to give the benefit of

the doubt and assume that there is some intelligent method to the madness. You know, Trump is really into the art of the deal and just makes these outrageous asks and then finally settles for what he really wanted in the first place. And also, he's good at distracting attention. So, he just has something blow up over here while he's getting [__] done over there. So, it could be something like that, too. Although it certainly has made him much less popular amongst like the international community, especially this Greenland thing. With regard to Venezuela, like I was saying, it's like the leftists

themselves were denouncing Maduro. The Biden administration itself put a \$25 million bounty on his head. It's just that Trump being the one who's who took care of it is just all of a sudden it's this outrage. You know, if if like the Democratic Party five or 10 or 20 years ago endorsed something and then Trump does it, all of a sudden the Democratic Party now denounces it as just Gestapo tactics and so forth. It's weird. I mean, it's just like the the main position of the Democratic party appears to be just oppose anything Trump does. even if they originally endorsed it, if Trump is the one who's doing it, then it's bad.

So yeah, it it seems that Trump is kind of becoming somewhat of a loose cannon. Although still I would much prefer Trump to cultural Marxists just feminizing and castrating the United States and just subjugating it with some kind of socialist mommy state. If Trump wants to go Julius Caesar or Traan, you know, he sees that Europe is just falling, that it's it's just beyond repair at this point, so he's just going to take part of it, just like Putin is kind of trying to do the same on at the other end, then

maybe in the long run, it's a good idea.

I don't know. I really do not know what

Trump is and his administration know.

Like Marco Rubio, he's he seems to be a sharp person and relatively sane.

You know, he's involved in this, too. He must know what's going on.

So, we're just going to have to wait and see. with regard to the whole Greenland thing. With regard to Venezuela, I think that was not I mean a lot of Trump supporters don't want involvement in foreign wars, this kind of thing. But I mean, just going in in one night snatching this guy without taking a single casualty, I mean that was just a message to the world that American

military might is back. there's going to be no more of those botched withdrawals from Afghanistan, that the American military is numero uno on this planet at present. And he was just demonstrating that and that is from a a nationalist American point of view. I mean, that can be a good thing. You know, he's I have to admit, I mean, love Trump or hate Trump, he's got more coahones than than any president since Theodore Roosevelt. I mean, he just gets [_] done. I mean, it's it's like he's willing to to break eggs and just tip over apple carts and and all kinds of

things, make waves.

But I mean, it's people like that that wind up being like in the history books as like great leaders or at least very consequential leaders and just the establishment just doesn't know how to deal with it. I mean, their their purpose is to like nurse problems and keep saying that they're going to fix it and collect taxes in order to fix it and then they just don't do anything or just make it worse. And Trump just doesn't go that This is the first time in decades that net immigration into the United States has reached zero. And that's one of the reasons that people voted for him.

So, my opinion of Trump has changed a little bit. I mean, the whole Greenland thing especially is uh it just is seems weird to me. I don't fully understand it. I don't even understand what Trump's real motives are for doing this, but there very well could be some really intelligent method to the madness.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cyrus Frame, one of the few people who asks questions on Rumble.

And Cyrus Frame says, and I'm starting to get a little bit horse. This is turning into a long one. Cyrus Frame says, "It seems to me that

much of the Buddhist cannon is a corruption of what the Buddha actually said and meant. For example, in the Atakawaga, the word nibbana is not used. Instead, the verb form nibati or nibi to blow out is used. An equivalent word would be to extinguish. Not exactly."

That that was my addition, my little commentarial addition there. I continue. It does not make sense to turn that word into a noun like extinguishment as after a fire is extinguished the fire is gone. That is different from for example to judge where after that is done a judgment exists. I think that in the latter text or the later texts they took what is a process and turned it into a

thing so reified it. This this later led to people feeling the need to create the two truths doctrine in my mind directly contradicting the Buddha when he said there is but one truth not a second in the chula wuyuasuta in the atakawaga.

What do you think? Okay. Well, there's a few things here. Let's see here. Well, when he says it seems to me that much of the Buddhist cannon is a corruption of what the Buddha actually said it meant.

Yeah, I agree with that. I mean, I would I would I mean, I wouldn't be completely outraged at a claim that 80% of it or more than 80% of it is a corruption of what the Buddha actually said and meant.

Um, and then he says in the atakawaga, the word nibbana is not used. Instead, the verb form nibati or nibi, which literally means to blow out. An equivalent word would be to extinguish. No, that's not really the same. I mean that's just getting stuck in in like English, you know, you're trying to to uh translate just from from poly into English and it's not a direct translation because the connotations and the the meanings the understanding of the the words and everything are not the same between ancient North India and modern America.

So blowing out I mean it doesn't mean I mean it's it's I don't want to get into

the whole discussion of like ancient Indian understanding of fire but I mean it was like fire pervaded everything you know fire was the god ugný the fire was this immortal god and when the fire blew out it simply became unmanifest it wasn't like it died

I mean that's one way of looking at it anyway.

So anyways, let's see here. It does not make sense to turn that word into a noun like extinguishment as after the fire is extinguished, the fire is gone. Well, I mean, you need to bear in mind that there's two meanings of the word nibbana or nirvana. There is nirvana as an

ethical state and nirvana as a metaphysical state. as an ethical state. Yeah, it can mean just the moment of cessation or blowing out or whatever, you know, however you want to define it. You know, that's this ethical state. It's like the moment of becoming enlightened is nibbana. But then as a metaphysical state, that's the absolute. And the absolute, especially in early Buddhism, you just did not want to go there. But it's so difficult to deal with like the goal of Buddhism or like trying to to like even discuss reality without having words for it which of course like degrades it you know you're sort of reifying it dragging it into the

level of samsara but I mean to some degree it's just unavoidable from a philosophical point of view and ancient north Indian Buddhists were definitely philosophical they're having all kinds of philosophical arguments and hypotheses and debates and theories and all this practically from the get-go.

So let's see here that is different from an example to to judge where after that is done a judgment exists. I think then in the later text they took what is a process and turned it into a thing so reify it. Well, even the process, even considering

it to be a process would be reified. But I think what he means is that you're sort of conflating the two meanings of Nirvana, the ethical meaning and the metaphysical meaning.

You know, like metaphysical meaning like in poly would be nibbana datu, the element of nibbana.

So let's see here. This later led to people feeling the need to create the two truths doctrine.

in my mind directly contradicting the Buddha when he said there's but one truth. No, because the two truth doctrine is talking about conventional truth which is all truth can be put into words really and then you got the

ultimate truth which is beyond language
and conventional truth or worldly
samsaric kind of truth is not ultimately
true. is just accepted as true by
unenlightened people or maybe even by
enlightened people just as skillful
means as as a way of communicating
but really there is just ultimate truth
is the only real truth and you can't put
it into words but then later
philosophers really you know in order to
talk about it and what better thing is
there to talk about I guess in the minds
of philosophers is I mean in order to
talk about you got to use words which
dragging it down into

into some sic language reifying it etc.

So

yeah, when when the Buddha said there is
but one truth, he's referring to

ultimate truth and that is true. There's

I mean even to say that it's one I mean

you're already when you it's if it's

ultimate truth you can't describe it in

words is just hopeless. It reminds me of

the sins Ming supposedly composed by the

third patriarch of Chinese Zen Buddhism

who said all we can say is not two

because one and zero sort of like in

Hegel's dialectic they just merge

together

infinity and nothing pure being and pure

non-being. They just cannot be

distinguished. They just they're
synonymous essentially.

So

what do I think? Well, I've kind of
given a commentary to this that there's
two meanings of [—] One is just the
moment of enlightenment, which is an
ethical definition. And the other one is
what it is that is attained in a sense.
I mean, you don't just cease to exist.
You don't just poof, you know, and then
there's no more you or no more
appearance of you or anything like that.
But again, I'm trying to describe and
I mean it really is just like a kind of
dilemma with no solution.

People are just going to continue asking what's Nibana like, you know, and it just it just doesn't work.

Once you open your mouth and start talking about it, you're just dealing at the level of conventional truth, which isn't ultimate truth anymore. But that doesn't mean that there is no ultimate truth even though you cannot possibly utter it.

Oh man,
it it does get a little frustrating sometime.

So let's see here.

Yeah, the people feeling the need to create the two truths doctrine. I mean even they knew that conventional truth

isn't really true. It's just considered true by the majority of humans.

So I mean that's not a contradiction at all because even the formulators of the two truth doctrine assuming that it wasn't the Buddha himself

um they knew that conventional truth or simuti satcha is not the same as ultimate truth or paramata satcha and thus isn't really entirely true

but I do agree that let's see much of the Buddhist cannon is a corruption of what the Buddha actually said and meant and especially getting to Mahayana where almost all of it is just invented hundreds of years later.

This word is being put into the Buddha's mouth.

So if you include all Buddhist scriptures, then we'd be fortunate if 1% of it actually represents what the Buddha really said, which is unfortunate.

But at least we're not lagging anymore.

Maybe just a teensy bit.

And I'm moving on to the next question also from Cyrus Frame. He says, "My second related question regards the fact that in the Atakawaga, the sage is often described as someone who does not rely even on damas. For example, damop desitas

and that aay is an archaic suffix that

is not found in regular poly which indicates one of the indications of the extreme antiquity of these sutas.

But I continue here also no philosophies are received by them. If nibbana is a thing or a category it would be a dharma. I understand one description of nibbana is something that is unconditioned which is inherently without categories. But a noun by definition is a thing and that infers categories. Yeah. I mean conventional truth you got to use words. But I continue here with his question. A sage would avoid the process of categorizing. We nichī kupi jantuil

which is a person makes a discrimination in the world quote unquote but not the sage. It seems to me that these conceptual entanglements are unnecessary and arise because of reification. What is your opinion on this? Well if you don't reify it at least linguistically you can't say a [__] thing about it. See that's the problem. You're tr like the the goal of Buddhism is to transcend samsara but all language and all ideas and all explanations are necessarily samsaric. So how do you explain the transcendence of samsara in 100% necessarily samsaric terms? Again it's just this dilemma and people just keep insisting especially

intellectual type people who are just stuck in intellect. I mean, they don't just use it as a tool. They're it's like they're enslaved to it. They're it's like a a mental prison. Maybe a really comfortable one, the most comfortable one they they can they can think of or come have come across. But still, it's like a a a cage and the door is unlocked and people don't even try the door to get out in most cases.

But let's see here. I think the main problem with this this question is regard to the the meaning of the word dharma because the word dhamma has many

different definitions and you have to decide through context what the definition is and I've got dhamas translated as philosophies in my translation of the yacht because that's apparently what it means when it says the sage doesn't go by dhamas it means he's not like attached to a philosophy in in his practice or in his his his life in his what beliefs he shouldn't have that kind of thing.

So no philosophies are received by that means he doesn't cling to any theories. I mean you can you have to have so long as you're not enlightened yet especially you have to have some kind of belief system or theories but it's like there's

a difference between holding it in an open hand as a convenient working hypothesis and then or else just on the other hand just clinging to it. Oh, the other hand, clinging to it and insisting only this is true. Anything else is wrong, which is the way people generally operate because they think that their beliefs are true and therefore any other beliefs that are contradictory to their beliefs are necessarily false and wrong. And if they're an intolerant sort of person, they might actually try to shut down these people that are saying what is false and wrong. So mainly it's it's just saying that a

monk is not just like stuck in like
theoretical ideas

that he's dealing with reality.

Especially if he's an enlightened sage,
no longer caught up in the massive
words.

He's not making judgments.

So let's see here.

Yeah. I mean, if if you really don't
want the word nibbana misused, then you
just can't use the word nibbana
because nibbana is a samsaric word.

Sort of like the word verb is a noun.

And so it's like you can't really insist
that a process be dealt with only with
verbs because just the way the human
mind works, it divides things up into

subject and predicate into noun and verb
into temporal aspect or like spatial
aspect and temporal aspect. It's just
like this weird quirk of human mentality
and language is just caught up in that
might be unfortunate but that's just the
way it is. So if you don't want like
delusional ideas about nibbana, you just
don't don't use the term because it's
unavoidable if you do.

And I should probably move on to the
next question. And we're getting close
to the bottom here. Fear not. Although
you guys have the advantage of you can
just look down at the the bar and see
see how many hours the whole thing is

and how far we are into it.

You got the advantage on me on that one.

So anyways, next question is from Ruie.

And at up till this morning, this was the last question, but then somebody is squeaked in. You know, it's like in the movies when the big the big metal door is coming down. You got the person that just kind of slides or rolls under right at the last minute.

Last questions are like that.

So anyways, Ruie says, "Do you think disqu would be a viable translation for duka?" And I mean, I've never seen disqu used in a translation. We're lagging again. I've never seen disqu used as a translation for Duka. I do think there

are probably better translations for Dooka. I think my own preferred uh rendering of unease. I mean, it's similar disqu and unease, you know, there, you know, there's heck of a lot of overlap, you know, being ill at ease, you know.

So yeah, disqu I guess. But um I mean disqu is kind of a laughable term for like unbearable agony, unease, I guess. Also, I mean that's why suffering is usually used.

Suffering. I mean it has its faults, but all in all it may be I mean it's one of the best translations in English. I prefer suffering to a John Teniso's uh

rendering of stress.

Venerable Ajan Tenisro, I think he always translates duka as stress, unless maybe it just obviously means like physical pain in that context or something and he might might render it as pain. But I mean, if you want to use disqu and it works for you, then it's your call.

Although I still prefer unease and even just suffering the usual translation still it's fairly workable. It still it still works.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question which is our last questioner but he asked three questions. This is fifth although really he's he's

last as I just mentioned. Fifth says,
"In episode 36,
that's quite a while ago. In episode 36,
you mentioned you were under
investigation by Burmese secret police
at one point. What was the reason
that you think you were under
suspicion?" Well, yeah, that was fairly
obvious. I knew exactly why I was under
suspicion. There was a just this
mindblowingly rascal of mind-blowing
rascal of a monastery attendant who was
among other things stealing stuff from
the monastery and selling it in town for
his own personal profit. He was cutting
down teak teak trees and then selling

the teik in town or just like pilfering things from the monastery that people had donated and selling them in town and pocketing the money. And so I mean especially with regard to cutting the trees, I was I I mean I scolded him. I warned him. Told him to stop doing it. couple of times I was just yelling at him just stop cutting down the trees and he'd be, "Oh, this is this isn't a useful tree. This is doesn't have any fruit on it or anything." It's like it was like a wildlife refuge and it was literally illegal to be cutting green trees in that area. But he just kept doing it and because he was like a monastery attendant, people weren't on

his case except for me. I was definitely on his case. So finally I just kicked him out. I just threw him out of the monastery just in a rage that time. I mean I was so I was so angry at him at that time. I I I left for something. I had to go get my visa renewed or something. I come back and there's like stumps everywhere. He just went nuts cutting down just so many trees he had chopped down in this wildlife refuge. And then he was just selling the the wood and pocketing the money for his own use.

So I was so mad at him that time that I mean I just was I was I had forgotten

how to speak Burmese and I was too angry to remember how to speak Burmese. So I was in a way I was almost just bellowing at him incoherently and just chased him out of the monastery and wouldn't let him come back.

And so he had his heart set on living at that monastery. you know, his family had been supporters of that monastery for for decades, apparently, and he just felt like he had authority over the place. That's one reason why he just kind of ignored my warnings and and scoldings and so forth. And so, after I kicked him out and it became obvious that I wasn't going to change my mind because his first strategy was just try

to ease his way back in again, you know,
wait till I wasn't mad at him anymore
and ease his way back in. But he just
didn't know me very well. that wasn't
going to work because he was just a
complete I mean it was just mind-blowing
because on the one hand I mean he's
insisting he wants to live at a Buddhist
monastery you know he was he was living
there just being like the monastery
attendant and every night he'd be like
chanting you know meta to all beings and
reciting Abidama and so forth while at
the same time he was just this
outrageous crook of a guy you know it's
some kind dissociation between the

religious part of his mind and just the
the crook part of his mind. So what
happened was after he realized I wasn't
going to let him come back, he just went
to the like the military dictatorship,
the local office of the federal
government in town and reported me as a
political agitator. So, I was under um
yeah, I was under investigation on
political charges by the the Burmese
secret police, like the military
intelligence and stuff, but they could
see clearly enough. I mean, I'm living
alone in a forest
and just minding my own business a lot
of the time, not even coming out of the
cave to meet visitors. So, it's it would

pretty obvious that I wasn't really a political agitator.

So, I mean, they did a a reasonably good job of investigating me and they they saw that that I it's hardly likely that I was a political agitator. I mean, if I was a Burmese citizen, they might have just arrested me anyway just to make sure, but being a US citizen does have its advantages. You probably have more rights in Burma as an American citizen than as a Burmese one.

But yeah, that's the reason why I was under suspicion was just because this this rascal of a crook trying to to get me kicked out of the monastery, trying

to disappear me so he could move back in, just went to the the military dictatorship central office in town and and reported me for being a political agitator.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fifth's next question.

How long did it take you to get comfortable with longer meditation sessions?

Well, um

before I became a monk, it was a struggle to sit for 30 minutes.

I'd have like this kitchen timer. I'd set it for 30 minutes and I'd light some incense and it was just a struggle. I mean, my mind is very restless. Kind of

a supercharged kind of a mind sometimes, especially when I was younger. Just kind of nervous restlessness, a lot of agitation. No, what is it called? Od odacha. That's the poly word. Udacha. Udacha. Okay. So, just kind of like restless agitation. My mind was subject to that. And so, it was a struggle just to sit for 30 minutes. I'd light an incense stick and then I'd think, man, this is taking forever. I'd open my eyes and like the incense stick wasn't even halfway burned down yet. You know, it was difficult until I became a monk. And then when you become a monk and it's like it's my sacred duty to do this,

it's like your
your perspective changes and your
motives are like kind of
I don't know what's the word just kind
of reinforced,
you know? It's like I've got to do this.
It's no more just kind of dabbling being
amateurish. It's like this is my sacred
duty. I'm gonna strive for
enlightenment. And so you just muscle
through it, you know. So it became e way
easier after I became a monk. You know,
I could sit for two hours. I didn't do
it very often, but I I was able to do it
in full lotus. So,
but it wasn't always necessarily
comfortable. It's just that when you

your like your motives change, your perceptions change, then it just becomes more doable. It's like the story I told about my father. Um

his legs started turning black when I was a kid. So he went to the doctor and the doctor said that um he had a he was a long shoreman. loaded logs onto ships as as a profession and one of the logs rolled over his leg and crushed his leg a little bit and there was capillary damage in that leg. And my father smoked two packs of cigarettes a day. And so it was tar building up in these damaged capillaries that was causing his leg to turn black. So the doctor told him, "You

have two choices. You can stop smoking or we're going to have to amputate your leg."

And my father had tried to stop smoking on numerous occasions. You know, he'd stop, then maybe after a month, you know, he'd start chewing a little tobacco, maybe start smoking a pipe, and next thing you know, he's back to two two packs of cigarettes a day again. But then all it takes is this change in circumstances and it's like once it was clear to him the choice is stop smoking or have one leg then all of a sudden even though the like the addiction urges and so forth were the same. It was just easier to resist.

And it was kind of like that becoming a monk when I mean meditation for half hour just sitting still for half an hour is like this herculean effort as a lay person. Um I mean if if you're at a meditation retreat when you don't want to be shamed by being the first person to just get up and walk out. You know you can't hack it when everybody else can. I mean that can that kind of modifies your intentions or your motivations also.

But it was just sort of it just kind of automatically happened when I became a monk or once or twice at a meditation, you know, the few meditation retreats I

attended before I became a monk where it's just the situation has changed now and just quitting early is no longer an option. So you just stick through it and then it just gets easier because you're just used to it and it becomes more or less habitual.

So

the last question of this Q&A

also from fifth who is also last.

Any tips on someone relatively new to weasa meditation?

Question mark. It seems like sometimes during a meditation session I get really in the zone and then I just lose it.

It's kind of like off and on. I'm sure I just need more practice, but I can

already see it. It's improving my mood throughout the day. So, the actual question here, any tips on someone relatively new to weasa meditation?

Well, it helps to go to a retreat. I mean, that it can help. It usually does to attend a formal retreat with a meditation instructor. And like I was saying just a few minutes ago, you know, you have kind of a a peer group pressure of, you know, you sit there like like everybody else is doing. You don't want to be the wimp, the only person to get up and walk out because you can't hack it. That kind of thing.

Um,

there was a dog underneath.

But let's see here.

Uh,

yeah. Yeah, I mean the whole thing with

with vipassana is whatever arises you

note it and let it go. You know sad

but I really don't like the term

weasa meditation because it's it's not

really what it is. Weasa is something

that arises spontaneously

often as a result of meditation but

sometimes it has you know it's not the

result of meditation or it can even be

the result of samatha meditation.

So I mean that's just kind of a niggle.

I don't particularly like the term weasa

meditation. I would prefer mindfulness

meditation or sad patana meditation and the whole purpose of that is whatever arises you note it. You know it's like you you hate meditating at you know you're having like these feelings of just oh god I hate this. You just observe it and let it go. Your knee hurts observe it and let it go. You're wondering what that noise is outside. You observe it and let it go. You know ideally you hear the noise. It's just like the sound goes in and just remains unprocessed auditory data and just goes out the other ear. I mean, you just watch it go by.

The the watching part is itself going to

eventually be transcended by just seeing without making any effort to watch. It's just effortless seeing. That's even better.

But really, it's just whatever arises, you just note it and let it go. You get pissed off, note it and let it go.

That's that's kind of tricky because you know it's like it's not just going to go away. You're going to have to note it and let it go repeatedly. Especially like pain in your knee. I mean that can just become the whole meditation pain. It's like when I was at Pandarama that was and that was one of my main meditation objects is you know you're sitting several hours a day for two

months especially after the first couple weeks. you know, you got an ankle screaming in agony or a knee or a hip joint screaming in agony or you're starting to get like a bed sore on your behind from sitting so much that's it that hurts like a son of a [_] Then I mean you just watch that and I mean you're not fighting against it. That doesn't help. That's not meditation. You just observe it and observe it. What does it feel like? You know, it's just it's sort of like after a while you realize that the the dislike of the pain which is actually causing the suffering is different. And I mean you can just

observe it like it's it just becomes
like a a flashing red light or
something. still hurts, but it's like
you've kind of
h kind of overcome this automatic
like reaction of aversion.

But I mean at first you just have to
watch the aversion for the pain. You
watch the pain, you watch the aversion
for the pain.

So yeah, I mean that's really what
so-called vipassana meditation is about. I
mean it's like usually you'll be sitting
there watching your breath and then if
anything else comes up anything more
noticeable than the breath comes up then
you watch that you note it you let it go

and then when that is has run its course
which might be I mean if it's just
wondering what that sound is outside I
mean that just might be a matter of one
second or if it's the pain in your knee
it could just be the the whole rest of
the the meditation session but I mean
you just note it you just observe that
what does it feel like what's it? You
know, what what are the characteristics
of this? You know, in a way you can kind
of deconstruct it, especially in the
early stages of meditation,
you know, kind of beginning level.
But he says here, I get really I get
really in the zone and then I just lose

it. It's kind of like off and on. Yeah,
it was it was like that for me also.

I mean, the offs and the ons are going
to gradually get better. you know, your
best will continue to get better and
your worst will generally probably get
better,

but you just stick with it. It's like
your your sacred duty. I mean, if you
look at it that way, it makes it easier.

So,

I guess I I kind of rambled about that
for a few minutes and I guess I sort of
answered it. So, I guess we're done. By
golly, and it's still technically less
than three hours.

Although it probably be more than three

hours by the time I'm done using the
saying the usual stuff at the end like
as I should usually say at the beginning
and have said only once to my knowledge.
If you think I can answer a question
about

Dharma or Dharma, early Buddhism,
Theravada Buddhism, Buddhism in general,
meditation, you know, Burma,
my my own life personally, no questions
about my genitalia, please,
then

feel free to ask. No more than three
questions per person, per episode,
please. and like and subscribe if you
find anything of value in this.

And uh check out the URL links below
which would include links to my books
and I am working on a fourth one. Um I
can't make any promises with that uh at
present however. And uh last but not
least, be happy.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to take two of question and answer number 190. I am your host Po Basa and this is my primary designated beverage with the emergency backup beverage being this one.

And it's take two because as usual it seems I forgot to plug in the computer and had to go and get the cord and everything.

So fortunately I noticed it before I get the warning window popping up on the computer saying that the battery is about ready to go dead.

And we've got relatively few questions, like about 20 this time, possibly

because people are just like hunkered down preparing for the storm that's sweeping across the eastern United States at present. And if this video is late in being uploaded, it will be because the storm has knocked out the electricity or the internet or something.

But thus far things are relatively calm and we don't have any snow or anything yet. No half inch of ice coating everything yet as they are predicting.

And South Carolina is currently in a designated state of emergency.

But

I guess it doesn't even really matter.

At least not to you guys if you're not

here.

And of course 180 is not a prime number.

is in fact $2 * 2 * 3 * 3 * 5$.

So

do with that what you will.

And let's see here. I mean

I may not be at my best this evening

because I didn't get much sleep last

night. Still there's the the

disturbance in the forest which is now

manifesting outwardly as as like weather

disruptions and so forth. And uh I had a

like a heavy dinner so that uh I'm like

the lion that's stuffed with fresh zebra

that just kind of wants to lie there.

But when the lion has to do a Q&A, I

mean, he just has to sit up and roar out the Q&A, I guess.

So, I guess without any uh further um babbling, rambling,

whatever you want to call it, I'm just going to start answering questions here, or at least trying to answer questions because there are a few kind of sticky ones in this relatively short list.

Anyway, the first question is from Xenithoid. And Xenithoid says, "I've seen a few philosophers put forward the idea that the idea of moral actions influencing karma is simply a teaching for the masses to keep society functional, while karma is really simply cause and effect on a more grand and

esoteric scale. This makes sense to me because morality cannot be made completely objective and the universe seems to be indifferent to any particular moral code except for survival of the fittest. Thoughts on this?

Well, it seems to me that the philosophers who put forward the idea that the idea of moral actions influencing karma is simply a teaching for the masses to keep society functional are the same people that are mostly the same people that just say religion in general is just kind of a social tool to keep people under

control, that kind of thing. And so they tend to be like superficial materialist types. So I don't know how xenithoid thinks that these same people think that karma is uh cause and effect on a on a esoteric scale because the people who think that like religion and like morals are just a social construct.

I mean they tend not to have much use for the esoteric

um you know they just tend to be like followers of materialistic scientism.

So there's that that's a thought on this.

Um then Zenithoid says this makes sense to him because morality cannot be made completely objective. And I mean from

the Buddhist point of view morality is subjective.

You know, it's it's objective in the sense that you can observe like patterns, repeating patterns with regard to human psychology.

And that's really what morality is based on in Buddhism. It's not some decree from some deity. It's just based on human psychology. Anything that you do motivated by attraction, aversion or delusion is going to like reinforce that and it's going to just kind of lead you away from enlightenment which from the Buddhist point of view is unskillful or immoral or unh wholesome bad karma.

Anything that reduces your greed, hate and delusion is wholesome. So I mean that's that's really what Buddhist morality is based on. and karma. I mean to say that it's just a cultural construct is I mean it's people who don't understand it would say that people that really don't have any spiritual depth to them maybe or at least in most cases people that are just superficial materialists and like a lot of them that just say well you know it's like the government wants you to be religious so it's easier to control you that kind of stuff. There's you'll see a lot of that on the internet, especially in certain dark corners of the internet.

But I mean, it's just an observation, it seems to me, based primarily on ignorance of human nature in particular. And there's just the idea that some sorrow is is just based on like clinging to greed, hate, and delusion. The three so-called poisons, attraction, aversion, and semiconscious stupidity. Loba, dosa, and moa.

So, I mean, karma is habit energy. Karma is volition. I mean I mean if you just go with the definition that karma is volition or karma is will then I mean you can't really say that karma is something else I mean if that's how

karma is defined then that's it then if you say well that's not karma then you'd say well I mean will doesn't exist either or some some such or you would just say that will has absolutely no effect on the quality of your life.

But like a superficial

a superficial like example of karma that even most materialistic types would have to accept is just force of habit. It's just this force of habit that acts as a kind of autopilot that drives us through life. Of course, you have to take steps away from like scientism in order to get into a deeper, more metaphysical interpretation of karma where this world is a manifestation of mind and it's your

knee-jerk habits. You know, it's just your your reflex. Forget reflex. It's just this force of habit that is just just creating your world in just this kind of regular way. And it's not necessarily good because all of your mental states aren't good. You know, it's like you're asleep at night. You're sometimes even good people will have nightmares.

And this is just a kind of dream state that is at a higher level of consciousness than like a sleeping dream.

And I'm starting to just wallow in metaphysics right off the bat. It's it's

good sometimes to have an easy question.
But I do try to answer these questions
more or less in chronological order like
the order in which they were asked
roughly.

So let's see. I mean do I have more
thoughts on this?

A few philosophers put forward the idea
that moral actions influencing karma.

Okay. Okay. Well, I mean, all right.

Simply a teaching for the masses to keep
society functional. Yeah. Yeah. That's I
mean, most atheistic types who have like
this superficial understanding of
samsara, think samsara is reality. They
often adopt this point of view that just
religion in general, religious beliefs

in general or just superstitions that are in place in society to keep people under control, keep the ignorant masses, the superstitious rabble under control.

And

I don't buy it. I mean, to some degree, I suppose, but that's really not the highest manifestation of dharma.

So

yeah, morality cannot be made completely objective unless I mean you're not going to be able to scientifically analyze it very well other than analyzing human nature and that certain kinds of acts tend towards like more agitated,

more delusional mental states. Other kinds of acts tend more towards calmer, more enlightened mental states. Although enlightened probably isn't a very scientific term.

Let's see. The universe seems indifferent to any particular moral code except for survival of the fittest.

Well, that's not a moral code either, I suppose. But the universe seems indifferent to any particular moral code. But human psychology follows like observable patterns. I mean, you can't just walk up to somebody and just kick them as hard as you can without like agitated,

very messed up mental states going on.

Even if it's your job to do that, you know, it's like for I mean, just like deleting your own mother. How could anybody do that without all kinds of psychological mayhem going on that's going to mess up their life to some degree? I mean, there's going to be different different levels of that. At one end, you've got like Lizzy Bordon, allegedly, and at the other end, you've just got like the grieving son or daughter who just has the doctor pull the plug on the life support machine. And so, I mean, there's going to be gradations of how messed up your

mind is going to be, but almost nobody is going to be able to terminate the life of one of their parents in a completely serene, calm, you know, just unaggitated state of mind.

And your state of mind conditions the world you live in. I mean, even from a superficial scientific point of view, it's like people who are more freaked out about getting a disease are more likely to get a disease. People who are more freaked out and afraid of being mugged are going to obviously be freaked out enough that muggers will like, what's the word? Target them. You know, somebody who's just swaggering along, like swaggering along like they own the

street is much less likely to be
attacked by a mugger than someone who's
obviously afraid and just trying to
scurry down the sidewalk
as fast as they can because they feel
like they're they're in danger. They're
already stressed out. they're already
like halfway to victimhood already.

You know, sort of like the lion or the
hyena is going to selectively target the
the the the young and the sick, the
weak, you know, you don't target the
strong.

So, I mean, they're like superficial
elementary examples of karma in action
that even like

some superficial materialist would have to accept to some degree.

But then you get into you'd have to get into like

uh like theoretical quantum physics or something to kind of get into the realm of mind is affecting physical systems.

You know the observer perceiving the world helps to kind of lock the world into place in a certain way. You know you can you can follow that route I suppose.

But just to say that, you know, a belief in morals and karma is just a way to control the ignorant superstitious masses is really just a kind of ignorant idea in my opinion.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. And I don't know how well I did justice to that. You know, I'm just starting off, you know, this very first question and I've got to kind of wade into metaphysics and that sort of thing.

So the next question is from Phil's and Phil says, "Would you say you're more enlightened than the average Joe on the street? Or is it that you're either completely enlightened or completely not?" As I've noticed some of the Zen men believe. Yeah. Some of the Zen men will say that you're both at the same time. That everyone is enlightened and

unenlightened. depending on how you look at it. You look at it from the absolute point of view and we're all essentially just manifestations of nirvana or some such. Whereas you look at it from a samsuric point of view and everybody is wallowing in samsara. You know, you look at the world through enlightened eyes, you see enlightenment. You look at the world through unenlightened eyes and you see samsara.

Or as St. Paul says in the New Testament, to the pure man all things are pure.

So I mean you could just say like pa wisdom

you know instead of saying more

enlightened than somebody else you could just say maybe closer to enlightenment which means essentially the same thing I guess or just have more discernment or some such and I would guess yeah that I mean from a certain point of view in certain ways I have cultivated pa or wisdom more than most other people in this world. But then with regard to certain other things like some people are just very people oriented even though they might be relatively foolish in certain ways they might have the patience of Job with regard to their fellow man more so than I do.

So it isn't just a number just like an

IQ number something like that. the wisdom quotient or some such. I mean, even IQ, it's it's you can divide it up into like spatial intelligence and verbal intelligence and that sort of thing.

So, yeah, in some ways I when if you're at the samsaric level, the relative conditional level, in some ways I'm wiser than the average person.

So

yeah, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Romeo.

And this is kind of a a simple sort of straightforward kind of question. Maybe I should have started with, but I'm going to have to get up and open the

door because it's getting hot in here. I don't know. It's like the humidity is going up because the storm is going to hit soon or something.

Okay,

excuse me.

So, this question is from Romeo, as I've already specified. And Romeo says, "I don't know about where you live in South Carolina, but around my way in crazy New York City,

a sizable part of the population are still wearing those pandemic masks despite Biden ending the emergency declaration like three years ago.

At my job, which is not a hospital, some

of my co-workers wear a mask if they have a common cold. I have heard that not I've heard that not only don't these masks protect you from much, but they act as a face diapers and trap in germs that would normally be expelled. As someone with an educational background in biology, do you see any benefit or justification for everyday citizens still walking around wearing these masks?

Well,

I mean, surgeons still wear masks in the operating room. I'm pretty sure. So, I mean, if it was completely useless, I doubt that they'd be wearing the mask. But, of course, they wear like special

surgical masks that are designed to prevent microbes from escaping, like when they accidentally cough or sneeze during the operation.

Just a regular piece of cloth, like tying a handkerchief over your face, wouldn't be nearly as effective, I'm sure. I I assume it would reduce to some degree the sputum that sprays out when you cough or sneeze and creates like an aerosol of droplets in the air. I assume it would reduce that to some degree.

And the first time I ever saw people wearing like masks when they had a cold, I think was in Japan. I went to Japan in the early 1990s.

And you know, you'd see most people wouldn't be wearing masks, but every once in a while you'd see someone wearing a mask and probably they had a cold and they were just trying not to spread the cold to other people.

Um, let's see. What's the question, though?

Do I see any benefit or justification for everyday citizens still walking around wearing these masks? Um, I mean, at the very least, you're it's like a a signal to other people that you're sick, you know, so then they can see, "Oh, that person's wearing a mask. I'm going to steer clear of that person lest I catch their disease." So, I mean,

there's that. I assume that's one of the main benefits of the people wearing the face masks in Japan when they have a cold is it's just sort of a warning to other people that uh they've got a cold and you know you might want to not get too close to them or something.

But

um I mean if you're just cautious, you know, you can catch yourself before you cough or sneeze. And when you do cough or sneeze, if you don't have a hanky handy, you just cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm. And I mean, that's that's seems to work well enough. That's what I do anyway.

Um, so I guess you you could say there's
some

slight benefit at least in wearing
masks, but I mean there's also certain
detriments to wearing the masks. that uh
may counterbalance any benefit. And
that's for each person to decide. It
seems to me

I didn't like wearing masks during the
whole pandemic thing. I had to wear a
when I was I was riding a train from
California to South Carolina and I had
to wear a mask the whole way and it it
sucked. I didn't like it at all. it
just, you know, top of your ears where
the strap is on it, it it starts to
really hurt and

I don't know.

So, yeah, I would guess that I mean, with regard to um infecting yourself, you can't really infect yourself. So, you've got the mask on, you sneeze with the mask on, and then the mask gets like gooey or something. I mean, it's not going to make you more sick so long as you change the mask every day, you know, at least once a day. And it may reduce to some degree, like I said, the spray coming out.

But I would guess the main benefit to it is just it's like a um you know, if everyone's not wearing a mask, then you know, it's people will

see, well, this person's got a cold, so I won't try to shake hands with them or anything.

Uh, okay. I guess I answered that one.

I'm just going to move on to Romeo's second question along the same theme here. He says, "Do you ever see a time when these perpetual mask wearers take off their masks or is this new normal permanent for them?" So, I mean, I'm not sure. I mean, I have seen people in in South Carolina, a few who still just wear masks. Um, I assume at least some of them aren't sick. you know, it's just they're germaphobes or something and they just don't want to get sick. So, they go out in public, they go to

Walmart or whatever wearing masks. And probably a lot of these are not the healthiest people.

And so, you know, instead of living a healthier lifestyle, they just, you know, put a a band-aid or in this case a mask over the problem.

Um, but I mean, it's it's hard to say. I mean, like in Japan, people who have a cold might still be wearing masks. They did in early 90s, probably other countries also.

So, I mean, I'm not exactly sure if Romeo is referring to that kind of people or just people who are just wearing a mask all the time in public

now for fear of infection.

And

yeah, I I would assume if the culture changes then I mean the norms will change for better or for worse. So it could become more or less in the future depending on whether society becomes healthier in a psychological sense or unhealthier and more just kind of fearful of germs, that kind of thing.

I mean, when I was a kid, it was you and you think about what life is going to be like in 2026 and a lot of people would think, well, the ozone layer is going to be gone. Everyone's going to have to be wearing hazmat suits because of all the air pollution and lack of an ozone layer

and all that. Very least we're going to be wearing gas masks and have any exposed skin coated with like zinc compound or some such, but we haven't got there yet.

Let's see.

Yeah. I mean, do I ever see a time when perpetual mask wearers take their masks off? I mean, it's gonna it's going to depend on just the direction that culture takes. And I assume the the system is kind of self-healing.

And so

there there is a good chance that this kind of paranoia and and whatever you want to call it, people who are just

always afraid of catching somebody else's disease and so they're just kind of, you know, going Howard Hughes on the world.

Then I mean, if you don't know who Howard Hughes was, he had obsessivempulsive disorder. And in his final months, he was a complete germaphobe and was just locked into a hotel room with a few trusted servants bringing him prepackaged meals with like rubber gloves on and so forth because he was completely freaked out about germs. So, I mean, we're just going to have to wait and see. I'm not very good at prophesying cultural trends.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Romeo also.

Along the same theme, how do you suggest I react should someone, a micromanaging supervisor, hypervigilant co-orker, or general busybody, urges me to wear one of these masks when I am sick?

Well,

personally, I would appeal to company policy. I mean, if it's your boss, then I mean, it may be prudent, at least when you're sick, to wear a mask, especially if it's like a a real surgical mask that may actually prevent viruses or other microbes, pathogens from entering the atmosphere,

from your orifices.

Um, I mean, what is company policy? I mean, you could appeal the company policy and if it doesn't say you have to, then you might politely with meta in your heart point that out to them and that say that you do take precautions. For example, you sneeze into the crook of your arm or into a hanky rather than just spraying it across the room.

But

how you react would depend on the circumstances, I assume. You know, it's like set and setting and and who it is you're you're interacting with and and why and how and all that. But I mean, I would be reluctant to have to start

wearing a mask unless there's a very good reason for it like company policy or your boss demanding that you do it or people like clients complaining, that kind of thing.

So yeah, I'd stand politely stand your ground. Um, unless there's some really good reason why you actually should be wearing the mask, in which case I assume you'd be perceptive enough to to realize that and put on the mask.

But fortunately,

that's that's ancient history for me. I haven't worn a mask in since since that train ride, I guess. Or I guess there was like one time I had to go somewhere

where they made me put on a mask, so I did.

Let's see. I'm just gonna move on to the next question. This is from Austin. And Austin says, "What is your best argument for why Buddhism is true?"

Well, I guess my best argument for why Buddhism is true would be Buddhism is primarily based on the four noble truths. You know, the four noble truths are like the heart of Buddhism. And the first three of the four noble truths are verifiable. The first noble truth is to exist is to suffer. Well, I mean, you can you can determine that through your own personal experience and just look around.

Second noble truth is that desire is the cause of all suffering or the cause of all unease or whatever English word you want to use to translate the Pali word duka into English.

All dukkha is caused by tanha or craving just or like also it can be um attachment insisting upon things being a certain way and you can you can verify that empirically also just look into it and chances are you're going to see the truth of it. Then the third noble truth is just a logical consequence of the second noble truth. I mean that's just logic. You don't need empiricism for that. As long as you've you've accepted

that the second noble truth is true, if you're a rational person, then it follows that the third noble truth is true. If all suffering is caused by desire, then the cessation of suffering comes from the cessation of desire.

You know, if whenever there's smoke, there's fire. If there's no fire, there's going to be no smoke.

I mean, it's just logical consequence.

So then the only noble truth that really is not

empirically verifiable to like an ordinary unenlightened person with a modicum of intelligence would be the fourth noble truth which is the path leading to enlightenment. And at least

you can extrapolate. You can practice dharma and see what direction you're heading. And then you could extrapolate, make an educated guess at least as to, you know, where it's going to lead you if you continue improving in your practice.

So that'd be the best argument for why Buddhism is true is that three of the four noble truths are verifiable empirically. And the fourth noble truth is at least supported to some degree by empirical evidence. the more you practice, the more empirical evidence you will acquire that presumably will support the hypothesis that

Buddhism is true.

And so I'm just going to move on to

Austin's next question.

After the Buddha's enlightenment, the

Buddha says, "I have seen the

housemaker. Who is the housemaker?" Um,

it's like poetic for Mara, I'm pretty

sure. And Mara is just sort of like the

personification

of some sordid delusion.

So yeah, housemaker, you are seen.

Yeah, that was supposedly the Buddha's

first words or it's it's one of the two

sets of first words attributed to the

Buddha.

Let's see.

Yeah, the housemaker would just be Mara,

who is in this case at least the personification of samsaric delusion.

And I'm just going to move on to

Austin's third question,

which is as follows. If impermanence is

a fundamental law of reality, will it

ever not be the case that $2 + 2$

equals 4? It's really hard for me to

understand how Buddhism can reject the

idea of arithmetic being a stable

function. How can $2 + 2$ not ever

equal four? Well, I mean, there's lots

of approaches you can take to this. I

mean, does $2 + 2$ equals four if

nobody is doing the calculation? I mean,

you could say potentially it does just

like potentially desire is the cause of all suffering. You could say, I mean, that could be an eternal truth. And in a way you can have a kind of eternal truth, but it's an abstraction that exists in people's mind or in other conscious beings mind.

So I mean it doesn't exist unless someone is perceiving it. Like George Barkley used to say SAS perkip to exist is to be perceived. And those perceptions upon which $2 + 2 = 4$ rely. And you know suffering is caused by by desire that so if I mean so long as someone is perceiving it you can say it's it's there and it's true but if nobody's

perceiving it then

I mean it's just blinks out of
existence.

I mean you could say in potential
but just because something potentially
exists doesn't mean that it really does
exist. And of course, when you've got
all these different beings perceiving
it, they're going to be perceiving it in
different ways. And so, it's just going
to be like flashing on and off all over
the place. And that's not permanent
either.

So, the abstraction presumably is
permanent, but the abstraction only
exists in a perceiving mind, which is

impermanent.

Let's see here.

See, he says, "It's really hard for me to understand how Buddhism can reject the idea of arith arithmetic being a stable function." Well, I mean I mean you could go deeper than this. I remember I remember I had like an existential crisis. It caused me to be relatively severely depressed. It was one of the most depressing times of my life. I had been a monk for a few years. I was living in Burma. And what triggered it was I'm just trying to think of something that can be like believed that is certainly true. And there's uh some spiritual teacher who

goes by the name of Jed McKenna who says that is how he became enlightened just trying to write down anything that he could not doubt.

So

you can doubt that $2 + 2 = 4$. I mean a lot of like sages and mystics claim that multiplicity is an illusion. So if multiplicity is an illusion then two is delusional, four is delusional, plus is delusional.

So I mean if it's all delusional, how is it true? I mean it's kind of follows certain rules that the unenlightened mind relies upon. Maybe to some degree even an enlightened mind might rely upon

it if he's trying to do a math problem.

But still

it's uh just because everyone agrees on it doesn't mean that it's ultimately true. Especially if in ultimate reality there is no multiplicity.

There is no plurality. There's no pluralism at all. So if that's the case, if in ultimate reality there is no multiplicity, then how is $2 + 2 = 4$ going to be ultimately true?

It's going to rely on perception.

So in in the case of my um existential crisis so-called

the closest I could come to something that could not be doubted was the idea the universe is the universe

and the universe was is just defined as
whatever there is

is whatever there is and that's just a
complete tautology and it's practically
meaningless

but that was the best I could do because
anything that involves multip
multiplicity can be doubted.

Wise people have challenged the idea
that multiplicity is ultimately real. It
takes like a perceiving mind to create
multiplicity.

And if if it takes a a perceiving mind
to create multiplicity, then it takes a
perceiving mind to create 2 plus 2
equals 4.

And we got a dog barking in the background. It's distracting me a little bit. All three of our dogs are in heat at present. And so it it's kind of crazy.

Can't have them in the video because they might be performing like what's tribodism. Is that what it's called?

It's a certain lesbian act that we need not get into because nobody asked about it.

So

yeah, I guess I answered that question well enough or badly enough enough in either case. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Chzas is and Chzas is

says, "Why do you think people with very low IQ seem generally more happy and less depressed than people with normal or higher than normal IQ?"

And that's a reasonable question to ask.

And it seems to me that it would be similar to why cows seem to be less unhappy than people. You know, the more mind you've got, the more happiness, the more happy you can be. And also the more miserable you can be. You know, the bigger your mind is, the more capacity it has for storing joy or misery.

So a miserable genius is going to be more miserable than a miserable imbecile.

I imbecile kind of slipped through the cracks for being a kind of uh derogatory term. I mean, it's it's still derogatory, but it's not like a taboo word because most people don't use it. You don't hear it very often.

So yeah, this this question also reminds me of Walt Whitmann in his he's got a famous poem. I guess you can call it poetry in his famous book Leaves of Grass talking about animals and how animals, you know, it's like they don't worry about the future. They don't fret over the past. You know, they're right here in the present moment, which is one reason why Eartolo says most animals are enlightened.

So a person with an IQ of 50 would be kind of in that same position. It's like most human suffering especially in the developed world like the United States of America. Most suffering in the United States is depends upon imaginary scenarios. You know you're worrying about the future. You're you're guilty about the past. What if this happens? What if that happens? I don't make enough money. I wish I had you know this other thing instead of the thing I've got this kind of thing which requires a certain amount of like intellectual capacity and the less intellectual capacity you've got you know if you're

like sub imbecile

then you know it's like your mind isn't going to be generating these these scenarios that are going to result in unnecessary unhappiness that you're going to be in the present moment and like one of the special ed kids who nobody wants to sit next to them on the bus, you know, they get kicked off on into the aisle. That happened when I was a kid. Not to me, but I remember there were like these three special kid special special ed kids that would ride the same school bus as me like when I was in grade school or junior high or something. I don't remember exactly now. And nobody wanted

to sit next to them. So they try and sit down and you know the kid would just like kick them off off the seat into the aisle and finally the bus driver who had some compassion just left the seat right behind the driver's seat empty so that those kids could sit there instead.

So I mean even someone with an IQ of 50 is going to be unhappy sometimes. They hurt themselves. It's still going to hurt and they're not going to like it.

It's just that this imaginary kind of suffering, worrying about the future or fretting over the past or what if this and what if that, you know, that kind of stuff, they're much less prone to that

sort of thing, which is going to reduce their their unhappiness and bring them closer to the placidity, the serenity of a cow.

But even a cow can be unhappy. you you put it into the truck and truck it off to the slaughter house, it's going to be freaked out plenty.

So, that would be the main reason. I'm sure there's other reasons, too, but that's the one that immediately comes to mind. And now I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Maitraa Buddha.

And for some reason, I don't fully understand. Maitraa Buddha always spells Godma Buddha as Guadama Buddha. I'm not

sure why, but because this is Maitraa Buddha, I'm sure he's got his reasons. So, anyways, Maitraa Buddha says, "Would you say Guadama Buddha or God Buddha attained the philosophers stone or do you think one needs to become an alchemist to attain the philosopher stone?" And I was going to ask Grock or just look up exactly what the philosopher stone is supposed to be and I forgot to do so. But it seems to me the philosopher stone would be one of two things. I mean it would be a kind of catalyst for converting base metals into gold which is what a lot of the like medieval alchemists were were going for.

Even a lot of modern Burmese alchemists are still going for that. Or you could say the philosopher stone is like the secret to immortality.

That would be sort of a higher level philosophers philosopher stone. So I would assume that my Treya Buddha isn't asking me if God Buddha knew how to transmute base metals into gold. That I assume my Buddha is asking me if the Buddha could have been immortal.

But I mean nobody could really be immortal. I mean according to the poly texts

the Buddha hinted to Ananda shortly before the Buddha's his death or his paribana that he could live till the end

of the kapa until the end of the world
cycle

and Ananda didn't catch it and didn't
ask him to please stay alive until the
end of this world cycle this kalpa in
Sanskrit

and so he was rebuked at the first
council for not requesting the Buddha
stay alive longer when the Buddha was
kind of hinting that he could stay alive
longer and Ananda didn't uh take the
hint but I mean even that's not
immortality I mean how could anybody
really be immortal what's what happens
someone is just truly immortal right
then the sun goes nova what the hell are

you going to do

you know the earth dies what are you

just going to be floating around in

space

you can't die might be frozen isn't

solid

or you get sucked into a star, you still

don't die.

So yeah, I don't think God I mean maybe

theoretically

he could have transmuted base metals

into gold through psychic powers if he

had some reason to do so, which I doubt

that he did.

Um, but I mean he obviously didn't live

forever. ing me. He died of like severe

abdominal issues like when he was 80 I

think in his early 80s mid 80s I don't remember the exact year that I think he was either 80 or 85 something like that I really should know these things but I mean the exact age of his death is largely legend anyway so I mean it's really not necessary to know these things to understand what the man taught.

So

yeah, I mean I wouldn't say that God Buddha attained the philosopher stone in either sense of being able to transmute base metals into gold or living forever. Uh, I mean, you could say, well, the philosopher stone just kind of makes you

live much longer. And then, according to legend, just his psychic powers allowed him to live until the end of the world cycle if you wanted to, which would be, you know, millions of years, maybe, maybe billions if you go with modern astronomy. But I just doubt it. I mean, enlightened beings, they're just as prone to physical, you know, cessation of metabolic processes as anybody else. That's really not what Dharma is all about. And even Dowoism, I've I've read some criticism of modern Dowoism where I mean Daoism, you're supposed to be in harmony with the way and then you got these Dowist masters who are trying to

live forever just through being completely in harmony with the way, but the way involves everybody eventually dying.

So, it's it's like they're trying to go against the way by to live in order to live forever, which is like a kind of self-contradiction.

But yeah, I mean, he obviously didn't live longer than than humans have this biological limitation. You know, it's like I doubt there have been very many people who who've lived to see 150. And the Buddha wasn't one of them.

So

I mean in in the case of of like a

really advanced spiritual being it may be like Neim Karoli Baba I always use the wrong finger. Neem Kuroli Baba up there. I mean there are stories or accounts of his his words where he's for example he meets some devote who is astonished that he looks so young because she knew him when she was a girl and he says ma I was I was born again I was born in the mountains or something like that you know it's like you know um it's sort of like you just keep just going from body to body which everybody does I suppose according to Buddhism and Hinduism and so forth but if you're advanced enough then you may be able to remember this and have like a a unbroken

momentum of like memory and so forth
that other people wouldn't have that'd
be about as close as you would get and
the Buddha did claim to remember his
past lives at least after his
enlightenment

but according to orthodox Buddhism this
was his last existence

He he saw the house builder and his the
house is broken. The ridge pole is
broken and the rafters are broken and
there's not going to be another house
which means the body.

So

I guess I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Jimmy Lad.

And Jimmy Lad is asking me about the philosopher H Highdeagger.

So he says, "Do you have any thoughts on H Highdeagger particularly on his conceptions of authenticity, distinguishing oneself from the crowd, Dasman, and concept of being towards death, which invites us to embrace the inevitability of our mortality as a transformative force by confronting our mortality and awakening from the mundane routine of life, which obscures being and is in fact an obuscation and running away from anxiety towards death. And that paragraph there may have been an attempt to simplify the teachings of H Highigger. And if that's the case, H

Highigger would be scary.

But I I really have not read anything by
H Highigger other than maybe a few brief
quotes. I'm no authority at all on H
Highigger. I mean, almost all I know
about him was, first of all, he was a
Nazi, you know, and he would wear like
the swastika armband while giving his
lectures at university
back in the day.

Um, and also he's considered to be, if
not an existentialist, at least
existentialist adjacent,
which was a big deal like the mid 20th
century.

And that's that's about all I know about

it. That's about all I know about H
Highagger was that he went along with
the the prevailing political trend in
Germany in the 1930s and first half of
the 40s and that he was considered at
least to be either an existentialist or
existentialist adjacent. And that's all
I know about H Higher. And this kind of
synopsis

is so kind of densely convoluted, I
guess, that uh I mean, it really doesn't
it doesn't give me enough meat to really
chew on, so to speak. Doesn't really
give me much to comment upon. And so I'm
just going to declare my innocence of H
Highagger and move on to Jimmy Lad's
second question which is also about H

Highdeagger

although the title or the heading to this question is H high digger on the Greeks.

So Jimmy Lad says, "Haider said that Plato and Aristotle obscured being by emphasizing a metaphysics of presence and sought a revival of more presocratic forms of thought to undo our alienation to being thought that poetry, not analytic philosophy, could be the only way to return to this more primordial form of consciousness that has been obscured and forgotten any thoughts. Well, I'm not so sure that Plato and Aristotle were trying to get back to

presocratic forms of thought. I mean,
that would be fast. I mean, you you'd
only have Socrates
would be the only presocratic philosopher
because well, I guess I mean in a in a
in a way. I mean, it's like Socrates was
not presocratic
pretty much by definition. And then his
two most famous disciples or his fa most
most famous disciple and then the discip
most famous disciple of his disciple
both go back to presocratic forms of
thought. Yeah, I really don't see much
presocratic philosophy in Plato and
Aristotle. But then again, most
presocratic philosophy has disappeared
due to hysterical Christian book

burnings and so forth back centuries ago.

So let's see here.

Obscured being by emphasizing a metaphysics of presence. Yeah, I'm really not exactly sure what this means.

It's it's like kind of technical language and big words and so forth that's very condensed trying to summarize like really like a large body of thought into one little paragraph that isn't working very well especially due to the sleep deprivation I currently am experiencing. I didn't sleep well at all last night.

Maybe I should have studied up on

Heidegger before answering these questions, but to obscure being, I think Aristotle at least made the distinction between essence and form or Yeah.

essence and form. And essence I assume would be being.

Yeah.

Yeah. I'm just not really a Heideggerian scholar.

I just never read any Heidegger. So, it's it's not good for me to even try to make intelligent statements about Heidegger other than the the very brief ones that I've already made.

See, to undo our alienation to being well, I mean, the Greeks did that just through being just like excessively

reliant on rationality. The Greeks were just they glorified rationality to such an extent that they probably really thought that you can figure out reality or that you can know reality intellectually. And most western philosophers go the same route. So the only way to return to this more primordial form of consciousness would be like poetry and not analytic philosophy. Well, I mean was H highger a poet or an analytic philosopher? It seems like he was more of a philosopher than a poet. He never heard of any of H Highigger's poetry. So it seems like he wouldn't be following that route even if

he thought it was the only way to return
to a more primordial form of
consciousness

that had been obscured and forgotten.

But the more primordial form of
consciousness, I mean, that would be
done mainly for an ancient Greek through
the mystery cults,
you know, it'd be through mysticism,
maybe even like a certain amount of drug
use.

Yeah.

If you want to get back to like Bronze
Age, the Bronze Age mindset,
then Yeah. I mean, poetry kind of, but
poetry is still a cultural thing. It's
still very perceptual.

So, I mean, if you really want to get to the essence of being, you know, being in its purest form, you do that through mysticism.

And the ancient Greeks mainly approached mysticism through the mystery cults and and drug use. Certain drugs like hella boore, for example.

like the orphic mysteries, that kind of thing might get you closer to an understanding of pure being than any amount of Aristotle's books or Plato. I mean, I really don't have much use for Aristotle or Plato to tell you the truth.

So, I have read a lot of Plato.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Anguli Mala. And Anguli Malo says, "You made the distinction between philosophers and sages. Fair play. Which sages are most worth studying and imitating Eastern and Western?" And he he misunderstood what I said. I mean, I didn't make a distinction between philosophers and sages or I did make the distinction, but it's not the distinction he's referring to. Like, a sage would be like just an an enlightened philosopher, a genius philosopher. So what I think he's referring to is saints. So there's a difference between a saint and a sage. A saint and a sage are not necessarily the

same person.

A saint would be a genius of virtue.

Whereas a sage would be like a genius of philosophy,

a genius of wisdom.

And virtue and wisdom, they may go hand in hand a lot of the time, but still you could have nutty, foolish saints to some degree. at least they're going to be foolish like in a in an intellectual sense like Nutty St. Gertrude for example

and then you can have sages that aren't particularly saintly.

So yeah, it's like like a saint would be like the the goal of of religion,

saintliness would be the goal of religion. Sagehood would be the goal of philosophy.

So you can compare religion with philosophy. That would be probably the kind of distinction Gouly Maul is referring to. Or you want to get to the like the highest achievers of religion and the highest achievers of philosophy, you'd have saints and sages and they're they're different. I mean they could be overlapping. They could be the same person or or not.

So he wants to I think what he's asking is which saints are most worth studying and imitating not necessarily which sages

because I think he's already asked about the like philosophers.

So which saints are most worth studying and imitating? Well like um in the previous Q&A I mentioned that Nim Karoli Baba up there he wouldn't really count as a philosopher in my estimation. He's more of a like a religious teacher and saint. He's like a religious guru and you know he didn't really teach a lot of philosophy. He taught like devotionalistic religion and the cultivation of virtue that kind of thing. So just reading about Nim Karoli Baba like the book miracle of love stories about Nim Kuroli Baba compiled

by Ram Das I mean that's one of my favorite books. It's a mind-blower of a book and by reading that it is you get a sense of what it's like to be in the presence of like an enlightened saint because saints can be enlightened too you know sort of like perfection of the heart rather than perfection of the head.

Um in of western saints I mean my favorite Christian saint would be St. John of the Cross who I think may have been wiser than the founder of his own religion.

St. John of the Cross I mean he he was definitely had some like philosophical talent. I mean he he was able to explain

things intellectually in a way that makes good sense but mainly he was a saint. You know he was more religious than philosophical even though he could hold his own pretty well philosophically. Another like like western like a Christian saint who is not canonized I'm pretty sure would be Meister Eckhart.

So those those would be two good ones. I mean Jesus of Nazareth but it's kind of hard to be sure as to what he actually said. I mean you can rule out most of the gospel according to John.

Even the Catholic Church says that most

of the words attributed to Jesus in the New Testament probably are not authentically words of Jesus. You know, it's like 20% is reliable, something like that. I think that's like the official position of the Vatican, although you don't hear very much about it.

Uh let's see with regard to Eastern saints I mean Ramanam Maharshi I mean he may have been a fully enlightened being even though his best friend was a cow and he literally worshiped a hill almost his only writings are devotional hymns to a hill called Aruna Chala but I mean he was definitely the real deal when it comes to saints even though

he wasn't a Christian

or what Ramachrishna would Another one

maybe I really don't know all that much

about Ramach Krishna

but I'm just going with the idea that

Anguly Mala said saint when or said sage

when he really meant saint

mean sages I think we kind of we already

went over that one I think in the

previous Q&A so I'm assuming that when

he says sage he means saint and if he

really does mean sage then I apologize

because I'm misinterpreting the question

because the distinction between a

philosopher And a sage is that a sage is

just a very highly advanced philosopher.

Now very like a genius of philosophy, a
genius of wisdom.

Just like a saint would be like a
religious genius, a sage is a
philosophical genius. At least that's
how I interpret it.

See, studying and imitating I mean
reading like the daqing theangu

I mean those are

I don't know whether I guess they'd be
more sages than saints you know the
authors of the the daq jing and theang
zoo um some other like saintly types
would be like or kabir who wrote poetry
Um, St. Francis of Aisi I mean he was a
genuine saint. I mean just reading his
biography is I mean it's it's worth

reading.

So yeah there's there's lots of saints.

I mean there's a whole calendar of saints in Christianity and then there's probably even more saints in you know like India and and parts east.

But just because you're a saint, you're just because you've been canonized doesn't mean that you're necessarily a saintly person. Like, oh, what's his name? Some of the some of the Catholic saints are really awful people. Like, what was the saint?

Was it Clement of Alexandria? Who was the one that had the the the philosopher

uh Hipatia

put know this like tortured to death?

Just killed in broad daylight in public.

No, it wasn't it wasn't Clement

serial St. Sirill of Alexandria. I mean,

he was just a bad person.

But he was a saint mainly because he was

on the winning side of a like a

theological controversy. He championed a

certain view that turned out to be

accepted by mainstream Catholicism and

so he was called a saint because of it.

I think the uh uh the Greek Orthodox

Church considers the Roman Emperor

Constantine I to be a saint. That I

think Constantine I was canonized as a

saint by the Greek Orthodox or Eastern

Orthodox Church. Even though Constantine was no saint. He had his wife and his eldest son just put to death because you know they maybe they were plotting against him or something. But even if they're plotting against him, killing your own wife and son or just ordering their death is more along the lines of what Nero would have done than like a genuine saint. Plus, of course, he plunged the Roman Empire into this bloody civil war just for his own glorification mainly.

So, yeah, there is a difference between a real saint, like a genius of virtue or like a genius of religion and just

someone who's been canonized by the church.

But I I I think I've given enough of a list, you know, like in the east or like in the west you've got St. John of the Cross and like Meister Eckhart even like I've been told that uh what the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola is like just one of the best books in the west on mental cultivation. I think it was Somerset Maugham or some famous author said that. I mean, he was just like completely impressed. Or maybe it was Bernard Shaw, one of those English writers, like the turn of the 20th century.

Um,

like the desert fathers, you could read
like the the writings of the desert
fathers or writings about the desert
fathers.

I mean, that that if in the west, you
know, those would be a good start. And
in the east of course you've got Nim
Crowley Baba, you got Rama Maharshi,
you've got Rama Krishna

um

who else

lots I mean there's lots Rumi Kabir
some of the Sufis

there's lots of them but

mainly um my my reading outside of

Buddhism is somewhat limited you You

know, I've I've read more than most people, I guess, but within the within Buddhism, the people that I have the most respect for would be sages and not saints. They'd be more philosophical than religious, more wisdom oriented than faith oriented.

And I suppose I should just move on to Anguly Mala's next question.

Says, "What daily habits do you personally keep and which ones would you recommend as most beneficial for everyday life?" Well, I sleep every night and I eat food every day. Go potty pretty much every day.

Make sure I have clothes on before I go

outside the house.

Um, those would be some of the most important ones that I would recommend for others to follow.

But

I mean, I really don't know how to answer that question. What daily habits do I personally keep? I just get up in the morning, drink a cup of coffee, look at the headlines in the news.

Gosh,

I mean, it's

I really don't know. I'm not exactly sure how to answer that question because I mean your outward actions

really are not nearly as important as your mental states anyway. But yeah, the most important habits that I would recommend to others that I personally keep would be sleep every night, get up and maybe drink a cup of coffee and go to the bathroom, bathe every day, brush your teeth every day, at least once a day,

eat food, preferably healthy food.

And that's you're you're actually that'd be starting off on the right foot, I think.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Kify and Clefy says, "When are you starting your Dharma school? It is somewhat a joke

question, but knowing how corrupt most Buddhist centers became, it's time for a Buddhist center for those who want to escape samsara."

Well, the thing is, even when I was a monk trying to live in the West as a teacher, I mean, you have to work for a living in in the West pretty much. And so even when I was a monk, just doing it as like my main job still, I mean, if I wasn't like relying upon like Asian immigrants to to provide me with food, clothing, shelter, and medicine, then I mean, I'd just be like barely surviving, you know, just living from hand to mouth, which is appropriate

for a monk, I suppose, but still I wouldn't have very many supporters. And so I would just feel like I was being a burden on these well-intentioned generous supporters. And I mean it wasn't it did not seem to be sustainable.

So I mean even when I was a monk I couldn't really make a living as a dharma teacher.

You make a living as a monk by being a kind of living breathing pagan idol that devout Asian Buddhists just want to support in order to earn merit.

So now that I'm working, you know, having to pay bills and so forth,

not working at this present moment, but still, you know, I got a bills to pay and so forth. And just being a dharma teacher,

the most sustainable way of teaching dharma is online for me. And even if I did try to set up some kind of center or have meditation sessions in my living room, which isn't very likely to happen still, I mean, I'm living in the Bible belt. I'm living in South Carolina. Most Western Buddhists, as Clefy kind of indicates here, are gonna be just very left-wing

once they find out that I'm a fascist or a Nazi or whatever. You know, not that I

am one, but a lot of them would think I was simply because I'm farther right than Hillary Clinton.

So, when am I starting the Dharma School?

at probably at the soonest would be like at least 10 years from now unless just something weird happens, something unforeseeable happens and then it happens.

But I'm not really deliberately moving in that direction at present simply because even when I was a monk, it wasn't working out very well.

So

I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie. But

good luck with finding a a good teacher.

I mean, there are they are out there.

And if you have good enough comma, if you're if you're ready, you know, when the the when the student is ready, the teacher will come.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ruie. And Ruie says,

"Pointing mind at mind and observing the carousel of thoughts, one realizes that no single thought offers stable, enduring refuge and that even wholesome thoughts are fleeting." Confidence in Buddha Dharma is confidence that it offers an off-ramp to this predicament.

What is your experience of the dhammic
nonverbal off-ramp? Well, I mean the
off-ramp mainly occurs in the form of
meditation or at least meditation is
giving you like more subtle mental
states more and more subtle that is
making it easier for you to eventually
just stop relying upon perception in
general thinking but perception in
general

but I mean even Ruie says I mean like
I've mentioned the the the small
discourse on voidness in the Majjiminaya
more than once the chula sutta and
I mean the monk in the sutta you know he
he's cultivating more and more refined
mental states until he gets into the

anime chitoimi or let's see anime
chto samadei the the formless
concentration of mind the signless
concentration of mind which is higher
than even fourth Janna you know it's
symbolically kind of the highest
possible state you can attain like
through cultivating meditation and then
when the monk comes out of that state he
realizes that even that had a beginning
and an end and its condition and is you
know impermanent and dooka so then it's
when you get to that stage then it's
just like something just clicks you have
this insight that nothing is really
going to work nothing that you do is

going to get you enlightened and then in a way you just kind of let go.

But at least by cultivating more and more refined mental states with less and less thinking that you know you can kind of extrapolate to some degree, you know, you can kind of get little tastes or glimmers of kind of what it's like. Sort of like you can get a little taste or glimmer when you're in the middle of a sneeze. you know, you're wide awake and you're not thinking anything during that split second when you're sneezing.

So, what is my experience of the dumbic non-verbal offramp?

Yeah, I mean just when you get into refined meditative states

then um like the the Janna in the text
are sometimes referred to as temporary
liberation

because you know it's like at least
you've got loads and moa you know
attraction aversion and semic-conscious
stupidity just so sublimated so subtle
that they're almost not an issue and
then you can sort of get a a glimpse of
what is beyond that, you know, what's
just right on the other side of the
veil, so to speak.

But when you experience a mental like a
meditative state, when you're just wide
awake and not thinking anything,
then yeah, you definitely get a a kind

of taste of what it's like
just not to be addicted to thinking and
completely lost in perception, which is
what samsara is. Samsara is perception
and most people are just completely
stuck in it. I mean what is on the other
side of the veil is always there. It's
just like the enlightened mind is always
right there. The mind is luminous like
the sutas say but it's defiled by like
incoming defilements or sort of
extraneous defilements.

According to the atakawaga even your own
thoughts are extraneous. You know
they're just somehow coming from
outside. And it's like in Buddhist
philosophy something that always struck

me as rather strange.

Mind is considered to be the sixth sense and just like the other senses, you know, you've got the sense organ and then you've got the sensory data that impinges on the sense organ from outside your mind somehow. And that's the way Buddhism looks at even thinking, you know, it's just sort of like this extraneous thing that that's like incoming into your mind.

So to be freed from that even for just a like a few minutes especially at first when you're not used to it I mean it's like 20 years of struggling and floundering is well worth it just two

minutes of just into getting into this
state of just silent illumination
and that's sort of a taste of the
offramp I guess

and I'm just going to move on next
question this is from Fred

And Fred says, "Is the body just
immersed in the absolute? In my opinion,
the body is just an instrument in an
environment. Everything is experiential,
not existential." Well, I mean, I can
always fall back on the well-worn
simile of the block of marble. You know,
you've got this block of marble
and contained within that block of
marble is every possible statue
including every possible body. So, in a

sense, your body is immersed in the absolute because the rock itself would be the absolute. And these imaginary forms that are really in there. I mean, they really are in that block of marble. All you got to do is just carve away the extraneous rock and the Venus Demo is right there with and without arms, you know. Leia Kuan and his sons being devoured by snakes. The discus thrower, the dying gall. I mean, they're all in that same block of marble. Every single molecule already in the correct position.

It's just that it takes perception like imagination

to single out one statue instead of another. And that's what our mind is doing. That's kind of what karma is doing with us.

So in a sense, the body is just immersed in the absolute just like every single statue is immersed in that block of marble.

So I guess I answer that question more or less. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Fifth.

And fifth says, I was wondering this week what exactly was the point of Mahayana. What I mean by this is how in your opinion were the original teachings of the Buddha changed so much as to

incorporate the concept of a multitude
of bodhicattvas holding off one's
enlightenment to liberate all beings
etc. Well, I've I've kind of given a a
brief history or synopsis of a brief
history of the origin of Mahayana
Buddhism

more than once, but what the hell? It's
been a while. So, I'll I'll kind of give
a a brief history of the origin of
Mahayana Buddhism as I understand it.

And of course, there's going to be lots
missing just because I don't know
everything. But Mahayana apparently was
it was sort of a coalition of different
schools of Buddhism with different

emphases. Like you had the Pya Paramita school of Buddhism that in a way it was like a reform movement, you know, in a way it was like a reaction against these abidharmas and abidharmas that the earlier schools were cooking up of just this formulated intellectual scholastic philosophy, you know, very systematic. Everything is categorized, you know, all different forms of of matter and all the the different possible like conditions and interactions are cataloged and described in detail. This kind of thing that some of the the Mahayana or proto Mahayana like these pragny paramita people, I mean, they realized that that was moving away from this like the the

stark simplicity of what the Buddha was originally teaching like in the atakawaga. And so the Pragma paramito sutras to some degree they kind of go back towards the like the the spirit of really archaic Buddhist texts like the atakawaga.

So there's that school. You have like the pure land school which in my opinion mainly arose from monks trying to become enlightened and failing and so then they just fall back on faith. You know it's like Buddha Buddha save me.

So there's that.

But with regard to like the the multiple bodhic sattvas and taking the bodhic

sattva vow and all that part of it I' I've read I think it was like an early Buddhist scholar named Francis story had this theory that makes a lot of sense. He said that that aspect of Mahayana like the preference of being a Buddhist sattva over just becoming enlightened in this very life which is what the Buddha in all likelihood was teaching. You should become enlightened in this very life if you can and then later Mahayana Buddhists are saying nope you should put that off indefinitely and become a Buddhist sattva for the sake of all beings and so forth. And that has its roots according to Francis story in Jotica stories in Jotica

literature which is stories of the
Buddhist past lives or at least some of
his past lives and in some of them are
like as fables where the Buddha is like
a talking animal or you know sometimes
he's like the wise brahman this kind of
thing the wise prince
and because of this Jataka literature
that arose
after the Buddhist time. You know, it's
it's a way of glorifying the founder.
It's taking a lot of like Indian
folklore, you know, a lot of these were
like
what do you call it? Fables or stories
that had already existed and then you

just tack on a Buddhist beginning and a Buddhist ending and a Buddhist moral and you've turned it into a Buddhist story. So with the glorification of the Buddha and these Jotica tales, you know, it it created more of a distance between the Buddha and an ordinary enlightened being until there was like this orders of magnitude. The Buddha was just so far beyond an ordinary enlightened being even though originally in my opinion there wasn't necessarily a difference other than God Buddha is the one who started the system and other people followed. But I mean they were just as enlightened as he was.

Even going with Abidama philosophy that

pa or wisdom is the same. It's synonymous with amoa or absence of delusion. So you if you have zero delusion you've got maximum wisdom which would be like a dry visioned arahant with no psychic powers or a sama buddha. They're the same amount of wisdom because they have the same amount of moha which is zero.

But it's just human nature. You glorify the founder of your religion. I mean one famous religion in the west the founder of the religion was actually turned into God Almighty.

Buddhism, I mean, they they kind of outdid even that because they've got the

they've got like the highest gods in heaven coming down to worship the Buddha. You know, the Buddha is higher than the gods, higher than Brahma.

So, you've got this idea that it's more noble and more exalted and better to be a Buddha than to be just an ordinary ordinary enlightened being. Even though like I say there probably wasn't originally a distinction other than the Buddha was just like the leader of the the the SA the founder of it.

So I think that's really how the idea of people taking bodhic sattva vows and just putting off enlightenment indefinitely for the sake of all beings which ultimately don't even exist.

I think that's how it happened is
glorification of the Buddha and then
glorification of Buddhahood and then the
bodhic sattva is someone who's striving
for Buddhahood

because that's somehow nobler and more
heroic and more exalted than just
becoming enlightened and just bailing
out of the system.

But the Buddha in all likelihood
taught people just become enlightened if
you can in this very life.

So I think I'm just going to move on to
fifth's next question
which is

can you talk about your views of the

existence of matter and whether or not things exist at all? I don't really understand the terravada concept of matter being real. But everything is constantly blinking in and out of existence. Or rather, I don't understand how that makes more sense than it all being made up by the mind. Maybe I'm just not understanding it well. But I'd appreciate you comparing your view, which from your past Q&As I'm inclined to agree with, to the Terravada view. I've also heard you mention there are schools of Mahayana that are more in line with your views on this. Can you talk about those? Well, this is kind of a complex question.

This is the second to last question though and we've only been going for less than an hour and a half. So, I guess a complex question is acceptable.

Let's see.

Where do I start on this?

Let's see here.

I guess the terravada understanding of matter or yeah the existence of matter according to terravada or orthodox terra which includes abidama in the commentarial tradition you got four ultimate truths four ultimately real

I don't know phenomena you've got mind or consciousness wana or chitta in

abidama you've You got mental states or
chasea. So mind and mental states are
just qualitatively different. It's not
that mental states are a form of
consciousness. They are just utterly
absolutely different. Then you've got
rupa or physical matter. And ultimately
rupa just means form. It came to mean
physical matter subsequently I guess.
And then you've got nibbana. Now there's
only one kind of cheetah or
consciousness. I mean it takes various
colors you know in in association with
the mental states that it is serving as
a background for but still technically
there's just one cheetah there are 52
chasikas or mental states that are just

ultimately separate from each other
completely different from each other
qualitatively different ultimately real
in and of themselves

and then you've got 28 different kinds
of matter and then just one niba

So you can add those up if you want.

It's it's complicated math. I won't try
to go there.

So 28 kinds of matter that are
ultimately real and they're flashing off
and on at like a trillion times per eye
blink. And that has never made sense to
me. And it just it's just like a glitch
in Buddhist philosophy. It's like in
ancient times they didn't try to figure

it out. Maybe nobody's noticed that there was this major problem looming in the theory and that is if everything is blinking on and off a trillion times per second, you know, it's there, then it's not there, there's nothing there, then it's there again, then it's not there. So, I mean, you've everything is broken off at the non-existence part. I mean, what causes everything to come back into existence? Because things cannot come into existence through a non-existent cause.

I asked a Burmese Abidama scholar about this and he says in Burmese there is what they call aone. But aone just means momentum. You know in physics you know

the the Burmese word for momentum in physics mass times velocity is aone.

But I mean you can't have momentum if it's stopping start stop start stop start stop. That's not really momentum.

That would be some different kind of momentum. But even momentum would disappear. So there would be zero momentum if everything is blinking out of existence with nothing there.

So the terravada explanation and just multiplicity in general relying upon perception and so forth. I just haven't been able to take it very seriously from the beginning from the time I started learning it.

But the terraotta point of view is even though it's ultimately real, let's say earth element, even though earth element is ultimately real, it lasts only a trillionth of an eyelink. And it only exists because of conditioning causes.

So you know, it's sort of like fire exists only when you've got the conditioning causes of fuel, oxygen, and heat. Take away any of those, the fuel, the oxygen, or the heat, the fire goes out.

So that's kind of the way Terravada looks at it. Even though something they say something is ultimately real, it exists for only a trillionth of a second and it only exists because of these

conditions. So in a way it's conditional even though it's ultimately real. And it's I think to some degree you've got ancient Indian philosophers who are not fully enlightened who are just kind of waiting too deep into abstractions and intellectuality that they can't really make sure everything is airtight. You know it kind of reminds me of the the philosophy of Sartra. I don't know how to pronounce his name. French words, you just you're best off just mispronouncing them on purpose just as a form of defiance, peaceful non-cooperation with the French language. But Sartra, I mean, I read I

read at least one of his books and it seemed to me that when he's being philosophical and he's not just doing a biographical sketch of of of a Renaissance painter or something, he's like really being philosophical. It's like his his method is to formulate sentences that are so long and convoluted that neither he nor anybody else can see the flaws in his reasoning. And that's kind of the way Abidama works. It's just it's so complicated, so complex, so convoluted and abstract that a mere mortal human mind is incapable of straightening it all out and getting rid of all the glitches. So that's kind of the terravada position

from a critical point of view. I mean my point of view, I mean just go back to the block of marble again. You've got infinite formless consciousness or call it pure being which Hegel says is indistinguishable from pure non-being. It's it's this paradox. It's like the origin of the universe is this paradox. Everything exists and doesn't exist simultaneously because they're the same. And when you divide things out into, you know, the 10,000 things as the Daoqing talks about, then, you know, it's harder to see that just pure undifferentiated being and pure undifferentiated non-being. I mean, there's no

discernable content in either of those.

so that they just blend together and are the same.

So that's that was like the synthesis of Hegel's first,

you know, his first thesis antithesis

and synthesis in his logic. Start with

pure being, then the antithesis is pure

non-being. That's it. I mean, they're

the same. You can't tell them apart. And

so the synthesis is like distinctions.

You have to have a distinction between

being and non-being with like a a line

between them essentially a contrast. You

have to have contrast

in order for anything to seem to exist.

And I'm not exactly sure why I even

started talking about that. That was so long ago.

But uh I mean you've got the uncarved block. Daqing talks about the nameless uncarved block which could be you know infinite formless consciousness luminous all round like is found in a few old poly texts.

Then you've got contained within this uncarved block all every single possible statue and so long as you've got the conditions for that statue being singled out it'll be singled out. I mean they're all in there.

So in a sense matter I mean it's suffused with ultimate reality

but its distinctness and separateness is not ultimately real.

Okay. So let's see.

I guess I explained that well enough. I mean, it's it's something that I explain pretty much in almost every Q&A and people keep asking about it because it's it's just kind of beyond the pale of what most people can really wrap their head around as far as I can tell, especially people that insist upon intellectual explanations. I mean, if you're just like clinging to intellect as your way of understanding reality, I mean, that's that's like a mental prison. It's like a ball and chain. I mean, you're never going to understand

reality so long as you're trying to figure it out intellectually.

It's just not going to happen. It's not going to work.

But I can move on to the other part of the question here. Let's see.

Let's see. He says, "I've also heard you mentioned there are schools of Mahayana that are more in line with your views on this. Can you talk about those?"

Well, this reminds me of this. It was like a college level philosophy book that I found in Burma written by two Indian presumably Hindu philosophy professors and the book was for Indian universities. So it's it's it was like a

survey of Indian philosophy
and it was based on old comparative
philosophy texts from like medieval
times.

And with regard to Buddhism, I mean it's
it's kind of ironic that these scholars
on Indian philosophy had to rely on
western scholars of of Buddhism like
Rice Davids, people like that to to
write their chapter on Buddhism.

But according to these medieval texts,
these medieval philosophy texts in India
that talk about Buddhism, they would
divide Buddhism into four main types.

And that would be dependent on their
metaphysics or what is it not
epistemology, ontology. It's like you

had the school of Buddhism that says you cannot know mind or matter. Then you have the school of Buddhism that says you can't know matter but you can know mind. Then there's the school of Buddhism that says you can know mind and matter but you can know mind directly and matter can be logically inferred with certainty. And then finally you've got the school of Buddhism that says you can know mind and matter directly. Now, Theravada was not on this list because at the time that these medieval or late ancient philosophy texts were written in India, in North India, Theravada had already stopped being a major player in

in North Indian philosophy. It had sort of migrated south and had faded into obscurity in the north. But the the the the the school that claimed you can know mind and matter directly was closely related to terra and that was Sarvastivat.

And I don't know how anybody I mean I've had terraata Buddhist monks like western ones even tell me you can know mind directly or you can know matter directly and it's like how just read George Barkley he'll tell you how that that can't work.

You can't I mean all you can all you can know directly is mind because knowing is mind. To know anything other than mind

has to be done indirectly through mind.

So anyways getting back to this four divisions of Buddhism. There's the second school that says you can know mind directly but you can infer matter indirectly with logical certainty. And that I think was the saltronica school. And these first two, the Svastadans and the Saltronicas that both say you can know matter were what would be called Hinayana. They're like pre- Mahayanaist. So it was like the pre Mahayana schools had somehow gotten on to this idea that that physical matter is ultimately real and you can know that with certainty.

And

it's just one thing about early Buddhism, not the earliest Buddhism that doesn't really adopt any philosophical stance, but these early schools of Buddhism that somehow just due to cultural conditions decided that physical matter is ultimately real and you can know that either directly or indirectly.

So then the next school of Buddhism or the type of Buddhism that says you can know mind you can't know matter would be the yoga mahayana Buddhists or the mind only school. They were like philosophical idealists.

So they're saying physical matter doesn't even really exist and you can't

know it. And then finally you've got the school that says you can't really know mind or matter. That would be Majamaka. They were like radical like the Hindus called them nihilists. But it's more subtle than that. It's more subtle than just being a nihilist, you know? It's it's sort of taking like mysticism and bringing it into philosophy so thoroughly that the mysticism just kind of denatures and kind of destroys the philosophy as it goes along. It's it's kind of like that. I mean, it's Ma the Majamaka Buddhists weren't denying that there is an ultimate

reality. They're just denying that you can wrap your head around it. You can really know it

at least like with a samsauric mind, you know, a philosophical mind.

So

let's see. Yeah, Majamaka really, it seems to me comes very close to the point of view of the Atakawaga.

It just takes like the refusal to philosophize of the atagawaga and it sort of is more sophisticated in that it's able to use philosophical more or less logical arguments to just sort of undermine philosophy in general. It's weird. It's like majamica philosophy. It destroys all other points of view and

then it turns on itself and destroys
that just leaving emptiness behind and
presumably enlightenment.

So yeah, I do think that the Majamaka
understanding of like mind and matter is
probably more accurate and more in
harmony with what the Buddha originally
taught than orthodox terravada as found
in

Abidama and the commentarial tradition
and even in some sutas

because all the sutas are not just 100%
verbatim verbatim.

just transcripts of what the Buddha
taught.

Excuse me.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to move on to the last question. And this is from Cyrus Frame, one of the only people who asks questions on Rumble.

and he started off kind of offering to debate me with regard to the atawaga and ancient Indian beliefs about fire. You know, it's like the word nibbana literally means blowing out like a fire blows out like you blow out a candle.

And I have made put forth the the statement which I think I originally got from Ajan Tenisero who wrote an entire book about this that the ancient Indians had this idea about fire not really being extinguished and ceasing to exist. It just becomes unmanifest when the fire

goes out. So he kind of is is kind of pushing back against this interpretation. Now he points out that nibbana is not found in the article. It's it's the the verb nibi or nibadi which means blowing out.

Let's see. So then he quotes

the ai vachuta

about a fire going out due to simple lack of the requisite conditions for fire.

And any boy scout knows that the requisite conditions conditions for fire are fuel, oxygen and heat.

So this this suta the egi vajota suta u includes the word sanankyam which is

translated in English as reckoned.

So it is simply reckoned as extinguished
and see.

So anaharo means you without fuel,
without sustenance.

Nibbuto blown out. It even is
reckoned and it goes.

That's like a word by word very clumsy
translation of the poly there. Let's
see. He says reckoned or sank implies
that fire is just a name or a
classification we use. As long as the
process of burning is happening once the
process stops, the classification no
longer fits anything real. It is not
unmanifest. It is simply no longer being
fed. So it is gone. In my opinion,

anaharo is the cessation of constructing views and perceptions. So not constructing is blowing out or nibbati because the Buddha did not use the word nibbana in the atakawaga. I suspect he never actually used that word at all as nibbana is a label or sya which is is perception

which is a precursor to a view. What do you think?

Well I mean you can interpret this at different levels. I mean the more at face value you give like the comparison of the sage blowing out and becoming enlightened and the fire blowing out and just either going out

which is an Indo-Uropean idiom that is common in many Indo-Uropean languages. I actually looked into this, you know, it's like when a fire stops burning, you know, the fire stops being a fire that in Indo-Uropean languages there's always or usually or frequently this prefix meaning outwardness, you know, it goes out or even extinguish the X, you know, it's like exterior. It's it's it's like an outward thing.

So that could just be an idiom. But I mean this whole argument kind of reminds me, if you can call it an argument, there's

um right after the atikavaga and the

sunni pa, there's the paranavaga, which the central core portions of it are considered to be also extremely old. You know, comparable to the atagawaga, maybe not quite as old as the oldest sutas of the atagawaga, but it's still archaic Buddhism. And there's a famous verse in in the paranoaga. It's let's see here. Okay, it's it's in the upa manavapucha. The questions of the Brahman student up. And the Buddha says, oh, I'll I'll spare you the poly. You probably wouldn't understand it through my thick accent anyway. But in English, it says, "Just as a flame tossed by force of wind quickly goes to its cessation and

subjects not itself to any designation,
so the sage released from the mass of
names quickly goes to his cessation and
subjects not himself to any designation.

So the massive names, you're free from
the massive names just as the fire is
free from the requisite conditions for
fire. So yeah, I mean it is a matter of
perception. I mean just using the fire
as a kind of metaphor. I mean, you
shouldn't get hung up on, you know,
trying to

argue or assert that, you know, there's
like this necessary connection between,
you know, the blowing out of a fire and
the blowing out of the unenlightenment
of of a of a biku or whatever.

So, Iwamuni namakayauto.

So thus the sage released from the the
like the uh what is it the mass of
names.

So yeah the massive names is perception
and that really is I mean like I've said
before earlier on this Q&A perception is
samsara. So that's ultimately what's
what's ending when you when you become
enlightened you cease to be
unenlightened. I mean the enlightenment
doesn't start. Nibbana doesn't start.
Nirvana has no beginning and no end. The
nirvana is always here. At least if
you're going to consider it to be a kind
of metaphysical state and not just like

the moment of enlightenment which lasts
you know this eye blink

where how do I even start that sentence?

So

yeah I mean it's perception is some
sorrow. So what's what's blowing out is
not necessarily perception because
presumably even an enlightened being is
still perceiving. It's just like the
clinging to perception, the identifying
with perception

and then kind of the the comparison
between perception and fire kind of
fizzles out. I mean it it it's not a
perfect analogy because no analogy is
perfect.

But yeah, I'm I'm completely fine with

the idea that what blows out is the mass of names or perception.

Namarupa, I mean, originally Namarupa was name and form, which is kind of the way perception works, except it's kind of in backwards order. You start off with a form, you single out some form, and then you slap a name on it. You designate that form. That's how perception works.

But then in Orthodox Terravada and other early schools they reinterpreted namarupa apparently to mean mind and matter.

But I mean in old upanachads some of the oldest upanads maybe older than the

Buddhist texts namarupa meant name and form. It didn't mean mind and matter.

So yeah, I mean I'm I'm not really inclined to debate this and I mean trying to like nail down some one correct interpretation is is just futile anyway. Nothing is really 100% certain. It's all based on delusion. You're never going to understand reality by figuring it out intellectually anyway. So if it works, that's good enough. It helps you to wake up. That's really the important thing. And it I mean it could be Buddhism that's helping you to wake up, a certain school of Buddhism, a certain interpretation of a school of Buddhism, or it could be Christian mysticism or

whatever.

But if it helps you to wake up, then then it's it's doing its job. I mean, it's if it helps you to wake up completely, then it's certainly adequate.

And I think that's it. I think I answered that one more or less.

And uh I appreciate your patience with uh any kind of slowness of intellect on my part this evening due to lack of sleep last night.

But the show must go on. And if you like these kind of Q&A videos or other videos that I occasionally produce, then feel free to like and subscribe. And

if you have any questions you think I can answer, especially about Buddhism, you know, Dharma in general, which would include, you know, various philosophies and meditation methods and so forth. I mean, I'm I'm no expert on like Tibetan meditation techniques, that kind of thing, but I generally know more about Buddhism than most people do, I guess. And I've been a monk for 30 years. I mean, I've lived the life. I've studied Buddhism from the inside out. So, if you have any questions you think I can answer

um after watching all 190 previous 180 previous Q&As's because chances are I've already answered most of the questions

that I get asked. So, just watch all those first, which probably shouldn't take you more than a month or two as long as you know you don't do anything else.

Then, uh no more than four. No. Oh god, I almost said four. No more than three questions per person per episode, please. And uh I guess that's it. So be happy.

Okay then.

I think we are recording. Is this working?

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 181. I am your host Po Basa. This is my beverage. And you may notice that I'm not in the studio.

And that is because my fair mate, my sweetheart, is in there, I hope, working on the cover art for my next book, which is pretty much done. It's just like the cover and maybe a little bit of the front matter and the back matter still has to get done. You know, like I got to apply for a copyright number or something like that. or the what is it

the ISBN

whatever that is.

So hopefully within the next couple weeks

I'll have my fourth published book out not including the article translation that doesn't count and yes indeed 181 is a prime number.

So that's the last two out of three have been prime numbers which is nice.

And uh let's see here. I'm speaking to you from the middle of the tail end of a blizzard. I guess it's the most snow I have seen in South Carolina since I moved here. It's maybe five inches at present, but it's still snowing.

And uh I guess I should just uh start

answering questions of which we have
kind of a
kind of the lower end of average
number of questions kind of like in the
high 20s something like that. So it
shouldn't be an extremely long one. For
those of you that don't like extremely
long ones I think you might be in luck
this time. Of course, I could just go
off on tangents and digressions at any
moment, like bitching about the new Star
Trek,
that kind of thing,
gay cllingons.

Well, let's just answer questions at the
present time. And the first question is

from Romeo. And Romeo says, I am currently reading your essay, The Tribal Native, from your excellent book, Buddhist Ethics, Buddhist Practice. In the essay, you say that you have a quote cool heart unquote and quote a lack of regard for my own species except for a few friends and the occasional beautiful female unquote. I identify on both counts. I've always had a slight aversion towards the average normie, though this has improved somewhat with age. I'm looking for ways to further increase my capacity for caring and overall regard for other people and wonder if you have any suggestions. I know that there is meta meditation which

I do and has helped me somewhat in this regard. There's also the sentiment behind the expression, quote, "Love your crooked neighbor with your crooked heart," unquote, from the poet When.

In other words, when any kind of social aversion creeps up in me, I try to remember that I am not perfect and have my own shortcomings like everyone else.

Other than those two things, meta meditation and recognizing I am imperfect like others. Do you have any other practical tips for someone to increase their regard and compassion for others?

Question mark.

So

Romeo is asking me how to be less
misogyn no misogynistic misanthropic
I suppose.

And yeah, I mean, I've improved with age
also. I've never really hated Let's see
what Let's see. He says I've He's always
had a slight aversion towards the
average normie. And I'm not sure. I
mean, once you know an average normie
personally, or at least in my case, I
mean, they're just another person. You
you have like a rapport. There's sort of
like an empathy. So that in my case um I
just didn't have use for human beings in
the abstract as a generalization you
know just the human species especially

when I was younger I really didn't have
much use for I preferred the companies
of trees to humans as a general rule
with the exception as he quotes from my
essay you know a few friends and the
occasional beautiful female
but I
just because
um I can get along with the average
normie. I mean, I grew up in in in the
midst of average normies. I grew up in
like a bluecollar town, bluecollar
neighborhood and just,
you know, it was like there weren't a
lot of scholars or intellectuals that I
was hanging out with um even getting up

into college really.

So I I've always had a kind of appreciation for riffraff. In fact, one of the essays I wrote, I don't remember which book it's in, if it's in any of them, is just on the the merits, the advantages of associating with riff raff because when you're amongst riffraff, so to speak, that they just accept you for who you are. You don't have to be fake. For example, when I was in college, I went to a University of Washington party. A friend of mine went to the University of Washington. I went to visit him. We went to this party. And at the time, it might still be the case, the UW was like the most prestigious

university in Washington State. I mean, there's no Ivy League schools there, that kind of thing. So, I go to this party and it's a bunch of like like young preppy types just kind of like [clears throat] posing, you know, projecting an image, you know? It's like they're practicing for like some corporate cocktail party. And I mean I came from like Aberdeen, you know, it's this bluecollar town, like a logging town. And there, I mean, people might get in fights occasionally, but at least they're being themselves. They're being like genuine, authentic humans, and they go to a party to have fun, not to like

pose and project an image.

So, I mean, my father was the same way, too. He he tended to associate with riff raff for lack of a better word. At least for lack of a better word that I can think of.

So I mean there are certain advantages to that. I mean for me I was like a prince among riffraff by associating with riffraff. You know they kind of looked up to me. At least a lot of them did. You know I was the only the only party animal in high school that was in the honor role for example.

But uh getting back to Romeo's question here, the main thing I think that has helped me to have a higher opinion of

the human race is I spent 30 years
trying to perfect myself, just trying to
become a saint, you know, trying to
reprogram myself. And I realized that
you're pretty much just stuck being who
you are

trying to become a different person like
like Schopenhauer

was continually saying in his works. I
mean it just you know it sounds nice in
theory but it just doesn't work that way
when you've got someone who's insisting
that you got to be more this way and
less that way or they're going to
withhold their affection or you know
just wash their hands of you or

whatever. Well, I mean, that's pretty much on them really because as a general rule, people do not change that much. I mean, you can sort of make slight modifications, but any major radical change is going to it's pretty much necessitates some just profound crisis, some crash,

and then you can reprogram. It's it's I've talked about this before. I've I've mentioned Battle for the Mind by William Sergeant, which is one of the most important books I've ever read. It'd be like in the top 10 with regard to really modifying my outlook on the world.

And he says that I mean it's it's just an instinct in in higher vertebrates,

not just humans, that we are governed by habit. You know, we're just set in our ways. We're just kind of locked in. And so long as our habits get us through life well enough, then we resist change just at this subconscious, unconscious, instinctive level. And what really requires

um and what is necessary for change is you have to hit this crisis where your habits are just not dealing with the problem anymore. Where you are just crashing out hard because you just cannot deal with the situation. like Chinese thought reform was based on this. A lot of like stone age or

huntergatherer manhood rituals or basic training, especially in like elite military forces where they just grind you down until you're like this quivering massive jelly and then just build you back up into a super soldier who will not hesitate to obey an order. That kind of thing. a lot of religious like being born again is based on this same principle.

So anyways, getting back to

[clears throat] Romeo's question, I mean, I realized from 30 years of practice that changing yourself and not being a messed up, you know, mortal or whatever. I mean, it sounds good in theory, but as a general rule, it just

doesn't work very well.

At best, you can do like Jung says, and if [clears throat] you're going to get rid of some major mental force, you have to replace it with an equal mental force. For example, it was known in the old days almost the only cure for alcoholism, which was called dipsomania back then, was theomania, or becoming a religious fanatic.

So, I mean, I have a lot of compassion now for the average person because the average person hasn't spent three decades trying to perfect themselves, you know, based on this exalted ideal of of dharma. You know, they're just trying

to get along as best they can. And so I mean if I couldn't modify myself, if I couldn't reprogram myself into a saint, then how can I expect others to be saintly or just not mess up? You know, it's just I have more sympathy for the human condition now, more compassion and empathy for just people being born into this meat puppet.

So there is that and as you get older I think you just pick that up gradually. I think that's one reason why as people get older they tend to become mis less misanthropic at least in many cases like in my case and according to Romeo in his case also but also another thing is um it was after I dropped out of the

monkhood and started working again
working for a living that I started
appreciating that just the average guy
you know I'm got a bluecollar job I'm
among bluecollar people you know they
probably got C's in school if that if
they were on any sports team. They were
probably second string or junior varsity
or something might have gotten picked on
at school. might have been unpopular a
lot of them and they just get a job out
of high school and they just train at it
and get good at it until in you know
within a few years they are skilled at a
certain

I don't know a certain kind of work that

most people just can't do like driving a
semi most people could not back up an
18wheel se

you know they couldn't back it into like
a a parking slot, you know, at a at a
loading dock or something or running
certain machines. Just the average
person is what's running the world
really. You know, you've got the the
really brilliant people who are
inventing things and innovating things,
but it's just the average person who's
driving the trucks and stocking the
shelves and, you know, selling whatever
it is that people are buying, that kind
of thing.

We're just building the cars, building

the buildings. It's just average people doing that. And I have a lot more appreciation for that after coming back to America and seeing that, you know, almost everybody who has a job is specialized in a certain way. So that they're good at this one thing. They're kind of an authority or an expert at this one kind of narrow bandwidth of the the full spectrum of, you know, what runs society. And so I I have more of a respect for the average guy. You know, he's he's working 8 10 hours a day. You know, his kids don't see much of him. His wife might not see much of him. His wife might have a job, too. And he's

just working and working and working.

Sometimes it just drudgery just for the sake of supporting his family and all that. And I have respect for that. It's the curse of Adam. you must earn your bread by the sweat of your brow and so forth.

So, there's that. And also, um, as I've gotten older and just partly through my monastic practice that I have just more automatic empathy, you know, you just kind of feel what the other person is feeling to some degree. There's like this us entity that you can tap into and there's like this almost like telepathy going on.

And everybody's got that to some degree.

Even even animals have that to some degree.

So all of that kind of helps me to be more compassionate and have more so-called Christian charity towards other people. And Christian charity isn't like making donations. Christian charity in the old fashioned sense is just accepting people as they are.

Faults and all, warts and all.

And uh I mean reading Dostki helps I suppose because he specialized in portraying people very realistically with all their faults and warts on full display.

And he had a profound respect for his

fellow man. Partly because he spent a few years in like a Siberian prison colony with like hardcore criminals like murderers and rapists and so forth. And he could see that even in them there was like this tenacity and like courage.

There was there were certain like strengths and certain qualities that were even admirable even in like a mass murderer that Dosi had the sensitivity to kind of appreciate to some degree. I mean, he wasn't denying that they belonged in prison and they they had killed children or whatever, but still, I mean, he could see the human condition and have sympathy for it.

So, yeah, I mean, even like reading

Doski's The Idiot, for example, or Crime and Punishment, something like that, it can help a person maybe have a little a little bit more Christian charity for their fellow human.

And I guess some of it you just get me aware with age that that helps too I suppose.

And uh as for meta meditation meta meditation I never really liked it much because it just seemed too artificial that for me genuine meta has to be spontaneous that you don't cultivate it so you can turn it off and on like a faucet. It just some people it might

work but I think a lot of people who practice meta medit meta meditation are just sort of like laring you know they're pretending you know they're just getting this warm feeling of benevolence but it's just sort of like isolated and you know it's not really being applied to real life and then when the real life situation comes that meta meditation has little or no influence on their attitude.

Not that I'm saying you shouldn't do meta meditation, but for me it just didn't work very well because for me it just has to be spontaneous. So it's like you try to cultivate spontaneous meta at all times just

through

I don't various ways that I've already been discussing. So I guess I should just move on to the next question and this is from the saboturs who may or may not be more than one person and the sabaturs say what are the karmic effects of selfdeion

if you are not in any serious pain I knew someone who topped himself because he couldn't get a girlfriend. So again, this is the kind of question that people frequently ask. You know, what are the karmic effects of this action? What are the karmic effects of that action? Is doing this right or wrong? You know, do

you get bad karma for this? And like I keep saying, it's like the actual physical act is ethically neutral. Just a mere physical act produces no karma at all. That the karma is the mental state, the accompanying mental state. So, if somebody autoterminates, so to speak, I mean, if they do it in this frenzy of just despair and anguish and self-hatred and so forth, then they're going to be making a lot worse karma than say some samurai who, let's say, he becomes Ronin because his master, his daimo has been killed in a civil war or something. And so it's he just considers it his duty to finish himself off and or like Ko the

younger who opened his veins or had his doctor open his veins so to speak when Julius Caesar was winning the civil war and it became obvious that the republic was coming to an end in Rome. So I mean if you do it for philosophical reasons you know let's say there's this intelligent relatively wise person who realizes he has got some terminal health condition it's not going to get better he's just going to get worse and worse and so he decides well might as well just uh put an end to this.

So, you know, in a case like that and he he does, you know, he he does the

research and knows what kind of medication to take or whatever it is that will cause him to just go to sleep and not wake up like uh venerable

Vera who was an eccentric very intellectual British monk living in son in the 50s and 60s. he autoterminated with using um ether.

And so with something like that, it's just like an anesthesia. You just go to sleep and you don't wake up again.

So I mean it's going to depend the karmic effects of selfdeion or auto termination if you're not whether or not you're in any serious pain. I mean it's going to depend on your attitude. You know what what your motivations are, how

you feel about what you're doing, that kind of thing. I mean, if you're just like can't stand it anymore, it's just too horrible, just bleakness all around, just, you know, depression and and just despair and all that, then I mean, you're going to be taking that with you with your karma. I mean, that's just creating this karmic imprint. And especially I mean if you selfdelete in some dramatic way that's going to have you just like in this state of emotional charge you know jumping off a cliff for example then it's going to have a lot more effect karmically and just influencing your next life than just you

know taking too much of a certain substance which makes you fall asleep and not wake up again when you just for like philosophical reasons.

I mean, it would be difficult to do it with no bad comma at all, with no unskillful mental states at all. Because it's difficult to do anything with no unskillful mental states at all.

Anything motivated by attraction, aversion, or semiconscious stupidity, which is essentially unenlightenment, is going to have some negative comma in associated with it. And so anything that an unenlightened person does with maybe very few exceptions is going to have at least a tinge of unh wholesome karma

associated with it.

So I suppose it's possible for a fully enlightened being to auto terminate in which case there would be no karmic effects at all.

I'm not sure if there are any cases in the texts of a fully enlightened being autoterminating,

but it wouldn't surprise me if there were. I mean, there's cases like God and in the God Suta who became enlightened while auto terminating and of course there was no karmic effect of that because he became enlightened at the moment of death.

On the other hand, some people can just

be very messed up going into their next life because of just the just the horror of their mental states at the time of their selfdeletion.

So it just depends on the mental state.

And I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "Nondiffiation entails monism. If everything is fundamentally one is knowledge and ignorance undifferentiated

lies and truth also question mark. Well, non-iffierentiation doesn't necessarily entail monism. It's like it reminds me of the sins singing Ming by

Soon. At least that's his Japanese name.

He's the third patriarch of of like Zen

Buddhism.

Third Chinese patriarch anyway. And he says all you can say is not two.

So I mean monism it's it's like emphasizing oneness but I mean if you emphasize oneness then that oneness in order to have any meaning has to have a contrast of not oneness you know it would be either nothingness or multiplicity or whatever and still you're you're kind of stuck in dualism.

So I think Son had the right idea and not even insisting on monism not even insisting on the one just but saying all we can say is not two.

So if everything is fundamentally one is

knowledge and ignorance undifferentiated
uh yeah I mean [clears throat] knowledge
and ignorance would both be mental
states and if and if everything is all
fundamentally one there wouldn't be any
mental states. So I mean there they'd be
not only undifferentiated but they they
wouldn't even be in the picture.

Lies and truth also it's it's the same.
I mean you can't have lies and truth
without mental states.

So I mean if everything is fundamentally
one I mean in reality at the at the
ultimate level you've got
non-differentiation
then yeah there'd be no differentiation
between lies and truth. I mean there

would be no lies and truth even at that level of reality at the ultimate level.

Lies and truth neither one of them would have any validity.

It'd be meaningless

because in order to have lies and in order to have truths you have to have differentiation.

And you wouldn't have you wouldn't have truth without untruth. You wouldn't have untruth without truth as perceptions.

Just like you wouldn't have knowledge without ignorance. And you wouldn't have ignorance without knowledge as perceptions.

And that's the only way they really

exist is as perceptions.

To exist is to be perceived.

So I'm going to move on to Austin's next question, which is why does the universe obey equations we supposedly invent?

Well, the universe doesn't obey equations. It's the other way around.

It's like the universe does what it does.

Let's say somebody throws a ball and then you've got some physicist who is like measuring the arc and then he's coming up with a mathematical equation that can map onto that arc more or less but it's not going to be a perfect fit because I mean with regard to throwing the ball there's going to be other

factors besides you know perfect gravity on a perfect flat plane you know there'd be like friction with the air there'd be like slight gravitational effects of like the sun and the moon interfering with the gravitational pole of the earth and all this. So that the equations that the physicists come up with are abstract and it's like they just observe reality or they observe empirical reality and then you know if if they're a physicist or a chemist or some sort of statistician, you know, maybe some of some of these ecologists, they'll they'll like come up with some mathematical equation that fits what

they observe as closely as they can. But that doesn't mean the ball is obeying any law regarding like parabolic arcs when you throw the ball.

It's just that these equations are cooked up by mathematicians or scientists who do math and it comes as close as they can find to what they observe and it doesn't fit perfectly because there's like so many variables involved that I mean it's like they're in abstraction they're isolating this one force of of say gravity and then they're just dealing with that.

Well, the universe doesn't really work that way. I mean, kind of. I mean, maybe

it does if you could isolate all the the variables, but in the empirical universe, the variables aren't isolated. It's just this soup of all these different conditions.

So, yeah, the universe just does what it does and then scientists will come up with equations that they can map onto the observed data.

And I'm just going to move on to Austin's third question.

I think Austin doesn't like monism very much. I just get that get that impression. But anyway, Austin says, "Logic seems to constrain any possible thought, not just human thought. If

logic was generated by the mind, how could it not be the case that contradictions could be true by different conventions?"

Now, that's a difficult question. I gotta I got to read that second question again. If logic was generated by mind, which seems pretty obvious to me that it is, how could it not be the case that contradictions could be true by different conventions? Okay, so he's saying if logic really is just a kind of mentally generated, you know, abstraction, then how could contradictions be true by different conventions? Well,

I mean, apparently Austin doesn't know anybody who's like a new age follower, a newager, but I mean to to a lot of these new age people, I mean, contradictions.

I mean A and B even though they're mutually contradictory can still be considered true in their world.

So again though I mean it's let's see I mean any kind of multiplicity is generated by mind. Logic is is is a matter of perception.

So I mean you get rid of the the mind. I mean you get rid of logic. I mean you get rid of any kind of proposition.

How are you going to have you know like a syllogism? Is that going to be a valid

syllogism or an invalid one without any kind of perception?

You got to perceive it. I got a dog looking at me now because she wants to be sitting in this chair. She likes being in this chair chewing on stuff.

like, oh, here she likes chewing on these. Here, here you go.

[clears throat] And she grunts when she likes something.

So, let's see here. Did I answer the question? It's Austin and and like many other people. I don't want to just pick on Austin. I mean, there's lots and lots of people in this world. probably most of them if if you really kind of question them about their attitude, you

know, it's like they try to understand reality and it's like they want to know what reality is like without human psychology interfering, let's say. So they kick human psychology out the front door and then just immediately sneak it back in through the back again.

That's what scientists try to do.

Although since like um quantum theory and theoretical physics came along with like the idea that the perceiving mind is influencing systems then even this is getting getting weak in physics even though it's still you know like a biologist or a chemist is still trying to understand what the world would be

like you know through the eyes of God
and not just through the eyes of people
And really, they're just trying to get
rid of human psychology
and then they can't. And so they just
have to sneak the human psychology in
through the back door immediately
because they can't imagine anything
without human psychology, especially if
human psychology is creating
multiplicity.

And you have to have um relations to
have multiplicity. In order to have
multiplicity, you have to have contrast.
And contrast relies on relations.
Same as, different from, especially
those are like the two main ones. And

there there is no same as or different from out there in the world outside of a perceiving mind. Like I've said before, a chemist can analyze a sample of matter. He can divide it down into its constituent elements. He's never going to isolate any pure same as or any pure different from. Those are purely psychological. And without those psychological elements, there's no differentiation. There's no contrast. Unless you want to just sneak human ape psychology in through the back door and pretend that it's not there. And some people when they're trying to understand reality, I mean I mean that I

mean in a way that's that's like the the
first first mistake because you cannot
figure out reality. You cannot
understand ultimate reality
intellectually symbolically.

All of your thoughts are symbolic. And a
symbol isn't the thing that it
represents. It's it's like this abstract
weird attempt to portray what it's
trying to represent and it doesn't do a
very good job. I mean just the idea of a
tree is very different from a actual
tree. Assuming that there is an actual
tree you can't even prove that
take away all the mental states the tree
disappears too for all intents and
purposes.

I used to think it was all intensive purposes, but then I realized I'm pretty sure it's all intents and purposes.

So, let's see. Did I answer the question before I move on to the next one? I mean, I really want to really answer these questions if I am able to.

So, logic seems to constrain any possible thought, not just human thought, I suppose. I mean it doesn't constrain newagers thought. I mean a lot of Christian thought it doesn't constrain a lot of fundamentalist Christians will think that the Bible is absolutely 100% true even though the Bible itself contains contradictions.

So [sighs]

okay that's that's kind of the easy sentence in this two sentence question.

The second one that has the actual question mark, if logic was generated by the mind, which presumably it is, how could it not be the case or just forget the case, how could contra how could contradictions not be true

by different. Oh man, this is it's for some reason some sentences like this, it's hard to wrap your head around the actual meaning. Although I think I've already answered this. If logic was generated by the mind, how could it not be that contradictions could be true by different conventions?

Yeah, contradictions can be true by different conventions. I mean, if you just got an irrational convention, for example, no problem. Or even I mean, I've I've pointed this out before, like the Coca-Cola bottle. I don't have a Coca-Cola bottle handy. I've got this glass

purchased from the Dollar Tree.

But that's not good because it's glass can have two different meanings. Forget that. All right. How about

Okay. How about this? This is a coaster made of wood. So, it's a coaster and it's wood. But coaster doesn't mean wood. You can have coasters made out of

other things like cork, for example. And obviously anything made of wood isn't necessarily a coaster. So coaster and wood are not synonyms.

But this is coaster and wood simultaneously. It is a and not a because coaster and wood don't mean the same thing. Not necessarily. There's a teensy bit of overlap.

But coaster does not mean the same as wood. Wood does not mean the same as coaster. So wood and coaster are not the same. They have different meanings.

But this is both at the same time. It's a and not a simultaneously which violates the aritilian arisetilian laws of thought.

A cannot be not a. But this is a and not a. This is coaster and wood with a being coaster. that say

but I mean it's it it might be seen as a kind of paradox or you can try and work out like I did mention that there's a teensy bit of overlap so that's that's what that's why they're why they're not contradictory but really it's like two entirely different levels of truth it's form and function the or essence essence and function let's say essence and or essence and form substance and form The substance is wood. The form is a coaster.

So, it's just two different levels of

truth.

But I don't know why I'm wallowing in this,

but different conventions. I mean, obviously you you've got some conventions that see no problem with contradictions

and just leave it at that, I suppose.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Arpad and Arpad says about the 500year prophecy. And before I get any further with the question, he's referring to this

notorious prophecy made by the Buddha.

When um his aunt and stepmother, both the same person, Maha Pajapi Goami, she

wanted to be a nun. She wanted to be a fully ordained Buddhist nun. and there weren't any. So, she was following the Buddha around asking him, "Please let me be the first nun. Please ordain me as a nun." And the Buddha just kept refusing. He said, "You don't even go there. Just don't even bring it up. It's not going to happen." So, she was just kind of following him around, his tears in her face and just dust in her hair. She'd just be standing silently outside of his door just kind of silently protesting and grieving that the Buddha would not allow the ordination of women. And then his cousin Ananda who also had the

family name of God.

His cousin Ananda who was also his attendant talks the Buddha into it. You know he used mainly the argument that persuaded the Buddha was Ananda said, "Well, can't women become enlightened just like men can?" And the Buddha had to admit that they can. And then he said, "All right, we'll ordain women." But now you've done it because now that the ordination of women is going to be allowed, the true dharma will exist only half as long. It will exist for only 500 years instead of a thousand years. And so now there's I mean it's it's not very popular among people who like support bikuni ordination and so forth. They'll

just say, "Well, that must never have happened. that just got added later or something. But there are a number of possible interpretations of this and Arpad is going to come up with another interpretation that I haven't really considered very much. And so let's go back to the question now. Arpad says about the 500year prophecy. Could it be possible that since the ordination was open to the other half of mankind or people kind therefore doubling the potential number of enlightened beings the amount of time required to reach that number was proportionally divided. So Arpad is actually turning this into a

good thing you know I mean it was obvious that the Buddha didn't want to do it. He thought it was a bad idea and when he got talked into it he tells Ananda all right but now you've done it because I mean he was not praising Ananda for talking him into doubling the amount of enlightened beings in the world.

So, I mean, that's just for starters, but it's also true that I mean, maybe not until modern times, modern in the modern west especially, that you're going to have roughly proportionate numbers of men and women practicing advanced spirituality to the point of enlightenment. I mean, that's mainly

been a man's game throughout most of history. I mean, you're always going to have prophetesses and nuns and priestesses and female shamanesses and so forth. And some of them presumably, assuming that people get enlightened, some of them were probably enlightened. But it kind of reminds me of that saying of Nietzsche where I mean he was in a way he kind of was jealous of women or sort of wished that he could just spend his life just thinking about clothes and food and children and gossip instead of dealing with the heavy issues. And I think women are especially like historically and traditionally more

inclined to just go with the flow of
samsara and just spend their life taking
care of kids and talking about food and
clothes and gossiping at the back fence
that kind of stuff. and men I mean
they've been like the supporters of
religion you know they've been the ones
who feed the monks and so forth but for
the most part it has been men who have
been doing most of the heavy lifting
so I think that our pad I mean it's it's
kind of an interesting interpretation
but clearly when the Buddha was saying
that the true dharma was only going to
last half as long because of
nonordination

He didn't think it was a good thing, you

know. I mean, he obviously considered it to have been a bad idea.

So, I don't think that he would consider doubling the amount of enlightened beings in the world to have been a bad idea.

It was just going to cause more trouble than than than it was worth presumably.

So,

I guess I'll just move on. Next question. This is from Troas is

And Tzas is says, "Do monks living alone who really practice eventually start to believe in their own greatness? Maybe like Nana Vera who had written the exact date when he became a sodapon." Yeah,

Nyan is the person that I mentioned in answer to the first question or second question. Second question I think who selfdeed in Sri Lanka or son like around 1965.

Um,

do monks living alone really practice eventually start to believe in their own grace? Some of them do and a lot of Burmese seats who don't live alone and they might really practice but I mean they've got disciples. You know, they're the abbot of a monastery, maybe a famous monastery with lots of lay people coming to visit and making offerings and so forth. Um, they're treated like kings who are just infallible oracles for so

long that a lot of Burmese apparently start believing in it. You know, they start considering themselves to be infallible oracles. You know, kind of like a certain German painter who became chancellor in the 1930s who was so successful at the beginning of a certain war that he kind of started considering himself to be like this chosen man of destiny and essentially infallible. And then he started micromanaging the military and making mistakes and so forth. So I mean you don't have to live alone to start believing in your own greatness. Some some monks live alone and they just stay

humble or they just they just don't think about that kind of stuff.

But others I mean they start thinking that they're they've really attained something. And I mean you don't have to live alone to to think that. I mean, it might be even easier if you're with other people because then, you know, [clears throat] if they think you're great, then that reinforces your own idea that you are great. But a lot of what happens, a lot of what I've experienced, especially Burmese people, because I was dealing mostly with Burmese Buddhists for most of the time that I was monk, they'll have some weird experience, some breakthrough in their

meditation, and they think that's it. I'
I've become an Arya. I've become a
sodapona or something. And
that happens a lot. Some Westerners do
that too. And some of them were just
clearly just clearly kind of nutty that
but they're just sure that they there
was this one guy. He came to visit me.
And I was I was staying at a school
monastery in near Mandalay at the time.
And as soon as he walked in the door, I
knew there wasn't some there was
something not quite right about this
guy. It was just like this look in his
eyes and you know at first we sit down
and we're having like this normal

conversation and then he just starts
like

quoting sutras that I'd never heard of
that I think he was just making up like
the the demons hanging from a horse's
tail this kind of stuff. And then he
starts talking about how he was in this
meditation hall and this dragon from the
center of the galaxy started coming
towards them and he was going to like
devour everybody and then it was I can't
remember if it was him or the the leader
of the meditation group that says do not
be afraid. The power of our samadei will
protect us. And sure enough the dragon
didn't eat them.

And so I mean there's a lot of that kind

of stuff. And this guy was sure that he was an Arya, but anyone who knew him was generally be just as sure that he was possibly schizophrenic.

But that I mean that doesn't mean that you can't be both. I would assume a lot of very advanced spiritual practitioners have been nutty by me western modern western psychological standards.

In fact, uh, William James in his classic book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, starts off pointing out that some people like I think it was George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. I mean, he was a wise person, but he was also naughty or like St. Teresa of Avia,

founder of the discounts Carmelite Order, who was apparently a meditation master. Her disciple, St. John of the Cross obviously considered her to be very highly attained in all this, but she was having so many visions of like demons and and and so forth that [clears throat] her father confessor just told her to make the sign of the cross whenever she'd see a vision or hear a voice or anything like that. And she got so tired of making the sign of the cross all the time, she just started carrying around a crucifix and was just holding it up whenever she'd have the vision, which was apparently several times a day.

So I mean whether you're alone or not I mean if you're alone without feedback sometimes you can drift in weird eccentric directions.

So that that is more likely the believing in your own greatness that can happen either way and I don't think being alone would necessarily increase the odds of that.

Like there's the the Baja Suta which is one of my favorite sutas in the Udana.

Udana 110 I think it is where

Baja lived alone in the forest. He wasn't a Buddhist. He was living on like the the west coast of India. But people were revering him so much considering

him to be enlightened that he started thinking maybe he really was enlightened until some deva who was a close relative in a previous life came and visited him and told him no you're not enlightened. So yeah, even monks living alone, they still have to deal with lay people and the lay people might start thinking that this monk is fully enlightened. That happened to me a few times. Few places in Burma. People started thinking I was an orahant mainly just because I was minding my own business, meditating out in the forest and I didn't handle money and I didn't sit around smoking cigars and drinking tea with the the village guys like most of the other like the

village monks were doing.

So

yeah, with regard to Yanova, I mean Ajan
Ajan man also in his I think it's his
autobiography,

he [clears throat] he like listed like
the times and places of all four stages
or all eight stages because each each
stage of being an Arya has like the the
the path and the fruit, you know. So,
it's like broken up into two two events
instead of just one. And he had it all
worked out, you know, exactly when and
where it all happened.

[clears throat] So, [snorts]

I mean, Ajan Mun's case, I mean, I don't

want to second guess Ajan Mun, but he was kind of like the St. Teresa of Avila type where just apparently he was having lots and lots of weird visions and so forth in addition to being highly advanced in meditation and so forth.

So have I answered that question?

Sometimes I just answer and answer and answer so that I wind up answering like five or six questions most of which weren't even asked.

Um,

I think yeah, I think I answered that question. So, I'm just going to move on to Troas's

second question, which is, "Do you have a new job?" And the correct answer to

that is not yet. Although I am looking
and I have received [clears throat] some
interesting offers, like two main ones.
One would be working on a trim break
again, which is something I was really
good at and I kind of enjoy doing it.
And then there's [clears throat] an but
that's a little farther away. And then
there's this one that maybe I could get.
You know, it's neither one is is
finalized, but both are still
open-ended. Another one is building
crates for a place that's just really
close to here. Just I mean, it just be a
few minutes drive. I mean, I could
almost practically walk there.

And the crates are for like large wind turbines that are being shipped overseas. So they got to be very precisely made to specifications and so forth, which I think wouldn't be as interesting of a job, but the pay is kind of equal equivalent or comparable in both cases. And so one has the advantage of being very close to home and the other one has the advantage of being something that I'm already good at and kind of enjoy doing.

But I don't have a new job yet.

Although I might make a little bit of extra income from this fourth book that's going to come out within the next couple weeks, *Memoirs from Myanmar*,

which is going to be mostly
autobiographical stuff, stories about my
time spent um not only in Burma, but
also in America and Indonesia as a monk.
So, I'm just going to move on this
question. This is from PSA.

And PSA says, 'Aren't you sometimes
amazed at how immensely, monumentally,
inconceivably, indescribably,
immeasurably stupid human beings really
are? Only 0.1% are worth listening to,
while 99.9%
are hilariously incompetent,
astronomically [__] and
spectacularly wrong about basically
everything. The human realm could be

summed up as a few contemplatives and everything else is nothing but simps and hoes. It seems cosmically embarrassing to be part of the species. If the universe had a carnival, humans would be the main attraction. The ego freak show segment. How did they survive this long? How do we survive this long? I suppose he should have said, "Paradoxically, if humans were too smart, we all would have gotten enlightened by now. It is stupidity that keeps the theater going. Watching the human show is like watching a drunken, horny, bickering pack of apes accidentally inventing fire." Thoughts? Well,

I really do not completely I mean, even

at my worst, at my most misanthropic
as like a teenager or someone in my
early 20s, I really was not this extreme
in my despising of the human race
because I mean, [clears throat] let's
see how stupid human beings really are.
I mean, obviously, we're infinitely
ignorant. I mean any any being with a
finite intelligence is going to be
infinitely ignorant. But I mean we are
the smartest beings on this planet
presumably. I mean there might be
dolphins that in certain ways are
smarter than us.

You know it's like I did a research
paper on intelligence in bottl-nose

dolphins when I was in college. And apparently they can communicate like two different messages to two different dolphins simultaneously. One like through uh repeating like a sonar uh sonar echo. You know it's like they send out this pulse of sound through a kind of sonar.

It comes back to them modified and you know their sonar is accurate enough they can tell you know the difference between heads and tails on a quarter from five feet away in in in opaque water that kind of stuff. So all they got to do is just send what they received to a different dolphin and it's just like sending a picture instantaneously.

Well, other to a different dolphin, they can be like doing the clicks and stuff, sending a different kind of message to a different dolphin at the same time, which is sort of like talking and texting at the same time.

And I mean, they got a a larger, more convoluted brain than us and so forth.

So I mean it's possible that in certain ways other animals may be more intelligent than us, may have higher IQ than us in certain ways, but still I mean

we are relatively intelligent and even though it's a tiny percentage of the people that are like the Galileo and the

Thomas Edison's and you know the you
[clears throat] know the big inventors
who are really changing things. Elon
Musk, I suppose, could be included in
that these days.

Tesla,

Nicola Tesla, not the car

that uh I mean they're the ones who are
inventing this stuff, but still like I
was saying in response to an earlier
question, you've got just ordinary just
average mediocre people who, you know,
[clears throat] they dedicate their
intelligence to mastering this one
little sliver of what, you know, the
bulk of human knowledge that, you know,
they specialize in that and they do well

enough at that that civilization keeps going.

So I really is people aren't that stupid. I mean [clears throat]

I mean we are infinitely ignorant.

Let's see here. But let's just get a little farther here.

Hilariously incompetent. No. I mean not really. I mean, if we were hilariously incompetent, then civilization wouldn't have gotten as far as it has and still be going strong, apparently.

See, spectacularly wrong about basically everything. Well, I mean, even the geniuses, the inventors would be spectacularly wrong about basically

everything if you're going with ultimate truth and not just this samsaric matrix that everybody is wallowing in.

Let's see.

uh cos it feels cosmically embarrassing to be part of the species. I mean, well, how do you know what other species?

Let's say there's other planets with other intelligent races. They could be even stupider than us. Or I mean, most species on this planet are stupider than us. Maybe not as neurotic as us. I mean, you have to get a certain level of intelligence just to be messed up or at least to be spectacularly messed up.

So yeah, if the universe had a carnival,

humans would be the main attraction. I don't think so at all.

See, how did they and how did we survive this long? Yeah, he doesn't include himself as a human apparently.

How did we survive this long? Well, partly I would guess

is that uh we really didn't have the power to destroy ourselves up until relatively recently with the invention of nukes and spectacular forms of of pollution,

that kind of thing. I mean, now we might have the potential to really wipe ourselves out, which is one reason why Elon Musk wants us to colonize space as

soon as possible because he knows a lot of our limitations and knows that, you know, it's I mean, he's maybe read enough science fiction, too, to know that so long as you got all your human eggs in one basket of Earth, then the whole race can get wiped out by just some maniac pushing the wrong button. Whereas, if you've got space colonies, then even if the world is destroyed, you've still got some human race going. So, let's see here. Watching the human show is like watching a drunken horny bickering pack of apes accidentally. Well, I mean, is is is PSA one of the 0.1% or is he one of the the the laughably incompetent, [__]

apes?

Apparently, he considers himself to be one of the just the the refined ethereal elite or something.

But

yeah, I mean we are what we are. I mean we started off we're like an upgraded ape. So I mean compared with what we used to be compared with Homo erectus I would say that we've made a lot of advancement and it all balances out the poses the positive and the negatives the positives and minuses good and the bad all balance out through the the law of dualism.

the law of subjective equilibrium as

I've sometimes called it.

So yeah, I mean probably PSA is still young. He's still in his more misanthropic stages,

but by the time he gets to be an old man with gray hair, then there's a good chance that he'll have a little more Christian charity and compassion and empathy and so forth.

So let's just move on. Next question.

This is from Maitraa Buddha.

And Maitraa Buddha says, "Narender Modi uploaded a video titled Why the Return of Bagawan Buddha's relics is a defining moment for India. What is your response to this when historically Hindus have

had a rivalry with Buddhists and claimed the Buddha to be an incarnation of Vishnu that would teach people a dharma and lead people astray from the vadas? Could this be a tourist attraction rather than genuine admiration and honor to go Buddha? Well, first of all, Narendra Modi is a politician. So, a lot of what he says no doubt is for public relations. you know just for just to to to project an image I suppose also in India the Hindus won so they can afford to be magnanimous towards Buddhism now Buddhism is no longer their mortal enemy you know like no longer their primary rival

nowadays it'd be more like either Islam or communism would be more of a rival to Hinduism in India than Buddhism is so there's also that I mean that that that kind of religious cold war that was going on between Buddhists and Hindus in India for so many centuries I mean that's it's past history now so you can afford to be magnanimous but also I mean India has all I mean nowadays India does take a certain amount of pride like like the flag of India has got that wheel on it which I mean to some degree it's inspired by Mahatma Gandhi spinning wheel but also it's inspired by the wheel of dharma the Buddhist wheel of dharma of the emperor

Ashoka

so I mean the emperor Ashoka was I mean
he was like one of the ideal rulers uh
at least in the minds of the people of
India or and of the world I suppose you
know he was like a stereotypical
virtuous ruler

so

I mean I don't think that Hindus
uh certainly not all of them consider
Buddhism to just be this horrible
blasphemous heresy anything like that
anymore. They might have at one time and
probably many of them still do. like you
you find certain like social media
threads where you've got, you know,

hardcore Hindus just bashing away at Buddhism just like you you got some Christian threads in the West bashing away at anything that isn't Christianity.

So, let's see what did I answer the question. Could this be a tourist attraction rather than genuine admiration and honor to God Buddha?

Well, it's probably a combination of both. at

least a little bit of both. But I'm not a mind reader. I really don't know what Narendra Mod's motives were for saying what he said. But yeah, I don't think that there's nearly as much of an axe to grind against Buddhism among Indian

Hindus as there used to be. And so now they can kind of relax and, you know, be magnanimous as I've said like three times at least.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Yoshi Buouie.

Oh, and this is a Nagarjuna question. I don't have the fez.

Damn.

Anyways, Yoshi Buouie says, "Did Nagarja not claim that a thing does not arise from itself and it does not arise from another? I came from my mother. Does not that constitute arise from another?" Um, it's been years since I've read the Mulamjama caraka and I do seem to recall

that one of the first issues was not whether a thing arises from itself, but whether a cause is the same as the effect, whether the effect is the same as its cause, which kind of is is similar to this. It might just be a reinterpretation of this issue.

So I mean the argument if I remember correctly if the effect is the same as the cause then I mean there was no change but if it's different from the cause then I mean it wouldn't need the cause I mean it would just it could just arise randomly or spontaneously that was like the the arguments and then he rules out both and then he rules out neither because the whole purpose of the

bulk of the muamajamaka caraka at least
at least One of its main themes is just
a asking these philosophical questions
and then ruling out all possible answers
using logic chopping or whatever it's
called. Just this like dismantling just
shooting down any possible answer and
then just leaving like emptiness behind.
But whether that's a different question
that was or a different issue that was
dealt with in the mula majamaka karak
car karaka not is an effect the same as
the cause that caused it but whether a
thing arises from itself well I mean
obviously a thing couldn't arise from
itself

then it would already have arisen but if
it doesn't arise from itself then I'm I
don't know what the argument would be
I'm sure that Nagarjuna had some clever
argument if if this issue is dealt with
uh separately from the cause and effect
issue

but I mean if it's arising from
something then what it arises from would
be the cause presumably so I think this
is just sort of a rephrasing of that
preliminary

issue dealt with in the *mulamama caraka*
that if it arises from another
that [sighs]

Then I mean you don't even really need
the other if they're if they're

qualitatively different.

And nowadays you you could have a logically minded person could kind of shoot down a lot of the mulamjamaka carak's arguments. I think what the mulamjama cara is trying to say is still valid but I mean you could just say it's the same substance but different form that kind of thing.

>> [sighs]

>> So let's see here. So I'm not saying that everything Nagarjan says is necessarily true. I think he was aiming at a at a certain goal and using certain logical tricks or logical arguments to support that goal. And I think the goal

is a valid one really that um I mean partly that everything is just sort of um conditionally real and not ultimately real.

I mean that was one of the main main arguments and that's just central to Buddhist philosophy

that objects do not have an individual inherent self-existence

that they just exist conditionally upon causes and you take the causes away and this supposed entity also disappears

because the causes that cause it disappear.

So if you came from your mother, does that not constitute a rise from another?

Uh from a conventional point of view, I

suppose it does. Although you'd say that I mean the elements came out of your mother, so the elements were the same. It's just they took a assumed a different form.

I mean, you could use that kind of argument nowadays, but I don't think that it's really u a wise use of time and effort to really try to wallow through ancient Indian logic that I mean formal logic was still in its early stages back then. And I mean especially in terraat sometimes if you read like the kataw watu which I think is the third book of the abidamapita is pretty much the only

readable book in the entire abidama
pitikica which is using like arguments
to shoot down the philosophical views of
other schools of Buddhism. So pretty
obviously it arose after the time of the
Buddha because other schools of Buddhism
that are mentioned in the Katawatu
didn't even exist in the Buddhist time.
But I mean some of the arguments used by
the terraodins are much worse than the
arguments used by Nagarjan just because
formal logic just had not been
established in Indian philosophy yet.
who's better in Nagarin this time but
still not perfect.
But I mean the the main point that he
was trying to get at is still true in my

opinion and he was using like the best logical tools available in India at the time to demonstrate his point and I'm just going to move on next question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says, [clears throat]

"If no philosophical system or language can ever reach ultimate truth, does this mean that they are simply tools for achieving different goals?"

Not necessarily.

I mean, you can still have the goal, a philosophical goal of reaching ultimate truth. I assume there have been philosophies that really were [clears throat] just

aiming at ultimate truth.

Well, they just can't do it. They just can't get there. At least not from my point of view or this the classical Buddhist point of view. Unless, well, I guess from an orthodox Buddhist point of view, you'd have to say abidama is ultimate truth. So that would be a philosophical system that does arrive at [clears throat] ultimate truths from the point of view of say a Burmese Abidama scholar.

So let's see. Yeah, I would guess that most philosophical systems I mean yeah there's different philosophical systems will have different goals. I mean some philosophical systems are just trying to

find meaning to life. you know, like existentialism, you know, it's not really dealing with metaphysics much.

It's just dealing with ethics. What what should you do with your life? How should you live your life? That kind of stuff.

A lot of ancient Greek philosophy was like that.

Um, some philosophical systems are kind of nihilistic. You know, they're just trying to show that you can't or like skepticism for example, you can't know anything.

So I mean different philosophical systems will have different emphases and be moving in different directions. All

philosophy is not created equal. You know ethics and metaphysics for example or even like aesthetics you know what is beauty this kind of stuff.

So

yeah I don't think that all philosophical systems I mean I don't think any philosophical system or language can reach ultimate truth.

Um and so probably the most sophisticated philosophical system is one sort of like Nagarja was doing where you're demonstrating that you can't reach ultimate truth through intellect like Emanuel Kant was doing that most famously in the west I think so [clears throat] see does this mean

that they are simply tools for achieving
different goals not simply

I mean I mean they are tools for
achieving different goals different
different emphases you know like ethic
ics versus metaphysics,
logic, that kind of stuff,
epistemology.

So, different philosophies will have
different emphases and be moving in
somewhat different directions, having
different goals, but I don't think that
it's [clears throat] even if the I mean,
some philosophies really are trying to
reach ultimate truth and they just can't
do it, including Abidama philosophy.

So kind of yes. The answer to that answer to that question is kind of. And I'm moving on to Xenithoid's next question. He says, "Assuming yes to question one, would it be accurate to say that Hinduism is the tool to achieve pure being, Buddhism is the tool to achieve the unconditioned, and Jan Janism is the tool to achieve pure non-being?" Well, no, I wouldn't go that far. I mean, I think like the the wisest or the most advanced spiritual systems within Hinduism and the most advanced spiritual systems within Buddhism. I mean, they're both going for the same enlightenment, the same realization of the absolute, so

to speak. It's just they use different language to do it. Janism was more of a more of a primitive archaic kind of system where in Janism you've got a ja or a soul that is weighed down with all this sticky karma. And so you're just trying to exhaust the karma, you know, to burn off the karma you've already got without adding any new karma to your ja so that it can float up into heaven.

So that's what the James were trying to do. There still are. There's still a few million of them.

So yeah, I think that Hinduism, I mean, it's the most advanced schools of Hinduism and Buddhism, the most advanced

spiritual traditions. I do think that they're essentially striving for the same goal. It's just they're using different language to explain it and somewhat different techniques for getting there.

But it's like knowing God, you know, it's like the Buddhists wouldn't use the word God. But still, I mean, it's it's just different words. It's just different descriptions that are imperfect and they're not really going to apply to the absolute anyway.

So, let's see. I'm not sure. Let's see.

I thought I had I made a note at the bottom of one of these and now I'm not seeing it.

Oh, okay. All right. I'm going to get there still.

So, and we've been going for a little over an hour already. So, but we're over halfway done. So, we should be done within two hours, I think, maybe.

So, I think I answered that one. Okay, I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Fifth.

And Fifth says, "Do you have any thoughts or opinions on Sad Guru? He is extremely popular and I see him everywhere online. He has followers who cry and kiss his feet and made the announcement that this is his last life. He is kind of like a neo-Hindu and

focuses a lot on Adi yoga. Yeah, I've seen

a few of Sadguru's videos. Isn't he the one that's like was like riding a motorcycle across the country at one time? Maybe he does that regularly. I'm not sure.

Um, but I really don't know much about him. I really I mean I would be skeptical of any claims to his full enlightenment but who knows I really don't know that much about him

[clears throat]

but his followers who cry and kiss his feet I mean that's what Hindu devotees do to their gurus regardless of who the guru is uh in many cases.

Um but yeah, I really I really don't know enough about Sadguru to really make any kind of even educated guess about him. [clears throat and cough] So I'm just going to move on to Fifth's ne next question, which is why or how did the Bikunis go extinct?

So yeah, the Bikuni order, the fully the order of fully ordained nuns in Buddhism in Terravada Buddhism, the Bukuni Sa went extinct a few hundred years ago. Um there's claims that they went extinct several hundred years ago but still there's mention of biconeis in Burma like late 1600s maybe even early 1700s but eventually they did go extinct and

there's different reasons for that. One reason is [clears throat] that nuns were not allowed to live in forests just for their own safety because there was like bandits, bad men living, you know, men with toxic masculinity living out in the forest. And so there's a rule preventing nuns, bikunies from, you know, living too far away from inhabited areas, you know, living out alone in the forest. They can go out there to meditate but they got to come back and sleep at the the convent I guess you'd call it and part and then because of that at times like in India and other places where you would have like an anti-B Buddhist king who's persecuting the Buddhists the

Bunis because they were not I mean there weren't any or very few hiding out alone out in the forests you know they they could get persecuted into extinction. more easily than a lot of like caved dwelling herb monks out in the forests. So that was part of the reason. But I think a more important reason is that the rules for bikunis are much stricter than for monks. And part of the reason for that is just to weed out women who are just trying to escape from an [_] husband, a bad marriage, bad family situation and and join the SA without really having a true spiritual calling.

So the rules are much stricter. For example, you've got four parajika rules for monks that if a monk breaks any of these four rules, he's automatically excommunicated from the sa for life.

Nuns have eight.

I mean, in a few cases, the rules are easier for nuns. Like, nuns are allowed to cook their own food just because they didn't get the same amount of respect from the people as a general rule, which is still the case in Burma.

Although, I mean, there aren't any real Bikunis in Burma that I know of. But nuns just don't get the same kind of respect. And so, they had certain privileges [clears throat] like being

able to cook their own food that monks were not allowed. But because the rules are so strict

um sort of discriminating against nuns that it just sort of discouraged enough women to become fully ordained nuns.

They just prefer to be like an eight preet nun or a 10 preset nun that isn't fully ordained. And that was good enough. And that continues to be good enough in places like

Terravada Buddhist Southeast Asia.

It's just kind of weird to me that in the West you've got people this campaigning to revive an order that blatantly discriminates against women

for the sake of gender equality. And so what they do is they claim to be fully ordained bunies and then they just don't follow the rules very well. So what's the point of becoming a buun unless you just want the official status? But don't get me going on a a rant about

[clears throat] post-modern attempts to revive the Bikuni order. I've been told that in Burma, any woman claiming to be a Bikuni can go to prison for it.

And it's just common knowledge in Burma that the Bikuni order is dead. like um before the podimoka recitation every two weeks approximately at a at a monastery one of the duties that's in the text is you have to exhort the bunis and so in

the preliminaries like the introductory verses that are chanted before you start chant or reciting the the pimoka you have to say there are no bikunis and so the exhortation to the bikunis is just kind of a moot point but mainly went extinct because they were more visible because they could not be hermits living out alone in the forest. And so at times of persecution, they would get persecuted more than the n monks would. Then plus of course there were never as many nuns as monks. Never nearly as many nuns as monks. So any kind of bottleneck is more likely to

wipe them out than wipe out monks. But also just because the rules were so strict just to weed out the ones the nuns that women that just wanted to get away from the [__] husband and live an easy life that it just became more and more prevalent in Buddhist countries that women who wanted to renounce the world would just become like an eight precept nun or a 10 precept nun and just didn't bother with the extreme strictness of being a fully ordained. And so the Bikuni order went extinct a few hundred years ago.

And so I'm just going to move on [snorts] to Fifth's third question, which is kind of an interesting one. He

says, "I was wondering if you had any favorite time periods or wars in history. I was a history major myself and I am always curious about which topics people gravitate towards."

Well, the Second World War is interesting, very important one just his historically and culturally for us nowadays.

Um, I've I've when I was younger, I was more interested in ancient Greeks than Romans, but as I got older, I became more interested in Romans than Greeks.

So yeah, it's like sometimes I'll watch um YouTube videos about famous battles and gosh, probably half of them are are

Roman, you know, late republic, early empire, that kind of thing. Um like feudal Japan interests me. Um medieval Europe, like the Hundred Years War, that's that's interesting.

Frederick the Great of Prussia was was a military genius allegedly. So it's like the Seven Years War which uh manifested in American history as the French and Indian War. That was that's been of interest to me. Um what else?

Yeah, that's those would be the main ones I think. I mean a lot of like interesting like Indian history this they they're not as detailed in descriptions of battles and so forth.

Well like India in the Buddhist time is

fascinating to me and I've studied that a lot.

Although you don't hear much about battles and if you do hear about battles you just pretty much hear that there was a battle and this side won because they don't really go into details about you know how the wings were set up. Lately, I've been studying up a little bit on Epom Apamandis, who was a Theban general shortly before the time of Alexander, who was considered one of the great military geniuses of history. You know, he started the the asymmetrical battle line where he was the he was he and the

theans defeated the Spartans after the Spartans being undefeated in a major land battle for centuries. He came up with this system of an asymmetrical battle formation where all of his best fighters would be, you know, like at least half of them would just be on one side and then they would move forwards and then he'd tell the other like the center and the and the right to just kind of fade back and avoid fighting.

And so they just steamroll one side and then just wrap around and just wipe out the enemy army or just defeat it, send it into a route, that kind of thing. And um Frederick the Great of Prussia, he uh he learned from a Pameandis, I think he

was using some asymmetrical battle formations also.

But uh yeah like

Ganges [clears throat] Valley in the

Buddhist time, Roman Empire stuff

especially or late republic early Roman

Empire um ancient Greece is is

fascinating

uh feudal Japan and medieval Europe are

like some of the main ones and uh some

like some periods in history some

cultures just do not resonate with me at

all like Meso America I've rarely had

any interest at all in, you know, like

the the civilizations of Central America

and South America, that kind of thing.

For some reason, also ancient Egypt. I mean, sometimes just like watching videos on new developments in the like understanding the pyramids and the secret passageways and that kind of thing can be interesting. But um just ancient China. I mean I I've read some of the the the strate like the military manuals of military strategy manuals of of like ancient or medieval China that kind of thing is kind of interesting. But uh assuming that there is such a thing as rebirth than I think I was more likely, you know, like part of participated in the the late Roman Republic, you know, feudal Japan, medieval medieval England, that kind of

thing. And of course, India.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ruie.

And Ruie says, "Do you think the timelessness of dharma?" Akalico in

Pali. I'll start again. Ruie says, "Do you think the timelessness of Dharma can be used as a temporal wormhole of sorts by means of sat or recollection?

Concepts such as now or moment and even instant seem rather clunky. But

timelessness, although it is just

another word, seems to generate a

certain inner atmosphere more conducive

to an experience of the unconditioned.

Particularly when the narrative mind

begins to fade,

but the perception of wakefulness is
still palpable.

Gosh, I think I need another drink of
the primary designated beverage.

Maybe timelessness is more effective in
describing a timeless situation partly
because it's a negation

just like unconditioned [clears throat]

is a kind of negation. Unconditioned
means not conditioned. Timelessness

means you know not time or not in time.

So yeah, Buddhism does seem to prefer
negations to assertions with regard to
describing like profundities,
you know, not this, not that, although
that's uponic.

So let's see here. What's the actual question? Where's the question mark?

Do you think the timelessness of dharma can be used as a temporal wormhole sorts by means of recollection? Yeah, I mean if it works for you then go for it.

Anything that works I mean you got to be pragmatic to some degree. If it works then keep doing it and if it doesn't work then try something else.

But yeah timelessness I mean it does seem to fit the Buddhist uh approach better than more positive assertive kind of words because it's more of a negation. You know it's just kind of Yeah. So let's see what what else is

there's there's something else in here.

But I mean eventually if you want to understand Akalico or timelessness or eternity you know or you know the power of now or whatever I mean you just do it practically you know you just when you're doing your mindfulness meditation you're just emphasizing the present moment and when you get really good at mindfulness you know every moment is the only moment and you don't really even have a concept of time.

I mean, you even kind of move beyond impermanence because if every moment is the only moment, you don't even really perceive impermanence because every moment is the only moment. You know, in

order to perceive impermanence, you have to compare one moment with another moment and then you're not being fully in the present moment.

So, yeah, I mean, if it works for you, then go for it. And timelessness is I mean it's rather literal translation of the the poly word akalico.

So that's fine. And I'm going to move on to Ruy's next question here. He says here is a rare and more pedestrian second question brought about by the fairly stiff weather we've been experiencing on the Lucatanian seaboard as Portugal for those of you who don't know what Lucatanian means. Pretty sure

it's Portugal anyway.

Does extreme meteorology energize you at all? Yeah, it does. Like especially when I was a monk living in a semi- desert area of Burma, when there were when there was rain, sometimes it would just be this torrential downpour, just electrical storm, the whole sky just flashing like a strobe light just pissing down rain, just roaring.

And times like that, I just couldn't sleep. You know, it's sometimes you just go outside and watch the watch the lightning and just watch the rain.

But yeah, I'm like a human barometer.

This changes in barometric pressure do have a a significant effect on how I

feel. And like stormy like really kinetic kind of weather does have like a kinetic effect on me.

I really do like observing storms and it just makes me more energized.

Not just the static electricity in the air from the lightning, but just just the violence of it and just the radical changes in the atmosphere that cause changes in my body and then in my mind also my spirit you could say that it does have an effect on me.

Although [clears throat]

just a week ago, we were the state I live in, South Carolina, was declared uh it was a a state of emergency

and the the storm came through and and
you I didn't even notice it. I mean,
there's like no
no sound, you know, it was just like
this silent still kind of a storm. It
was just um it snowed a little bit and
then I guess the state of emergency was
caused by freezing rain that it was
going to cause like a thick crust of ice
on like power lines that could get so
heavy that it could snap the power lines
and and break trees and so forth. But I
mean it was like the biggest non- entity
of a of a storm or a state of emergency
that I've ever been through. But even
right now, it's it's snowing outside in
South Carolina. Um, [clears throat]

we've got about maybe at this point as much as like half a foot, six inches of snow outside, which is nice. Not for the dogs, though. The dogs don't like going out there. Mo two of them are little dogs and the other one's a princess and neither one of them particularly likes going out in six inches of snow in order to go potty.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. And we are kind of getting down there. We're We're getting down towards the bottom of this scroll.

This question is from Mr. Pronov.

And Mr. Pronov says, "If you had to be a devote and worship a mainstream Hindu

god," and then he's got in parenthesis
Krishna, Ram, Shiva, Vishnu, Kali,
Durga, etc.

Which would it be and why?

And I have to admit that I've always
kind of gravitated towards Shiva. I've
got more veneration for Shiva than for
Vishnu. And of course Krishna and Rahm
are just avatars of Vishnu. Kali and
Dorga, they're just consorts of Shiva.

And Kie, I mean I've known some new age
people that were really into Kie. And I
did a little research on Kie. And Kie is
mentioned in the poly text, but she was
just sort of like a demonist. She was
like a relative of Mara back then. And
up until modern times, I think in uh it

was like 16th or 17th century Bengal
that Kie um sort of graduated out of
just being some demonist that haunts
battlefields and actually became some
sort of metaphysical super deity,
you know, some personification of some
some kind of ultimate reality.

But then again, Shiva also, I mean, he
started off as Rudra who was like a
storm god in like in the Rig Va.

So, I mean, if you're going to be a
[clears throat] deist along Hindu
paganistic lines, I think I mean, I
would have to admit that it's just sort
of a personification
that I mean, I couldn't really take

seriously all the legends that I mean,
you just look into the history and you
see just like with Jehovah in the West
that the whole the the God evolved over
time

Jehovah started off as L, God of the
Canaanites or one of the gods of the
Canaanites who had a wife and then he
got conflated by some Moseslike figure
with Yahweh who was like a Midianite or
Edomite god and then you know they they
had to dispense with the the consort
this kind of thing and I mean you look
at the the evolution [clears throat] of
the Hindu gods and it's similar. So I
mean I couldn't really be a literalist
with regard to any of them but just with

regard to the vibe

and of lesser importance the music I

prefer Shiva to Vishnu

Shiva has better music than Vishnu hands
down

and just sort of the destroyer god Shiva

is like the aesthetic you know he's he's

on Mount Kyash in deep meditation this

kind of stuff that he's uh I don't know

just something about Shiva is appeals to

me more than um Vishnu does. Vishnu is

more of an Apollo type. Shiva is more of

a Dian Isis type and for whatever

reasons I just kind of resonate better

with Shiva,

but I'm [clears throat] not planning on

converting to Hinduism at any any
foreseeable future time. And I'm moving
on to the next question. This is from
Robert

And I hope that this is loud enough. I'm
sitting farther away from the microphone
than usual. And so I turned up the see
turned up the audio mixer a little bit,
but I don't know if you might have to
turn up the volume on your your uh
computer or whatever you're watching or
listening to this on.

But you already know that because we're
already well over an hour into this.

So, Robert says, "To what extent do you
think one should avoid philosophy as
engaging in it might just be wallowing

in superficial conventional reality and therefore lead one astray?"

Well, by golly,

[clears throat and cough]

this reminded me, this question reminded me of a quote by David Hume that I really like. And so, I'm going to quote David Hume here. David Hume says, "The most perfect philosophy of the natural kind only staves off our ignorance a little longer, as perhaps the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind serves only to discover larger portions of it. Thus, the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy

and meets us at every turn in spite of our endeavors to elude or avoid it."

And that kind of reminds me of Nagarja also. So it may be that your best use of philosophy from a practical point of view. Well, I mean there's more than one benefit to philosophy. One philos one one benefit of philosophy is you're sort of [clears throat]

um to use a Buddhist metaphor. You're knocking out a big peg with a small one. You know, it's like you got the carpenter, he's got this peg that's in a in a piece of wood. He wants to drive it out. So he gets a smaller peg and drives out the bigger peg. So in a way you're substituting something more exalted for

something more crude, you know, as just an intermediate step. So replacing foolish ideas with wiser ones, even though they're not fully enlightened ideas, I mean, that's that's not bad. And so long as you're not fully enlightened, you got to believe something. You have to have some kind of model. You have to have some kind of um conceptual like world view. And so to have like a philosophical one that emphasizes morals and a goal of you know increased wisdom and less reliance on thought and ideas and so forth. I mean that's good but also like logic

that [clears throat] kind of intellectual philosophy the best one of the main benefits of that is for use as a [__] detector. It helps you to identify foolish ideas and avoid them. But you got to believe something. So it might you're better off believing a relatively wise philosophy than just a foolish worldly lack of philosophy.

You're better off, you know, having a subtle metaphysic than just being a naive realist and just take everything that you experience at face value. This is all ultimately real, in which case you're just pretty much stuck in some sorrow.

So a philosophy that acknowledges that this is not ultimately real. That's fine. I you use it as a tool. You don't just rely on that as truth, you know, like some fundamentalist religious person. Only this is true. Anything else is wrong. But I mean, you use it wisely in a, you know, in a loose a loose hand, not a clenched fist, an open hand without clinging to it any more than you have to, I suppose. And then it can guide you. I mean dharma is philosophy and I mean it guides people to you know kind of helps them to disentangle themselves from samsara but ultimately you have to let go of it just like

nagarinuous philosophy you know you use
nagarinuous philosophy to shoot down all
other philosophies and then you turn it
on itself until all all concepts are
gone and there's just like this
emptiness this voidness that's left
behind.

So

I mean if you're really going for it
like like the early Buddhist monks
following the atakawaga where you're
just already like relatively advanced.
You've already renounced the world.
You're already practicing like
relatively advanced austerity and
meditation. Then you may not need
philosophy anymore. Then you can just

let it go. But if you haven't gotten to that point yet, you might you might still need some philosophy at least to help guide you towards a more advanced state. You know, a philosophy that has a more advanced state as as an ideal is going to get you farther than not having any philosophy at all. And you're just wallowing in samsara.

But ultimately, you have to let go of it.

You got to let go of everything.

And I'm just going to move on to Robert's next question.

He says, "The Buddha avoided some metaphysical speculation, undeclared

questions, but to what extent do you think philosophy and metaphysics can be useful in a normal day-to-day life of a Buddhist?" Well, let's I pretty much already answered that one in my answer to the previous one.

So, let's see what what else is there to say on this. What extent do you think philosophy and metaphysics can be used in a normal day-to-day life of a Buddhist? Well, I mean, ethics is a branch of philosophy. So, ethical conduct as use Buddhist philosophy as a guide to ethical conduct. You know, you can just take the word for it like malicious gossip.

I've I've got this situation going on in

my in my home now where there's
[clears throat] this person that my
sweetheart and I both used to watch and
like Stixs Hex and Hammer 666
and lately it's like he's crashing hard,
you know? It's like half of his videos
he's obviously drunk now. At least it
seems like he's obviously drunk. Like
bobbing his head around and slurring his
words and this kind of thing. But then
my sweetheart [clears throat] is
watching this other show that's like
it's kind of like malicious gossip or
like mockery of other people
including Stixs and
it's it's from the Buddhist point of

view it's pisunacha I mean what these other guys are doing not with Stixs is he's got his own messed up situation he's he's wallowing in but these other people who are like maybe even making a living through just sort of like mocking and sneering at somebody else. And in some cases, it's it's people that aren't as messed up as Sticks. It's

It just I don't know. I just It makes me feel uncomfortable, you know? It just makes me feel like I don't know. It's kind of listening to somebody telling lies. And from the Buddhist point of view, telling lies and also like malicious gossip against someone or just, you know, bad mouthing someone

behind their back kind of stuff. I mean both of them fit under musulatto or wrong speech.

So I just as a as a as a Buddhist I mean you might just you might not really see that I mean you don't have to just tell lies in order to indulge in wrong speech. I mean there's other kind other ways other kinds of wrong speech and I mean it can guide you away from that kind of stuff even if [snorts]

I mean you don't really see the point of it yet or you know you don't see the point of why not you know pill for uh pens from the office that kind of thing but you know in Buddhism it's like do

not take what is not given and so you just follow that and I mean it it can help you I mean if you just get like like really obsessive about it and cling to it you know where you're just like despising other people that because you see them as not living up to your ideals and so forth that's not good either but ethical philosophy I mean it can help to guide you to um to live a better life I suppose and I mean it's like I like I was saying earlier where um In in answer to the previous question, it's if you have a philosophy that that holds out that like reminds you this is not the highest truth. there is a higher truth and if

you can strive for that and you can
attain that and so I mean philosophies
like that you know that are ethical and
practical with some metaphysics thrown
in like this is not the highest truth or
just basic stuff like to exist is to
suffer you know first noble truth second
noble truth whenever you are unhappy
it's because you want something you
desire something
and so just a little self-reflection
what is it that I desire you're unhappy
just well what do I want? What is it
that I'm desiring that's causing me to
be unhappy? And I mean just a little bit
of reflection. I mean you could it could

be something stupid you know it's like it's raining. You wanted to go outside and do something and then it started raining and so now you're you're pissed off. It's like, [—] you know, I was gonna ride my bike or I was gonna, you know, go out and and, you know, do this or that and now it's raining and so you're unhappy and but all the unhappiness in the world isn't going to make it stop raining.

So, I mean, you just look you you just like examine your own thoughts in accordance with Buddhist philosophy and then you can you can see this stuff that a lot of people wouldn't even notice. They're just they just think

that because it's raining they're necessarily unhappy. It's just somehow made them be unhappy. They're just victimized.

But in in reality, I mean, so you're closer to the truth if you realize that, you know, I'm not unhappy because it's raining. I'm unhappy because I want it to not be raining.

So [snorts]

yeah. And then of course just having some grounding and logical thought helps you to weed out a lot of [_] I guess.

But uh yeah, metaphysics I mean the one of the main benefits of metaphysics is

just reminding you that this isn't
reality

that there is a higher reality than
this. A higher truth than
walls and TV sets and plants and
fireplaces,
shirts,
people.

So yeah, I mean it's it's useful in
helping you to have right view. It helps
you to guide your practice. Helps you
it's like a map that can at least guide
you in the right direction.

Give you the idea that you should be
moving in a certain direction.

Not just wallow in samsara and think
that this is ultimate reality.

>> [sighs]

>> So I guess I just am going to move on to the next question since those two questions were pretty much almost the same question.

So Robert's third question is I've heard you talk about Eola in the past. What is your view on traditionalism?

Well traditionalism with a capital T I'm really not well versed in. I've read about it a little bit. I know Evola was into I think wagner was even more into traditionalism. I think Gwynn just insisted upon it.

Um but I mean following traditions

it stabilizes society. If you got most people on the same page with regard to their conduct then that definitely strengthens the society. Although a society also has to be flexible that if you just stay completely conservative and refuse to make any like revisions or refinements or innovations to the system, then other cultures are going to evolve past you and then start out competing you. That was one of the strengths of the the Romans is [clears throat] when they're in contact with another culture, like they're at war with another culture, then if they had some something that worked really well, especially like in military

technology, the Romans adopted it. So the Romans were traditionalistic and conservative in a lot of ways, but at the same time, you know, they were flexible. they were able to make adjustments to the tradition at least to certain aspects of the tradition.

So yeah, I mean tradition just a small T traditionalism

um it does like stabilize and strengthen a society so long as it doesn't ossify and just become something inflexible.

So the way America used to be was a good kind of traditional. It was like uh I can't remember what what's something. Yeah, I can't remember the

exact name of of what I'm trying to get at what America used to stand for. It wasn't so much ethnic nationalism. It was civic nationalism where everyone agrees on certain ideals, you know, human rights and liberty and everyone's equal under the law and everyone should have equal opportunities even though everyone's not going to be strictly exactly equal at least with regard to, you know, protection of the laws and having rights and so forth. Everyone should be equal.

That kind of thing. that was like a stable and very flexible kind of a vague but still idealistic and useful kind of traditionalism that held sway up until

cultural Marxist started undermining all of it.

[sighs]

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG. An Ethiopian fake TIG says, "In the added rules that came to be after the Buddha decided to include women in the SA, why was the rule that a female monk of a hundred years of seniority has to bow down to the male monk that was ordained that very same day?" That was partly just to make sure that the the nuns knew that they were subsidiary to the bikus, I suppose. And there have been people arguing that these these

this set of rules, you know, that, you know, even the most senior nun has to bow down to the most junior monk that were they were added later by sort of misogynistic monks that didn't like nuns in in the in Buddhism, that kind of thing. Um but I mean even like a fully ordained nun is not allowed to sit in the presence of a biku. And then of course the nun the bikunes nowadays just ignore these kind of rules. But I mean they have to remain standing in the presence of a biku. And partly that was cultural. You know ancient India men it was patriarchal. Men were superior to women or they were seen by tradition as superior to women.

at least in certain respects.

I mean, the Buddha admitted women can get enlightened just like men can. And so, an enlightened woman would be superior to an unenlightened man. She'd be superior to almost all men, at least with regard to wisdom.

But I mean, it was also part of the just the strictness of the rules for nuns to ensure that women that weren't really serious about just renouncing everything, renouncing their status, renouncing the world, and just wholeheartedly committing themselves to living a life, striving for enlightenment

that I mean, the ones that weren't that serious would get weeded out. And so it was just kind of humbling to them. Just another little weeding out process, I guess.

And I'm falling [clears throat] back on the emergency backup beverage.

[sighs] So

yeah, I mean I really can't say for sure what was going on in the minds of whoever it was, possibly the Buddha himself who came up with a rule that [clears throat] even a senior female monk or senior nun has to bow down to a junior monk or even a senior nun is not allowed to sit in the presence of even a junior monk. And also I mean no nun is

even allowed to sit cross-legged. I'm sure that there are very few of the new bikunis who follow that rule, but we don't need to get into that. So, anyways, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake TIG's next question, which is thoughts [clears throat] on the Disney classic Aladdin.

And the answer to that is no. I don't have any thoughts about the Disney classic Aladdin because I never saw it. I saw the old Jungle Book, [clears throat and cough] but I I never saw Aladdin, so I don't really have any thoughts about it. [clears throat]

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. Also from Ethiop fake, let's see where Ethiopian fake TIG.

Sometimes I get confused with regard to his name.

So

[snorts]

[clears throat] EFT says, "Is it allowable for monks to listen to EDM or pop music?" And I had to look up EDM and it it stands for electronic dance music.

And

the answer is monks shouldn't make any effort to listen to any kind of music.

In fact, it's against the rules even for monks to chant in a musical manner.

So any kind of musical sing song kind of

chanting is also out for a strict Buddhist monk. But let's say a [clears throat] monk is walking through a village and a festival is going on and music is being played. He can listen to that. So long as he didn't go there just to listen to it. I mean that so long as that was not his purpose for being there, then he can be somewhere music can be playing and he can listen to it and he's not [clears throat] breaking any rules. It's just that he's not supposed to be making an effort to listen to music or to play music or to sing or dance, that kind of stuff. Because Buddhism is one of the few

spiritual traditions that considers
music to be essentially unh wholesome
and immoral because you are wallowing in
sensuality
by indulging in it.

But I assume listening to some kind of
like

some sort of ambient technotrance music,
which I listen to sometimes as a monk.

This is kind of background music if I
was typing or something.

I mean, you're better off listening to
that than like like that [clears throat]
throat screechy death metal stuff.

At least it's a somewhat more refined
form of unh wholesomeness.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question which is the last

question. And this is from Cyrus Frame.

And Cyrus Frame says, "What do you think of this [_]

And I'm going to take a drink before I say the Kan."

[clears throat]

Okay. What do you think of this coin?

And the coin is as follows.

Jean John said, "Is it like No, I messed up already. I I made I did the name almost correctly and then I screwed up and the first little words." Okay, I'll start over. Jean John said, "It is like a man up a tree. He is hanging from a branch by his teeth. His hands do not

grasp a limb. His feet do not touch the trunk. A man beneath the tree asks him, "What is the meaning of bodhic dharma coming from the west? If he stays silent, he fails the man. If he does answer, he will lose his life. What would you do in such a situation?"

And that is the that's the kan and it's from the gateless gate, better known probably as the mumon khan. Um, [clears throat] and in the Japanese translation, the the Zen master is Kyogen, not Jean Jan. So, it's case five of the Mumon Khan. And I mean, a [__] is a question or a riddle that really does not have a correct answer. So, in my case, [clears throat] I mean, I just

keep my mouth shut, stay up in the tree,
and and not die.

I mean, what's what would be the point
of trying to answer the guy? I mean,
you're going to be dead before you get
to the end of the answer anyway, but
it's the question is not supposed to
have a correct answer. It's like a
no-win scenario.

But, I mean, I could tell you what uh
Mumon [clears throat] says, which is as
follows. Case five, Ky's man up a tree.
Muman's comment to that is, "Even if
your eloquence flows like a river, it is
of no avail. Though you can expound the
whole of Buddhist literature, it is of

no use. If you solve this problem, you will give life to the way that has been dead until this moment and destroy the way that has been alive up to now.

Otherwise, you must wait for my Treya Buddha and ask him." And then Mumon's verse, Kyogen is truly thoughtless. His vice and poison are endless. He stops up the mouths of the monks and devil's eyes sprout from their bodies.

But when Mumon says someone is truly thoughtless, it's actually kind of praise because you're supposed to be thoughtless, I guess.

But uh what's the actual question here? What do I think about it? Yeah, what do I think of this con? It's not one of my

favorite coons, you know. It's just kind of like a a no frills kind of a [_]

You know, it's like you're you're hanging from a tree by your teeth.

Somebody asks you a question about Buddhism. So, what do you do? If you try to answer, you fall and die. But if you don't answer, it's like you're you're not sharing dharma with another being.

But I mean, technically, if you tried to answer, you'd be you'd be falling out of the tree and dying before you could answer anyway. So, it's it's really not one of my favorite coons. I've got lots of coons that I like better than that one.

But, you know, it's just a standard example of a riddle or a question that really does not have a correct answer.

And so you got to like shortcircuit your rational thinking mind in order to get past the impass essentially.

And I'm not sure what the correct answer would be. I mean it would depend on you and the circumstances and the the Roshi who's asking you the question, you know, it might be the correct answer. Like you go down, you sit down in front of the roshi and the roshi says you know the man beneath the tree asks what is the meaning of bodhi dharma coming from the west you stay silent you fail if you do answer you die what will you do and

it may be the correct answer it just be
like good morning rushi
or whatever it is because there really
is no correct answer it's just a matter
of like shortcircuiting the intellect
and just breaking through the log jam,
I guess.

But yeah, there's there's plenty of of
coons I like better than that one. Like
tozison's what is it? 60 blows. It's one
of my favorites.

But anyways, that's it. We are done. And
so, like I should always say at the
beginning and pretty much never do. Do
you have any questions you think I can
answer about Buddhism, Dharma,

Terravada, early Buddhism,
just philosophy in general? I guess
meditation. Did I already say
meditation? Just me personally, Burma,
that kind of stuff. If you think there's
a good chance I can answer it, Disney
movies, not so much. I'm not really an
authority on Disney movies.

Then [clears throat] feel free to ask
the question though. and uh I will do my
best to answer inshallah. No more than
three questions per person per episode,
please. And if you like this kind of
stuff, feel free to like and subscribe
if you have not done so already. And
like I have been saying, my next book
will be coming out in the next few

weeks, I hope. Fingers crossed. It's
been a while, but we're down to the
we're down to the wire at this point.
And uh all I can say after that I
suppose is be happy.

Okay, then

I think we are recording here. Let me adjust stuff a little bit after I've already started here.

Okay,

I guess that's good enough. Hello and welcome to question and answer number 182.

I am your host Po Basa.

This is my beverage. Unfortunately, those of you who are just listening to the podcast, not watching the video, cannot enjoy the [clears throat] beautiful splendor of my beverage.

And of course, 182 is not a prime

number. It is in fact $2 * 7 * 13$. And I know what you're all thinking. You're thinking, "Hey, where is this bibonob?" Or if you prefer, where is that big red fish that was swimming around in the aquarium in the background every time that I saw that that aquarium? Well, the thing is Ishbanov has passed away. He was the large male flame dwarf gourami, the last of his kind in my aquarium. All of the dwarf gouramis died out due to inbreeding and the dreaded dwarf gourami virus that now infects most dwarf gouramis that are bred in captivity. It is unfortunate. So, I've had to switch over to pearl gouramies, which I don't like quite as much, but they're

chill. And according to Grock, they have an only an 8% chance of contracting the dwarf gourami virus, and even then, they probably won't die.

So, there is that.

And we don't have a whole heck of a lot of questions this this time around.

You know, maybe in the low 20s, which is fine.

And so I guess I should just uh start answering questions. And the first question is from PSA. And PSA has questions about the Nazi salute.

He says, "It's becoming more common for young people to throw the Nazi salute as a joke. They're just goofing around."

There's no real anti-semitic hate element to it." However, is there any bad karma being made in this action?

I've been tempted to do it with my friends, too, but I've held back due to possible karmic consequences.

Also, Kanye West's song Hy Hitler in in quotes there was played in a nightclub in Miami by a bunch of influencers recently and it got a lot of backlash. Gee, I wonder why. At which point is free speech acceptable and boys are allowed to goof around and at which point is it extreme censorship? For example, American citizen Otto Wombier was kidnapped and imprisoned by North Korea and sent back to the US in a coma

for stealing a poster, which is another case of boys goofing around and the people in power overreacting. This reminded me of the boys in Miami goofing around and the people in power overreacting. So I guess we can sort of disentangle two questions from this seems to me.

One question is kind of standard sort of question that I get asked. What is the the what is the karma of performing action X?

And then the other one is let's see at which point is free speech acceptable and boys are allowed to goof around and at which point is it extreme censorship.

So let's just go with the first one.

What is the ethics of doing the Roman or
or Nazi salute or if you thump the chest
first before extending the arm? I'm
pretty sure that's the Romulan salute
from the old Star Trek. I don't think
that the German national socialist Oh,
the National Socialist German Workers
Party or the ancient Romans or like uh I
mean it's also like the Olympic salute.
It I assume it's been decommissioned by
now, but it used to be that just
extending the arm, you know, palm
downwards, fingers forwards was like the
the salute of the the Olympics.

But [clears throat]

those those those pesky Germans just

ruined that. Just like the name Adolf has been ruined, you know, and and a certain mustache has been ruined. Every once in a while you'll see like a a Saudi Arabian shake or something with the little toothbrush mustache. But um you know, I mean still Laurel and Hardy. It was uh Hardy who had that kind of mustache, but he was before World War II, I'm pretty sure. And I don't think anyone holds it against him.

But like I was implying at the beginning, it's like what are what is the the karma or the ethical quality of extending one's arm in the Olympic or Roman or Nazi salute or with the

preliminary chest thump, the Romulan salute? What is the ethics of that? And as I keep saying over and over again, just a mere physical action is ethically neutral. There is no karma derived from a mere purely physical action. And so the karma or the ethics comes in through the motivation, the will which is motivating the behavior.

So if someone is just goofing around, you know, they're just being silly.

They're saluting each other like national socialist German workers for example or or just I mean it's

I mean there's nothing that an ordinary

person can do that's just purely
virtuous or purely unvirtuous.

There's always going to be a shade of
gray. You know, anything motivated by
attraction, aversion, or semi-conscious
stupidity, loba dosa and moa. Anything
motivated by any of those is going to
have some unskillful, unh wholesome
ausula karma kama and pali associated
with it.

But I mean it's there's different
degrees. one person doing the salute
because, you know, they consider
themselves to be genuine national
socialists who wish to extirpate
the the Hebrew race. you know, they're

doing that as just a matter of, you know, showing their intentions to to the to other people, then they would probably get worse, comma, than someone who's like doing the Romulan salute from Star Trek or someone at the at the Olympics, although I would assume they don't really do that anymore at the Olympics.

So, I mean, it depends on on the motivation.

And you could say, well, it can offend people and so you shouldn't do it. But even if you do something knowing that someone may be offended or even someone probably will be offended, that's still not necessarily unskillful to do

something knowing that it may cause offense because to be offended is always the fault of the offended person. From the Buddhist point of view, from the point of view of Buddhist ethics, it is immoral to be offended.

So somebody is just doing what they do for other reasons

and someone is offended and they know somebody would probably be offended.

That's not necessarily immoral. Just like walking from point A to point B knowing that you're probably going to step on some bugs, killing animals, which is worse karma from a Buddhist point of view than offending somebody.

You know, killing is one of the worst things you can do to kill an animal [clears throat] or to kill a conscious being.

But if you're just walking from point A to point B, that is your reason for going there. You're not going there for the purpose of stepping on bugs. And I mean there have been times like in Burma there was one time at the beginning of the rainy season out in the desert when the ground was just completely covered with these little gnatlike insects and you just couldn't walk anywhere without killing them. Even if you were a Jane with the the grass broom, these things were so tiny and so fragile you'd be

killing them anyway.

But so long as your purpose is not to kill bugs, you can walk from point A to point B and you're not committing any offense. You're not breaking a precept.

You don't have to make confession, anything like that. And it's similar like if you've got some valid reason or some even neutral reason for giving the the the

Roman salute.

you know, you're not you're not doing it deliberately to offend anybody and you're not doing it deliberately to show off that you hate Hebrews, that kind of thing. Then if somebody does get

offended, that's on them.

So,

I mean, it all it all comes down to if something is moral or immoral. It depends on the mental states associated with it. So if you're doing it maliciously

then that's going to be worse comma than if you're doing it just because you're silly or you're you're like a Treky doing the Romulan salute and then other people misinterpret that then I mean it's there's going to be this whole gradation. It's never going to be completely pure until you are completely pure. If you become a fully enlightened saint, then you can do as you please,

assuming that that even makes sense
anymore

and you haven't done anything wrong. But
so long as you're not enlightened yet,
anything you do is going to have at
least a little whiff of immorality to
it.

Even bowing to the Buddha, I mean, if
you consider yourself to be, you know, I
am bowing to the Buddha, I mean, you
still have like self view while you're
doing it. Well, that's bad karma,
doesn't it?

Or you do it out of greed for heaven or
greed for enlightenment, that kind of
thing. Then again, if there's any kind

of attraction, aversion, semic-conscious stupidity, and until you're enlightened, there's always going to be some semic-conscious stupidity, there's going to be a certain amount of bad karma involved. But, I mean, it really depends on why you're doing it. What is your purpose? What is your motive for doing it? If you're doing it deliberately to make somebody offended, then that's on you. Whether they're offended or not is on them, but you trying to offend somebody is on you. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This also for is from PSA. That first question was asked like two weeks ago. He asked the question a

um under a previous Q&A after I'd already moved on to the next Q&A or was in the process of recording the next Q&A. So it just got lost and uh maybe some people would have preferred that it remain lost but what the hell. So this next question is also from PSA

and he says, "Might the combustion adjacent architectural feature positioned posterior to your sitting location constitute a genuinely functional apparatus for controlled thermal generation or merely a nonoperational simulacrum intended for aesthetic signaling."

And of course, he's referring to the fireplace that was behind me in the previous Q&A that I consider to be like a fake fireplace with fake fire because it's not real wood. You just flip a switch and it's like this natural gas fire, little flames coming out through like [clears throat] crevices in like ceramic fake logs.

And I would prefer to have a real fireplace with real wood. But even so, even though it's a fake fire with fake wood that you just turn on with a light switch, still it does heat the living room. But the thing is, it heats the living room, but it cools down the whole rest of the house because the thermostat

for the central heating of the house is also in the living room. So, the living room warms up due to the fake fire in the fake fireplace, which then causes the central heating not to go on because the thermostat feels the warmth in the living room, all the other rooms get cold. But so long as we're hanging out in the living room, it doesn't matter. Might even save save money that way.

Ah, so I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "One of the most profound insights into human psychology that I have found since exploring Buddhism is that most suffering doesn't

come from so-called negative thoughts and emotions, but from the resistance and non-acceptance of such thoughts and emotions. Without this resistance, the thoughts and emotions are simply blips of energy temporarily manifesting in the body as sensations.

Is my understanding of this Buddhist insight into suffering accurate or have I either misstated or oversimplified it?

Yeah, I think it's a little bit inaccurate because the negative thoughts still I mean those negative thoughts tend to be attract they tend to be motivated by aversion. You know there's dosa in a negative thought. So there's going to be a certain amount of of

bad karma, let's say, a certain unwholesomeness or unskillfulness in having negative thoughts.

Uh let's see. I'm not sure the negative thoughts and emotions. Yeah, like anger for example would be a negative emotion, let's say. Well, I mean that anger itself is generating some bad karma. You know, it's like you are wallowing in aversion, wallowing in dosa.

So yeah, I think that aspect of Romeo's like synopsis of how Buddhist ethics works, I think that is a little inaccurate.

But I do think that most of like in a developed country where we're not like,

you know,

you know, this like hyenas are no longer a problem. And if you're living in a safe neighborhood, you know, being attacked by human hyenas isn't much of a problem either. So most of the suffering that the average person living in a developed culture experience is just like

artificial, you know, it's like gratuitously generated, you know? It's like you just think about how you don't have something and then you have like a version for this madeup situation in your mind. You know, an absence of something is not really an objective reality, but you sort of reify this

absence of something into this thing
that you have aversion for and then that
creates a certain amount of suffering or
like a really simple case is like a
toothache. So, you got a toothache and
that's pain and the pain isn't
necessarily a negative emotion or a
negative thought. That's like a like a a
painful feeling. It's a sensation. And
it is true that that pain is different
from suffering. The toothache itself,
just the throbbing pain in your tooth is
not the same as suffering. That's pain.
It's the aversion for that pain. The
desire for that pain to stop, insisting
that that pain not be there. That is

what's really causing the suffering.

So Romeo would be correct with regard to that, you know, in in that sense, he'd be right on the money, I think. But like Shakespeare [clears throat] said, you know, it's like

something like never was philosopher who could endure the toothache patiently, something like that. Because a toothache, I mean, that's just hardwired right into the system. something farther away like a a pain in your foot. Let's say you've got gout, your big toe is sore. It's easier to maintain equanimity when the when the pain is way down there in your toe than when it's like right up here in your head.

I'm not exactly sure what the mechanism for that is, but it does seem that pain, like a toothache, just the searing agony of a toothache, is much more difficult to endure with patients than other kinds of pain that are in other parts of the body. And I'm not exactly sure why nature designed teeth. I mean, teeth really are not that great of a of an evolutionary invention. And I think to some degree birds are better off just swallowing rocks and storing them in your crop and storing them in their crop, I should say, and then using, you know, just kind of tearing off hunks with their beak or whatever it is

they're eating and and then it just gets
chewed up by rocks in their crop and
they just swallow more rocks.

Just it seems to work better for them in
certain respects.

They might have more difficulty eating
certain foods, I suppose.

But I'm just completely digressing. I
mean, when when the hell do we start
talking about teeth and birds?

So, let's just I want to I have to read
this. I've I've wandered so far away
from the question. I should probably
read it again, just kind of refresh my
own memory of it here. My own shortterm
memory.

See, one of the most profound insights

into human psychology that I have found since exploring Buddhism is that most suffering doesn't come from so-called negative thoughts and emotions, but from the resistance and non-acceptance of thought such thoughts and emotions.

Well, I mean the resistance and non-acceptance are really the negative thoughts and emotions that

I mean you can have negative thoughts and emotions right off the bat I suppose but I mean those are created I mean any kind of negative thoughts and emotions are going to be dose up but even like a positive attraction

is still creating suffering you know
desire is the cause of all suffering and
just like wanting something is I mean
it's a kind of dissatisfaction. So it's
there's still suffering there. There's
it's maybe more subtle. The the
suffering of desiring an orgasm, for
example, in the heat of passion is is
going to be more it's going to be more
mixed with pleasure and more acceptable,
I suppose, than the agony of a toothache
or, you know, just just fill in the
blank with something miserable.

I think there there there's a sutra that
talks about how like attachment to
pleasure. I mean, you're still bound.

It's just like you're bound with a

silken cord instead of with an iron chain, but you're still bound. It's still it's still bondage in uh a nonsexual usually sort of way.

So I mean the negative thoughts and emotions usually in the west are negative thoughts and emotions that are reactions to some not necessarily suffering inducing situation.

You know I've got to I got to clean the garage and then you think about having to clean the garage and that makes you unhappy.

So the idea that you have to clean the garage isn't necessarily a negative thought, but the aversion for having to

clean the garage or whatever the hell it is that causes suffering. But still, I mean, you can have negative thoughts and emotions right off the bat, which already are create, you know, they're creating suffering. They're making so-called bad karma. And then you just add like aversion for the aversion, that kind of thing, or whatever it is. So in that sense, I think Romeo is not entirely accurate in that you're generating suffering and bad karma right off the bat as soon as you start having negative thoughts and emotions or even some positive ones [snorts] or at least attraction motivated ones.

[clears throat and cough]

But with regard to humans in general,
especially humans living in a relatively
developed peaceful civilization or
society, then most of the suffering is
just sort of like
generated gratuitously. Even boredom,
you know, nothing necessarily bad is
happening to you, but still you're
dissatisfied
because you're bored.

So, I mean, boredom is just kind of a
weird kind of suffering that um
it doesn't even really have any cause
other than a desire for something more
interesting than this.

So, I I hope I pretty much answered that question.

But again, with regard to pain, pain itself may be a negative sensation. I I mean you want to call it a negative sensation that's fine but the pain and the suffering the pain and any kind of karmic ramifications are are are different because the suffering comes from wanting the pain to stop aversion for the pain and it's just built in.

It's just habitual. I mean some people are better at resisting pain than others. You know, my father was a macho tough guy and you know, one of his favorite sayings was a little pain never hurt anybody,

but even he probably wasn't cool with a
like a really severe toothache.

So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's
second question,

which is, is there truly any suffering
in this life beyond the resistance and
lack of acceptance of so-called negative
thoughts and emotions? Uh, yeah. Yeah,
there's suffering in this life beyond
that. I've already pretty much answered
this question while answering the
previous one because this one is just
kind of like an um not an ax, you know,
a correlary a correlary to the first
one.

Uh, and like I've said, it's like even

just longing for something is it's not really a lack of acceptance of so-called negative thoughts and emotions. You know, you desire something strongly. You're you're unhappy. You're dissatisfied. And so, you're suffering. But it's that suffering doesn't strike me as obviously being a case of lack of acceptance of negative thoughts and emotions.

So attraction and aversion are both generating karma and and dooka unease.

But like I've been like I have been saying in in a world like um most parts of America, especially if you're living in a safe neighborhood, you're not just living under a under a bridge or

something, then most [clears throat] of the suffering is just sort of like mind generated,

you know, just not being satisfied with the way things are.

And that's pretty much what causes all suffering really, not being satisfied with the way things are. If you can accept things, you're okay. Like one of my favorite mottos that I'm pretty sure I came up with, even though I'm sure other people came up with the same idea back in the stone age is doesn't matter what it is. If you accept it, it's not a problem. And it doesn't matter what it is. If you won't accept it, it's a

problem. Problems are not out there in some supposed empirical universe.

Problems are a mental state. They are nonacceptance of the way things are. And you can do something about that. And that's something that's very important to learn if you're a student of Dharma or Dharma is that suffering ultimately is it's it's like volitional but it may not seem valitional just because your culture doesn't point it out to you. And it's just force of habit that causes in just like animal instinct in the human animal that cause people to act with aversion for certain things like physical pain for example or boredom.

But when you look into your own mind
through introspection,
then you see that it's you really have a
choice whether to accept or not accept
the situation.

And some situations are easier to accept
than others. Like the toothache, it's
it's hard to accept that I have to
admit. But even then, even in a case
like the toothache, the principle
remains true. It's just that the
toothache is such an intense such an
advanced level challenge
that possibly only a fully enlightened
being could successfully or at least a
very highly advanced sage could sit

there with equanimity during a raging
toothache.

[groaning]

So I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from the
saboturss

and it says here that the saboturss is
only one person. So there could be some
multiple personalities or something but
we don't need to get into that. Maybe
the saboturs is sort of like a last name
like people like my own lay last name is
Reynolds and then there's there's a lot
of last names that are really a first
name with an S at the end like Phillips
or let's see Rogers.

that kind of thing. Which just means

that there was like some distant ancestor who was some kind of big shot and then everybody all of his descendants were just sort of got the last name of Roger's descendants.

So maybe [clears throat] this person here, the saboturs, is a descendant of a an actual sabotur and then it just got an S at the end and became his last name.

or could be some other reason. Who knows? I hope at least the saboturs knows.

But I haven't even started on the question yet. The question is, what is the difference between ego and

self-esteem?

You have to have some self-esteem and feel good about yourself or you may start to feel low.

Well, ego has more than one reason or more than one definition. like in Freudian psychology. Let's look it up. I got a dictionary right here.

Ego.

Okay. Noun. No, plural is egos. And then there's a person's sense of self-esteem or self-importance. So, I mean, you go with the or the first dictionary definition and they're synonymous.

Self-esteem and ego are the same.

But if you want to get into psychoanalysis like Freud for example,

it's the part of the mind that mediates between the conscious and the unconscious and is responsible for reality testing or reality testing and a sense of personal identity compared with id and super ego or you want to get into philosoph like philosophical metaphysics. It is a conscious thinking subject.

So yeah, I mean it's like a sense of personal identity like in in Buddhist philosophy.

See, I got to rearrange windows here. In Buddhist philosophy, you you may see that in in English Buddhism, you know, not in poly Buddhism, but in English

Buddhism, ego would just be sort of like the conceit I am. Ahankara would be one of the the uh synonyms in in Pali.

So,

I mean, what is the difference between ego and self-esteem? It would depend on what definition of ego you're going with, but like the first main definition in the dictionary is that ego is self-esteem and therefore they're the same. But ego in the sense of um like a more philosophical Buddhistic kind of term or an English translation of a Buddhistic term then it's just you know the the belief I am believing that you are some separate individuality distinct from the rest of the universe.

So

let's see the sabotur says you have to have some self-esteem and feel good about yourself or you may start to feel low but I mean if you're practicing intensive Buddhism then like you're you're practicing satipana then you feel good about yourself you know you're feeling good about yourself you feel start to feel low you note that you're starting to feel low and you just observe that without judging it and without really throwing any kind of ego into

So

yeah,

but self-esteem from the Buddhist point of view, it still would be a kind of unskillful mental state.

Self anything would be an unskillful mental state from the point of view of like classical Theravada Buddhism or even pre-theravada Buddhism. Maybe some later schools of Buddhism started thinking that self-esteem was just fine and dandy, but that would be kind of a deviation

from the earlier teachings.

So,

see, you have to have some self-esteem and feel good about yourself. Well, I mean, just not to have desires to have equanimity. I mean, at least you're not

feeling bad about yourself. And that would be preferable to kind of just being smug. Being sm I've I've always kind of had a a certain aversion, I guess, for smugness in other people. If if anyone pointed out to me that I was being smug, I' I'd really kind of stop me in my tracks and have me like like reviewing my behavior over the past many seconds just to see if what they said had any validity to it because smugness in other people just kind of rubs me the wrong way.

So, let's see here. I guess I answered that question. I apologize to the saboturs if I did not answer it

sufficiently because I'm moving on to the next question.

And Clefy says because it is in fact Clefy who is acting asking the next question axing it. I am struggling to understand a notion of mind. If everything I perceive is a product of the unenlightened mind of mine, what created my mind? My karma?

Well, I mean, that's kind of a tricky question. I mean, there's different ways you could look at it. I mean, really, anyone who wants to understand how I would answer questions really has to seriously consider the simile of the block of marble. I mean, I've I've talked about the simile of the block of

marble well up into double digits at this point on these videos. And really just trying to understand what I'm saying would answer many questions that I get asked here from people that have heard the simile of the block of marble many times.

Still, I mean, you should just consider that. Consider like the implications and the ramifications of the simile of the block of marble and the simile of the block of marble. I mean, please forgive me for beating a dead baby at this point.

I mean, you've got this block of marble.

It's It doesn't have anything around it.
So, there's nothing to compare it with
size-wise. So, we might as well just say
it is of arbitrary size. It is
essentially sizeless. And within that
block of marble are every single
possible statue, including an infinite
number of impossible ones. You know,
like Myron's discus thrower with the
head levitating above the trunk of the
of the body, you know? I mean, it
wouldn't couldn't exist like that in
real life. Oh, there's a fish freaking
out in the tank over there. Damn.

Excuse me. I got distracted by a large
loach.

>> [clears throat]

>> So I mean even impossible statues can exist in this block of marble but every single possible statue is in there including statues that are so complex they become self-referential and start thinking that they are separate. They start having the conceit I am.

So before you get to that, I mean the the reality is just this formless, sizeless block of marble. And if you go with some early Buddhist philosophy and especially like Hindu philosophy, you've got infinite formless consciousness that corresponds to that block of marble. So you've got infinite formless consciousness, luminous all around. And

contained within that formless
consciousness is every possibility.

Every possible mental state, every
possible state of consciousness is
contained within that infinity of mind.

including

some of these forms of mind have become
so complex that they become

self-referential

and think that they are separate

and in Buddhist philosophy um the Buddha

really doesn't try to tease out the

origins of these things he just you know

it's like in some in indeterminate past

you know it's like uh I think it's very

common in Buddhism

where you just think it is without

beginning. You know, samsara itself is without beginning. But like what caused my karmic momentum, you know, my the stream of of volitional mental states that is my karmic stream? What is the origin of that? And the Buddha really didn't go there. You know, he just says it's not known.

is, you know, it's just in that the hazy. I mean, even if it had a beginning, the beginning would have been so hazy. You'd start off with, you know, some very kind of primitive, you know, like a a crystal or something or maybe just some sort of um dream image in somebody else's mind that somehow

persists after that person's dream ends.
this sort of thing. You just start off
with this shadowy semi-existence that
then starts developing and like
evolving.

And the Buddha didn't really discuss how
your karmic momentum starts. You know,
it could be like I've read in a book
called Seth Speaks two different
theories on how karmic like a karmic
stream of a certain being or a certain
sort of lineage of beings through
rebirth can be initiated. One is just
through splitting. you know, you've got
a some being with a lot of mental states
going on and it's just like part of that
just splits off and starts its own

existence. And I don't see why that would necessarily be impossible. But then the other weird idea that I I got from this book says speaks is the dream image one like you dream about people in your dreams that you've never met before. you know, they don't have any outward objective existence. You've just sort of generated this being, this shadowy semi kind of being that may somehow continue to exist after you stop dreaming them. You just kind of, you know, you gave birth to this this shadowy semi-being in this kind of ghost dream world that then somehow continues to exist. Or like

even in the upupanads it talks about you know just very primitive life or the janes also talk about you know like fire was considered to be a primitive form of life to the janes in just in ancient north India in the Buddhist time it was a common belief that fire was a kind of living being

and it's it is kind of true I mean it needs food it needs oxygen you know it's it has a lot of the same properties as life it doesn't have the same organization and it's just like an uncontrolled

oxidation reaction instead of like a controlled one that is then like fueling chemical processes and so forth like

like happens in life

but um I think I'm kind of deviating

from Cley's question

but what created mind

I mean the origins of it is uh you know

It is hard to say. It's unknown and it

may not be the same for all beings. Some

may have split off. Some may have

started as a crystal. Just the first

tiny glimmerings of consciousness that

is enough there that is able to can

perpetuate like through rebirth or

whatever.

But what keeps it going is karma.

Definitely. That's the only thing you

take with you after you die is your

karma which is like your psychic momentum.

The motive force of your mental states that doesn't just stop at death, it has to continue.

So yeah, I mean if you really contemplate the simile of the block of marble, I think I mean it's hard to wrap your head around, which is one reason why people just don't wrap their head around it, but still I mean it does help to understand a lot of things. So it's it's pretty much my theory of everything, my toe, my toe, if you will. And I guess I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Yoshi Buouie.

And Yoshi Buouie. Oh, he's asking a kind of Majamaka question. I'll put the feathers on just just for the hell of it. I'll be right back.

[snorts] Here I am.

See? Put this Fez

purchased from Fezorama. Well worth it, I should I might add. Not that I'm being sponsored by Fezorama.

Okay. Got to get the eye centered there.

Okay. Yoshi Buouie says, "Could you clarify what quote if the effect is different from the cause," unquote means. If one punches another person in the left eye, then the bruised left eye would be the effect and the cause would

be the punching. So naturally, effect is different from what caused it. Unless instead of a bruised eye, the person being punched gets a bruised nose, which is not possible. Or you could say the bruised eye is the effect of just an intermediary step. You know, the bru first you've got the punch, which you know, it hits the eye and then the eye gets like swollen. Some capillaries are ruptured, which then gradually causes the bruise to appear, but the bruise isn't there immediately after the punch. So you're not going to have a separation of time between the cause and the effect seems to me.

So the punch is actually causing like

the damage to the eye which results in
the bruise. But in a way we're
nitpicking here because

I mean the whole question comes from one
of the first questions. I think it is
the first question in Nagarjuna's mula
majama caraka where he's trying to
debate the logical question

is the effect the same as the cause and
if the effect is similar is the same as
the cause then there would be no change
according to like ancient Indian

attempts at formal logic but according
to um nagarja if it's different from the
cause, then it doesn't even need the
cause because the co there's like no

real connection. So that's the argument he's making that I mean if the the effect is different from the cause then I mean there's no qualitative connection between the two. So that the the co the effect should be able to arise just spontaneously at random without even the the cause being there because there really isn't a a connection.

And I mean I could [clears throat] come up with arguments to debate that it's like you know it's just it changes form that the energy is the same. You've got conservation of energy let's say. So I mean you could say the essence is the same. It's just

the form changes.

So you could say it's same essence,
different form, that kind of thing. But
like like I said, I think it was the
previous Q&A when which I was mentioning
this that first of all formal logic was
just getting a foothold in India around
the time of the origins of Mahayana
Buddhism. And

it's like they're trying to use logic in
a way that might not be acceptable to
modern westerners.

But the point he's trying to make is
valid. You know, it's like the whole
purpose or the main purpose of the
mulamjamaka caraka is to point out that

you can't really answer any question completely validly. So you can you can shoot down any kind of question or any kind of answer to any question. So it's like with regard to every question that is asked or proposed in in the mulama caraka I mean first you say that [clears throat] um it's the answer is not yes the answer is not no the answer is not yes and no and the answer is not neither yes nor no there is no valid answer to any question which is what he uses to shoot down any attempts at understanding reality rationally.

And that is a valid point. I mean, what he's trying to accomplish, I mean, he

may be using kind of premodern, not entirely acceptable by modern standards arguments, but the main point he's getting at is a profound one, which is you can't understand reality by thinking about it. is you're you're generating these unenlightened perceptions, these symbols that are supposed to represent things out there somewhere, but they can't. And I mean, the main proponent of this kind of thinking in the west, as far as I know, is Emanuel Kant. He did he did it a lot more logically by modern western standards. So if the mulam majamaka caraka is unacceptable, you know, it's

its style of reasoning is unacceptable,
try reading Kant's critique of pure
reason, for example, if you can because
it's very dense and very difficult to
read.

[sighs]

But the main point he was making is
simply that yes is not a valid answer to
any question really. No is not a valid
question or a valid answer. Yes and no
is not valid. And neither yes nor no is
not valid. And so it's just what Mjamaka
philosophy does is it it shoots down all
philosophies and then saves itself for
last and then shoots itself down just
leaving emptiness.

Because if you're going to understand

reality, you're going to have to understand it through emptiness and not generating these perceptions, these symbolic perceptions that supposedly are describing ultimate reality when all they are is just samsara itself.

Perception is samsara.

And you're never going to understand nibbana or ultimate truth, the absolute through samsaric means. it's just not going to work. And that's the main point.

So I mean I'm not when I'm talking about the mulama car I think I made this fairly clear in the previous Q&A also. I'm not arguing that the mulamaaka cara

everything it says is just you know
infallible.

It was using

Indian logic in the form that it existed
in those days back when formal logic you
know like Aristotelian thought was
gradually filtering into India like
through trade routes with with Rome or
like Hellenistic states at that time.

[sighs]

So yeah, it's just is the cause the same
as the effect? And if it's yes, then
there was really no change and if it's
no, then there's no connection and so
the the effect should just be able to
arise at random. I mean, that was the
the main argument that was being made,

and you can accept it or reject it as you please, but he was using kind of questionable means to get to a valid conclusion.

And that is that you're never going to understand reality by thinking about it.

So Buddhist philosophy, I mean the main purpose, the main benefit of Buddhist philosophy is just to like attack all philosophy turn on itself at the very end and then you just because it's philosophy philosophizing it can be skillful at you know beginning stages but you're never going to reach the goal through philosophizing. You're eventually going to have to let go of

it.

Now I'm going to take the fez off now.

>> [cough and clears throat]

>> And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from RFS

and this is kind of a a simple

straightforward kind of question which I do appreciate every once in a while.

RFS says while on alms round are monks allowed to offer thanks or answer

questions from the lay people and so

that's kind of two questions you know

there's the offering thanks question and

the answering questions question so I'm

just going to separate that

okay so first question is while on alms

round are monks allowed to offer thanks
and they shouldn't in fact

>> [clears throat]

>> um in Burma and Thailand is just Bu Bu
Buddhist tradition that monks do not
thank lay people. I mean they can like
certain ceremonies like at the kina
festival or the kina ceremony they will
offer what is called anumu modina or
rejoicing over the good deeds of the lay
people which is an expression of of like
appreciation

more than gratitude you know it's
acknowledging their good you know their
generous sentiments and so forth but um
you can actually offend and anger

a Burmese lay person or a Thai lay person by thanking them. You know, if if you're a monk, I mean, if if they offer something to you, they're not doing it for thanks. They don't want to get paid by thanks in this life. They're trying to gather up treasures in heaven, to use a Christian metaphor.

So, yeah, they're not doing it for thanks. They're not I mean, they're doing it because they want merit, you know, they want good karma.

And so um I have read in a book by Mahasi Seattle which is probably like transcripts of his damat talks that that's one thing monks just should not do. Do not thank lay people. I mean you

can in a way you can sort of
praise them for their generosity. You
know you can express appreciation for
their good deeds and their generosity
and their their good intentions and so
forth. But thanking them for for helping
you, I mean, in a way, it kind of takes
away some of the merit that they're
earning because in a way, you're kind of
you're already paying them. You're
paying them back. You know, they're
getting their karmic reward through
thanks in a in a way. So it's just even
if it's technically not forbidden in
accordance with Vineia, I don't recall
there being any rule of monastic

discipline forbidding a monk from
thanking a lay person. Still in Thailand
and Burma at least, it's considered to
be bad etiquette. And lay people can be
upset by a monk thanking them. Although
in other other times like I had a a
Christian Burmese man who was acting as
my attendant and we went to get
eyeglasses or something. I had to get
new glasses and this attendant who was a
sort of an uppercy Burmese gentleman who
was educated in a Christian school and
converted to Christianity and so forth.
And it's like most of the Burmese people
that work at the American embassy are
like half Burmese Christians
for whatever reason. And he would he got

on my case a few times. Aren't you going to thank them? And it's like he didn't know Buddhist culture enough to know that monks really aren't supposed to thank people. But the people who sell eyeglasses in Burma, at least in Rangon, tend to be like Hindus. you know, there it's Indians who pretty much run the the the spectacle salesman racket in in Rangon, or at least that's the way it was at the time. So maybe I should have, but it was just sort of ingrained in me as a monk. Monks aren't supposed to be thanking people, which then gets a little trickier when the monk comes back to the West and

people in the West don't know about Buddhist etiquette. They don't even know you're not supposed to point your feet at people or feet at monks or you know teachers that kind of thing.

So there is kind of a cultural aspect to this and like I say I don't think it there is an actual

um rule of monastic discipline

forbidding a monk from thanking lay

people. It's just that in Burma and

Thailand at least it's just you're not supposed to do it.

So, I'll just move on to RFS's next question.

Well, on alms round, are monks allowed

to answer questions from the lay people?

And if it's a simple question, you know, are you going to be coming this way tomorrow, venerable sir? Then of course, a monk is allowed to answer, you know, simple questions like that. Will you be at the monastery later on today, venerable sir? I know somebody who would like to meet you. That kind of thing.

Obviously, the monk can answer that question. He's he's he's not required to remain silent at all times, especially if people are asking him questions.

Although, I mean, if they're asking for, you know, some sort of guidance or, you know, they want you to give them a damat talk or something like that, then it may

not be the best time. You may you may
say, well, you know, you can ask me
later at the monastery or something, but
I'm not really free here. Which is what
the Buddha himself did in the Baja Suta
where You've got the aesthetic
Baja who goes to the Buddha first. I
mean he's he walks from western India.
He hears about the Buddha. He's in
western India. The Buddha is like more
eastern
hundreds of miles away. Baja when he
hears that there's this enlightened
being called God Buddha he just packs up
what little stuff he's got. takes, you
know, takes what little he needs with
him and just starts walking, never

spending the night, you know, twice in the same place. Just he's he's got to meet the Buddha because he's heard of there's this enlightened being. So [clears throat] he goes to the monastery where the Buddha lives and he's told the Buddha is walking for alms right now. So [clears throat] the Baja just takes off. He's not even willing to wait for the Buddha to come back from alms round. He just goes after he goes after him, sees him walking for alms. He goes up and you know, teach me dharma. And twice the Buddha says, "Now is not the appropriate time. I'm walking for alms." But then um Baji just says, "I don't know when I'm

going to die. Please tell me now." And in the third time, the Buddha gives him this brief enigmatic zen-like dharma teaching. And then just minutes later, Baja is trampled to death by a young cow.

So, I mean, the Buddha was reluctant to give any kind of dhamma while walking for alms. And really, monks should just mind their own business. They're not supposed to be looking up. You're supposed to be looking downwards. You know, it's against the rules of monastic discipline for a monk to be looking upwards in public unless he's got a really good reason.

So yeah, you can answer brief questions,

but you wouldn't want to be just
standing there in the road delivering
sermons
while walking for alms.

And so I'm just going to move on to
RFS's third question,
which is what leads to long-term
benefit? And I mean the first thing that
came to mind when I saw this question is
a verse from the dharmapara which is to
do good to refrain from doing evil and
to purify the mind. This is the teaching
of the Buddhas.

So yeah that would that would definitely
lead to long-term benefit. Do good,
refrain from doing evil and purify your

mind.

So what could have been like a vague
meandering kind of answer turned out to
be kind of succinct kind of pathy if you
will

and I'm just going to move on to this
question

this is from Dhamma River and Dhamma
River says are monks allowed to ask for
specific kinds of food during sickness
for example garlic or ginger tea for a
sore throat or vegetable soup if they
have a cold, etc. Or are they just
supposed to eat their one meal a day
accepting whatever is given to them and
tough it out if they get sick? Well,
that is an option. They can just tough

it out if they're being like aesthetic. You know, they're just going to throw themselves on the mercy of of their own karma, so to speak. They can do that. But it is allowed for a monk to ask for specific kinds of food during sickness. In fact, there's one of the potty mocha rules says a monk is not allowed to ask for like certain high quality foods including meat and fish unless he is sick or the person he is asking has already given him uh permission in advance to ask for this kind of stuff. So a monk is sick, he can ask for medicine. He can ask for food that he think will help him to get better. Even

if it's like steak,
h garlic on one hand, garlic and ginger,
those are two medicines that a monk can
store
indefinitely. You know, there's there's
different kinds of food. I've I've
probably forgotten. There's Let's see.
Uh yeah, I think I've I'd have to rack
my brains. I don't want to sit here for
five minutes just staring off into space
trying to remember the terms. Uh Sataha
Kalika is one of them. But it's like
four kinds of consumables. You got
consumables that have to be consumed
between dawn and midday, and that's
regular food. Then you've got
consumables that have to be consumed

before dawn of the f before dawn of the following day. So you can eat them uh or consume them in the evening, afternoon, evening, at night so long as dawn hasn't happened yet. And that's mainly juices like fruit juice. And then you've got food that has to be kept for can be kept for no longer than a week, which are Ajantisro calls them tonics. You know, it's kind of medicinal substances or at least they were considered to be medicinal to some degree, which is let's see, you've got butter, [clears throat] ghee, honey, molasses, and oil like like vegetable oil like especially sesame oil because that was the the oil of choice

in ancient North India. It's like every culture has its favorite oil, you know, like the the Germanic tribes had butter and I guess the Tibetans had butter. The like in the classical Greco Roman world it was olive oil. I'm not exactly sure what it would have been in China, but in India it was sesame oil.

In Burma nowadays, it's mostly peanut oil, although sesame oil is still used for certain delicacies.

But I digress. And [clears throat] then finally, there's consumables that can be kept for life, which would include like pharmaceutical medicines, um, you know, aspirin, garlic, ginger, you know, turmeric, this

kind of stuff. Um, that it's it's even salt can be kept indefinitely so long as you're not sprinkling it on your food to make it taste good. because there is this this rule that when you mix these four types together, it automatically becomes the type with the this shortest expiration. So, you've you're keeping sugar. You're allowed to keep sugar for a week. But then you sprinkle some of that into your coffee.

Well, let's see. Let's say let's say let's use a different example. Make it simpler. You got salt that you're using for medicinal purposes, but then you got some food in your in your in your alms

that day that you think really needs salt. So, you take some of the salt and sprinkle it onto your food. All of a sudden, that that salt is already past the expiration date because you've already had it for more than a day because you've been storing it.

So, it's kind of complicated. I mean the rules of monastic discipline are much more complicated than most people think including more than most monks think because most monks really have not tried to really carefully investigate all the rules of monastic discipline. It's like four relatively thick books of rules. It's not just the potty mocha rules. So yeah, the answer to that question is

yes. Monks are allowed to ask for specific kinds of food during sickness. I could have just said yes and moved on and these videos would be a lot shorter, but what the hell? And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says, this is this is kind of a tricky one. He says, "Can you explain in detail what you mean when you say women don't have a sense of honor in the same way that men do? I remember you mentioning that women in the past would derive their sense of honor from chastity. And that's true. It's like in in the old days, a woman's honor was

almost always her sexual purity, either her virginity or her faithfulness to her husband. That was a woman's honor. And so you had um there was like Lucretia I think was her name in this Roman mythology. She was back in the before the republic days. This is back when Rome was ruled by Etruscan kings. and she was

raped by I can't remember if he was the Etruscan king of Rome at the time or if he was the son like the prince of the king of Rome but she was a married woman and even though it was not her choice I mean he took her by force still she she self-deleted just because of the shame to her honor and a lot of the Germanic

women would do the same thing I mean
they would delete their own children and
then delete themselves rather than
become the the sex slaves of Roman
soldiers, that kind of thing. So, that
was really mainly what a woman's honor
consisted of um in premodern times. And
now that you've got like postmodern
times, I mean, it's like honor itself
has just faded into obscurity. just the
idea of honor. I mean, you can talk
about it with regard to military
personnel or law enforcement officers,
that kind of thing. But for the gen the
average person, I mean, it's honor has
just kind of just faded into a kind of

superstitious word like sin.

I mean sin still is is like a legit word
for Christians but just mainstream
culture in the west secular American
culture honor has gone the route of sin
but

that's [clears throat] part part of the
reason for that is because western
culture has become feminized so I mean
honor for a man he's willing to he
believes in something
strongly enough he's willing to die for
his principle

You know, it's living your life by
principles is something that women don't
do as much as men do. It seems to me
just based on my observations of men and

women throughout the course of my life and just, you know, reading history books and so forth that women are much more flexible. They're much better at justifying anything they do like like telling a lie for example or just changing their mind. It's like they promise to do something and they say, "Well, it's different now." Whereas a man if you know he's a man of his word, then I mean he he's he very much he's very hesitant to break a promise for example. Whereas women it's like well it's different now the situation's different so it's okay. you know, they're much more inclined to just

justify or rationalize anything they do and consider themselves to be completely right by doing it, which is kind of a a leftist approach to things nowadays, partly because the left is more feminized than the right. Just it seems that's the way it is.

Most women in America vote Democrat.

Most men vote Republican.

>> [sighs]

>> But I think I might be straying a little bit from this somewhat volatile kind of question. But I do think it's men are much more likely to just insist upon standing on principle and and not through fear of public opinion. I mean that's more of a feminine thing. What

will the neighbors think? That kind of thing. That's stereotypically feminine. It's just you know I cannot look myself in the mirror

if I violate this principle that I have held sacred throughout my life and my father before me considered this to be a sacred principle that that is just more of a masculine thing.

So I hope I answer that question.

probably haven't offended very many women by answering that question because there aren't very many women who watch these videos. It's if I look on the I haven't looked in a while, but you look

at the stats on my channel and it's it's
like 98%

of my viewers are male.

Go figure.

I thought my dashing good looks would
attract more women, but at least with
regard to viewing my channel, but and I
was told by women in the past, oh, women
are going to love your channel. But they
little did they know that my
[clears throat] whole point of view is
just sort of anathema to sort of the the
feminine point of view.

Anyways,

I'm moving on to Xenithoid's next
question, which is a followup of his
first one. So, we're not entirely off

thin ice yet. He says, "Why would evolution cause the sexes to understand the concept of honor differently?" Well, one reason for this is that just over the course of human existence going way back into the stone age, one of the main causes of death was intertribal warfare. that I mean I have read that one of the main causes of death for like stone age Europeans was intertribal warfare and when you had intertribal warfare what would often happen is the victorious tribe would just kill all the men and just enslave the women I mean that's you read the Old Testament Moses was in charge of this kind of stuff you

know it's like all right the women that have slept with a man all All the men get killed, all the boys, and then all the women that have slept with a man should be killed. But like the virgin girls you can keep as slaves, that kind of thing. I mean, that's right in the Old Testament. I think that would be in the book of Exodus.

So, I mean, this this has been going on for a long time. And so, women have to be more flexible than men. Women I [clears throat] mean, all of a sudden, they're prisoners of war. They're married to some conquering soldier now bearing his children. All of a sudden, she's got to speak a different language.

She has to conform to different cultural norms, worshiping different gods. So, women in that case have to be more flexible. Also, they're just not as physically strong or as aggressive as men. And so, they have survived largely through submission.

And so again, that would be conducive to sort of flexibility with regard to a lot of things, not being just rigidly adhering to principle, which would strengthen a man as like a fighter or like a a worthy warrior of the tribe, a brave or whatever. But [clears throat] it's just there was dimorphism just physical dimorphism and and

psychological mental dimorphism in humans. Males and females are just human nature is different between males and females much more so than in other animals.

I mean other animals some animals are way have way more sexual dimorphism than us.

angler fish for example or like gorillas.

I mean the male might be like two or three times as massive as the female.

It's real obvious difference there.

[clears throat]

[sighs]

But evolution would cause the sexes to understand the concept of honor

differently largely through what I I
have said that um just since the stone
age

you know you've got intertribal warfare
as just a major factor in evolution
guiding evolution and forming human
nature that you know women had to be
more flexible with regard to adjusting
to changing cultures and so forth cuz
they might just get sold pulled off to
another tribe. You know, there might be
like a bride swapping or something or
they just get captured by another tribe
and all of a sudden they have to conform
to a very different culture speaking
different language, you know, different

taboos, different gods and all this. So it just was more of a survival strategy, more conducive to perpetuating their genes for them to be way more flexible with regard to like principles than men. Also, women are tend to be more guided by emotion than men are. I mean, that's just a vague generalization, you know, it's just like a matter of percentage points, you know, gradations on a scale. is not that women are completely irrational, men are completely rational. No, nobody is completely rational. But it was just [clears throat] since the stone age, probably since before homo sapiens existed on this planet, that women or females,

our female ancestors, just had to be more flexible with regard to principles and so forth than men as just a means of surviving.

And I'm going to move on to Xenithoid's third question,

which is how much of this do you think is biological versus culture? Well, it's definitely biological. I think it's just built into human nature at this point.

So I think it's more biological than cultural although it was cultural cultural conditions you know going back into the stone age that eventually caused you know human nature to in a way it was sort of evolving to you know keep

up with the culture I guess

[clears throat] you know it happened

over a very long period of time

so I mean there's there's a cultural

element And there's been a cultural

element from the beginning like the

intertribal warfare stuff. You know,

there's cultural elements and then

there's the cultural elements of just

the the female prisoners of war, for

example, or just young women that were

swapped for other young women with a

different tribe that have to conform to

the new tribe, that kind of thing. I

mean, there's cultural elements to that.

Um but still you know it does cause

genuine biological adaptation to occur

just like in Darwinian sexual selection it causes you know just sort of sexual preferences. You know it's like some species of bird the females through whatever reason just have a preference of red over blue. You know a male has more red and less blue. She's more likely to pick him. Whereas in a different species it might be blue over red. And it's just like this arbitrary maybe some weird mutation that occurs that causes the females of one species to like blue better than red and the other species likes red better than blue.

You know this

[clears throat] but I think it is largely biological at this point.

Although the culture is kind of suited to humanity and [clears throat] it does kind of fit um just human nature to a large degree. I mean a culture cultural norms that don't really jive with human nature. I mean it's going to cause instability in the culture and it's going to have less survival value.

Although, like I said, there's the cultural thing now of honor just sort of going out of fashion because the culture has been so feminized.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Sedarta Loha.

And Sedarta Lohachita [clears throat]

after my female viewership has gone from 2% to 1%.

Sedara Aloha says, "Do you think modern psychology or psychiatry is a joke?"

And to some degree, I mean, in a way, psychology has been a pseudoscience for for most of its existence. I mean, there's even pseudoscience, let's say alchemy

or astrology. Those are kind of two of the the classic examples of pseudoscience that really existed pretty much in the mainstream for centuries.

And the alchemists, I mean, that was

protochemistry. I mean, there was some genuine chemistry, you know, the alchemists knew how to how to make sulfuric acid, for example, oil of vitriol, I think it was called. You know, they knew how to like refine like like elemental mercury out of ores, this kind of stuff or like medicine, premodern medicine, like Galen, this kind of stuff. I mean, they weren't really scientific, but still a lot of it was based on just knowing what works, seeing patterns. You know, I give them this kind of leaf to chew on and it relieves pain. And so, I mean, that's it just spreads. you know it works. I mean it's not completely scientific but there is a

certain amount of empiricism and
objectivity involved um even in like
premodern medicine or alchemy maybe less
so in astrology
but but still so modern psychology yeah
I think a lot of throughout most of the
history of of psychology it has been
more pseudoscience than actual science
like throughout most of the 20th
century, you'd have some famous
psychiatrist or psychologist, you know,
Freud Young, Adler, there's lots of
them, who would write their theories
and it was almost more a matter of just
eloquence, you know, just being
convincing, persuasive that they knew

what they were talking about that would cause them to get followers. And then you'd have these schools of psychology or psychoanalysis or less to less degree psychiatry.

Um that

you know like like Freud I mean he's he's like the the towering giant of western psychology or psychoanalysis you know he might not be all that great now. He's sort of like Galileo of psych psychology in a in a in a way, but it's like the Edypus complex and all this. It just seems just more like just weird ideas that Freud believed in. And so he just conveys these weird theories with a voice of authority. And he's he's

largely right with regard to lots of other stuff. So people just accept it all and consider him to be some kind of oracle.

Then like in like the late 70s there started being like really like psychologists that were trying to turn psychology into a hard science. It was called cognitive science. You know they didn't even want to be bismerched by the word psychology in the name of their field of science where it was like real you know understanding you know like how the nervous system interacts with various forms of behavior. what parts of the brain are responsible, you know,

what evolutionary processes could have resulted in this kind of this aspect of human nature and so forth. Um, and it was starting to really gain momentum like in the 1980s and then it became politically incorrect.

You know, it's like

uh human biodiversity,

you know, it's like you just cannot

accept that men and women are not the

same psychologically. You cannot accept

that various ethnicities are not just

identical. And so it just it just pretty

much got persecuted or just ignored into

obscurity.

So that's unfortunate. I assume there

still is cognitive science going on.

It's just that they have to be more careful because academia where most of the psychological stuff is is being worked out seems to me is pretty much just under the the hobnail jack boot of the ideological left at this point.

Psychiatry is more medical. I think you have to be a an MD. You have to go to medical school to be a psychiatrist, which would involve more of the like [clears throat]

pharmaceuticals, like the pharmaceutical aspect, you know, what kind of medications to give somebody for for this mental syndrome, that kind of thing. Or in more

extreme cases, like like brain surgery,
that kind of thing.

Um, but [clears throat]

I mean also there's just the hackne
truism that all psychologists are nuts
with few exceptions. But it seems to me
that most psychologists and
psychiatrists are pretty nutty. It's
like they are studying psychology
largely as a way of getting a grip with
their own dis mental dysfunctions and
then they become kind of an an authority
on the subject and then uh start start
applying what they've learned toward
towards other other people and making
money from it.

[clears throat] But yeah, most modern

psychology

and like psychoanalysis

it it's still kind of a pseudoscience

which means it's not entirely wrong just

like premodern medicine wasn't entirely

wrong and there's a lot of stuff they

didn't understand but still there were

doctors way back in ancient times and at

least they did some things right you

know or alchemy you know it wasn't

really the science of chemistry yet but

still they knew how to do stuff and

you know they did have considerable

knowledge and so forth. So yeah, I think

modern psychology uh just setting aside

the fringe of like genuine cognitive

science is mostly like alchemy and premodern medicine.

And then a lot of a lot of psychiatry nowadays is just prescribing pills.

You know, it's like you've got the these symptoms. Okay, take this pill and it'll inhibit those symptoms. And that's about as far as that goes, which is empirical at least, but I don't think it's the best way of going about things. I I used to know a psychiatrist who was one of the world's leading authorities on obsessivempulsive disorder, and he had to admit that sometimes pills like I think um what was it called? I don't remember what the pill was. you know, it was it was kind of an anti-depressive

that was popular back in the day. Um, it can be used as like training wheels, but you don't want to just become dependent on taking meds your entire life. And so, he was actually using Buddhist meditation techniques like Sati Patana as a way of curing people of obsessivempulsive disorder. You know, somebody's has this obsessive compulsion, I guess it would be more of a compulsion to just wash their hands over and over again, over and over again, you know, until their hands are just bleeding because they the just the soap and everything is just messing up their skin. And he would teach them

sadana is just, you know, you you note the arising of the urge and, you know, you just don't do not identify with it.

You know, it's not me, it's the OCD.

And then you kind of distract yourself by doing something else. So long as you have this intense urge to wash your hands, you know, you observe it, you note it, you remind yourself that it's not you, it is a mental dysfunction that you're trying to cure yourself of, and then uh knit or or shoot baskets or something until the urge goes away.

So, I mean, it's it's not entirely foolish or bad or wrong. It's just that it's not purely scientific at this point, especially psychology as opposed

to psychiatry. I really don't know about psychoanalysis because I've never really delved very deeply into modern psychoanalysis.

Know something about Freud, but Freud was pretty nutty of a human being in my [snorts] opinion.

[cough and clears throat]

So, let's see. Did I answer the question? I guess I did well enough. I'm just going to move on to Sedara Lohachita's next question.

Let's see. He says, "Do you believe there is a retita as the Vadas?" He says, "The Vetas I think the Weren't the Vetas like a like a an oustoid tribe

living in Sri Lanka and southern India?"

[snorts] No, I think he means vadas

here. I'm just going to remove that D. I

don't think he's talking about the

Oustraloid tribe here. Okay,

so Sedarta Lohachita says, "Do you

believe

was it the Vetas? I think maybe it was

the Vetas. I don't know. I could just be

confused." Anyways, Sedarta Lohachita

says, "Do you believe Are we recording?"

Yeah. Yeah. Looks like we're recording.

Sedart lohachittita says, "Do you

believe that there is a retita ria as

the vadas say or as they said in

medieval Christianity a hierarchical

order inspired by God clearly adapted to

a Buddhist vision of no almighty God
could be a good and bad karma in some
degree hierarchical something like
people with bad karma are less suited to
knowledge or governance or servants.

People with good karma are more suited
to governance and spirituality. That's
how Tibet worked.

Okay. Well, there is actually a word and
I didn't look it up in poly. It's kind
of an obscure word. It doesn't get
mentioned very much, but it's sort of
like like Vuna in the Rigveda was, you
know, he was responsible. He was like
the god of like cosmic order.

And there is a kind of cosmic order uh

in Buddhism, not so much scriptural Buddhism, but sort of commentarial sort of Buddhism. And I don't remember what the word is, but it is it's just like this cosmic order.

And Abidama is all about cosmic order.

Abidama philosophy, you know, it's, you know, there's 17 mind moments to every moment of matter. And, you know, it starts this way. You got the the wiggling bunga and then it goes through all these different stages and you know it's 28 kinds of matter and 52 different mental states and all this. It's just locked in. That's just the way it is. They don't ever try to explain why there's, you know,

this many mental states or this many
mind moments for every moment of matter.
They don't say why that is. They just
know that mind operates faster than
matter does and leave it at that. And so
it's kind of like science is it's an
attempt at being empirical. You know,
even science doesn't explain, you know,
why it is that, you know, gravity is the
way it is or like the charge of the
electron is exactly such and such. You
know, they don't they don't usually
don't go so far as to say why,
you know, it's like this, but it's just
this is the way it is. We've we've
observed it. This is the way it is.

So there's a lot of that in Buddhism. I mean with regard to ethics,

I mean ethics is just based on human psychology. Anything that takes you closer to enlightenment is good and anything takes you farther away from it is bad. And enlightenment isn't just some arbitrary state. You know, it's anything that increases attraction aversion and semic-conscious stupidity is is unskillful. Anything that decreases

attraction, aversion, and and uh unenlightened or semic-conscious stupidity is good.

Anything that increases desire is bad.

Anything that decreases desire is good

because it's getting you closer to
ultimate reality, which is not just some
abstract

pick, you know, it's just somebody
decided, oh, it's enlightenment is is
point A here. It doesn't work that way.

So, I mean, it's Buddhist ethics and
this Buddhist order is largely just
empirical. Just observing the way things
are and and just trying to explain it
and explain this is the way things are.

You know, it's not God. It's not some
cosmic force even necessarily that's
making it that way. It's just that's the
way it is.

This example he gives at the end though

is I could kind of pick that pick at that a little bit. He says people with bad karma are less suited to knowledge or governance. Well, I mean the saintly people are not the best people to be governing a state.

I mean you want ruthless badasses who are patriotic and really are trying to help their country that are running the state. That's one that's another thing of like the feminized postmodern world, you know, especially kind of the the political left, you know, they think that the leaders should be these paragonss of virtue, whereas a paragon of virtue, I mean, he's just going to be nice. He'll be

nice to he'll forgive his enemies. He'll just, you know, like violent criminals will just be forgiven and and just turn loose back onto the streets. This is happening all the time in America now where you've got violent criminals who they've they've already been convicted of felonies like up in double digits mainly for violent crimes or other things like you know like drug drug dealing and so forth and they just get this little slap on the wrist or even the slap on the wrist might be seen as offensive and they just think oh poor baby just you know go and sin no more and then they they stab some Ukrainian

woman in the neck on a public transport report.

I mean, that guy, he he had been arrested so many times for violent crimes, they just keep letting him go.

And that's that's like what the the gentle, forgiving, saintly, or at least, you know, sort of feminine

uh governors, like leaders are are more inclined to do. It's weird. So, I mean, you want some ruthless, tough badass who nevertheless has honor and principles and is a patriotic servant of his country.

Probably the Roman Emperor Hanorius was a nicer person than say Trajan.

But Trejan kicked ass and he led Rome to

glory. This the peak of their prosperity was under Trajan. At least the the maximum extent of the empire was under Trajan. Hanorius, he was married twice, probably died a virgin while Rome was being sacked by the Goths. He's like feeding ornamental chickens. This kind of stuff. He's maybe a really nice guy, but just totally worthless as as a leader.

So, let's see.

This let's actually try to answer the question now. Now that all that is like introductory verbiage, see do you believe that there is a retita as or cosmic order as the

vadas say or as they say in medieval
Christianity a hierarchical order
inspired by God

[clears throat] clearly adapted to a
Buddhist vision of no almighty god. Well
obviously there is a kind of cosmic
order like in science laws of physics
are an attempt to describe cosmic order.
So Buddhism, you know, it observes this
kind of stuff and
teaches it to some degree,
but it's not some sort of divine
divine consciousness or divine force
that's holding everything together.
In a way it's sort of like in science
you have the big bang is just pure
blinding energy and then finally stuff

starts to coalesce in a way that is stable. If it's not stable it you know it just disappears. So it's just the energy of the the big bang or whatever it is just coaleses into some kind of stable pattern that can perpetuate. And that's pretty much what the universe has done from the Buddhist point of view.

Also, it seems to me, I mean, if you think that the universe is just generated by ignorance and delusion, then still there has to be a certain stability.

You know, it's there has to be something stable for anything to exist for more than a trillionth of a second. There has

to be continuity. And for whatever reason, the universe, our version of it, our samsara

has sort of like the right balance, the middle path between like stability and change, you know, just complete change would just be chaos. Nothing staying staying the same for more than a trillionth of a second. Complete stability would just be like frozen death.

So you have to have like this middle path. It's like dependent core rising. Stability and change have to be in in this balance and they mutually condition each other.

Some stuff has to stay the same at least

enough that you recognize it as the same thing persisting over time. Well, at the same time, there has to be change every moment.

But in Buddhism, I think it's more empirical. It's not formulating any kind of divine force holding things together. It's just this is the way it is. Deal with it.

And it's based on observation like empirical observation. A lot of it. Not everything in Buddhism is necessarily empirical like you know pre-existing Buddhas going back zillions of years. You know that's mythology. That's legend. So there's a lot of that too.

But then you've got like in the Buddha
wamsa you've got this template. Each
Buddha has to follow the same pattern
where he has to renounce the world in
one of like a limited number of vehicles
on a horse in a chariot on an elephant
or in a flying palace like a weim mana a
flying mansion.

You know, he's got to receive, he's got
to practice austerities with other
aesthetics for a certain period of time.

He's got to accept milk rice from some
virtuous female and then sit under a
tree of enlightenment. He always, every
Buddha going back zillions of years has
become enlightened sitting under a tree.

And it's I mean Buddhist like

mythologers,

mythologizers, you know, they want to try and kind of fit that into a stable pattern also. Although when when you get to that point, all you're doing is just kind of retconing previous mythological Buddhas in accordance with the pattern of our Godma Buddha.

So it's even the finding order in in you know patterns stable patterns and all that is some of it is just human nature just making [__] up.

[sighs]

Okay I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from practice meta and we're getting down

towards the bottom here. Well,
getting close to the bottom here.

Practice meta says,

"Do you believe journaling to be useful in any way? For example, to help settle the mind. It seems to be either discouraged or outright banned during meditation retreats." Yeah, it tends to be discouraged or banned during meditation retreats, just like talking on the phone tends to be discouraged or outright banned during meditation retreats.

It's uh it's not meditative really. I mean, first of all, you got to be thinking in order to be writing. And at a meditation retreat, you should be

keeping even thinking down to a minimum.

[snorts]

If it's a beginning meditation retreat, you may still have to think quite a lot.

Even your meditation technique may

involve lots of thinking,

at least labeling.

But yeah, journaling. I I did a little bit of journaling. I mean just keeping like a diary.

Um I experimented with that as a monk.

Um but mainly in my case I was just

using it as a kind of time capsule. I

think that's probably from the Buddhist

point of view or the point of view of a

Buddhist renunciate that may be the best

reason for using a journal is a kind of time capsule in that you're you're putting down on paper like a portrait of your own mental life so that five years from now you can read that and see if you've made progress you know are you you know to what extent have I changed to what extent am I better to what extent maybe am I worse than then. That was the main reason why I was writing stuff down is just as a kind of time capsule so I could look back and see this is where I was then and how do I compare that with now?

Have I made progress? And if so, what?

That kind of thing.

But I'm not sure exactly what other

benefit there would be in journaling.

Um, from a like a monastic point of view. I mean, from [clears throat] a lay point of view, journaling can just help to hone your writing skills, that kind of thing. And I mean, some monks may need good writing skills. I mean, I did a lot of writing as a monk. Thomas Merton was a Christian monk who was just like addicted to just writing pretty much all day long. He wrote a lot you know he was just kind of compulsive writer I think but

[clears throat] it's like being a good teacher is not really of primary importance to being a monk or at least

it shouldn't be. I mean some people are ordained as monks just because they want to be famous dharma teachers but seriously journaling writing in a diary it's lots of thinking and as a general rule it's lots of self view you know ego so

um I mean I experimented with it uh for a while few a couple years I've got maybe a couple years worth of journals maybe a little less than two years of journals. Um, I had one, the long one, like the my main experiment with journaling, I had that published on my old website. I don't think it's on my new website, and that should be rectified. Um, there's some people say

that of all the things that I've written, that was really their their favorite thing that I'd ever written was this journal that I kept while living under a rock ledge in Alando Kazapa National Park. just talking about my challenges and struggles, the occasional success of being a an aesthetic monk, just living out in a forest with no roof over my head for almost a year.

But I have to admit, at certain times of year, my journal consisted largely of just bitching and moaning over just not being able to stop sweating or be comfortable for any length of time. It was awful.

So yeah, the main purpose of journaling for from a monk, a monastic point of view, is just kind of to take a snapshot of where you are at like spiritually at that time so that you can refer to it later and and kind of see if you're making progress, see if you know you've improved or gotten worse or that kind of thing. But with regard to a lay person journaling, um I mean you can use it for that reason still, but there may be other reasons like just like being able to organize your thoughts better, you know, becoming a better writer, being able to express yourself more skillfully, that sort of thing. Um it can be useful for that also.

Or it can also be used as incriminating evidence against you if you ever commit a crime.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cyrus Frame.

One of the few people to ask questions on Rumble.

And he says, "This is kind of an interesting one. It's kind of a long question, though. It's one of those questions that's kind of like a a little essay with thoughts at the end, [clears throat] but it's still kind of interesting. here. Cyrus Frame says, "It seems to me that the [__] I asked about last week, that was the last question of

the previous Q&A, but I interrupt myself and I'll start again." Cyrus Frame says, "It seems to me that the [__] I asked you about last week, the man up a tree is pertinent for what you do in this channel. Bodhi Dharma came from the west to teach the dharma. The man in the tree is part of that tradition of teaching the dharma, as are you." However, some of the questions people ask you, particularly concerning what there is after nibbuta or the thoughts of enlightened people, I think you sometimes get frustrated with answering because, as you say, that is off the scale. Any description, therefore, is not really going to cut it. If you stay

silent or not answer the question in a way that is a truer representation, or at least it is not being forced to speak in metaphors. On the other hand, by staying silent, you are perhaps failing to communicate the dharma. It would also be a strange video if you just sat there in silence. Clinging to the tree by his teeth represents silence as he cannot speak. Letting go to speak means falling into a kind of misrepresentation.

So I think the [_] is about the paradox or dilemma of how do you express or communicate the inexpressable. For what it's worth, this is how I would answer the question right now. I would say I

don't know what I would do as it is a hypothetical situation and so anything I say would be a view. Also, it is similar to the song K Sarah by Doris Day. What will be will be. The future is not ours to see. Only instead of the situation being in the future, it is a hypothetical reality. So how could I know what I would do in that? There is only what you do in the real reality and even that is always unknown before it happens. What do you think? Well, that's a that is a good insight that comparing the [__] to you know uh a teacher or a monk trying to put into words what you really cannot put into words. trying to teach reality

when reality cannot be expressed
symbolically in language.

So yeah, that's that's a good insight.

That's I can appreciate that. I mean,
still it's the [__] is is this riddle
that has no correct answer. And so just
practically by definition, a [__] is a
riddle that has no correct answer. And
you are required to answer it correctly.

And [clears throat]

one person's correct answer may be very
different than another person's correct
answer. I mean, they may be opposites
because it's not the words coming out so
much as the mental states, you know,
like like I said before, I think what in

the previous Q&A, the correct answer may be just uh you know, the Roshi asks you the the unanswerable riddle and you just say, "Good morning, Roshi." And that may be that may be good enough depending on your mental states, which the Roshi will have to like feel into, I guess.

intuitively.

So yeah, but with regard to asking a question, what would you do under such and such circumstances? It's really it's it's a common

in a way it's it's almost like a trick.

Like I remember a long time ago back in the 80s back when George, what's his name? George Dukakus was running for president and he was a Democrat. I

actually voted for him. I voted Democrat in those days. I [clears throat] can't remember who he was running against.

Maybe George Bush the first. Yeah, I don't remember now. But anyways, he was seen as kind of cold and unfeilling. You know, he's kind of out of touch. You know, not really a heart oriented person. And so some reporter

who's, you know, trying to ask a gotcha sort of question,

which, you know, they've been doing for a long time. Hasn't been invented just for Donald Trump. He asks him, "What would happen if your wife got, you know,

like abused or assaulted or something
and he just kind of was like a deer in
the headlights. He really didn't know
how to answer the question if I remember
correctly." And that was seen as look,
he really is just cold and unfeeling
and but I mean being fair to him,
I mean, you can't really know in advance
what you're going to do. So I mean I've
[clears throat] recently I had a an
interview where someone was asking me
you know what would you do under such
and such circumstances and honestly I
mean sometimes you just have to say well
I mean it's going to depend on all sorts
of things you just you have to act
spontaneously in the flow and so what

you do is going to depend on you know
who who you're interacting with and and
like where and how and why and all this
and of course that's not the the kind of
answer that people want. they want like
a a yes or no kind of kind of answer.

So yeah, I mean you can't

[clears throat] really answer a question
like that um accurately with certainty
in a lot of cases. I mean it's if you're
in a crisis situation, how would you how
would you act in a crisis situation? You
can't really know until you're in a
crisis situation. You know, you're not
just going to be using your ordinary
thinking mind to decide what to do in a

crisis situation.

You know, somebody assaults your woman while you are there, then you know what exactly are you going to do? I mean, in all likelihood, you just kind of charge the guy and punch him in the face or whatever, but I mean, you can't know for sure exactly how you're going to respond.

You know, you could just grab a lamp and and bash him with that or something. I mean, who knows?

[sighs]

But let's not talk about bashing people with lamps.

Let's see. Yeah, I think that Cyrus frame may be correct in his uh

interpretation of the coan as as a kind
of metaphor

for like a Zen teacher especially who's
trying to convey what cannot be
expressed. You know, I mean, you either
have to remain silent or you just sort
of babble and hope that the babbling is
skillful enough means that it helps the
other person. even though you'd probably
be more correct just to remain silent.

And some Zen masters actually did remain
silent. There's one Zen master, I think
he's mentioned in Zen Flesh, Zen Bones,
who would just he carried a flute around
with him and if he was asked a question
about Buddhism, he would just take the

flute out and blow one note on it and
put the flute back in. Or there was
another uh there was another Zen master
who when asked a question about about
Zen, he would just lift one finger. It's
like Goute I think it was his name Goute
where I think there [clears throat] I I
vaguely remember the story about um
there was this Zen master this teacher
this Roshi who when asked questions
about Buddhism would raise one finger
and then there was one of the noviceses
one of the like the kid monks started
doing the same thing. one of his
teachers would ask him a question, he
would just raise one finger. And so
Goute hears about this and he calls this

young novice

to him and asks him a question about Buddhism. The little kid raises one finger. Goute just grabs the kid and just chops his finger off and then he says, "Now [clears throat] how do you and then supposedly according to the legend, according to the story, the kid became enlightened." So, I guess that justifies cutting his finger off. So, yeah. I mean, it's still it's still the unanswerable question. What do you do? I mean, you you have the duty to answer the question, which causes you to fall out of the tree and and die, but still,

I mean, you do the best you can.

And uh I think I'm just going to move on

to the next question. This is from

Trzasquez is

and Trzasquez is says, "Could you

explain in brief the Jane religion

mainly about the afterlife options?"

Well, I mean the afterlife options of

Janism are pretty similar to Buddhism

and and like Hinduism. I mean they

believed in rebirth or reincarnation and

you know there's all these different

realms. So in that case and it wasn't

that different from Buddhism or

Hinduism. It's just that um the Jane

religion apparently was based more on

like uh a spiritual system going back to

the Indis Valley civilization that was kind of pessimistic. You know it's like the world is a bad place that you should try to free yourself from.

And you know they believed in karma which to the James was almost like a physical substance that you could unlike in Buddhism where karma was purely psychological in Janism there was also a physical component where even if you stepped on a bug accidentally you were still making bad karma. So that's why the Jane monks, a lot of them will have like these soft grass brooms where they sweep the path in front of them so that they won't step on any ants even

accidentally. And they'll wear like the the face mask thing just so they won't breathe in any flying insects accidentally because even if you do it accidentally from from the Janus point of view, it's still bad karma.

So um a lot of the the assumptions of Janism are similar to the assumptions of Buddhism and um Hinduism or protohinduism.

Um but they did consider there is a soul or a ja. I've mentioned this I think it was in the previous Q&A. You've got this soul called the jva that has karma sticking to it and weighing it down. So what the genes were supposed to do is just burn off their karma. It's very

simple philosophy. You've got this karma and you have to just get rid of it without making new karma. So they were like lawful neutral going with dungeons and dragons. You know, they they weren't going to make any karma. You know, they wouldn't accept alms from a place where there's a hungry dog or lots of buzzing flies because they might deprive the dog or the flies of a meal if somebody [clears throat] gives them food instead of just throwing it out in the street. So the Janes, they [clears throat] had more of a mechanistic view of things, maybe a little more archaic understanding of things than the

Buddhists and the some of the like the
Upanotic teachers
um like Vdanta.

But I mean with regard to the the realms
of samsara and everything, it was fairly
similar. It's just that you have a jva.
You have this soul and your karma sticks
to it and weighs it down. And so you
have to burn off the karma through self-
torture even sometimes. You know, you
just get rid of the karma. Don't make
any new karma until finally you're free
of all karma and then your ja just wafts
up into some eternal heaven.

I mean it's it's fairly simple very
straightforward
more so than [clears throat] Buddhism or

vdanta

and that's that's pretty much it. I mean the the lengths that they would go to to avoid making new karma and I mean they would torture themselves and which was I mean it it was sort of like a passive kind of torture like I mentioned before that just remaining squatting remaining in a squatting position was a common tortured technique that James would inflict upon themselves and if you don't think that just squatting in one place can be torture just squat in one place for an hour straight just try to watch Watch an entire movie while squatting on the floor in front of the TV set and

you're going to find that you're it hurts. It is painful.

And then apparently the Janes when [clears throat] they figure that they had burned off all their karma. I mean they would selfdelete

before you know they might accidentally mess up and start making more karma and then die in a state where they've got karma that's going to be weighing down their ja. They figure once they're they're free of karma that they selfdelete. And the way they would do it is they just walk off into like some desolate area and then just squat down and just remain in a squatting position, not drinking or eating until they were

dead. I assume it'd be like kidney failure from dehydration that would get them first.

But it's kind of a strange religion. And they did believe that fire was like a living being. Um they weren't allowed to drink cold water, but they weren't allowed to build a fire to cook their water. And so they mainly survived on drinking the water that was drained from boiling rice. You know, they'd walk around in the morning and they'd be a lot of them would be naked. They wouldn't own anything. And so they just beg. They wouldn't have a begging bowl. They just cup their hands like this. And

apparently the nice ladies would save their their rice water and um pour it into their hands or something. Let them drink from the the the pot or something. And uh I I would assume they got a lot of their calories just from this water that had had boiled rice in it because some of them were were aesthetic to the point they would eat. I mean, if if you can believe the Buddhist texts, then some of the extremists would eat once every two weeks, which yeah, that's that's kind of hard to believe, but even eating just once every three days, I mean, one meal a day, every or one meal every three days plus drained off rice water, you know, they're pretty pretty

skinny. I would guess that a lot of those Jane monks were in advanced state of emaciation. And I used to wonder how how these malnourished Jane monks would survive the wintertime because a lot of them were naked. They were skycladara janes would just be naked. They would own nothing. No clothes, no begging bowl, nothing.

So it turns out that in the winter time and it gets down to about freezing in the Ganges Valley, at least it did in the Buddhist time during the the winter time, that they would just smear themselves with mud and then that would be their insulation that would keep them

from dying of hypothermia.

Of course, the mud would probably be crawling with little microscopic creatures and worms and so forth, but um I guess you have to kind of kind of have to be flexible with regard to certain things.

But yeah, the Jain religion was apparently like a relic of pre-Vedic religion that may have had its origins in the Indus Valley civilization.

The shamanic tradition which also produced the Ajivakas which are now extinct. It's a spiritual movement that was common in the Buddhist time. There are more Ajivakas than Buddhists you know in the early times of Buddhism. And

it also um it gave rise to sananka which was another one of these atheistic kind of pessimistic you know believing in a kind of a mechanistic idea of karma and you need to purify yourself to escape from from this world of this samsaric world and this kind of thing and sankha eventually um at least one branch of it got incorporated in Hinduism as yoga and Buddhism also has roots boots there. Although the Buddha himself was arguably a philosophical genius in addition to being fully enlightened and he he kind of adjusted certain things like karma is a mental state not just this mechanistic phenomenon of the

universe that kind of thing. And he apparently um he refined an idea of dependent core rising which was so refined that almost nobody including most Buddhists can understand it.

But I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG

and uh he's our last questioner of the evening by golly. He asked three questions though. So Ethiopian fake TIG's first question is what are some signs that someone is progressing in their practice after they become ordained [clears throat] as a monk?

Is that signs for out outward observers or is that signs for the monk himself?

Ethiopian fake TIG does not specify. But if one is progressing in their practice, they're going to be like serene. They may have like this glow of serenity and contentment. You know, they're they're enthusiastic about their practice.

They're enthusiastic about being a monk.

They they they look forward to

meditating. This kind of thing is there

are signs that one is progressing. But I

mean that's not the only kind of signs

that one is progressing. I mean it may

be that there's a lot of friction and

like aversion and stuff arising which is

is just stuff that has to burn itself

out. It's just, [clears throat] you

know, you've got all these habits that you established as a lay person that they're not fitting the monk's life very well. And so I mean there's going to be some bumpy roads, some choppy seas, you know, so to speak, that I mean, you can still be progressing even though it's not really obvious because the monk may be going through like internal upheavals

just, you know, trying to reprogram himself from being a worldly-minded lay person into being some spiritual renunciant.

But if [clears throat] if they are progressing, they should be, you know, more content, more serene, less

talkative.

Um,

you know, just less less excitable, you know, less less like emotionally worked up over things. Or if they are emotionally worked up over everything, it should be like like faith and gratitude and enthusiasm for practice, that kind of thing.

>> [sighs]

>> But I mean it's it's hard to say for an outside observer and sometimes it's hard to say for even for oneself to what extent one is is progressing because sometimes it may seem like your mind is just rebelling against dharma.

But I mean that may be a kind of you're just having to work your way through this this wilderness. You know it's like the the dark knight of the soul that St. John of the Cross was talking about. I mean according to St. John of the Cross, this dark night of the soul, this this bleak dryness with no consolation is just a prerequisite for the next stage which is a very exalted spiritual state. So there's not always obvious signs that one is progressing. They may one may be having you know meltdowns and crises that are just kind of burning this burning defilements and so that you can make progress to the next stage. Or the crisis might be the the sort of crisis

that just slams you into the next stage.

And in some cases it may be just

necessary for you to go through that.

And so you may seem like a basket case

to yourself and others while not

realizing just how close you are to

reaching like the next stage which may

be the relatively exalted stage in your

progress your spiritual progress.

So just because

um someone isn't showing just I mean

they're not just like glowing with

spiritual light, you know, just serene

and equanimous and all that. I mean that

doesn't if they're not showing those

signs, it doesn't mean they're not

making progress. They're just making a different kind of progress.

But I mean, if they're happier after they become a monk, that's a good sign that they're making progress.

You if they just, you know, they were happy before they became a monk and then they're miserable while they're a monk. They're they're still going to be making some kind of progress, I suppose. But I mean, it's it's not a very good sign, it seems to me.

And I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question and uh take the last drink of cold coffee like that. Open the emergency backup beverage like this. Take a drink of that

so that they can mix in my digestive system.

[sighs and gasps]

And then I'm going to answer Ethiopian fake tig's second question which is as follows. After his enlightenment, how come the Buddha didn't go back for his son to perhaps guide him and help him as a father? Well, actually he did. His son was named Rahula according to tradition. And it was a few years.

If if uh Rahula was a baby when the Buddha renounced the world, then I think he was like seven or something like that when [clears throat] the Buddha finally did go back to his hometown of

Capilawatu after he'd kind of
established Buddhism, set up the SA and
everything and he felt the time was ripe
to go back to Capilawatu
and he went back there and you know met
his father and met his I guess still his
wife,
although of course they were separated.
And I think it was his wife that
demanded
that little Rahula should have his
inheritance because he's like a royal
prince or something. But the Buddha, who
was inclined to reinterpret
traditionally understood terms, said,
"Yeah, I'll give him his inheritance in
inheritance. You know, he'll get his his

[clears throat] what's the word? his legacy and then the Buddha ordained him. So he ordained Rahula and then Rahula eventually became enlightened. So it's hard to say that the Buddha did anything wrong by abandoning his child and then staying gone for years because the way he he did it. I mean still his son wound up becoming a fully enlightened Arahant anyway. So I mean anything that results in somebody becoming a fully ordained arhant can't be all bad seems to me. So he did guide him and help him as a father. And there are at least two Rahula suttas in the texts one of which is in the sutin pa which is very nice

suta by the way.

[snorts]

[cough and clears throat]

So, I answered that one. And so, I'm moving on to Ethiopian fake TIG's last question, which is the last question of this Q&A. And he says, "Can you tell me the story you told on how you think the Buddha would look like if someone was to time travel back in time to be in his SA? Perhaps add some more details since I like the picture you painted last time." Well, I did mention in a previous Q&A that when I was a monk, I had sort of cooked up this little science fiction story about these people who are going to go back in time in a time machine and

visit the Buddha. And you've got the the
smug scholar, you know, the he's like
president of the Polytech Society,
written all kinds of learned books on
the subject. You've got the Burmese
seat, the fundamentalist religious
Buddhist. Then you've got sort of like
the the the Western liberal kind of
Buddhist. You know, this this woman who
wrote who got famous for writing books
like, you know, liberating the the
Buddha from within, you know, these kind
of newagy self-help books with a
Buddhist theme, that kind of thing. And
then you have to have like the
technician who's just running the

machine. And of course the the woman who wrote you know liberating the the [laughter] you know freeing the Buddha within you this kind of thing she just has like this sudden crisis that prevents her from going back you know and the implication in the story would be it's just so some sort of like um subconscious fear is just causing her to just have psychosomatic symptoms or or whatever panic attacks or something that just she's she's not going to face the Buddha because she knows she's, you know, not or at least she considers herself deep down to be unworthy or some such. Then, you know, they so they go back in the time machine, the the smug

scholar, the the seat and the
technician, they they go back to the
Ganges Valley and they ask around it.
And one of the first humiliations for
the Seattle is nobody can understand his
poly. So the the scholar who's like uh
an authority on Indic languages,
procrits, this kind of stuff, he's able
to communicate well enough that they get
instructions on where the Buddha is. So
they go to where the Buddha is supposed
to be and there's just like this skinny
guy wearing rags.

Probably doesn't smell very good. He's
got maybe like a fly crawling on the
side of his head. He's scruffy looking.

Doesn't have the lump on top of his head. He's got, you know, like a week's growth of stubble all over his face and head. Just sitting there serenely with, you know, other people who look kind of similar. You know, they're all dressed in dirty rags. You know, well, at least maybe a few of them had washed their rags recently, but you know, they're skinny. They're not very clean, scruffy looking. They're not the exalted noble beings that you see in the Buddhist art, you know. They're just they look they don't look very impressive, at least from a superficial point of view. Even though I mean you you gaze upon them with a little bit of sensitivity, you'd

see that they're just like glowing with serenity. This kind of thing, you know, very peaceful, very calm, you know, just sitting like statues. if they're sitting in meditation.

But yeah, I mean the Buddha himself presuming that the the legends have some truth to them, he'd probably be taller than the average person, probably skinny, probably scruffy looking, wearing rags. I mean, it was against the rules for a monk to bathe more than twice a month.

So unless it was a certain time of year like the end of the hot season or the beginning of the rainy season, there's a

good chance that, you know, he may have gone a week or more without bathing, just wearing kind of brownish colored, you know, robes that were sewn together pretty sloppily because they didn't have, you know, good thread or anything in those days. And you know, maybe the fly, maybe more than one fly crawling on it,

but I mean, he'd probably have a noble bearing. He'd he'd be Caucasian probably whether if not Indo-arian than at least Indo-Iranian

because you know there's there's a possibility that you know his ancestors and like the the Sakya tribe you know Sakya and Cyian and Saka all sound

similar. So there is a possibility that he was more closely related genetically at least with regard to the male line of his ancestry to some Indo-Iranian [clears throat]

you know more or less cyian tribe that you know settled in India along with the the Indo the Indo um Arians

but I mean they look pretty much the same. I mean, he'd be like relatively caucasian features, you know, kind of a long longish straightish nose, high forehead, not very dark skin, possibly blue eyes. At least tradition says he had abil, which is like intensely blue eyes.

Probably black hair, which would be like stubble.

>> [sighs]

>> So,

I mean, that's pretty much what he looked like, I guess. I mean, that would be like an educated guess as to what the Buddha looked like.

If he stood up, he'd be taller than most people, at least taller than most people in those days.

might not be taller than the average modern Dutch person,

but [clears throat] still tall, skinny, more or less like Indo-Uropean or like Iranian looking,

not very clean. Probably no lump on top

of the head. Probably no spiral here, you know, probably no webbed fingers and toes, you know, like the 32 marks of the the the great being. Probably he wouldn't have very very many of them.

I mean, he look like a an ordinary aesthetic in ancient India of like the upper classes. So he'd look more European than you know the lower classes would look who are mainly of like Aboriginal ancestry, Aboriginal Indians, you know, Dravidian types.

I mean I mean it doesn't really matter what he looked like, but I guess it's if you're going to rever somebody, it's good to kind of have some idea in your

mind of roughly what he might look like.

You know, it helps to focus your your devotion or gratitude or your concentration of some sort onto such a being. You know, that's why they have statues.

Statues and other images.

But let's see. Did I answer the question?

See, can you tell me the story you told?

Yeah, I already Oh, yeah. might as well finish the story where [clears throat] the uh the the Burmese seat when he sees this kind of scrunchy not extremely clean looking person who doesn't have the all the marks and the lump on his head and everything he just can't

believe that's the Buddha. He just thinks this is ridiculous and he just stomps off, you know, refuses to even meet him.

Then the the smug scholar goes up and he's just sort of asking questions that he pretty much already knows the answers to as a way of just kind of showing off how knowledgeable he is, which the Buddha sees through immediately, you know, and then the the the scholar just kind of smugly and politely, you know, he's he's Oxbridge educated, so he's very polite, but still he he smugly excuses himself because he also wants to go meet Macau Gosa and and you know he's

on a limited schedule. So he takes off, you know, just smugly smiling, you know, that was very satisfying. I got to got to meet the Buddha. So that's that's definitely going to help my career, that kind of thing. And then finally, when they're ready to go back into the future,

the the humble technician, you know, who who hasn't been talking much, just been taking orders, you know, doing his job, they can't find him. So finally they go back to the Buddha and there's the the the technician who is just like on his knees or on his face, you know, in front of the Buddha just, you know, he he's refusing to leave. He's he's finally

gotten to the presence of the Buddha.

I mean, there's there's no indication of what his spiritual beliefs were

previously, but it's just the the

implication of the story would be, and

I'm I'm not skillful enough at writing

fiction to write this story, but that,

you know, he was sensitive in a way that

the the other people weren't. And he was

just could feel this this spiritual

profoundity

there sufficiently that he was like,

"This is it. This is this is the real

deal. I'm staying.

And that was the end of the story, the

end.

And that's it. That's the end of the uh
the Q&A also. And uh [cough] like I
should always [clears throat] say at the
beginning and pretty much never do. If
you have any questions you think I can
answer, especially with regard to
Theravada Buddhism, early Buddhism,
Buddhism in general, Indian philosophy
in general, spirituality,
dharma in general, meditation,
what it's like to be in Burma, that kind
of stuff that you think I can answer,
then uh feel free to ask no more than
three questions per person, please. My
fourth book is still going to be coming
out soon inshallah. I still have to get
some of the artwork finished, but that's

that's really the only thing holding me up at this point. That's the bottleneck at present. And uh what else was I going to say? I

was going [clears throat] to be something really important, too. Like and subscribe if you haven't already.

That wasn't the important thing I was going to say, though. And now I'm probably not even going to remember it.

Damn.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> Anyways,

I guess I've said everything that really needs to be said except for the final thing that I always say, which is be

happy.

Alrighty then. Or if you prefer, okay then.

Hello and welcome to Question Answer episode number 183. I am your host Pony Bosa and I'm sitting here on a gray, dark, overcast, rainy day in upstate South Carolina.

This is my beverage.

and

183 although odd is not prime because it is $3 * 61$

[groaning]

and that is a kind of pointless preamble.

Suppose we should just get right into answering questions here and there's not

a whole heck of a lot. I think some of the viewers are hibernating over the winter or something.

And it's a little unfortunate that the very first question is kind of diving into profundity right off the bat. I like to have a few easy questions or kind of superficial ones so that I can build up some momentum before I get into like the really like deep philosophical stuff. But it's not going to happen this time. Dharma River says, "Why do Buddhas teach the Dharma after reaching enlightenment?" And that is essentially the question. But then he's got a couple paragraphs here [clears throat] of kind of uh commentary

which uh may amount to a second question. We'll have to we'll have to look into this. He continues, "If we were truly completely empty, then there would be no point in teaching anything and Buddhas would simply remain quiet and peaceful until the body passes away." This proves that duality is real to some extent. However, it doesn't disprove anata either. What it proves is that we are trapped and deluded by a simulation that the Buddhas are trying to wake us up from. What's your opinion on this?

Well, I guess I should just go up to the first question, the the question mark,

the first question mark. Technically,
there are two question marks. One
question mark and then another question
mark. So, we'll deal with the first
question mark first, which is why do
Buddhists teach the dharma after
reaching enlightenment? And I have to
admit like the official reason that you
see in the poly texts is not persuasive
to me because it's
compassion you know ana
anu [snorts]

which is I mean literally it means like
trembling after you know a sort of like
being concerned for the welfare of
others not wanting them to be in danger
and so forth but like a fully

enlightened being he would see through
samsara realize that all these beings
are ultimately illusory
virtual reality.

And so yeah, I that really has never
been a persuasive answer for me.

So I mean one I [clears throat] mean
where where do I start on this? I mean
one thing one way of answering this why
do Buddhists teach the dharma after
reaching enignment? It's very similar to
one of the most common Zen coons. you
know, one of these paradoxical riddles
that has no answer. And that is why did
bodhi Dharma come from the west, you
know, to to China in order to teach

Buddhism there? I mean, why did he do that? And that is like a co-an has no real legit correct answer.

But also I'm reminded [clears throat] of a statement that I've repeated on these Q&As's a number of times. A statement made by Rahm Das with regard to his guru Nim Karoli Baba also known as Maharaji who is up there on top of the bookcase. At least his picture is I mean he's not really up there unless he's everywhere of course. So anyways, Ramda said that the more you got to know him, the more you realized that there was really nobody there. That he was just a mirror like reflecting your own karma back at you. And that's one way of interpreting

why Buddhists teach. They are just there's really nobody there. It's just a mirror reflecting your own karma back at you. And people that had a lot of good karma, a lot of spiritual, you know, leading up to enlightenment kind of karma. I mean, they wouldn't have a lot of opportunities for that to be reflected back at them until they perceive that there's an enlightened being who is more likely, partly due to their own beliefs, their own faith maybe, to reflect that kind of karma back at them.

But it's it's like your own karma to hear what a spiritual teacher has to say

to you. So it's really the fruition of your own karma to have a Buddha teaching you dharma. I mean what he's teaching you is already kind of latent in potential form already inside you in a sense.

So that would be my best answer for why a fully enlightened being who makes no karma has no vition or at least no samsaric volition, no cheetah, not no will. Why they would bother to teach dhamma because it's just a reflection of your own good karma coming back at you. Maybe a little bit of bad karma coming back at you too. for example, if an enlightened being scolds you for some reason, hits you with a

stick or something.

So, anyways, let's just go on to uh the subsequent two paragraphs here. If we were truly empty, then there would be no point in teaching anything and Buddhists would simply remain quiet and peaceful until the body passes away. Well, I mean, Buddhists do remain quiet and peaceful. Inwardly, they are quiet and peaceful. You know, it's again like the old Zen saying that [clears throat] the uh the the meditation hall can be resounding with the shouts of the master and blows from his stick can be falling like rain but still the master is dwelling in silence and stillness

inwardly.

So let's see here then the next statement is this proves that duality is real to some extent. I mean yeah from a samsaric point of view it's virtually real or conditionally real within the context of samsara that I mean duality is samsara I mean that's what I mean samsara is based on duality or just perception and perception requires contrast and contrast is duality.

You can't just [clears throat] have something completely in isolation. You have to have something to compare it with or contrast it with something for it to be different from and that's

duality.

Okay. So anyways, let's see. He continues here. However, it doesn't disprove or no self either. What it proves is that we are trapped and deluded by a simulation that the Buddhas are trying to wake us up from. What's your opinion on this? Well, the Buddhas I mean for them to be trying I mean subjectively all bets are off because you can't really say what's going on with an enlightened being subjectively. I mean it could just be silence and stillness in which case all the stuff that they're doing like I was saying is just a mirror reflecting your own karma

back at you with really nobody being there anymore.

So that would be my answer. It's It's not so different from my first answer.

And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question here

which is also from Dama River. I just arrived in Sri Lanka today. This was days ago. So he's he's in Sri Lanka.

Okay, I'll just start over. I just arrived in Sri Lanka today and I'm headed right now to a forest monastery where I will stay for a few months. with your knowledge of Sri Lankan terraodan Buddhist tradition. Do you have any words of advice

so that I can maximize the benefits of

my stay here and maybe things I should watch out for? Thank you. Okay. Well, I mean Sri Lanka,

I really don't know a whole heck of a lot about the Sri Lankan terraotta forest tradition other than what I have read in a few books. And excuse me, I'm taking a drink in my beverage here.

So, um I've met a few western monks who spent time in Sri Lanka, presumably in the forest tradition.

Um

my understanding is that Buddhism in Sri Lanka for the most part is very corrupt.

I mean, it's rare to find a monk who follows the rules of monastic

discipline, for example. You know,
you'll see in Sri Lanka more than
anywhere else [clears throat] in terara
Buddhist Asia like monks with jobs
carrying briefcases,
you know, driving to work, that kind of
stuff.

So I mean, [clears throat]
excuse me, [cough]
my first advice would be just, I mean,
if you are going to Sri Lanka to be in a
forest tradition, make sure that you're
in one of these kind of newish forest
traditions that are like reform
movements where they really are trying
to practice dharma correctly, including
rules of monastic discipline for monks,

you know, not handling money, for
example, not eating food in the
afternoon,

that kind of stuff

and uh I guess there is like a reform
movement in Sri Lanka where there are
monks there now in the forests who are
taking Dhamma very seriously. So I hope
Dhamma River is with is it one of these
kinds of monasteries than

[clears throat] the the usual kind of
monastery in Sri Lanka.

Um,

I guess aside from that, um, the main
advice I would give is like in Burma,
like if if someone was going to come to

Burma, my first advice to them would be be very patient because nothing's going to work right. The buses aren't going to run on time. The electricity is going to go off and on at random. The air conditioning might not work even at the hotel, this kind of stuff. So, you just have to be very patient. just be willing to accept just about anything and then just do your best. You know, it's like if it's uncomfortable, hot and sweaty and mosquito and that kind of stuff. Well, I mean that's part of the practice. I mean, I think for really like archaic Buddhist monks, you know, the earliest Buddhist monks just wandering around homeless, being bitten

by mosquitoes that they weren't allowed to slap and just sweating all the time and just [clears throat] the discomfort and inconvenience of it all was a major part of their practice. Just being able to accept that to be kind of at one with all that is one of the most important aspects of Buddhist practice in my opinion. And that's one reason why Buddhist monks nowadays probably don't make nearly the sort of spiritual progress that the earliest Buddhist monks had. I mean the earliest Buddhist modes had the advantage of you know the Buddha was either there or still in memory and you know there was still a

lot of enthusiasm and like momentum
going whereas now it's just the momentum
of tradition largely
but still it's monks nowadays are mostly
living in relatively comfortable
monasteries and they know where their
next meal is coming from. They know
where they're going to sleep that night
and everything is relatively easy. And
in the West, it can be even easier.
I mean, just living at the the standard
of living of an early Buddhist monk is
is downright illegal in the United
States, unless you're a homeless person,
in which case laws don't apply to you.
So, I mean, maybe you could work
something out that way. Try to get

yourself qualified as a I guess homeless
is now considered politically incorrect.
So, it's like, what is it? houseless,
unhoused.

But I'm deviating from the question
here. I'm digressing.

[clears throat]

Yeah, just I mean be very patient.

Remember that any kind of difficulty is
just part of the practice. That's just
something that's being tossed at you so
that you can accept it with equanimity.

Even if it's something that has to be
fixed, you know, some you got visa
problems or something still, I mean, you
don't just say, "Well, I just have to

accept that, you know, my visa is
expiring or I have to accept that I'm
sick or whatever." I mean, you still
have to take actions intelligently,
prudently,
but still, I mean, it's while you're
sick, you just you accept the feeling.
You observe the feelings with
mindfulness. you know, you you've got,
you know, Monizuma's revenge or the the
the Sinhali equivalent of Monzuma's
revenge.

It it there's a good chance it's going
to happen. Well, that's just part of
your practice. You know, the heat, the
sweat, the mosquitoes,
the the weird food maybe, it's all just

part of the practice. And just learning how to deal with that with some mindfulness and equanimity is possibly more important than sitting cross-legged with your eyes closed meditating.

But good luck in your or good karma, good kama

and uh sadu sadu sadu for toughing it out in in a forest in Sri Lanka for the purpose of spiritual progress realization.

So I'm [clears throat] just going to move on to the next question here. This is from Tzasqueziz.

And Tzasquez is says, "I am sorry for a personal question if it will in fact

turn out to be a personal question." And then he says, "Were you ever sewer slid?"

Not supposed to say certain words on YouTube because it dings some AI filter and like demotes you in the algorithm if it doesn't just get you suspended or the the the video taken down outright.

So, was I ever inclined towards selfdeion is the question. And I mean obviously I was never fully persuaded with regard to that cuz here I am. At least it seems like I'm here.

So yeah, I was never 100% inclined on selfdeleted.

Although I mean for a long time I mean

it was always kind of an option. you know it's it's always on the list of options. If things just get too horrible then you know that is kind of an option or at least that is the way I was thinking as a monk you know um you know you get some sort of terminal condition that you know is just going to get worse and worse and it's very painful and so forth then I could understand how selfdeletion could be a wise and conscious choice I mean to selfdee in a state of just agonizing despair which is the way it often happens then I mean that's really not a good way to go because you you want to leave this

realm in as conscious of a state as possible because that's going to help determine where you're going to be immediately after this. You know, there's going to be like a continuum of mental states.

[sighs]

But when I was a monk, just as a kind of option that I never took, I did consider it sometimes when things were really, you know, just very difficult to to accept

that I did um have a kind of how do I put it? A certain toxic substance on hand just in case, which I never use. And I'm not going to say what the substance is because it's so easily

obtainable and doesn't result in like
nausea and convulsions and so forth like
most toxic like over overdoses would
cause that I don't want to help anybody
with regard to this sort of thing.

But it's true. I I went to a library in
Rangon one time. It was the
International Institute for Advanced
Buddhist Studies and they had um at
least one book on forensic science like
a coroner's manual. I assume they would
have that in a Buddhist studies library
because of the pictures of, you know,
gruesome forensic
stuff. You know, it had some pretty
gruesome pictures in it. You know,

shotgun wounds and this kind of thing.

and it had like an appendix at the end

which was just um toxic substances and

their their symptoms and so forth. So I

I studied through that a little bit just

to see what kind of toxic substance

would be preferable

[sighs]

but again I didn't uh avail myself of

that option and I am glad that I didn't.

It's just not my time to go.

But I have considered it many

[clears throat] times over the course of

my life um as an option which was

rejected.

And so I'm just going to move on to the

second question of chases is which is as

follows. Are you sure you never ate dog or cat meat when you were living on alms in Burma? And I'm pretty sure I'd say the odds of my eating cat or dog meat would be 5% or less while I was going for alms in Burma. Partly because it's considered very low status to to eat dog or cat meat, even as a lay person in Burma. Cat meat is more commonly eaten than dog meat. Dogs are just considered to be dirty, nasty animals, which is, you know, the prevailing view throughout much of Asia. you know, they eat garbage and dead lizards and baby poop and this kind of stuff and they're just considered to be

unclean. And so it's not a common like an ethnic thing in Burma to eat dog meat. Except there are some people who believe that eating dog meat can cure you of malaria. You know, it's just some weird folk

myth. I guess I doubt that it really helps unless it's just the placebo effect. you know, you you have enough faith in this dog meat that it's going to cure you of malaria that somehow it it it helps. Anyway,

cats, on the other hand, um yeah, I think some of the poorer villagers will like hunt stray cats and eat them. And that's one reason why you don't see very many cats running around in Burmese

villages. Although, the main reason is just that you got all these dogs running around in Burmese villages. The cats are pretty much existing by stealth. But there are some Burmese villagers who like cats and keep cats.

And I will point out just gratuitously that Burmese cats are similar to Siamese cats. Oh boy, low battery. I forgot to plug in the computer again. Just a minute.

I keep doing this. You know what I'm saying?

Let's see. I got pl

I got to stand back up again.

All right.

Okay. Now we're getting somewhere. Let's plug this in.

Okay,

we're down to 8%.

Let's see. Gotta make sure that Gotta make sure that it's working good now.

But I think we're I think we're okay.

Let's just click on this.

Okay. No, it says battery is not charging.

Okay. No, it doesn't say battery is not charging.

Okay. Well, let's just see what happens.

Anyways, back to Burmese cats. Like, a lot of Burmese cats have a kink in their tail. like Siamese cats. I've I've read or heard that a genuine Siamese cat has

a kink in its tail. And I've noticed that's very common in Burmese cats, too. I think they did away with that in like I don't know like what is it the American version of the American Kennel Club for cats.

The American cat kennel club that they probably got rid of the kink in the tail just because it's not aesthetically pleasing or something, you know? They're kind of posh, uppidity kind of people that that do that kind of stuff. So, they probably didn't like the kink in the tail. And uh we're still holding steady at 8% battery power.

So, we'll just have to keep an eye on

that.

[clears throat] So, poor people, poor villagers, some poor villagers in Burma and probably poor city people in Burma eat cat meat.

But I've never heard of it being offered to monks. You know, it's just kind of something that you do secretly because the owner of the cat might find out and get pissed off. That kind of thing. Oh, we're up to 9%. So, that's a good sign.

So, I mean, there's one time I ate something. I got some kind of meat in my bowl. At first, I thought it was like chicken or something and then I realized that it was a quadriped.

And then I'm thinking, man, this looks

like rat. And I asked one
[clears throat] of the monks, one of the
Burmese monks at the monastery, like
what is that? And he assured me that it
wasn't rat. It was probably gopher that,
you know, I thought maybe squirrel. I
was kind of hoping squirrel instead of
rat. I don't know why. I guess Americans
just have this prejudice against eating
rat meat. Whereas in some countries like
Thailand, it's just fairly common thing.
Or so I have. So I have been led to
understand.

But who knows? Maybe gopher meat's
really good. But I've heard copy bar,
also a rodent, is supposed to be really

good eating. So just because it's a rodent doesn't mean it's necessarily bad.

I guess the guinea pig was domesticated early on in South America, I think, for a meat animal. I guess the door mouse in ancient Rome was just that was like gourmet eats, which is it's also a rodent. So I guess just because it's a rodent doesn't mean it's bad. I've completely digressed from the dog or cat meat question and we're up to 10%. So, [clears throat] the battery is charging again.

So, let's see. Let's just move on to what technically is pretty much Trezas is his question, but it turns out two

people are asking questions on behalf of Siovox and Sipad Zena. Those of you who've been watching this for a while may recall that there was a questioner, a regular questioner almost every episode up until a few months ago named Siovak and Cipad Zena and then he got kicked off of YouTube.

Uh so then he joined the Discord server and then he has a kind of personality trait where he like compulsively complains about certain groups of people or one person in particular. And finally, I mean after a number of warnings, he kind of switched over to complaining about something else. I told

him just stop it or or you're going to get ejected from the from the Discord server. And he just said, "I don't care." and he he quit. But now he's he's got questions and I' I've been told he's too stubborn to get a new account on YouTube. And so I guess he's asking questions by proxy now.

And so somehow

he uh conveyed a question to Chas is to ask [clears throat] on his behalf which is as follows. He says please ask this for me.

When a person is in a vegetative state, they are awake but have no awareness of the internal or external environment.

This sounds like a form of pure

consciousness without any content. But yet, it doesn't seem like a good thing at all. What's the difference between this kind of state and nibbana? Because your definition of it seems very similar, quote unquote. Well, a vegetative state, let's see here. This seems awake. They are awake. A vegetative state. They are awake but have no awareness of the internal or external environment.

So I mean how do you know they're awake just because their eyes are open? I mean they have no awareness of the internal or external environment. They wouldn't be responding to any stimuli. You know

they'd just be I mean it it'd be like
being in a coma with their eyes open.
And I have to admit I did meet one
person like this in Burma. some some
young Burmese guy, like a teenage boy,
who [clears throat] he was born this way
apparently, and he was so brain damaged
that really there was just nobody there.
I mean, his mother would say he kind of
responds to certain things,
you know, like they can get him to eat
food, I guess. I mean, he was still
living at home, but I mean, when he was
they they had to prop him up, you know,
they brought him to me when I was a monk
and maybe for some kind of blessings,
you know, for his benefit somehow. And I

mean, he's looking right at me, but he obviously doesn't see me.

So, I mean, there was like there was nobody there.

[snorts]

Anyways,

let's see. When a person is in a vegetative state, I'm not exactly sure what the vegetative state would be if they are awake and have no awareness.

I mean, wouldn't being awake imply that you're aware of something?

Yeah, this this question doesn't make a lot of sense to me. I'm not exactly sure what the vegetative state quote unquote would consist of because he he says

they're awake, but on the other hand, they have no awareness of the internal or external environment. So what are they aware of? And if they're not aware of anything, how can they be called awake?

So

action

continues, "This sounds like a form of pure consciousness without any content, but yet it doesn't seem like a good thing at all. I mean, it might not seem like a good thing just from a human like instinctive point of view because that person's obviously got something wrong with them if they're just like that person I met in Burma. I mean, it

looks like they're severely brain
damaged. And so, just from like the the
animal human nature point of view, it's
like there's something not good about
this. You know, it's like we have just
an instinctive
desire to avoid people that have
something seriously wrong with their
health going. Unless it's like a close
family member, a dear friend, something
like that. But, you know, you you're
walking on the highway, walking down the
sidewalk, not the highway, walking down
the sidewalk, and you know, you see
somebody who's just completely out of
it, maybe all messed up. Um, some people

would just rush over and, you know,
maybe start doing CPR or something.

Other people would just kind of stand
back and call 911, keep a safe distance
just in case it's contagious or
whatever.

[sighs]

So, I mean, when he says it doesn't seem
like a good thing at all that you've got
a person in a vegetative state who's
somehow awake at the same time oblivious
to their environment, internal and
external. I don't know how that's even
possible.

But somehow, let's just for the sake of
argument say that if that is the way it
is, then [clears throat]

just the fact that they're like like in
this abnormal state could just
instinctively cause people to think that
that is not a good thing at all. But I
mean, how could it be good or bad? I
mean, if it's I mean, if they're just
oblivious,
you know, as somehow awake yet totally
oblivious to everything, at least
anything we can internal or external,
which seems to pretty much rule out
everything.

Then, I mean, how could that be good or
bad? It would just be like a neutral
state, it seems like, other than just
sort of like the instinctive human

reaction to something that's like
obviously dysfunctional and abnormal.

So ultimately the question here is
what's the difference between this kind
of state and nibbana because your
definition of it seems very similar.

Well I mean if you're enlightened then I
mean it's like infinite consciousness
and I mean if there are some people who
would say that trees are fully
enlightened. Echartah would say that you
know an ant is fully enlightened.

a cat is fully enlightened unless it's
somehow become neurotic through too much
interaction with humans.

Um I mean you could say that I guess
but it's sort of like kind of like

echartlah just kind of has like this spectrum of unenlightenment with enlightenment at both ends. You got the enlightenment of an ant or a parramium at one end and you got the enlightenment of a sama sam Buddha at the other end and he somehow I don't recall his explanation in his famous first famous book the power of now you know exactly what the difference is between the lower end enlightenment of an animal say and the higher end enlightenment of a like a Buddha

that there there is a difference I remember he specified there was some kind of difference

that the lower end is just kind of like
an inferior kind of enlightenment. Sort
of like the Mahayana idea of like an
Araant as opposed to a Buddha like a
like an enlightened bodhicattva
but let's see

I mean first of all I have problem
answering this just because the whole
premise of someone who is awake yet
oblivious to everything internal and
external. I mean, how is that awake? You
know, that's just like,
yeah, that doesn't make sense to me. But
then, yeah, it not seeming like a good
thing at all. I mean, being enlightened
would be subjectively not necessarily a
good thing because it would be neutral,

good and bad. That's the duality, a
samsaric duality that you dispense with.
So, what's the difference between this
kind of state and nibbana? Well, if you
think a brick is in a state of nibbana,
then there wouldn't be much difference.
But I mean, it wouldn't be full
enlightenment, I think, simply because I
mean, it's like there was no
karmic
stream that gets transcended or some
such. I mean, it's hard to say. I mean,
it's secondguing somebody like that
person I'm I saw in Burma who just there
was obviously nobody there. I mean, they
were just oblivious. They they had like

the sensitivity of like a plant or something, you know? They seemed to kind of be aware if someone was around them and and like being nice to them or something, but still obviously it's like they weren't seeing or or hearing or anything like that.

So

I [clears throat] mean second-guessing the mental states of a person who apparently has no mental states and also second guessing a fully enlightened being who has transcended mental states. I mean that might be the difference at least with regard to like someone who is still embodied.

You know it's like one person isn't

having mental states. The other person has mental states but they've just like transcended them and they become irrelevant because that is no longer like what they're focused on.

But then after the like parana then yeah who knows it's like there could be that kind of absolute that is not obscured in the the brain damaged person.

But that's kind of a weird sort of thing to investigate because really you're just trying to second guessess what's going on in the mind of a person who is essentially mindless.

Got no more mind than a than a plant.

Maybe that's why they're called vegetative. I guess so. I mean you could just have a plant instead of the person in the vegetative state and compare that to a fully enlightened being. Is that nibbana? And some people would say yes. I mean, it's not the kind of nibbana that a Buddhist or at least not a terra Buddhist is going for because the terra Buddhist is going for kind of a transcendence of mental states and not just the annihilation of mental states. And that's hard for a lot of people to understand because it involves thinking at two different levels of reality simultaneously.

But you can get to a mental state where you're still having thoughts. It's just that you're no longer identified with those thoughts. That the thoughts are just nature taking its course because that's what the brain does at this level of reality. But your consciousness is not identified with that anymore.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Clefy.

Although we haven't heard the last from sea action cading because he uh like indirectly asked another question through somebody else later on. I hope I included that on the list. I think I did. If I didn't, I'll have to look it

up. Anyways, Khifi says, "If the block of marble represents every possibility and impossibility, does it mean that the four noble truths are within the block? Does it mean that in a different realm the four noble truths don't necessarily apply? Well, the four noble truths would be contained within the block in the sense that any perception would be contained within the block. And as George Barkley used to say, "Say Esperipi, to exist is to be perceived." So any being who is perceiving the four noble truths is like creating a version of the four noble truths within the realm of anything that is possible.

So that answers that question. The four noble truths are within the block in the sense that the perception of the four noble truths are within the block. And if the four noble truths aren't being perceived by anybody then they just wouldn't be there. I mean they wouldn't exist.

So the second part of this question which is actually the second question.

So I separate it now. Does it mean that in a different realm the four noble truths don't necessarily apply? Well that's kind of like saying in a different realm is you know $2 + 2 = 4$ not necessarily apply.

And I mean it's hard to imagine something like that. I mean you can you can play number games you know that base two number system there is no 2 plus 2 equals four that kind of thing but the four noble truths don't necessarily apply um I mean in different some different realms the four noble truths just aren't an issue if nobody has discovered them and have started perceiving them although you could apply them like retroactively or you could potentially apply them to what's going on because it it does seem to be the nature of perception that first of all you have to

have duality and what's going to drive
this perception if not um like desire or
like this restless dissatisfaction or
dooka that is going to push the mental
states forwards with a kind of
continuity continuity and change at the
same time because there has to be both
And

that's it's kind of tricky. I mean,
there could be maybe
um there could be something else that
drives some sort of unenlightened mind
other than in some other version of
reality very different from ours.

um you know it could be like some kind
of geometric patterns or something that

has formed enough complexity that it becomes sort of self self-referential and acquires a kind of unenlightened consciousness.

Um, but

gosh, I mean, it doesn't necessarily mean that in a different realm, the four noble truths don't necessarily apply, but it may be that you could have a kind of consciousness that is so alien that what is driving it through samsara is something other than this restless dissatisfaction like the the thorn in the heart that has beings of of this world running in all directions insatiably.

The salah going with the the uh the

original poly term the the poly metaphor
the salah that we all have this thorn or
barb or spike embedded in our heart and
that's essentially unenlightenment. You
know it's craving desire attachment
restless dissatisfaction.

But theoretically, you could have some
kind of consciousness that it that is
motivated

by something other than restless
dissatisfaction, desire, and craving and
attachment. I don't know what it would
be. It'd be something totally alien to
us.

But even then, the formal truths
technically would still apply in that

desire is the cause of all suffering.

So even if you have some completely alien sort of consciousness, un completely alien sort of un unenlightened mind that is fueled by something other than you know desire and and attachment and restless dissatisfaction. Still it would still be true that this desire is the cause of of suffering. Not nec I mean how are you going to have

Yeah.

Yeah, I mean we're we're trying to second guessess. First we're we're second guessing fully enlightened beings, second guessing people in a vegetative state that have no mental

states apparently. And now we're

secondguessing

totally alien consciousness that runs

completely differently from from our

consciousness. Um

so just let's just kind of get our feet

back on the ground here or on the floor

in my case.

Does it mean that in a different realm

the four noble truths don't necessarily

apply?

Uh I think there could be some other

kind of realm that isn't running on

dooka and desire maybe.

But still the four noble truths would

apply to at least the second and third

noble truths would apply the first noble truth to exist is to suffer. I mean maybe there's some kind of completely alien sort of consciousness that I mean sort you could say like a computer has a kind of like imitation consciousness like AI especially they might not suffer at all even though they might have a kind of virtual intelligence or something. I mean that might defy the forable truths in that sense and that to the extent that they exist maybe they're not really suffering.

But this is another just tricky

question. I'm just getting slapped upside the head with these tricky kind of questions where I'm having to secondguess completely alien mental states.

Ah, but I hope I answered it well enough because I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Romeo and Romeo says, "What is your opinion of secular professionals using techniques or concepts derived from Buddhism in their jobs? For example, would a mental health counselor taking something like a mindfulness meditation teacher certification training to use with their clients be insulting, exploitative, or

blasphemous in some way to you? As a former Buddhist monk who took the authentic and arduous path of asceticism, do you see such certification courses as a copout or inauthentic shortcut? Well, I mean, there's different scenarios. For example, you've got um you've got some sort of psychologist or psychiatrist or counselor or therapist who takes a course in like what is it? Mindfulness uh mindfulness for stress relief. there's some kind of certificate you can get for teaching mindfulness as a way of of reducing stress, stress reduction. And in and of itself, I don't think

that's necessarily a bad thing. It's eclectic, you know, but I mean, it's it's helpful, you know. It's like people with terminal illnesses or like burn victims in hospitals to have somebody teaching them how to detach from that, to observe it mindfully, not identify with it.

the the worry or the fear or the pain or whatever. I think that's ultimately a good thing.

Um the only I mean like another another example is I've mentioned before I used to know one of the world's leading authorities on obsessivempulsive disorder. He was a research professor at

a major university in California

[clears throat] at the time and he used mindfulness like Buddhist mindfulness technique sad batana as a way of curing people of obsessivempulsive disorder.

They I mean their symptoms wouldn't entirely go away but they would learn to detach from it and not identify with it and not just compulsively you know follow through on the urges. So, I mean, that's good. That's a good thing. The only two things that would kind of bother me, they used to bother me as as a monk. First of all, you've got like some professional like a psychologist who takes gets the certification in mindfulness as a form of stress

reduction. you know just teaching
mindfulness stress reduction techniques
and then starts considering himself to
be an authority on dharma and you know
kind of equivalent to the sa this kind
you know the the biku song this kind of
thing you know they kind of get arrogant
that that that can happen and that would
kind of bother me a little bit and also
it did kind of bother me a little bit
when um I would see like an ordained
Buddhist monk who would get the
certificate on teaching mindfulness as a
stress reduction technique. Like I met
uh he was a Zen Roshi. I think he made
he made his real money like in real

estate. He was some kind of real estate agent but he was also a Zen Rishi and he got the certificate. So he's teaching mindfulness not as a monk but he's just teaching this technique developed by lay people for you know reducing reducing stress in in in people as a kind of therapy and I mean that just it's just kind of rubbed me the wrong way when you've got monks that kind of are favoring this watered down you know western iz secular kind of dharma in in preference to you know the full system the full monty so that that kind of bothered me a little bit but to the extent that it's helping people I mean you judge a tree

by its fruits right so the actual
[clears throat] helping of people is a
good thing but I think like some of the
mental states associated with the
teachers like whether they're lay people
who consider themselves to be, you know,
just authorities on Dharma because of
getting this certificate or the the the
monks who are supposed to be authorities
on Dharma traditionally who then kind of
step down to get this certificate to use
Dharma as a means of stress relief when
really I mean stress relief I mean
ultimately and that's the goal of just
complete stress relief you know just
complete end of dooka But in a way it's

really watering it down which happens a lot in the west I guess especially in the west.

So yeah I mean helping people in general is a good thing but I mean it can have like negative effects on the teacher. I mean still they're they're helping other people so they're they're earning merit. They're gathering up treasures in heaven. But still, it can result in like selling out their own tradition to some degree in the case of an or ordained monastic who who like goes to this lay institution to get this certificate that somehow makes them qualified to teach mindfulness.

I mean, that always rubbed me the wrong

way. And then of course that people can just kind of get these delusions of grandeur think that thinking that they they understand dharma when they just got this certificate.

I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from the sabotur who actually changed his name because [clears throat]

the sabaturs

um couldn't result in confusion

[clears throat] as to whether the sabaturs

were one person or more than one person.

And so he has clarified that he is only one person by removing the final S from

his name and now he is just the sabotur.

And he says, "I once had a girlfriend when we were aged 17 a long time ago and I once saw her crying. When I asked why, she sobbed, if I didn't exist, no one would miss me." Neither of us were existentialists then, so I assumed she was just dumb. your views please. Well, I mean it's it's just a common thing of human nature I think that people want to be remembered and missed after they are gone. That's one reason why some people just go for fame just so that they'll be remembered you know they want they want to be remembered for something.

So I mean it is a common aspect of

humanity I think and I mean there's deeper like evolutionary reasons why people have these kind of desires um you know strong interpersonal relations is conducive to survival and reproduction of your DNA sequences and all that. So yeah, I I'm not exactly sure

uh what kind of input I can give to this. I mean, it just seems like this basic human nature. And of course, a 17-year-old girl is going to be more emotional and touchyfey than than the average guy, I guess. So, I mean, they can cry over lots of stuff, you know? It's like people can cry over

watching a dumb movie. People can cry over getting a a puppy for their birthday. This kind of stuff, especially some teenage girl who's very emotional, you know, it's like the the the hormones of adulthood are flushing through the system. She's all doped up on hormones anyway.

And it works that way for teenage boys, too.

So, you know, I mean, it's it's nothing out of the ordinary. I'm sure that there are plenty of people who have male and female mostly female I would guess who would cry because of the thought that you know if they died I mean here she didn't even say that if she died

it's just if I didn't exist no one would miss me I mean I mean if you never were born in the first place of course nobody's going to miss you so I mean that would be kind of silly but it's still easily within the realm of the thoughts that teenage girls have So yeah, I would just chalk that up to teenage girl mentality. And God bless teenage girls. I got nothing against them. I'm sure some of them are very nice in a completely innocent platonic sort of way.

I'm not on the Epstein list.

[sighs and gasps]

Well, I mean, it's just human

to some degree human irrationality,
human emotionality, human
sentimentality,
doped up on hormones, intensifying it.
But yeah, now that I've read read this
like three times, [clears throat] I'm
not sure if she's crying because if she
had never been born, no one would miss
her, which is admittedly kind of a silly
thought because nobody would have known
her in order to miss her. I mean, you
can't miss what you've never
experienced.

Pretty sure
except for maybe, you know, somebody
who's a 30-year-old virgin. Just
instinctively, they kind of miss some

kind of action, if you will. But I mean,
if she's crying because if she
[clears throat] had passed away, no one
would miss her, then, you know, that's
that's definitely more of a human
normal kind of sentiment to have.

But I don't think she was just dumb. I
mean, even really intelligent women can
be like spectacularly irrational
sometimes.

I mean, if you haven't looked at it
already, you want to understand women
and just like a man's attitude towards
women and everything, just look up hot
crazy matrix on YouTube and you'll see
like on a scale of I mean

[clears throat] women go from a scale of 1 to 10 with regard to their physical attractiveness. You know, that's standard. Guys have been using the 1 to 10 system for my entire lifetime, I'm sure. But with regard to the crazy matrix or the crazy axis, it goes from four to 10 because all women are at least a four crazy.

That's really important for men to know. It has gotten me through a lot in life. So I guess I answered that one. So I'm just going to move on to the sabotur's second question.

He says, "I understand the Buddha was not in favor of numerology or astrology, etc. Can you please expand on that?"

Yeah, there there are sutas like there's one suta in the Atakawaga of the sutin pata warning or just admonishing monks. They shouldn't be interested in astrology or omens, you know, like interpreting bird cries or interpreting dreams, uh like any kind of magic, any kind of fortuneelling, all that stuff is monks aren't supposed to pay any heed to it. Also, even like consulting mediums in trance who are channeling higher beings. That's the entire silaconda of the dean kaya. The first like 10 or so sutas of the entire sutapitica have that have that warning in it that I mean there's certain things

that a self-respecting conscientious monk doesn't do and one of them is like consulting spirit mediums but also just like omens and fortunetelling all that kind of stuff. um astrology I don't I don't know if there's any particular mention of numerology just because numerology wasn't really much of a thing in ancient India at the time [clears throat] because like written numbers and such that sort of thing were pretty much the province of like like storehouse supervisors you know just keeping inventory of stuff in warehouses that kind of thing maybe some minister of the king who's like recording tax

revenues But the average person was illiterate in the Buddhist time. They couldn't read or use numbers, at least not written ones.

[clears throat]

At least that's my understanding.

But getting back to the actual question, there's there's two main reasons for this. I think why monks aren't supposed to pay any heed to like omens or fortuneelling, anything like that. is one of them is that it's it's like the same reason why they're not supposed to practice medicine towards for lay people. They can practice medicine with their fellow monks, maybe with their own

parents, but they're not supposed to be practicing medicine. It's against the rules of monastic discipline for a monk to practice medicine on lay people like village supporters, that kind of thing. partly because

I mean lay people would just come to the monk for you know to get cured you know it's like that Jesus of Nazareth had this problem I mean you read the New Testament there were times when he was exasperated where it's like people didn't want to hear him teaching the gospel they just wanted him to cure their their aunt Martha of of rheumatism you know there's that one scene where the Buddha or not the Buddha but Jesus

is in this building [clears throat]
teaching a crowd of people inside this
building and some some other people
break a hole in the roof and lower the
sick person down on ropes just so Jesus
can heal them.

And the Buddha could predicted that
that's not good. If if people are going
to come to monks, they should come for
dharma. They should come for spiritual
guidance and not for getting cured of a
disease or to have their fort for
fortune told or to have these omens or
dreams interpreted, that kind of thing.
So that's that's one reason. But another
reason is it's just a distraction

because it's not helpful for you to
become enlightened. It's it's just like
this sidetrack like politics
or even I mean yeah let's just leave it
at that. I mean it's just not domic.
It's it just is does not help you to
become enlightened at least not from the
the ancient Indian Buddhist point of
view that being able to interpret dreams
I mean it can be useful sometimes and
sometimes a dream is just you know you
can interpret it as this symbolic thing
that has a clear me message and that's
fine but to be like studying up on it
reading books on it and then like going
out like palistry that's another one in
in Burma there's a lot of monks who do

palistry they'll read your palm and tell
tell you all this stuff that you know is
I mean it's sort of like the the the uh
horoscopes in the newspaper when I was a
kid you know

there's like the Monty Python sketch
you know there this these ladies are
reading their their horoscope in the
newspapers and it's you are a
prehistoric reptile 25 feet long with
six inch fangs and you wear spectacles
and the woman who's wearing glasses like
that's uncanny about the spectacles
I do think that most palistry and and
like numerology and so forth is along
those lines

more miss than hit, but the hits are like get latched on to. It's like that's that's that's big that's a big deal.

So getting back to the question, it always takes me 20 times as long to answer the question as to read the question

[snorts] for some reason.

[clears throat]

But yeah, I mean, one reason why monks aren't supposed to be paying attention to fortuneelling and and astrology and and reading or like uh interpreting omens, that kind of thing, is because you want lay people coming to you for dharma and not for fortuneelling and omens and dream

interpretations, that kind of thing. But also, it's just a sidetrack that is not conducive to enlightenment.

So monks should be studying how to become enlightened and not how to interpret dreams or how to figure out the numbers of your birth date to determine what your future is going to be or you know the position of Jupiter how that how that influences your personality. This kind of stuff is just irrelevant.

Just reduce your desires and that will reduce your suffering to do good, refrain from doing evil and purify the mind and numerology and

astrology and and dream interpretation
and interpretation of omens and all that
just doesn't is not part of the equation
there.

So I'm just going to move on to the
sabotur's last question. He says,

"Lastly, because it is his last
question,

please give your views on Ram Bomb John
if I spelled it right." And I have no
idea who Rahm Bomb John is. I've never
heard of any Rahm Bomb John in my life.

Um, I mean, I've heard of Ram Doss,
you know, that and that Rahm Doss, but
Doss does not resemble Bomb John. So, I
assume that's not who he's talking
about. Also, I remember there was a a

person called Dafrey John who was one of these supposed enlightened beings, you know, sort of like an encarola type or kind of a [clears throat] I don't know, Andrew Cohen type, you know, these people or an Osho type who was kind of a cult leader or something. At least he was a sort of a Hinduistic spiritual teacher back in like the 70s and 80s if I remember correctly. Dafree John. Then he changed it to Bubba Free John after maybe you know he was kind of less keen on trying to pass himself off as an enlightened being or something for whatever reason.

But Ram Bam John no clue whatsoever.

This is the first time I've ever heard of him. So, I really don't have anything to say. I don't have any views on Rahm Bomb John.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Raphael.

And I may have to look at something in order to answer this question. Says,

Raphael says, "Can you do the test and share your results?" And this was on

Discord. I'm going to Discord even

though you can't see me doing it. Okay.

It's the philosopher personality test.

And the philosopher personality test um

just asks you a bunch of questions and

you answer them, you know, as truthfully

as you can manage. And then it tells you

of eight famous philosophers which one
you resemble the most closely. And so
let's just go here to Discord again. And
the uh the eight philosophers were
Aristotle, Epicurus, Kant, Dioynes,
Plato, Hume, and Nietzsche.

And let's see here.

Okay. And so of those those eight,
somewhat surprisingly,

I I had like an 85% match with Epicurus.

And I've never really studied Epicurus
much. He was just kind of a secular
philosopher with a relatively benign
philosophy of, you know, there are gods,
but they don't really care about us.

They've got their own realm, and they

just pretty much stay there. And Epicurus was largely materialistic, which doesn't match me very well. And he just had this simple sort of ethic of just live a simple life. Simple pleasures are the best pleasures, that kind of thing.

Um, kind of surprisingly, I was only a 60% match with David Hume, who is uh, one of my philosophical heroes. Only a 50% match with Dioynes. Partly because I'm much less inclined than Dioynes, to just blurt out offensive statements just for the fun of it or just for the sake of principle or whatever. Although it's not surprising to me at all that I most I least resemble Nietzsche

because I'm really I really don't have a
a high regard for Nichza. There are some
people who do and that's fine. You know,
different different temperaments,
different personality types, so forth,
but I mean Nze, I just was not much
inclined to [clears throat] be impressed
by his philosophy. And part of that was
just I just did not like his writing
style. his writing style was just too
like emotive and poetic and touchyfey
for me. I mean, I I prefer somebody like
David Hume who just explains things
simply and clearly and succinctly.
And so, I'm glad that at least I had a
60% match with David Hume. I'm not sure

why. I mean, I don't think that the the test was entirely reliable. like I was a fairly good match with Aristotle and I got really very little use for Aristotle.

I think I more closely resembled Aristotle than David Hume which [clears throat] I took a little bit of umbrage to.

Anyways,

yeah, I think the person I most closely resembled was Epicurus for whatever reason.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "If there is no free will, all of my karma is determined. It

would also be determined based off of factors outside of my control whether or not I would walk the eight-fold noble path. How is this not fatalism?" Well, the thing is the Buddha rejected fatalism. Like the Ajivakas were strict determinists. You had like 84,000 lives. you know, the the analogy or the simile was a ball of string. You know, you hold on to the the the loose end and you just kind of throw the ball and it just keeps rolling and rolling and rolling until it's just reaches the end of the ball of string and you just got this long line of string. And that was how the Ajivakas according to the Buddhists interpreted

like how rebirth happens that you know
you just inevitably have these 84,000
lives and there's no free will
whatsoever and that's it after you get
the 84,000th life
you're done. You you're enlightened.
And the Buddha rejected that. the fact
is he said that I mean this kind of
wrong view can can result in in hell
even that I'm not so sure about just to
believe a philosophical doctrine like
that I'm not so sure that that would
qualify a person for hell so I'm I'm
somewhat skeptical that the Buddha
actually said that it could just be a
little bit of religious pmics going on
in ancient India that got into the texts

because the poly texts portray all non Buddhist philosophers especially if they're not brah commons as just bungling fools.

So I I consider that to be a kind of religious propaganda going on. But still determinism, strict determinism is rejected. Like absolute free will is rejected. In the anatal, which is allegedly the Buddha's second discourse after his enlightenment, he said with regard to any of the five condas, you cannot say let it be this way, let it not be that way, and have it reliably happen. You do not have complete control over any of the five condas and that

includes will. Sankara is essentially
our karma and we don't have complete
control over that either. So
it's it's kind of a dilemma. It seems
like the two alternatives of free will
and determinism are both rejected in
Buddhism which leaves a kind of paradox.
And I do think that the answer may be a
kind of paradox, which I got the idea
from a book called The Trickster in the
Paranormal by George P. Hansen, who who
mentions in one of his chapters in this
book, well worth reading, by the way,
that like when you're meditating, you
become self-referential. You're you're
observing your own mind. You're
observing your own mental states. And

even the average person that has
self-consciousness,
being self-conscious is a kind of
self-reference.

And like in um goal's theorem
when a statement becomes
self-referential it can become
paradoxical like the statement this
statement is false
that statement this statement is false
is neither true nor false because if
it's true it's false and if it's false
it's true.

So, I mean, it requires self-reference
to produce this kind of paradox that
just kind of shatters rules of logic.

And so it may be that self-reference in the human mind, especially when it's intensified through like meditation, mindfulness, wisdom, that [clears throat] it creates this paradox that can somehow allow for something resembling free will to occur. Even though free will logically should be impossible, still like Aristotilian laws of thought, everything has to be either A or not A. So any statement has to be either true or false. But once you get in that self-reference like this statement is false, the Arisetilian laws of thought explode. It just it can't deal with it. So it could be that being

self-conscious,
self-referential, you know, the mind
like perceiving itself or certain
aspects of itself can result in this
paradoxical state that allows for
something along the lines of free will
to occur.

But I do admit that free will should be
logically impossible. Either something
has a cause or it doesn't have a cause.
it has a cause that is determined and
not free. But if it doesn't have a
cause, it happens at random.

And that's could be called freedom, but
it's it'd be more like an epileptic
seizure than making free choices.

[snorts]

So, let's see. Did I answer the question? That is the question.

If there is no free will and all of my karma is determined, it would also be determined based off of factors outside of my control whether or not I would walk the original eight-fold noble path. How is this not fatalism? Yeah, fatalism is rejected too.

So it's a paradox. I mean in Islam and the only religion I I can think of aside from the extinct Ajivaka religion where they just flatly reject free will as a general rule would be Islam where I mean Allah God somehow has free will but nobody else does because Gala Allah I

just said Gala probably God and Allah
combined

Allah is literally according to Muslims
omnipotent. All power is with Allah. So
anything that we do or not do, it's all
has to be the will of God. So to the
Muslims, [clears throat] they they have
this weird situation that's I mean right
there in the Quran that if you decide to
be a Muslim, that's God's will. If you
decide not to be a Muslim, that's also
God's will. But then it's also God's
will that you go to hell for not being a
Muslim.

So at least they they fess up to it.

There's a lot of stuff that Muslims fess

up to that's kind of embarrassing if you really examine it like the lifestyle of Muhammad for example. But we don't need to go there at all because this question is about free will and determinism.

And yeah, my best answer is that it's the self-referential nature of the human mind

um creates this paradoxical self-reference

which then can allow something along the lines of free will to like come in through the cracks.

And I might as well throw in that Raman Maharshi

used to say that the only free will we have is the choice whether or not to be

mindful.

And the more mindful you are, the wiser you are, the more choices you've got.

But for the most part, we are pretty much

Yeah, it seems that determinism is pretty much the rule and that we humans maybe have managed to be a minor exception to the rule,

[snorts]

I guess.

So, I'm just going to move on this question. This is from watermocker and watermocker says regarding dependent co-arising if nothing existed how was any karma created in order for samsara

to arise well this is assuming that
you're you're going that time is real
for starters and that you had this
beginning of time where nothing was
happening yet and that's not the way it
works I mean samsara is just infinite in
time and space in it's just infinite
no beginning and no end.

So there's always been some sorrow
and if you go with this hackneyed at this
point completely worn out theory or the
simile of the block of marble you know
you got the block of marble which
represents the absolute and contained
within that stat or that that block of
marble is every possible statue it's
already in there every single molecule

is already right in the exact place
you just have to use your imagination to
separate out the extraneous rock.

And so I mean that block of marble which
contains all possibilities has contained
all possibilities always.

No beginning and no end to those
imaginary statues. And we are some of
those imaginary statues
or you can say they're virtual statues
conditionally real.

But there's no beginning to that. It's
always been this way. And it's
[clears throat]

to some degree that caused me some
like mild depression maybe when I was a

monk living out in the forest in Burma
when I realized that I mean even even
even if you go with Einsteinian physics
with time being the fourth dimension
that still after you become enlightened
the unenlightened suffering you is still
real you know it's still there just
behind you
temporally speaking

And all the statues, including every
possible version of a miserable, messed
up you, is always going to be in there.
It's just a matter of transcending it.
You don't annihilate it. You can't
annihilate some particular virtual
statue contained in a block of stone.
All you can do is just stop imagining

it, but it's still going to be in there.
You just don't identify with it. You
know, you just transcend it. You just
start thinking in terms of this block of
stone or just stone, pure stone
and then you see all the different
statues around you. It's all just stone,
stone, stone, stone, stone.

[snorts]

So

let's see watermark. Did I answer the
question? If nothing existed, how was
any karma created in order for some sar
to arise? No beginning and no end
either. Sorry to say.

And so I guess I'm just going to move on

to Watermacher's next question. In that vein, how did Mara come to be? And it's the same answer. I mean, every statue has always been in that block of stone, including every possible statue of Mara, who is like the Buddhist devil. He's more sophisticated than the or he's more sophisticated than the the Christian devil because he's [clears throat] not just the god of of evil. so to speak. He's the god of good and evil. He's the god of samsara. You know, there's like this metaphor or simile in the poly text of Brahma who is sort of considered to be the creator god in to the the vadic brahinss. He's he's resting in the palm of Mara's hand because

Mara is essentially the god of samsara and he lives in a heaven realm, not in hell.

So if Mara can't get you to be bad, he'll get you to be good. Because either way, you're just creating more karma that keeps you ensnared in some sorrow.

The main thing he's trying to stop people from doing is not doing good.

It's from bailing out of the system by becoming enlightened.

So Mara's always been there along with everything else.

And I'm just going to move on to

Watermarcher's third question. He says,

"I'm living in Indonesia for a year and

I assume you have some experience with squat toilets. Any tips and tricks for a Westerner using a Southeast Asian toilet?"

Gosh, I mean, it seems pretty self-evident. You know, it's it's like not like it's complicated piece of equipment there. you just squat over it and do your business and then presumably wipe

or like in Burma, I mean wiping with paper is something that you don't do.

And and according to the ancient rules of monastic discipline for monks, you don't use toilet paper. First, you use a stick. It's uh gnudan is the Burmese word for it. Just a stick. And if it's

got a little bit of bark on it, that's good because it it's got more traction. And then after that, you rinse with water. And that's the way people have been like cleaning their butts in like South Asia, Southeast Asia for thousands of years because apparently in the Indis Valley civilization they they did the same thing. They they rinsed with water based on archaeological investigation of ancient outhouses, I guess.

>> [sighs]

>> So yeah, I mean I worked on Japanese ships back in the 1980s and most of those had squat toilets too. So even in Japan up until recently there have been

squat toilets. It's just kind of you just squat down over the hole and I mean let nature take its course and then you use whatever whatever means is available to rinse the narrow place or wipe or clean the narrow place and then you get up and you go out and wash your hands like a good boy.

Um, I mean I remember there's one monastery. This is I mean those of you who are squeamish about certain subjects might want to just fast forward past this part, but I I did live at this the one monastery I lived at longer than any other place in Burma.

Onebo do one wildlife refuge monastery.

I had this outhouse there and you had to

listen for this sound like soup when
when you took a dump because that meant
that it was sliding off the end of the
pipe into the into the ces pit. And if
you didn't hear that soup, that meant it
was still in the in the tube and you had
to rinse it down to the water.

Otherwise, it was just going to dry
there and plug up the tube. And when
that happens, it's not good at all. So,
I mean, it it's an outhouse byoutouse
basis with regard to stuff like that.

>> [sighs]

>> Be careful of snakes, I guess. I mean,
if it's like a forest kind of outhouse,
you definitely want to look behind the

water pot and look around before just walking in there. Cuz I remember one time it was it was the day after my the only other monk who lived at this monastery, one bo monastery is the same outhouse I'm referring to. I referred to just a few minutes ago. He was bitten by a cobra and died. It was the day of his cremation. I go to the outhouse. I open the door and there's a big Russell's viper just coiled up right next to the water pot. It wasn't the same snake that bit old Unanda. He was bitten by a cobra, I'm pretty sure.

But [clears throat]

you got to be careful about that kind of stuff.

And you're not a monk, so you don't have to worry about all the rules. There's several rules regarding using an outhouse that monks are supposed to follow. No loud grunting, for example. Don't throw the butt wiping stick into the ces pit.

Take your shoes off and your upper robe before going in.

But that would be just a matter of local etiquette. I suppose you'd have to be cognizant of, you know, what the the standard tradition is for how to use outhouses wherever you're going. I mean, if you're just living in Indonesia using your own bathroom, then you can do as

you please, I suppose. But still, you should definitely rinse or wipe and then wash your hands afterwards.

But, but using water works better than toilet paper, I have to admit. I mean, feces is water soluble. It rinses away way easier than than wiping with paper does. It's just that of course then you you got like a a narrow place that is rather wet.

But if you're just wearing like a saron with no underpants, which is what monks do in Asia, it's not a problem and it works better than paper.

In fact, uh in some Asian countries, like in Thailand, sometimes you'll have like a spray gun like like kitchen sinks

often have in the west. You'll have one of those right next to the toilet. You just use that to to spray. No toilet paper required.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> Anyways, I'm just moving on. Next question.

This is from Stellar Supreme, still formerly known as Liberland, and he's asking questions on behalf of Siovak and Cipad Zena. So, we got more Siovak and Cipad Zena questions here. Two more. So, Sio has not transgressed by asking a fourth question, not even indirectly through somebody else. So [snorts] anyways, Seio Zedina through

Liberland,

also known as Stellar Supreme asks, "If mystical experiences are states where thinking is gone and as a result, you become more aware, then does a toddler or child who can't think yet or even animals count as being in mystical states?" Not exactly. I mean it could be a relatively mild mystical state but I mean a mystical state isn't just not thinking in words. It's not perceiving. A mystical state is you are either not perceiving. You're still wide awake and not like thinking or perceiving. I mean at least it's it's so attenuated that you're getting a glimpse of what it's like if if you're wide awake and not

perceiving anything. you know, there's gradations of mystical states.

So, in order to have a real like a deep mystical state, like what a Catholic would call high contemplation, it's not just that you're not thinking in words anymore. You're not like imagining pictures, anything like that either.

So yeah, a a toddler or a child who can't think yet in words still they're perceiving, you know, they're still assuming this the world that they are perceiving all these objects and so forth are reality which means they're still stuck in some sorrow.

animals maybe cuz like Echartol says you know that all animals except for a few domesticated ones that have become crazy through interacting with humans are enlightened in a sense but I think from his point of view it's just that they're in the present moment they're not thinking about the future not thinking about the past they're just right there in the present moment even though they're still enshelved in perception which is some sorrow

so

um I mean there have been people who thought that small children are closer to enlightenment In and a way they are just like a cow is in some ways closer

to enlightenment than a human. You know, they've their mind isn't as big as ours. So, it can't hold as much delusion as ours can. It's just that for a cow, it's closer to enlightenment, but in a sense, enlightenment is behind it and it's going to have to keep going forwards to, you know, like transcend um or like outgrow, you know, has to run its course.

One analogy that Rahm Doss gives is like the hands on an old analog clock where it's like midnight is the absolute and then it's like a a being somehow arises from the the unmanifest absolute. And of course they're closer to 12, but they

got to go all the way around. When they get to six, they start their return home, so to speak, until they get back to midnight again.

So, a kid, a child, I mean, in in a way, you could say they're like at 3:00. So, they're they're closer to an adult at 6:00, let's say, but still they've got to still come full circle. So, they're still farther away. And there is the sutra in in one of the one of the pseudapiticas,

one [snorts] of the uh nikayas, I should say.

that I mean it deals with the issue is a baby enlightened and the baby is not enlightened partly because they still

have anusas or latent tendencies. They still have latent karmic tendencies that just can't come to the surface yet because you know it's like the the perceptual system of the of the baby isn't fully formed yet. That kind of thing. The nervous system isn't fully worked out yet. And in a way or like also Wordsworth, one of the greatest uh one of the great giants of English literature that nobody reads anymore. William Wordsworth, he had this famous ode intimations of immortality talking about how little children in a way are closer to enlightenment because sort of like Jesus says they're seeing

everything like a little child. You know, it's like they're seeing everything for the first time.

When an adult sees a dandelion, they think it's just a weed. It's a dandelion. And, you know, it's like they stop even like really paying attention to that dandelion. They just, you know, it's just been labeled. They deal with the label and and, you know, they don't give it a second thought other than maybe a little bit of mild irritation if the dandelion is in is in their own yard. Whereas a little kid sees that dandelion as though seeing a a flower for the first time and they might think it's beautiful. you know, they might

just be like enraptured by this this
dandelion. You know, they might go out
and pick a handful of dandelions to to
give to mommy and that kind of thing.
And the adults will think that's cute.
You know, the child is so naive. It
thinks dandelions are pretty flowers.
But really, I mean, if you look at
dandelions, some some dandelions are
kind of nice looking.

[clears throat]

But still,
in a way, you could say they're closer
to enlightenment in that their mind
doesn't hold as much delusion as the
average messed up adult. But still, they

have all these latent tendencies, all this karma that they haven't worked through yet. And they're going to have to get farther away from enlightenment before they're even in a position to start getting closer to it again.

But just not thinking in words is not a mystical state. It's either suppressing or transcending perception in general just symbolic thought in general which includes all like images and colors and all that.

So

section cipad zed's next question asked indirectly through stellar supreme still formerly known as liblam etc etc is as follows. What about 25 to 50% of the

population who have no inner monologue?

So this is just sort of like a correlary of the previous question and it's the same answer that even though they're not thinking in words all the time still they are thinking symbolically and perceptually they are still like in some sara because you know they see a tree and they just assume it's a real tree. you know, they think it's real. They're they're still just wallowing in in symbols instead of dealing with like actual capital R reality.

You know, they're still hypersamsaric if you please.

And so it'd be similar to the animal or

the child who is going to have to get farther away from the absolute before they can start getting closer again.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Gordon.

And Gordon says,

"Do actors and musicians go straight to hell after they die?" And there is a sutra where the Buddha is talking to an actor or some kind of entertainer. And the entertainer says that um you know it's his belief that entertainers go to the the realm of the laughing gods after they die because of all the the joy and happiness that they give to other people. Um and then the Buddha says no, you're going to hell. But it's this is

another one of those sutas where I mean I have to be a little bit skeptical that all actors and all musicians are going to go to hell. Some of them will presumably assuming that there is such places as hell, some kind of hell realms. I mean, it's really not that far of a stretch to consider that there are worse places than earth.

[clears throat]

But, uh, do actors and musicians go straight to hell after they die? I mean, the worst ones, the most like depraved, the evil ones, but I don't think that just being an actor or a musician is necessarily going to result in like a

lower realm.

And this, for some reason, I'm reminded of I remember years ago seeing this article in which the guy who played Freddy Krueger, I don't even remember the the movies. I never I never really like that kind of movie. But and those of you who are into horror movies know who Freddy Krueger was. The actor who played him is complaining that he's got like like these weird stalkers and stuff like really pestering him and just interfering with his peace of mind and so forth. And I remember at the time reading it's like what the hell do you expect? I mean you're playing this nightmarish demon entity

and I mean you're like poisoning people's minds with that kind of stuff. I mean, it's going to have karmic consequences.

So, people that that are like doing like the satanic death metal stuff or, you know, like playing murderers in slasher movies that are just like causing people nightmares at night. This kind of stuff. I mean, they're going to have worse karma than some relatively virtuous actor or musician. And there are a few of those who are, you know, just trying to uplift others, you know, like someone who does kons, you know, they're they're just like like playing sitar or tabla or

something while people are chanting the names of God, that kind of thing. I mean, that's a far cry from like screaming about Satan in some death metal song. if you can even call that kind of throat screechy screaming stuff singing or or for that matter like a lot of this rap and hip-hop stuff where you got these gangster guys bragging about all the women they abuse and the laws they break and all this kind of stuff. I mean that's like praising degeneracy and to some degree leading like young impressionable people astray. So that's I mean that's definitely a far cry from singing gospel music.

So yeah, I think there's a full spectrum

and I don't think that just being an actor or a musician is necessarily going to land you anywhere, heaven, hell, or anywhere in between. It's just your mental states and some actors and musicians have way worse mental states than other actors and musicians. I had one musician tell me that he I mean he never really made it big in show business because all the ones who make it really big in show business have to worship Baffomet.

I mean he was kind of a conspiracy theorist kind of guy. But he apparently had some kind of experience with that sort of thing I guess. And I mean when

[clears throat] people are like selling their soul to the devil figuratively or in their opinion literally in order to get you know fame and wealth and all that then that's a that's a whole different issue alto together and I will resist the urge to bring up Led Zeppelin in with regard to that and I guess I'm just going to go on to the next question.

I do consider Led Zeppelin to be the greatest rock band of all time. So, it's not like I'm totally have my mind poisoned against them.

Okay. Gordon's next question is as follows. I read that practicing monks have much lower rates of

Alzheimer's and dementia into old age.

Does your experience corroborate this?

Well, I don't really have enough of a sample size to determine whether it's

statistically significant or not. you

know, I can't really do the statistical analysis based on my own experience

because I really didn't interact with a lot of really ancient monks. But it

doesn't surprise me. I think that

probably practicing monks do have much

lower rates of Alzheimer's and dementia

into old age partly because they've

abused their bodies less or at least any

abuse that they have done of their

bodies was through asecicism. You know,

fasting and just enduring heat and diseases and so forth. But I mean, they haven't like rotted their brains with like processed chemicals as much or just, you know, vegetated in front of a TV set, that kind of thing. Or, you know, just squandered their lives with, you know, wallowing in sensuality, you know, considering that to be the highest goal, that kind of thing. And so, they've they've made less bad karma. They've lived kind of a simpler, cleaner, purer kind of life that has helped to preserve their system. One of the reasons why I'm as healthy as I am while as old as I am is just the 30 years of following the straight and

narrow, so to speak.

And I mean, if you're really practicing meditation, then I mean, you're heightening your awareness, which would help to combat the loss of awareness through Alzheimer's, I would guess.

So it's good karma, clean living and uh also just exercising your mind in a wholesome way that would help to stave off dementia to a higher degree than living otherwise. I mean I have met a few monks that I remember meeting um in Seattle and also another old monk who was about the same age as him would guess and it was just the difference between night and day. Lummens who was

one of the most highly advanced
spiritually speaking monks I ever met. I
mean he was about 90 years old at the
time at least in his his 80s and he was
just wide awake. I mean he's just
looking right straight through you. He
was 100% there. Whereas the other monk
sitting next to him I mean he was just
pretty much vegetative and people would
have to yell into his ear to try and get
any point across. And still it wasn't
100% sure whether he even heard what
they were saying.

So

I mean was very advanced practitioner
whereas the other monk maybe was not so
much and that may have been a factor but

I would assume that there is some kind of yeah I I can acknowledge the the likelihood that there is some kind of statistical statistically significant correlation between you know living like a a simple virtuous was meditative lifestyle, contemplative lifestyle and not developing dementia in your old age. Just like there's probably a statistically significant correlation between not smoking and not getting lung cancer or not chewing tobacco and not getting jaw cancer. You know, it's some people they smoke until they're 90. No problem.

Like George Burns, he lived to be 100 years old. He's always had a cigar.

So there's always going to be outliers, but as a general statistical trend, yeah, I think I'm fine with that.

But again, I don't have enough experience with ancient monks to really have a large enough sample size to do any kind of statistical analysis.

My N is relatively low.

Well, for example, the old monk, he was in his mid 80s, I guess, when he was bitten by a cobra. And I mean, his eyesight was going. He had kind of like this blue haze over his eyes. His hearing was going, you had to yell. I mean, it was any of you who have read um

what is it? Nicholas Nickelby by Charles Dickens, you remember old Mrs. Slider skew where I mean, she would pretend to understand what you were saying because she was so hard of hearing that I mean she would be too embarrassed to admit that she keeps saying what what all the time. So, she would just kind of make up in her mind what you were saying and answer a question completely different from what you asked. Old Unandanda was like that. And so I mean his his eyesight and his hearing were going. His you know his sensory organs were deteriorating but still mentally you know you could have a reasonable

conversation with him so long as you talked loud enough that he could hear you

or yelled I should say.

But yes, I mean I would accept that pretty easily, but um I can't really provide the receipts really to prove it.

And so I'm just going to move on to Gordon's next question.

Would Nichze consider Buddhist ethics to be a type of slave morality? Um I don't really know enough about Nichza to know what he would say. It wouldn't surprise me. you know he was kind of going the opposite direction of of Buddhism you know sort of glorify the ego you know sort of the will to power all this kind

of stuff you know it's like you don't
try to transcend samsara like his
forerunner Schopenhauer was saying he was
it was like you just master samsara more
more of like an Alistair Crowley
approach

so I mean it wouldn't surprise me if he
just looked down his nose on Buddhist
ethics is just some whimpering slave
morality.

But like I said earlier in this Q&A, um,
of the the eight famous philosophers on
that test, I resembled Nietzsche the
least. And I I seem to recall in Burton
Russell's history of Western philosophy.
Well worth reading to anyone interested

in Western philosophy. Um, he has this imaginary conversation between Nietzsche and the Buddha, you know, like a debate. and he didn't understand the Buddha very well but still I mean even Bertin Russell had this idea that Nietzsche and the Buddha were kind of um diametrical opposites philosophically but again I've read very little Nietzsche I've read the antichrist and I have to admit that Min's introduction to the antichrist was more interesting to me largely just because he had a more straightforward simple writing style and I I started reading thus spait zarustra and got as far as the tightrope walker falling off the tightrope and breaking

his leg and I just wasn't getting enough out of it really to inspire me to continue reading at that point and I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Ruie and Ruie says perhaps a few words on how dooka is experienced by the wise. Well, wise people experience dooka too. Anyone who isn't fully enlightened experiences dooka and some would say even a fully enlightened being still experiences physical pain. Like the Buddha was experiencing racking pains right before his death and paribana. So that kind of dooka duka is physical pain that's just kind of universal. So

long as you have a physical body that's going to happen just in accordance with nature I guess. But let's just uh keep it down to dooka that is caused by desire and attachment.

[sighs]

So

how it's experienced by the wise I mean it would be more subtle.

Um a lot of it if if you're wise enough to be mindful of it then you can observe your own dooka mindfully. I used to do that a lot as a monk. Sometimes I still do. was like uh a standard example I would give is I lived in the hills in Burma for a while and when [clears throat] I moved into that

monastery, the abbot told me, "We've got electricity here 24/7." And I I was thinking, "No, that's that's not possible. Not in Burma. You're not going to have electricity 24/7 unless you're living in the same neighborhood as like the dictator. He has electricity 24/7. Nobody else does." And I was right. I mean, it would still go on and off at random. It's just that it would, you know, go off maybe for a half an hour at random and go back on again. That kind of thing. And so, anyways, it was up in [clears throat] the hills in the foothills of the Shannon Plateau, relatively, you know, 4,000 ft elevation

above sea level. And it gets cold there, especially in the wintertime. And so, I would have to heat my water to take a bath.

And so I get ready to start heating the water and the electricity would go off. And immediately, you know, I could just observe this irritation arising, this sort of grumbling about, you know, this idiots just cannot keep the electricity on. They're so incompetent, you know, just this kind of stuff, just grumbling. And I just be mindful of that. Just observe this. It's like, why am I unhappy? I want the electricity to work and it's not working. It's just a simple second noble truth. Desire is the cause

of all suffering. I am unhappy right now. I am irritated because I desire the electricity to be working, which is stupid because all the desire in the world for the electricity to start working isn't going to cause the electricity to come back on. And so I could just sit there or stand there and just observe my own foolishness working itself out through force of habit.

So I mean if a person is wise enough to be mindful, not fully enlightened but wise enough to be mindful, at least they can mindfully observe their own foolish desires causing the suffering. And in a way just by being mindful of the

unhappiness, you know, you're detaching from it. It's still there. It's just that you're not identified with it.

You're just observing it like an ichthologist observing a dead fish.

you know, at some point [clears throat] like anger or other forms of dooka. I mean, if you detach from it enough, it's still there, but it's it's sort of like a flashing red light. You know, it's it's in a way you've denatured it.

Although there never was philosopher who could endure the toothache patiently, as Shakespeare is said to have said. I don't know what play that would be in.

Ah so dooka uh by a wise person first of all it would be more subtle it wouldn't

be as extreme neither the happiness nor the unhappiness you know you'd be more smooth sailing than the like the the roller coaster ride of ecstasy misery ecstasy misery of say a teenager in love and then also if you're mindful even that like less extreme kind of duke Luca can be observed mindfully which helps to denature. It doesn't make it completely go away necessarily but still at least you can observe it and and understand it.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Ethiopian fake TIG. And we are getting down towards the bottom of

the scroll here. So this won't be much longer than two hours I'm pretty sure. Unless I just go off on this tangent talking about, I don't know, turtles or something,

but I will resist the urge. Ethiopian fake TIG says,

"While you were in Burma, you said you never stopped liking girls once you disroed. Was there a need to go after Asian girls since you spent most of your time around Asians?"

Not really. No. I mean after I I

[clears throat] mean once I disroed I was back in America again dealing uh I mean there were still Burmese ladies at the monastery but one thing about

Burmese women is they're very demure
very modest and especially around monks
you know it's the Buddhist like the
devoutly Buddhist ones that I'd be
interacting with you know just very
demure very passive you know they're not
flirting with you or anything there are
a few times in Burma
village girls might flirt with me a
little bit just in the hopes that, you
know, I might not be a monk my entire
life and that I might just take her back
to America with me, that kind of thing.
There's a lot of that in in Asia.
But as a general rule, they're not
dangerous.

And also just the size difference
and also marrying a Burmese village
woman, a develop a devout Burmese
Buddhist woman would be sort of like a
compromise. You know, it'd be almost
like marrying a nun,
you know? It's like you you have a a
beer and she starts crying, that kind of
thing.

So

yeah, it was there's like the culture
barrier and there was to some degree
like the the size difference
and

yeah, I I I have to admit that I did
appreciate Southeast Asian women um more
after living in Burma for a while than

before because I mean they're they're graceful, you know, it's like carrying pots full of water on their head causes them to just glide when they walk, a lot of them anyway. And also, I mean, after [clears throat] living in Burma and being exposed to tiny, demure, dainty, graceful Burmese women, then I come back to America, just visiting my parents or whatever, and it did seem just by comparison that American women were big, loud, and clumsy. you know, they weren't as dainty and demure. Although overall, I do consider like European the European ethnicity of human female

to be the most attractive. Partly just I mean partly because there's like this instinctive desire to have a mate that is similar to your own phenotype just for complex genetic evolutionary reasons. But also there's just more variety. Different hair colors, different eye colors, different builds, you know, different facial shapes. You know, it's just, you know, there's something for everybody, so to speak. Unless maybe you're gay. So, let's see. Let's Did I answer the question? Sometimes I have to read the whole question over again just to make sure I answered the question because I [clears throat] have this tendency to uh

digress if you haven't noticed. Still haven't mentioned turtles yet though.

Okay. So, was [clears throat] there a need to go after Asian girls since you spent most of your time around Asians?

No, not really. I mean, I can I had more of an appreciation for Asian girls just from living amongst Asian people for more than 20 years, pretty much 30 years.

Um,

but still I could I realized that I would just fit better with a western woman despite I mean western women have their good points and bad points.

Everybody has their good points and bad

points, you I mean, the just the
demure

of of an Asian woman, you know, it has
its advantages when Western women aren't
nearly as demure
as Southeast Asian Buddhist village
women.

But all in all, I'm better off with a
woman of my own my own people, so to
speak.

And I'm just going to move on to
Ethiopian fake Tig's next question.

>> [clears throat]

>> There is a recent German monk by the
name of Biku Analio. He said that all
the texts were written 200 years after
the Buddha's death and that we don't

really know what kind of meditation he did or what he really said. Thoughts on this? Um well, I think that the texts were written down technically at least. What was it? The the fourth council. Yeah, I think it was the fourth council was the the council in Sri Lanka I think son Mona [clears throat] that decided that the the text should be written down. It was the the ancient Indian tradition that it's all memorized that sacred scriptures are just memorized by heart. But in times of persecution especially when when like the monks who have memorized things they get killed off or

or whatever that it's better just to write it down like Confucius say record written in palist ink is better than most retentive memory.

So that would be like 500 years after the time of the Buddha. Um I'm not sure if Biku and Alio is what exactly [clears throat] he's referring to. I mean there were some texts that were written down before then. They have found like um old fragments of Buddhist texts in like central Asia that may predate

um the the terra Buddhist fourth council.

um whether that was but I mean he's saying all the texts were written 200

years after the Buddha's death. Um it may be that what he means is that it was just sort of the the typica was finalized that texts stopped being added 200 years after the Buddha's death. But even that isn't true. So I'm not exactly sure where he came up with this 200 years. Um but let's just let's just skip the 200 years and continue. He says that we don't really know what kind of meditation the Buddha did or what he really said. Yeah, we can't be 100% sure.

All you can do is just um do a little bit of detective work and just go with what seems to be the most likely. I

mean, there's there's different approaches. Like the average Burmese Buddhist just considers everything in Titika to be 100% true. It's just gospel truth. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses look at the Bible. It's all got to be true. In fact, um you know, it's there's sort of a further step that the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Burmese Buddhists take in that even the commentaries are infallible. With the Jehovah's Witnesses, it's those books that they always have with them to look into and so they can answer questions from the book of Jehovah's Witness commentary essentially. And then the Burmese scholars actually consider the

commentaries to be more authoritative than the text themselves. Although they wouldn't admit to this simply because the interpretation of the text given in the commentary is considered to be true. So if the Buddha says blue but the commentary says if the Buddhist when the Buddha said blue he really meant red without the commentary you wouldn't know that when he said blue he really meant red. That's pretty much the attitude taken by like traditionalist Burmese Buddhist scholars that the commentaries are actually more authoritative than the texts themselves, the poly tip itself. But I mean, yeah, the Buddha was almost

prehistoric. There's not a whole lot of like real history other than just the texts themselves

that were handed down orally for a few centuries before they were written down and finalized in the form we see them today.

So yeah, we don't know what for sure what kind of meditation the Buddha did or what he really said. But

I mean you can look at the Pali texts which are like the oldest complete version of the teachings of Buddha that we still have unless they dig up something you know underground and find something older. But the Pali texts are the oldest version of Buddhism we have.

And you can like use like critical scholarship. You know, it's like the same techniques that Bible scholars have used with regard to the Bible to determine, you know, what's the most ancient and know what's most likely to be authentic and what is a forgery that was added later like so many of those epistles of Paul that aren't really by Paul.

So you can do that kind of stuff to the poly texts and you you can't reach 100% certainty, but still you can weed out a lot of the obvious deadwood, the talking animal stories and all this kind of stuff. The Buddha just grandiosely

bragging about how wonderful he is and how people should worship him and just, you know, flying up into the air and spraying fire out of one side and water out of the other and then switching it up and spraying the fire and water out of the other side just to impress some brahinss. this kind of stuff. I mean, fighting fire breathing dragons.

I mean, you can weed out that kind of stuff. You can weed out um texts that aren't common to all the earlier schools so that you get down to like the core texts and a lot of western monks, you know, they reject half the typica, including the entire abidama pitica

because only the terraodins had the terra abidama. Other schools of Buddhism either had no abidama at all or else they had a different kind of abidama. So [clears throat] you can get down to the core text which is about half and then you can start weeding out like the the talking animal stories and the fire breathing dragons and the Buddha bragging grandiosely telling people they should worship him and all this kind of stuff. And then you get down to a a smaller and smaller nucleus of stuff that is getting closer and closer to what the Buddha originally taught. And then you get a better idea as to what he

likely taught. You get back to like the atakawaga of the suta and you're getting fairly close to what the Buddha was really teaching in my opinion.

So

let's see. [clears throat and cough]

Yeah, I mean you just have to it's educated guesses unless you just want to be motivated by faith and accept all of it.

So you can adopt sort of a medieval Catholic approach to Buddhist texts and just believe what you're told which technically goes against the sutas you know like the the kalama suta saying don't believe something just because it's a venerated tradition don't believe

something just out of respect for your
teacher don't believe something just
because it seems like it ought to be
true

and you go to the walk up the sunnipa is
just don't believe anything.

[sighs]

So, I'm not exactly sure what the German
monk Biku Analio was really getting at.
I'm not really well acquainted with Biku
Analio.

So, whether he was saying this just
really just as an objective fact or
whether he was using that as a
justification for something, I really
don't know. But I mean it's aside from

the 200 years thing. I don't know where he got that that figure of 200 200 years. But yeah, I mean we can't know for sure.

I mean we can't know anything for sure.

We can't know 100% for sure what happened yesterday. It may be that the entire universe was created half an hour ago by a deity with a weird sense of humor and he just implanted memories into us of stuff that didn't happen.

We can't be sure.

So there always has to be a certain amount of skepticism involved.

Skepticism in the the ancient sense, classical skepticism of just suspending judgment, just admitting that you can't

be sure. And then you have to but nevertheless, you have to go with some kind of worldview. You have to go with some kind of plan. And so you just come up with what seems plausible, what seems likely, and go with that as a working hypothesis.

And when the Buddha's teaching like mindfulness, it is pretty likely that you know just based on the emphasis mindfulness gets that he did teach some mindfulness. You know even the atakawaga is referring to that sort of thing. I mean the atawaga doesn't give detailed instructions on how to meditate but at least it's saying you know you're aware

of what like you're you're mindful. You stretch forth your arm. You're aware of stretching forth your arm. That kind of thing.

saga sometimes that is called.

So yeah, I I have to aside from the the figure of 200 years, I don't know where he came up with that. I do have to admit that you can't really know for 100% 100% sure what the Buddha taught or what Jesus taught for that matter.

We don't know. I mean, we we can make educated guesses and so it helps to use some intelligence, some critical thought, some detective work to try to, you know, at least weed out the deadwood and get to a like a a more solid nucleus

of at least what is probably close to what the Buddha taught.

And I suppose I should just move on.

Next question also from Ethiopian fake TIG.

He says, "On your last Q&A, you said the Buddha went back to ordain his son, but on a PBS documentary starring the Dalai Lama, it said that the Buddha's tribe was taken out by another kingdom and that he was very sad afterwards." I assume that was the Buddha was very sad afterwards,

[clears throat]

which would be kind of odd for a fully enlightened being to feel. Anyways, uh

Ethiopian fake tig continues here and says, "Did this happen after he ordained his son perhaps?" Well, according to terraodan tradition, um the city state of Capilawatu was not destroyed and genocided until after the Buddhist party.

So um I mean PBS documentaries really are not authorities on Buddhism even if they got the Dalai Lama featured in the documentary. I mean he's going to be going with Tibetan tradition which may diverge considerably from terra tradition but I mean it's like watching a a a history documentary produced by CNN and I've done that and just I watched a documentary the other night.

It was like a made for TV documentary.
And even a person that is casually
wellinformed with regard to history can
see that they're saying stuff that is
just inaccurate, just objectively false,
stuff with regard to events in history,
that kind of thing. like CNN I think did
a documentary on the pope and the very
first episode it's it's it's making
these claims about you know the bishop
of Rome during the Roman Empire and so
forth that were just where they came up
with it I don't know it's just like
people that were not like real
authorities on the subject were just you
know getting a superficial understanding

of things which included some
misunderstandings of things and just
making a documentary out of

So yeah, the city state of Capilawatu,
which [clears throat] was the Buddha's
homeland,

it was wiped out, pretty much genocided
by it might have been King Ajata Satu,
but um it was after the Buddhist party
at least according to Terraata Buddhist
tradition. I mean the Buddha did not
live to see the destruction of his own
homeland.

at least according to Terra Buddhist
tradition and even if he did um I don't
think he was very sad afterwards
um at least not from a orthodox teraba

Buddhist position a fully enlightened
being would not be sad
so

yeah it was definitely after he ordained
his son Rahula and it was long after
that at least according to Theravada
Buddhist tradition I don't know what the
Dalai Lama's Tibetan tradition would say
about it

[clears throat] but I do think that
Theravada tradition is an older tradition
with maybe a little more footing in
actual history than you know a later
like a Mahayana tradition of what
happened in ancient India
and so I'm just moving on next question

this is from gruesome revilement

And Gruesome says, "What are the

categories of comma? I've heard you

mention good comma and bad comma before

using air quotes

for the words good and bad." I believe

I've also heard you say skillful and

unskillful. What is the correct or most

helpful way to think about different

kinds of comma? Sorry if this is a

newbie question. Thanks for the videos.

Well, according to according [snorts] to

like pi the poly language terra Buddhist

philosophy you mainly have two kinds of

kama kusula kama and akusakama

like in Burmese that becomes kudo and

akudo

kusulakama literally means skillful
ausula or kusakama literally means
skillful action akusakama literally
means unskillful action so good and bad.

[clears throat] They're not as
fundamental to Buddhist ethics as just
what is skillful and what is unskillful.

Skillful takes you closer to
enlightenment. Unskillful takes you
farther away from enlightenment.

Skillful reduces your desires and
attachments. Unskillfulness increases
your desires and attachment. But using
skillful and unskillful in ethics in
modern English,

it's it's kind of awkward maybe, you

know, it's it's just not as intuitive for an English-speaking modern person than an ancient Indian philosopher. And so sometimes it's kus and akusala are interpreted or rendered in English as wholesome and unwholesome.

But then also I mean just in common parlance you just say good karma bad karma but really in the original Pali it's kusakama

skillful action and akusakama

unskillful action and I'm pretty sure there is no neutral karma.

Karma is either going to be

like it's going to be a kind of momentum to your life like your psychic momentum.

It's going to change your psychic

momentum or reinforce your psychic
momentum um or deinforce your psychic
momentum. So, it's going to have some
kind of effect one way or the other.

So neutral karma that doesn't have any
effect is is not a thing. I'm pretty
sure it's either kusla or ausula.

Literally skillful or unskillful. A
little less literally wholesome or unh
wholesome and way less literally good
and bad. But I mean that's not all the
categories of kama. There is lots of
categories of kama. And I just happen to
have

Nyana Tiloka's Buddhist dictionary here
which is well worth having to anybody

who is a student of Terra Buddhism. And so you look under karma because they use the English word because [clears throat] karma is an English word. Let's see.

Yeah, it divides. See [clears throat] here the very first thing it says action correctly speaking denotes the wholesome and unh wholesome volitions kusla and unkusla

and their competent mental mental factors causing rebirth and shaping the destiny of beings. So according to nyanotila really there are only wholesome and unh wholesome. There is no neutral karma

unless Yeah. Yeah. Forget that. There is no there's no unless. But if you keep

going with this, you find that there's
other um

let's see, like there's the tenfold
wholesome and unh wholesome course of
action.

Um the five hellish crimes with
immediate result that would be karmic
here. He's got there's three kinds of
karma. Karma ripening during this
lifetime which is da dama vania.

You've got karma ripening in the next
birth which isapa

and then you've got karma ripening in
later births which is

and then those are divided into two

kinds. You've got um let's see here. If

if they with [clears throat] regard to karma that's going to have its fruition in this life, karma that's going to have its fruition in the next life and karma that's going to have its fruition in a life after that. Then you've got the karma that actually leads to this fruition. And then you've got what is called aosi karma or like has been karma that just the conditions weren't ripe for that to happen. And so it just it just expires. It has like an expiration date. Some comma has an expiration date, so to speak. Other comma, it just fades out if the the conditions that would allow it to arise and reach fruition just don't happen.

So maybe you have some kind of karma
that's going to cause you to be born as
a prince, a royal prince, but it's like
the waiting list for being reborn as a
royal prince is is long. And eventually
it's just there's no convenient
opportunity. There's not very many royal
princes anymore in this world. Not as
many as there used to be. And so just
the opportunity just doesn't arise,
doesn't arise, doesn't arise until
finally that karma just fades out. then
it would be called aosi comma or like
has been comma
let's see here yeah and then there's
just all these lists I mean you get into

technical terra Buddhist philosophy and they're going to analyze everything to death

especially like in uh abidama and the in the commentarial tradition so you've got regenerative regenerative or productive karma which is janaka kama you've got supportive or consolidating karma which is up tambaka kama comma. You've got counteractive or suppressive or frustrating karma which is let's see upa kama and then you've got destruction destructive or supplanting kama which is upaga or upachida kama etc etc and then there's just more lists of these different kinds of divisions but the main division the main categories of

kama for a gruesome revilement here are
cus and ausula kusula is skillful or
wholesome or good. Ausula is unskillful
or unh wholesome or bad. And the cusla
reduces your desires, reduces your
attachments, gets you closer to
enlightenment. And the ausula or unskal
comma does the opposite. Those that's
like the two main divisions you need to
worry about. You don't need to be
studying these lists of, you know, the
different
categories
of comma, like what their what their
effects are, what their conditions and
relations are, that kind of stuff. I

mean, you can just follow this go down the rabbit hole of just analyzing everything to death easily. If you get into like scholastic terravada where you've had monks with nothing better to do, you know that maybe they don't meditate very well. So they just dedicate their lives to scholarship and just analyzing and analyzing and analyzing and just writing commentaries and subcommentaries and sub subcommentaries just like categorizing and systematizing everything. I think the medieval Catholics did the same thing in Europe just analyze everything to death.

But

the word klethe and the spirit maketh
alive.

So you're better off with spirit than
than a letter. I mean you need a certain
amount of textual information to just
get you going in the right direction to
you know tell you how to meditate and
why you should meditate. But once you
learn that stuff the books aren't nearly
as important. I mean there's certainly
no more need to like study all these
various categories of comma than there
is to study
dream interpretation.

It's just a kind of distraction and some
monks will capitalize on that just

because they really don't meditate very well. They don't like meditation or some such. So they'll just say well I'm just going to go the scholarly route. And in Sri Lanka, getting back to the question uh a while back about Sri Lankan

Buddhism, there [clears throat] is a common belief in Sri Lanka that nobody can become enlightened anymore. So there's no point even trying. And so a lot of the monks would use that as a justification for not practicing much and just going the route of scholarship and studying the books.

So anyways, I'm moving on to the next question.

Let's see. Fred, the next question is

from Fred. Fred says,

"Can we really transcend some sorrow with a lizard brain in operation calling the emotional shots?"

And yeah, I think we can because the lizard brain, which is calling the emotional shots, I mean, you don't necessarily have to enslave yourself to that. You can detach from that. you can transcend the the lizard brain and just human nature in general. And again, we're talking at two different levels of reality. You've got this level of samsara with all this [__] going on and then through [clears throat] mindfulness and mysticism and detachment. I mean you

can just focus more on the block of marble than on the various statues or on any statue in particular or any group of statues in particular. So I mean [clears throat] from this point of view from from like the samsaric empirical point of view even an enlightened being is still going to have like the amidali in the brain you know the various like lizard emotional centers of the brain that are still functional. So, you know, certain mental states or emotions or whatever are still going to arise. It's just that the enlightened being is no longer identified with that. He's no longer enslaved to that. He has transcended

that level of reality. It's still kind of there, but it's just not the main focus anymore.

kind of like what I was saying about that um world's leading one of the world's leading authorities on obsessive compulsive disorder where you cure somebody of obsessive compulsive disorder. It doesn't mean that the urges like the like the compulsions and so forth just completely go away. They're still there. It's just you learn to detach and not react to it.

You don't identify with it more. It's not me. It's the OCD. And I think that just any kind of full enlightenment is

going to be along those lines. That unenlightened urges or just like human nature is still going to be there. It's just that you're you've transcended that. It's no longer you anymore. It's just nature taking its course.

That includes the lizard brain.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cyrus Frame. This is the last question, the very last one on this episode.

Cyrus Frame says, "When you were a monk, how did you guard the sense doors?"

Simple question. And guarding the sense doors is really emphasized in the poly text. The monk is supposed to guard the sense doors. And there's different ways

of doing it. [clears throat] One way of guarding the sense doors is you just go off into the forest and live in a cave. So you're guarding your the sense doors in that like like a mechanical way just by avoiding excess stimulation. You're staying out of town. You know, you're you're staying away from all this tumultuous like human interaction that can distract you and lead you away from practicing dharma correctly. So you just go alone like the horn of the rhinoceros. You go off and live in a forest, spend hours every day staring at the wall of a blank wall of a cave. or whatever it is.

So that would be like the the superficial mechanical way of guarding the sense doors is I mean you just remove yourself from society and just go out and live a very simple life with not a lot of distraction and stimulation.

Also [snorts] just being moral is a way of guarding the sense doors indirectly. you know, following all these precepts and just minimizing the amount of bad karma you generate or accus you generate that in a way is guarding the sense doors kind of defensively, preemptively by you're making less bad karma that's going to cause less like distraction and interruption and upheaval and so forth. But when you get to more advanced level,

guarding the sense doors, what you're doing partly is just being mindful, which is detaching yourself from everything you're experiencing. So that's a way of guarding the sense doors is through mindfulness where let's say [clears throat]

um a loud noise starts happening, a dog starts barking. If you're guarding the sense doors, it's just you're mindful of hearing. It's just like raw auditory data. You're not interpreting it. You're not wondering who the dog is. You know, whose dog is that? Why is the dog barking, you know? You're not going off on these chains of association. It's

just hearing, hearing, hearing. That is guarding the sense doors. That's one example of it anyway. And then if you get into like deep meditative states, then you're kind of tuning out.

Especially if you're doing samata meditation, you're tuning out you know what little stimulation is still out there and just focusing inwardly which is more radical guarding of the sense doors and that's just temporary because you can't be that way all the time.

Sometimes you've got to get up and move around. Got to go for alms around in the village. And in that case, you have to be very careful about guarding your sense doors because I mean going for

alms is one of the most stimulating experiences a monk has over the course of his day. A lot of the time it's like the most opportunity for [__] to happen. So, you know, you've got pretty girls walking around in the village sometimes, or you've got somebody putting something really disgusting into your bowl. Some little old lady puts cake into your bowl that's swarming with ants and her eyesight is not good enough. She doesn't see it. You know, she's just offering you this cake in good faith, but the ants found it before she did or before you got it. And it's or like you get a good [clears throat] piece of cake with

no ants on it. The very next lady just pours soup onto it. And it's like, great lady, you just poured soup all over my cake.

You know, it's so when you go for alms round, all of a sudden it's like relatively speaking, sensory overload. And so that is when it's very important.

I mean, you look downwards like when a monk is in public, he's supposed to be looking downwards at all times, unless there's some real need for it to look up.

So that's guarding the sense doors also. So you mean you're not checking out all the pretty girls, you know, and then you just accept your food with like

gratitude and a poker face. Even if someone with leprosy is offering food into your bowl, you're not cringing. They're offering something you just really can't stand, something disgusting into your bowl. I mean, you're not making faces.

It's just it's just visual stimuli. I mean, if you're really being mindful, you're just [clears throat] looking down, you know, accepting the food attentively, but you're not critiquing it, you know, you're not, you don't have this running commentary going. And that's what guarding the sense doors really amounts to at that level anyway

is you're just being mindful and it's like sensory data. In the scene, there is only the scene. In the herd, there is only the herd. In the felt, there is only the felt, etc.

You know, it's not like you're critiquing stuff, criticizing, have any kind of running dialogue going, any kind of commentary going on that's just kind of taking you away from the present moment.

That also is guarding the sense doors.

And that's in a way it's it's one of the main ways of guarding the sense doors that are referred to in the sutas where you're just not like following along any kind of stimulus. You know, it's the

stimulus isn't like distracting you from just being right here, right now in the present moment and just accepting all these stimuli as just sensory stimuli rather than at that dog is barking and it's bugging me. is just sensory stimuli that is guarding the sense doors. It's like protecting you from making aulakama and and just like wallowing in samsara, you know. It's it's like the unenlightened minds one of its best tools for just not getting just sucked into samsara and completely distracted and led astray by it.

And that's it. And my throat is pretty

much hash right now.

But that's all right, [clears throat]
too.

It's just kind of a wet, gray, rainy
day. And somehow [clears throat] wet,
gray, rainy days cause scratchier
throats than usual, I think.

But like I should always say at the
beginning and pretty much never do, if
you have any questions you think I can
answer about Dharma, Dharma, Buddhism,
Terraata Buddhism, early Buddhism, what
early Buddhism was likely to be like,
meditation,
monastic discipline, living in Burma,
living in Buddhist Asia, you know,
philosophy in general. If you think that

there's a good chance I'd be able to answer your question intelligently and you don't want to resort to AI to answer your questions, which is an easier and easier thing to do nowadays, feel free to ask um no more than three questions per person per episode, please.

And [clears throat] uh look at the let's see what is it, the URL links below. And I've still got another book coming out soon. In fact, technically, I've got two books coming out soon because somebody has generously printed up more than a hundred copies of my Atkawaga translation that is going to be sent to

me. Um, and so I will be able to distribute those.

I don't have the the um monetary wherewithal to send them all out completely for free, but uh anyone who wants to pay for the postage, I mean, it's free besides the however much it costs the the the postal service to send it. And I'm still waiting for the illustrations on on the [clears throat] memoirs from Myanmar, the uh writings of a incendiary monk series. That's pretty much done. I'm still waiting for the illustrations to be finished.

And uh aside from that, all I say is uh be happy.

Okay, then

I think we're recording. I think this microphone is working. Hello and welcome to episode 184 of Question and Answer. I am your host Pony Bosa and I'm wearing my Mulon Lab shirt today in honor of the Spartan 300 led by King Leonitis who died at the battle of Thermopoli. They died in glory. I watched a documentary about it last night.

And uh this is my beverage, which I haven't put the paper umbrella into yet. So, we open said beverage, insert paper little paper umbrella, immediately take it back out again because its purpose is mainly ostentation and to show my

sophistication and class to the viewer.

take a sip of said beverage.

[clears throat] And then I guess it's my duty to point out that of course 184 is not a prime number. It is $2 * 2 * 2 * 23$.

And um I was even considering just skipping this weekend because there's not a whole heck of a lot of questions asked. But then I mean last night I was thinking well maybe I can just skip this weekend. And then this morning more people ask questions. So we're above 20 now, which is okay. And so the show must go on and I'm going to commence to answering questions here after making a few slight adjustments.

[cough and clears throat]

Okay then.

So, I guess uh I've uh finished the
almost obligatory
completely digressional
digressional digressive
preamble.

And so, [clears throat]
next thing to do is to just wade into
these questions here.

And the first question is from Scooain.

And Scooterain says, "Do you ever say
I'm sorry or feel sorry for things you
may have unintentionally done to make
someone upset?" I guess according to
some at home, I don't do this. And

truthfully, I don't often feel very sorry. I also don't like to say I'm sorry if I'm not actually sorry. Of course, I don't like seeing anyone upset. And if it's something I've done that I can avoid, I will say that I will try not to do it again. I really don't like the idea of quote, "If you feel sorry for this, I will feel better." Unquote. Or quote, "If you feel bad, then I'll feel good." unquote. Maybe I'm just over complicating being sorry, but it's always seemed complex to me. And I can relate to this, but I guess before I answer the question, I should look up the word sorry in the dictionary because sometimes you have

people just trying to have a discussion
or a debate or whatever it is and
they're completely at cross purposes.
They can't possibly see eye to eye
because they do not agree on the
definition of the terms. like something
like a soul or free will, that kind of
thing. Does it exist? Does it not exist?
I mean, it depends on the definition.
Capital G, God would be another one. So,
let's just look up sorry here. Sorry,
adjective.

It's a predicative feeling distress,
especially through sympathy with someone
else's misfortune.

Okay, so that would be practically the

same as compassion, wouldn't it? Except it would be more negative I guess because there's distress involved.

Compassion doesn't necessarily involve distress.

So sorry for means filled with compassion for. Yeah, I feel sorry for that person because you know they they're dealing with so much hardship that kind of thing. So let's see number two second definition feeling regret or penitence.

So feeling regret. Yeah, that's from the Buddhist point of view. Feeling regret is always bad karma. You shouldn't do it. And I have taken that to heart. I rarely feel regret. Although it's kind

of strange that in the past after I was pretty much cured of regret. Still, I would feel it mainly thinking about stuff that I did before I was cured of regret. It was like the memory that memory just has like these sort of somewhat painful like emotional tones just to the memory itself. So that I would still have flashbacks of feeling regret um when remembering something that happened before I was cured of regret. So let's see here. Uh attributive in a poor or pitiful state of or condition. Oh yeah, like we're gonna we're gonna get rid of his sorry ass.

That kind of thing. So we can we

[clears throat] can uh just completely forget that one. So it can mean feeling distress, especially through sympathy.

Sympathy with somebody else's misfortune or it can mean feeling regret or penitence. And so I guess we should look up penitence.

So penitence, the action or feeling of showing sorrow. Yeah, circular definitions. This is like an Oxford dictionary too.

Feeling showing sorrow and regret for having done something wrong. Repentance.

So sorry is related to the word sorrow.

So it' be like sorrowful over having done such and such. But let's get back

to the question now, shall we? Now that we've studied up on the key terms, especially sorry.

Do I do I ever say I'm sorry or feel sorry for things that you may have unintentionally done to make someone upset? Um I I do say I'm sorry sometimes, especially at home with my beloved my beloved mate.

Um but it's not like regret. It's it's not sorry in the terms in the in the sense of feeling remorseful. It's more like, well, I am like unhappy because you're unhappy because there's sort of like a group mind going on. You know, we're having an interaction. I might be

catching hell for something. So, it's uh
a kind of,
you know,
let's see, how do how do I even explain
this?

It's it's not so much remorse,
but still it's like um to say I'm sorry
is more like uh a kind of way of saying,
you know, I beg your pardon. You know,
please forgive me. I didn't mean to do
it. You know, I didn't necessarily think
I was doing anything wrong by doing it.
That kind of thing.

But yeah, feeling actual remorse,
wishing that you hadn't done something,
done something with an N, not an M. Um,
yeah, I mean, you're just setting

yourself up against reality. I mean,
it's like wishing you hadn't done
something in the past, which is
irrevocable
or irrevocable. I mean, you just can't
change the past. So wishing that the
past was different, it's just
unnecessary self-inflicted suffering.
So if I do say I'm sorry, the main
meaning is like I apologize, you know,
it's I mean they're practically
synonymous,
you know, it's like I beg your pardon,
that kind of thing.
So let's see here. Did I answer the
question?

H I also don't like to say I'm sorry if I'm not actually sorry. Yeah, I mean that would be dishonest, wouldn't it? I mean, you'd essentially be lying. It might be considered to be a white lie and therefore okay by like western secular standards, but still, I mean, you should be committed to truth.

If you can't even manage conventional truth, how are you going to get to ultimate truth?

[snorts]

Know what I'm saying?

So, let's see here.

Of course, I don't like seeing anyone upset. Yeah, I don't like to see anyone upset either. I mean, even if somebody

that I don't particularly like, I mean, for them to be upset. I mean, it's it'd be better if they kind of were, you know, sort of a little more humble maybe. I mean, I don't like to see people that are just like gloating and completely, you know, just, you know, somebody that has like the opposite political view that I have that they're just like smug and gloating. You know, I don't like to see that either.

Let's see here. Now, see, my sweetie is just right outside the window. See, I'm I'm not in the regular studio. I'm in our the back bedroom.

And so I've got a window directly in front of me and if anyone goes out onto the back patio, I see it and it can be distracting.

So let's see here.

See, I will say that I will try not to do it again. Yeah, that's fine. It's that's the best thing to do. I mean, if you really aren't repentant, I mean, it depends on your definition of sorry, I suppose. Or if you're just using I'm sorry, you know, the the statement I'm sorry just as like a synonym for I apologize or I beg your pardon or please forgive me, that kind of thing, then I guess you can get away with it.

But yeah, I I do I I do really relate to

this statement. And remorse, regret is always bad karma.

Even if someone is insisting that you feel regret. And of course, if an enemy is wanting you to feel sorry, they're just I mean, that's just part of their revenge.

They're not going to really forgive you. Or at least in many cases like political enemies. They try to force somebody or compel somebody to say they're sorry just as a just as like a weapon.

You know, it's almost like

>> [clears throat]

>> you you're worse off if you apologize.

It's sort of like um like it reminds me

of uh the call of the wild
where it's talking about like sled dogs
in in Alaska in the Yukon territory
where if there's a dog fight and one of
the dogs goes down, all the other dogs
that were just sitting there watching
will just gang up on that dog that went
down.

>> [clears throat]

>> But I already answered the question.
There's no need for me to discuss the
behavior of sled dogs. So I'm just
moving on to the next question. This is
from Newman.

And Newman says, "Has there ever been a
terraodin version of tantric practice?
For example, the Thai tiger skin wizard

guys."

Well,

it's it's almost like a trick question.

Um, you could I mean in Burma you've got like

um they're like what's the word?

Trying to think of the word alchemists.

So you've got like alchemists and

wizards and so forth that are ordained

monks, ordained terra Buddhist monks,

but their their practices that are along

more or less tantric lines certainly are

not in accord with Terra Buddhism. So to

the extent that they are tantric, to

that same extent, they're not really in

accordance with Terravada Buddhism.

And if they're engaging in tantric sex practices, then they're not even monks.

Once once there's the amount of insertion

amounting to the width of a of a sesame seed, then one is parajika, one is excommunicated from the sa for life and one is no longer a monk.

um certain other acts like stealing. I don't know if there's any kind of tantric spiritual practice that involves stealing, but

um just doing things that are at variance with orthodox like rules of monastic discipline, fortunetelling, that sort of thing. It's not really in accordance with Terravada. So, it's not

really a terraodin practice. It's just a practice that some Terravada Buddhist monks just officially ordained Terravada Buddhist monks will do like reading palms, astrology, um, alchemy, trying to do I mean there's [clears throat] even like a certain amount of necromancy going on in Burma where um, certain monks, including at least one famous one that I know of, uh, allegedly would put out raw meat and raw blood that these hung hungry ghosts would feed on until the hungry ghosts are like jonesing for their raw meat and raw blood and reliant on this wizard necromancer monk who can then say, "All

right, you want more of that raw blood? Well, you're going to have to do what I say. You're going to have to do my bidding." And then they become like the the servants or slaves of the necromancer.

There supposedly allegedly is some of that going on in Burma.

But tantric, I mean, if if you're talking about capital T tantra, not just sort of unethical conduct that is done mindfully as a way of sort of transcending the ethics of it, you know, and trying to use the the behavior of the kaliuga as a kind of spiritual vehicle, which is what capital T tantra is doing. But I don't

think there's I mean you couldn't really do that within a terra Buddhist context. To the extent that you're doing that you're not terrain.

So you can have monks that are technically ordained terra Buddhist monks

who are doing tantric practices that aren't sufficient to get them excommunicated. Like no sex for example. Eating meat's fine, eating fish is fine. even drinking alcohol. Um, it's against the rules, but at least it's not going to get you kicked out of the SA.

But to the extent you're doing that kind of stuff, you're you're at odds with

terra Buddhist ethics.

So yeah, there have been terra Buddhist tantric practices especially now all of a sudden I'm remembering the Mahari and the Mahari were like a tantric sect of Buddhism similar to Tibetan Buddhism that was the prevailing school of Buddhism among the Burmese before they converted to Terravada Buddhism in the 11th century. So like the early Pagan Empire before King Anorata forcibly converted his his country to Terra Buddhism, you had like tantric monks that were practicing a kind of vajraana kind of stuff. And I would assume when Burma like was essentially by the royal decree converted to

Terravada, you had a lot of these
tantric monks who sort of superficially
converted to Terravada so they could
stay in their monasteries, you know, at
their temples and all that that
nevertheless were still doing tantric
stuff, getting drunk, for example.

But [clears throat]

again I mean you can it has happened
historically

with nominally terra Buddhist monks
but to the extent that they really are
doing tantric practices to that same
extent they're not following terra
Buddhism.

So you can interpret that as you please.

But there are like wizards and alchemists and necromancers and that sort of thing in teraba Buddhist countries that some of them are ordained monks.

And

I mean I mean officially technically they're terra Buddhist because they're ordained terra Buddhist monks who haven't yet succeeded in getting themselves excommunicated.

But still, I mean, they're like not conscientious monks. Even monks who who do horoscopes and and read palms, that kind of thing. They're deviating from what the texts say they should be doing. Because the texts say you're not

supposed to be doing fortuneelling and palistry and, you know, interpreting omens and that kind of stuff, much less doing like the hard capital Tantra stuff, the five M's, for example.

And the five M's of capital T tantra are my tuna which is sex. Can't do that in teraba if you're an ordained monk.

Matcha which is fish. Mamsa which is meat. Eating meat. Eating fish. Maja which is literally intoxicant but it here it means like alcohol. And then there's one that they [clears throat] don't really know what it means anymore. I think probably originally it was a kind of drug, but now because they don't

know exactly what it is, they replace it with parched grain, which I don't know why parched grain would be some transgressive fifth M for a tantric practitioner.

But I'm just going to move on to the next question here. Newman's second question is, have you ever encountered *davas*?

and not really that I know of. I mean, you can feel a presence, that kind of thing. Um,

the presence might just be like a higher level of your own consciousness that you're not aware of at the ordinary worldly level at all times. So, for example,

I've been near death a few times, like before I was a monk. You're you're driving too fast in cold weather. You hit a patch of black ice. The cars start sliding out of control and it's like everything just becomes crystal clear. You stop thinking. It is as though time slows down. But really, it's just you're operating at a a faster level. But I mean, it's like without thinking. It's just like some something takes over your body and just does whatever is necessary to keep you alive until the danger is passed and then you return to a more or less normal state and start thinking in thoughts again.

And that happened to me once um when I was in Burma. Um I was living under under a rock ledge in this little box canyon that the the cave or overhanging rock ledge was right at the end of the canyon. And sometimes I'd be looking up at the walls of the canyon think I wonder what's up there. I wonder what it's like up there because I really hadn't been walking around up above very much. But then I'd think it's just too steep. I mean it's almost like vertical walls to this canyon. And so I just thought it's just too too difficult for me to climb up there. And then one night after dark there was a brush fire and it's like burning leaves and grass are

falling off the top of the the canyon
and landing on the certain sides that of
the canyon that weren't completely
vertical but still like steep. and it
was causing the fire to gradually get
down into my little canyon. And so this
same canyon wall that I figured was too
steep to climb in broad daylight. I'm
climbing it in the middle of the night
with no flashlight, I've got a lit
candle [clears throat] in one hand and a
bamboo pole in the other hand in in like
a sarong amongst robes and and sandals,
flipflops. I'm climbing up this thing
and the light of the fire actually kind
of lit the way when I was going up. But

going back down again after the fire is out and it's dark, I've got a lit candle in one hand, but the when you're going downhill when it's really steep, the ground is way way down there. It's not like right in front of your face like when you're going uphill. And so I'm trying to go downhill like slowly work my way down this hill. And of course, I stepped on some dry leaves or dry grass or whatever. My feet just shot out from under under me and I start tobogganing on my back down the side of this very steep slope, way more than 45°.

And again, it was that same sort of mental state [clears throat] where it's like you stop thinking and just

immediately without thinking at all,
you're just like in this state of
heightened awareness where you're just
doing whatever it is that's going to
keep you alive. And it's like grabbing
it at vines that would would just snap,
you know? And for some reason, I kept a
a grip. I I immediately let go of the
bamboo pole, but that candle, I mean,
without having time to think about it, I
kept a firm grip on that candle because
if I dropped and lost that candle, I
would be stuck there until morning on
the side of that hill, assuming that I
didn't just fall off.

And so eventually my foot just hit a

clump of bamboo that was growing out of the side of the hill and stopped me with my other foot hanging off this vertical drop off which was only maybe six feet. But still it would have sped me up when on on the downhill on the on the ascent of the descent to the very bottom.

But again it could just that's not necessarily a dawa. That could just be like some higher aspect of your own consciousness that your thinking ego just is oblivious to most of the time and it doesn't really step in until there's a real need for it.

But I have I remember one time I was at Panda Rama in Rangon doing two months of intensive of two months of intensive

practice meditation practice under the
the tutelage of Mahazi upandit
and I was just kind of in this state of
borderline despair for a while which if
you've [clears throat] done intensive
meditation retreats you you probably
know that despair or desperation
can arise under situations like this
like your ego is just like battling
against the practice this kind of thing.
And so I just like if there's anybody
out there please show me a sign. And so
I thought all right within the next
three days somebody has to come up to me
and say the word sign and that will be
my sign. And then two days later, u a

friend of mine, a Burmese monk friend of mine and uh a supporter, a lay supporter came to me and they were getting me a Burmese ID card. And so they asked me to sign, but I mean it wasn't in English and so it was, you know, this kind of thing. So I mean that didn't really count. But then I said, "Well, does this mean or then somebody, I think it was the monk or the late, one of them, one of these two guys said, "Now [clears throat] that you have this Burma Burmese ID card, you won't have to keep getting visas." And then the other one says, "Miss Buu," which Masai Buu means it doesn't have anything to do with that. But still, it somebody in my

presence said sign. And I mean, I wasn't getting a lot of visitors. That was almost the only visit I received at the time. So I mean you could say that that was some dharma giving a sign or you could say it was just coincidence or you could just say that it's my own karma my own mental states orchestrated the whole thing at a like a subconscious level but the thing is I mean dharma as a general rule I mean going with even like Buddhist cosmology as a general rule they're invisible they could be standing right there next to you and you wouldn't see them you might feel a presence you know, but you're not going to see

them, you know, sort of like an ant
crawls across your foot. It has no idea.
It's in immediate contact with a higher
being. It doesn't see you. You know,
it's you're you're the the great moving
land where nothing grows or whatever.
And I mean, assuming that an a would
even think.

So yeah, encountering Davis, I've never
met one personally. Not that not not
that I I'm aware of at the ordinary ego
samsaric worldly level,
which is a very long answer to a very
short question,
but I have lived in places that were
considered to be haunted by like
terrestrial dadas.

Um, I've lived in a few places like that
and like that over overhanging rock
ledge that I was talking about. Um, it
was considered to be guarded by an Osas,
which is a relatively powerful
terrestrial deity in Burma. And a lot of
people were just afraid to come near it
because they were afraid of the Osas.
But I lived there for combined total of
about three years. Never saw the USA.
But who knows?

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question. And I must say here that
Newman has asked a transgressive fourth
question. His name is going on a list.
And if that's not sufficient to reform

his misconduct, then he's going on another list and he's just going to continue being added on to lists until he stops this. But in his uh uh I guess I I have to admit that he just forgot that he asked one question several days ago and then he just decided he's going to ask his regulation three questions while completely forgetting that he asked another question several days before.

And we don't have a whole lot of questions. So maybe I'll give a dulty kind of answer to his transgressive fourth question. But the name is still going on the list.

So Newman says [clears throat]

in terraata cosmology do you also find
sublunary

terrestrial demons or davas inhabiting
or embodying springs, rivers, streams,
beautiful sacred places etc. And yeah I
mean there are I mean in in uh orthodox
terra you've got rukadavas who are like
terrestrial small g gods inhabiting
large trees. You've got boommy davas who
are, you [clears throat] know, living on
the ground. In fact, the Osa that I
mentioned just a couple minutes ago
would be one of these terrestrial davas.
I've lived in a number of those places,
a lot of places in Burma where, you
know, you you're not supposed to spit on

the ground. You're not supposed to take a pee on this hill. This kind of thing because it will offend the the Assam or or the terrestrial dava or whatever it is. They firmly believe in what are called belu which um in poly would be yaka which is usually translated as ogre or it's often translated as ogre. You know they're kind of monstrous being but technically they are a small G god. They belong to the realm of the four kings which is one level above the human level.

So [clears throat] I mean they wouldn't count as dammons. I mean there's still das

you know there's like a small G god

superhuman being I mean really uh

Buddhism doesn't really

uh doesn't really have a category of

like a deva which is below a god but

above a human that kind of thing. It's

just if you're above human level then

you're at least a deva a small god.

Above the devas are brahmas that are that

are higher. They're they're like

[clears throat] in a different realm

than us. They're in the the rupaloka.

See, like devas and humans and animals

and ghosts and denizens of hell and

the asuras. Um we all are inhabitants

of the kama loka or the sensuous world.

And then above that is the rupaloka

which is the the realm or the world inhabited by brahas who have a physical body. It's a refined matter. I mean they'd be invisible to us unless they really wanted us to see them. But still they do have a body and then above that is the arupaloka which is formless beings. It's like the most refined realms in Buddhist cosmology are the the formless realms where the the beings there are pure mind and have no physical body, not even of subtle matter, no no physical body at all.

So yeah, and in in Thailand and in Burma, you'll see like big trees that have like a little shrine either built onto the tree or right next to the tree,

and people will come and make offerings.

Um, in fact, before

the the Burmese were Buddhists, before

they converted to Buddhism, like when

they're still living in the the

foothills of the Himalayas to the north

of Burma, they [clears throat] uh

followed what is called the Nat cult,

which still is vestigial in Burmese

culture where they were essentially

worshiping the spirits of humans that

died violent deaths. And if you die a

violent death or an unnatural death,

according to the Burmese, that causes

you to be a sane, which means like a a

green ghost, which is more powerful than

if you just die of old age, die of natural causes, just kind of fade out.

If your life force is just cut off suddenly, then you've got more of a kind of earthly momentum going, which causes you to be a more powerful spirit in the event that you are like still in the form of some kind of ghost or like a small G god

[clears throat] that is still associated with this earth.

And uh there's still some belief in that in Burma. the Knack cult, which is more of these more or less terrestrial deities.

[sighs]

I'm not exactly sure where the gnats are

supposed to live though, but I mean it's definitely it's right there in the polytext that there are like terrestrial small G gods

for the most part are invisible. But I mean sometimes like in even ancient Greek mythology sometimes you can have someone who appears to be a human being [snorts]

but really it's a god in disguise.

Like in ancient Greece there was some some saying I don't remember the exact words of it which would be in ancient Greek anyway but it's like you should be generous to beggars because it may be a god in disguise that's testing you. And

that does happen in in poly texts also.

[sighs and gasps]

So

yeah, it's just a belief in nature

deities guarding certain areas or

inhabiting certain areas is very common

in Southeast Asia. And I'm just going to

move on to the transgressive fourth

question. It's going to get have

Newman's name put onto a list.

says though Buddhism teaches you

shouldn't though Buddhism teaches you

shouldn't pray to these deities and rely

on yourself in chance of blessings from

monks some include statements that the

davas will pour blessings and protect

practitioners of the dhamma are these

blessings purely worldly in orientation or in terra are there deities that can help you in your practice at all and yeah they deities can help you in your practice but in Buddhism it's the whole thing is kind of shortcircuited Because in Buddhism, it all depends on your own karma. So whether a god helps you or not is still dependent on your own karma. If it's not your karma to be helped by a god, you won't be. And if it is your karma to be helped by a god, then that very much increases the odds that you will be helped by a god. Well, for example, just to give uh the first example that comes to mind, the Baja

Suta, which is Udana 110, one of my favorite sutas in the the polycanon.

There's this non Buddhist aesthetic named [clears throat] Baja who lives in western India and he's getting a lot of respect and veneration from the lay people and they think he's enlightened and so he's starting to think well maybe I'm enlightened and then a deity a small G god who used to be a kinsman of his but has gone to heaven descends to earth and tells him no you're not really a god or you're not really fully enlightened But there is a person who is fully enlightened called God Buddha who lives you know in the the kingdom of Kosula you know far to the far to the east and

you know and so Baja it inspires Baja to go and meet the Buddha who then preaches to him a short kind of zen-like sermon which causes Bah Baja to become enlightened.

So that would be a case of a deity helping somebody in their dharma practice. And it it does happen sometimes, but again, it's not going to happen unless it's your karma. You're I mean, it's all that kind of stuff is shortcircuited to a certain extent like in a philosophical sense by your own karma because it's going to happen in accordance with your karma. If it's not

your karma to be helped by a dva, you won't be helped by a dva.

So I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from the sabotur singular not plural.

And the sabatur says this is kind of a strange question. The sabotur says, "I read somewhere that if you delete someone, in addition to negative karma, you also inherit your victim's karma. Whether positive or negative or both, I don't know. For example, it is common knowledge that Stalin deleted God knows how many people directly and indirectly. But it's historically accepted that Beria, Berea, I don't know how to pronounce that. Beria deleted Stalin. So

would Beria shoulder all of Stalin's karma? In which case is Stalin now free of all karma and doesn't have to reincarnate?

Incidentally, Beria himself was deleted. Of course, the underlying motives are always key. Yeah, I don't know who would say this. It certainly is not a Buddhist doctrine. I mean, that would make karma sort of like a venereal disease or it's like, you know, they say you're having sex not only with the person you're actually in bed with, but with everybody that they have had sex with. You know, it's like karma does not work that way. I mean,

that would be so weird if you actually got good karma by deleting saints so that you would just be taking in all of their their saintly virtue into yourself. I mean, that would just that would just elicit a kind of [__] storm, wouldn't it?

But like in in terra Buddhism that one of the the ways of guaranteeing just rebirth in hell is to kill an enlightened being to delete a fully enlightened Arhan I should say. But then again I mean they kind of don't have and they still have latent karma.

So, [snorts]

I guess you could still inherit the karma of an enlightened being because

they still have latent karma even though they're not making new karma.

But that would I mean it's that would just be awful. I mean, if you had like devout Buddhists who think that by deleting saints they're going to be taking in all this virtuous karma. I mean,

yeah. And that's that's just weird.

So,

yeah. I mean your karma is just your own mental states. It's not like some kind of substance that you you can you just like absorb from somebody else that from the Buddhist point of view anyways karma is primarily volition. So it's your

mental states

and it includes a lot of like

subconscious mental states. So that if

you are deleting or just like

attacking a saint that deep down you're

going to pick up on that and realize

that you're like being mean to someone

who just really does not deserve it at

all which is going to make it worse.

Make your volitions worse because you

know deep down anyway

that you are inflicting you know bodily

harm or whatever onto someone who

doesn't even deserve it.

I mean, I guess their own karma would

cause you to be able to do it, but I

mean,

where do I go from there, man?

[clears throat]

So,

yeah. I mean, you don't just inherit

somebody else's karma if you like

[snorts]

cause them to cease to to metabolize on

this planet. They still have I mean

after they die they still have their own

karma. You know Stalin regardless of how

he died I mean he still has his karma.

It's not like he's just gonna become

fully enlightened or or like float up

into a heaven realm just because

somebody that was approximately as bad

as he was off him.

Yeah. So, I don't know where the sabotur
reads read this, but it's uh heresy,
heresy, pernicious wrong view at best,
and at worst, it could just actually be
if people actually believed it, they'd
be going around trying to to delete
saints just to just to get their karma.
sort of like some people that
[clears throat] would uh if they were
HIV positive that they would go and or
or also like in Victorian England if you
had syphilis. There were some people
that believed that if you um fornicated
with a virgin that you would get rid of
the syphilis and really they were just
spreading it and keeping it to
themselves and also spreading it to some

hapless virgin

or recent ex virgin.

Yeah. I mean this

not even and I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from PSA.

PSA says, "Which meditation technique or techniques are you practicing nowadays?"

And like I've said several times before, I'm really not doing any formal sitting practice anymore. Partly because there's no way that I would ever do justice to what I was doing when I was a professional meditator as a monk.

And so the only real meditation

techniques I do are occasional

spontaneous oming. Just doing Om as a

mantra quietly to myself when doing
other things or just mindfulness of
daily activities being aware of weird
mental states

or not so weird mental states or just
sometimes it's just like you know it'll
just kind of hit you that all of a
sudden you're you're aware of your the
the clothes touching your skin and your
your own breathing or whatever it is
that you're you're sensing, you know,
you just kind of detach from it and
observe it objectively instead of just
having that be you.

So, yeah, the only meditation techniques
I really do now are occasional
spontaneous oming and just sad saga

of just mindfulness of just whatever is going on, which also tends to be spontaneous.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie

and Ruie says, "If one is asked about dharma by someone who might have heard of the Buddha but knows nothing about dharma, what are the boundaries to sharing the sparse experience or

knowledge one may have? Is it preferable to remain silent?" Well, it depends on how much you know about it. But I mean, if you're uncertain about much of any of Buddhist doctrine, you might just tell them you really don't know enough to be

able to teach them anything and sort of refer them to a more knowledgeable source. But I mean, if you know the fundamentals, I mean, it certainly doesn't hurt to just give a a brief explanation of like the four noble truths. If something like no self is something that you're having difficulty grasping, then you shouldn't try to teach it to somebody else, especially if they're inclined to be. I mean, whether they're skeptical or or even just like gullible and just believing anything you say. I mean either way it's not really helping them for them to reject like some profound teaching w just with contempt or for them to just like accept

maybe an inaccurate explanation as gospel truth. I mean either way it's not really helping them much.

But I mean to the extent that you understand something fairly well like four noble truths is fairly basic.

the noble eight-fold path. Just simple basics like that, there's there's no harm at all in in sharing that with somebody else if they're receptive to it. I mean, if they're just openly disrespectful to it, then you're better off just not talking about it. In fact, there are rules of monastic discipline forbidding a monk to teach dharma. Um, no matter I mean he could be a scholar,

he could be an authority on the subject, but it's still against the rules for a monk to teach dhamma to someone who is openly disrespectful.

And it could just be like a cultural thing, you know, like the monk is barefoot and the person is wearing shoes [snorts] or has their head covered or is holding a weapon. any I mean it could just be that they're a soldier or something but still

it's just they should have sufficient respect to as to show respect for the dharma not necessarily even for the monk but just show respect for dharma and if they're openly disrespectful or just carelessly disrespectful then you're

better off not teaching it to them. It's kind of interesting some of the rules like a monk is not allowed to teach dharma to someone who is walking on the path if the monk is walking beside the path you know it's like a narrow path and so I mean you'd have to go single file for people to be walking on that path together and if the monk is behind he's not allowed to teach dhamma and if he's to the side of the path he's not allowed to teach dhamma but if he's in front then he can teach dhamma especially if the person that he's teaching Dhamma to doesn't have shoes on or a hat or carrying a weapon, etc., etc.,

so

I guess I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Trareas and Troas says, "What size are these new Atawaga books, normal or pocket size?"

And I just so happen to have one right here. So, this is like the most compact version of my Atikawaga translation in existence thus far. And somebody generously just volunteered to have over a 100 copies of this printed up for free distribution.

And I haven't really read through it, so I don't know what kind of typos there might be. Um, there could be typos.

Um, but also the only the only kind of drawback to this, aside from any

possible typos, which may or may not be in there, is that they're not really lined up. The original idea was to have poly on one side and English on the other side. And that you, if you knew enough poly, you could compare the poly version with the English version. just just so you could be confident that I wasn't just making [__] up because some of the stuff in the Antikawaga really is just it's not orthodox Terravada.

So an Orthodox Terravada Buddhist who knows Pi could refer to the original just to see for himself or herself that it really was a good translation. But um

just the way it's formatted,
it's uh they don't really line up. Like
you've got the beginning of the chula
wuihasuta in poly on this side whereas
you're already like halfway through the
chula chula weasuta on the English side
and then towards the end let's see
it it all just after the poly runs out
it just goes to straight English on both
sides.

So I mean that's kind of a quibble. I
really have nothing but respect and
gratitude to the person who went to the
trouble of doing this. U there wasn't
really much consultation going on. I
mean, I didn't really have a chance to
to look at the proofs or anything. And

it may be that I mean, it's just
sometimes they're just like glitches
where I mean, you just don't know how to
fix it or something. So, it's it is the
way it is. And it's I mean the English
which is what most people are just going
to read anyway is still fine.

So thank you to the person who went to
the trouble. This is comes closer to my
original idea of something really small
that you could put in your pocket and
carry around with you instead of some
big book that I mean you'd have to carry
it under your arm or something or in a
big bag or something.

So, yeah, there are these. And if anyone

wants one, um I'm not really in a position to pay for the postage for every everybody's book, but uh self-ress stamped envelope, I guess. Um maybe those prepaid postal service first class envelopes would work. Um, so I could find out how much those cost and that might be the price of of postage or someone could just send me one and then I could I could send a copy of this which is very nice little size I have to admit.

So let's just move on to Troas is next question. Did you plug your computer this time? Yeah, I I had because [clears throat] I moved into this room that um yeah, I brought the cord and it

was pretty obvious to plug it in. So,
yeah, it's plugged in.

Now, on to Trezas is third question.

Do you know this as a fact that Jane
Monks would just go to some forest and
selfdelete in a way probably most of us
would not do, not eating and drinking
anything? I'm pretty sure if I remember
that that the idea that if a monk or an
aivaca thinks that they have just
reached full enlightenment
that the thing for them to do is just
especially the Janes just forget the
Ajivacas. The question is about the
Janes anyway. So, I'm [clears throat]
pretty sure that I have read in a Jane

text that when a Jane thinks that he has exhausted all of his karma that he should just go off into like an isolated remote area, you just some wasteland and just squat down and remain motionless until he is no longer alive.

Because if you think you've exhausted all of your karma as a Jane, there's a chance that you might accidentally create more karma right before you die.

So, I mean, you want to just end it as just as soon as you can. You can't really commit violence upon yourself because that would be creating karma right at the last minute. So, you just squat down and remain motionless until you're not alive anymore. And I I seem

to remember that I have read that in a
Jane scripture. But just because it says
something in a religion scripture
doesn't mean that most followers are
going to be following that. You know,
you can just read the Bible. You know,
gather not up your treasures upon the
earth. How many Christians follow that
one? I mean, even a lot of ordained
Christians don't follow that one.

So

yeah, and I would guess that most Jane
monks

don't think that they've become
enlightened anyway. You know, it would
be like a very tiny minority of Jane

monks. Probably most of those being not entirely right in the head who are just like misjudging their own spiritual state, like overestimating their attainment or whatever. Who would try that?

But it's also I mean you can read about it in other books but

I I do seem to recall that I have read that in a Jane text in an English translation of a Jane text.

And so I'm just going to move on to this question. This from Stellar Supreme etc.

And Stellar Supreme does have like a an obscure way of communicating sometimes and I'm not 100% sure that I understand this question. He says, "You have

remarked that leftist compassion is dangerous, but I recall reading some polycanon passage stating that a noble king or sovereign has a sort of automatic rulership. He has command over state coercion. But the Buddha says the noble among them would secure prosperity such that the folk that live in his territory wouldn't even need to worry about bandits. they would leave their doors unlocked. Could we assume that this might be a mark of the best in a superior age whereas we now live in more of a dark age where being a sovereign is just bad karma?

Well, I understand the gist of this

question. So, just because

[clears throat] there are a few obscure

passages

or phrases contained within this

question, I think I can still answer it.

Um, see this, let's just kind of unpack

it a little bit though. He says that I

have remarked that leftist compassion is

dangerous. Yeah, leftist compassion can

be suicidal. Like if you refuse to

punish or at least imprison

violent criminals, which is a common

leftist practice nowadays,

you know, you just

go and sin no more and then they just

keep on sinning.

Um, yeah. I mean, that that is suicidal

to a society. I guess I said the word that you're not supposed to say on YouTube, so I guess the algorithm just got dinged.

[clears throat] So, anyways, let's see.

He recalls reading some polycanon passage stating that a noble king or sovereign has a sort of automatic rulership. I'm not exactly sure what an automatic rulership would mean. I don't think that would mean autocracy.

So he has command over state coercion, but the Buddha says the noble among them would secure prosperity such that the folk that live in his territory wouldn't even need to worry about bandits. Yeah.

Well, part of that they wouldn't have to worry about bandits because the bandits have all been arrested or executed or punished.

And I mean, that's just the way it was in the Buddhist time. I mean, and there were no saintly kings in the Buddhist time that I'm aware of. Maybe Ashoka a few hundred years later might qualify at least after he saw the light.

But I mean even in the Buddhist time they were in this grizzly public executions for example. And there is a certain jotaka story called the Tamia Jotaka. I've mentioned this before where I mean this is ancient India where the Buddha in his in a previous

existence before he was the Buddha he was still just the bodhic sata is born as a royal prince and when he is like a toddler he's sitting on the king's lap on his throne while the king is making like royal judgments which included having criminals put to death you you know, just gruesome public executions, this sort of thing. And the bodhic sata, Prince Tamia, realized when he grows up, he's going to become the king. He was next in line in the succession. And then he was going to have to do that because it's the duty of a king to punish criminals, to punish them in such a way that it

discourages others from taking up a life of crime. And so he just pretended to be a deaf mute after that to avoid being like the next king because to be a king you have to do bad things. It's just what is right from an ethical point of view is not necessarily right from a political point of view.

So

could we assume that this might be a mark of the best in a superior age whereas we now live in more of a dark age where being a sovereign is just bad karma. I mean the the karma of sovereigns in the Buddhist time was much worse. I mean you had royal princes executing their own fathers in order to

get the succession. Like in ancient Persia, you know, was the the king, the sha, he would have a harum of wives, you know, he'd have multiple wives, he'd have multiple sons, but after he would pass away, you'd have like this mass die off of royal princes where you got [clears throat] the one who's going to be the next king is just eliminating all the competition. To some degree that happened in in the Roman Empire also, but it certainly was happening in ancient India like during the Buddha's own lifetime. King Ajata Satu killed his own father so that he could become king. And this this is mentioned like in the

samaya pala suta which I think is the second suta of the deganikaya where king [clears throat] ajata comes and listens to the Buddha you know teaching dharma and then king ajata just kind of thanks him and walks away and then the Buddha makes a remark to the extent that you know he probably would have had more of a positive response. It would have been more helpful to him if his mind wasn't like his spirit wasn't already like damned. You know, he was like a damned soul from a a Buddhist point of view because he had murdered his own father so that he could become king.

So yeah, in the Buddhist time you really did have just these really horrible,

grizzly public executions that were just standard.

And that was I mean there were people being publicly hanged in London just as late as the 19th century. I don't know when they stopped doing that public executions even in the city of London but it's relatively recent that [clears throat] people have become more feminized which has its good points and its bad points. you know, the the self-destructive compassion being one of the bad points or [clears throat] yeah, self-destructive compassion is a pretty good bad point to mention. And but

the good point of being feminized as a society is there's just less like public violence

that would just be considered unthinkable now. Whereas not too long ago, well up into modern times, it was just common place.

So let's see here. [sighs]

[clears throat]

It all balances out in the long run. But seriously, what is right and good from an ethical point of view is not necessarily what is right and good from a political point of view. And idologues who insist that politics be purely ethical and good are completely unrealistic. And if their policies are

put into practice, you know, their
ideals are converted into official
policies, that civilization is doomed.
Like what's going on in in the European
Union right now?

Western civilization is in free fall in
the in
most of Western Europe anyway.

But you can have centuries of decline
before you finally hit the collapse
point. And that's like what happened
with the Roman Empire. It was it was
declining for hundreds of years before
the the collapse finally happened.

[sighs] So let's just uh move on to the
next question here.

This is from Xenithoid. [clears throat]

And Xenithoid asked kind of an interesting question that I haven't been asked before.

He says, "I've read that in the premodern age, children were seen almost as little adults and that the concept of childhood being a time for innocence and play is actually a relatively modern idea. How are children seen in practically premodern country like Burma?" Well, before I answer that question, I just want to point out something with regard to this first statement.

He says that in the premodern age, children were seen almost as little adults, and the concept of childhood

being a time for innocence and play is actually a relatively modern idea. Yeah, I don't think so. I I really I really think that that is not a a an accurate statement. For example, in Rome, 2,000 years ago and more, it was a custom. And I should have studied up on this. I mean, I've I've learned about it in the past, but [clears throat] before a a child

wore the what is it? The toga verillus.

You know, it's like the the toga of adult of an adult that they would wear white, I think, and they would have this amulet, which for some reason would often have like an erect fallus as part

of the symbolism on this this amulet. So I mean that's kind of sexualized but still what so long as you were in the presence like an a Roman adult especially the patrician class if they were in the presence of one of these white robed children who hadn't reached the adulthood yet it it was like totally uncool to use like vulgar language you know to cuss in front of them to do anything openly sexual in front of them. I mean that was just taboo.

because children in ancient Rome at least early ancient Rome like Republican days were seen as practically sacred in their innocence.

So yeah, Xenithoid read that in the

premodern age children were seen almost as little adults concept of childhood being a time for innocence relatively modern idea. That's not universally true. Maybe some cultures, certainly some civilizations may have been that way, but in our European culture, like at least with regard to Rome, it wasn't that way at all. I would I would guess that other other societies, other civilizations were similar in the idea that children really are innocent. They're supposed to be innocent, and it's just like taboo to cuss in front of children, for example. So getting to the actual question

though, how were children seen in a practically premodern culture country [clears throat] like Burma? It's it's kind of strange that I never really I mean I wasn't really like collecting anthropological data on how children are treated in Burma. Like I mean devout Buddhist Burmese people like villagers generally don't cuss much anyway. I mean, there's cursing is relatively rare in Burma anyhow, just because it's a more religious culture than the secular West.

Um,

so I mean, I never really noticed anything unusual about how the Burmese treat. They're much less likely to

uh I don't I don't know. It's like some
some parents will will spank their kids.
But I mean, it does seem to me that
Burmese village children are allowed to
run a muk more than western children, at
least when I was a kid. It may be really
different now. It may be that any kind
of discipline for your children or just
like with violent criminals is just like
a no no now.

But yeah, I mean, I really didn't
understand. I didn't really notice much
different about how Burmese parents
raised their kids than the way Western
parents raised their kids. Other than
Burmese kids were more likely to just be

just running a muck, just running and screaming with the parents just kind of not caring. Like little kids just running, just tearing through a monastery, just screaming at the top of their lungs. A lot of the parents just don't see anything unusual or inappropriate with that. That used to bother me a little bit. But it wasn't like they were treated like adults so much. Not that I noticed.

I mean, they'd be talked to like little kids. the parents would be trying to teach them to, you know, offer food to the monks and teach them how to do chanting and that kind of thing. But and really didn't notice any significant

difference. And it could just be human nature, just the parental instincts is just part of a kind of animal instinct in humans. So that all over the world parents probably

like deal with their own children in roughly similar ways that are all just human nature.

And I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's next question. I mean it may have may it may have been that way but I just didn't notice it.

So the second question from Zenith is, is the inner child a concept in Buddhist texts and Buddhist culture?

Not that I know of.

Yeah, the inner child. I mean, I've never really studied up on much of the inner child other than I do remember it was a concept in this one of the early self-help books that came out. This was like a mass mass market self-help book games people play which is came out in like the 50s or 60s. It was really like a forerunner of the just the mass quantity of self-help books that came out in like the 70s and 80s. But yeah, there was like [clears throat] three different kind of personalities that each person has. You know, you start off with the child and then you become the lover and then you become the parent. If

I remember correctly, I think it was those three stages. And it's like everybody has all three stages, you know, even after you outgrow being a child physically, still you have like the the inner child, I guess. And sometimes, [clears throat] you know, like you're being playful or whatever. You're you're just goofing around. the inner child may come out and then at other times the parent may come out, you know, the lover may come out just depending on circumstances and who you're with set and setting and all that, but it's not really a concept in Buddhist texts and Buddhist culture. And

it's really not much of a
[clears throat] concept in the West
either. I mean, it's it's most people
really wouldn't know much about it. You
know, it's not just something you're
taught in school or anything that I'm
aware of.

But yeah, I Don't think it's found
anywhere in the poly texts. The inner
child other than just you've got still
got child karma,
you know, like karma relating to
childhood either that's is going to have
to wait until you're a child again for
it to reach fruition or just stuff that
you created as a child that
can reach fruition at other times. But

it's still I mean there's just kind of a latent assumption that you have certain childlike at least childlike karma contained within your being your your psychic momentum.

But I mean it's not really singled out as a kind of concept that is discussed exclusively anything like that.

And so I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's next question which is do you feel that you are still connected with your inner child?

And

[clears throat]

I I guess I'm kind of four-dimensional sort of like Billy Pilgrim in

Slaughterhouse 5 and you have read a lot of Vonagot where I mean it's kind of timeless.

I mean, I don't really have don't feel the need to conform to acting my age, so to speak. Like, when I was a kid, I could be like precociously mature for my age. And sometimes now that I have white hair, I can still be sort of the opposite of precocious and behave in a childlike manner or whatever, just because I'm unstuck in time, so to speak.

But I mean the inner child, am I still connected with it? Uh that that's kind of a tough question because I mean the whole concept of the inner child is

really not part of my

I mean I don't really single it out as
some kind of category,

you know, it's just sort of blended in.

I would I would call it more of a

blending, you know, childlike qualities,

childlike karma is just all blended into

the mix. And I don't have like this

inner child compartment

in in my psyche that I'm aware of,

but it's it's there definitely maybe

more so than in most people my age that

I'm I'm like less

I feel have less of a a like a

subconscious

obligation or need to act my age

or something.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG.

An Ethiopian fake TIG says after I clear my throat again, [clears throat]

I have somewhat of a phatic temperament going with Galen. I've always considered myself to be largely phatic. I think I got more sanguine as I got older, but especially when I was young, I was very phatic and I have more flem than the average person, I think.

So, having gotten that out of the way, Ethiopian fake Tig says, "During the time of the Buddha, has he met any other beings that were enlightened without

learning his teachings? Or does the
Buddha have a patent on enlightenment?"

According to orthodox Terravada

Buddhism, then yeah, the Buddha didn't
meet any other enlightened beings other
than his own enlightened disciples.

>> [cough]

>> So yeah,

but I'm skeptical of this Terravada

Buddhist claim of a monopoly on
enlightenment.

So the Buddha does in some of his texts
refer to, you know, all the enlightened
beings of the past and all the
enlightened beings today and all the
enlightened beings of the future, you

know, etc., etc. Um there does seem to be a kind of implication that

there were other enlightened beings that weren't necessarily his own disciples.

Um so it depends on

the correct answer to this question depends on how you look at it I suppose.

I mean if you want to if you just want the official orthodox Terravada Buddhist answer then

the Buddha was you know he reinvented enlightenment

and the only other enlightened beings in the world

at that time would be his own disciples

or people who learned from him and became enlightened as a result of that. that nobody would become enlightened completely independently of the Buddha during the Buddhist time anywhere in the world. That is like the official position of terra Buddhism. But again, I am skeptical of that. I do think it's possible for a non Buddhist to become enlightened, assuming that enlightenment makes any sense in a samsaric context.

And so I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question, which is as follows. During your stay in Burma, did you make lifelong friends

there? Or perhaps people you miss now since you're back in the States?

>> [cough and clears throat]

>> Um, the only person I met in Burma that's still a friend that we still communicate, there's just one, and that he was a western monk who lived in Burma at the same time as me. And then he went back to America before I did uh to take care of his aging parents and eventually dropped out of the monkhood. And we still communicate sometimes. We still text each other or communicate on the Discord server occasionally. Um, so there's that. But one thing [clears throat]

is that some of my supporters in Burma,

a few of them were just sort of like Buddhist chauvinists who just think that if you drop out of the monkhood, you you're just a failure, you know, a disgrace, a disgraceful failure. So I had a few supporters like that that better off just not associating with them. and and like the villagers, I mean, I'd have no way of even contacting them. I was mostly living out in remote forest areas when I was in Burma. So, and then also there's just a kind of weird phenomena I noticed when I was a monk. When another monk drops out of the monkhood, he pretty much just ghosts everybody. And it's it's largely just

out of a feeling of

I don't know sort of awkwardness maybe.

And I kind of did the same thing too. I

mean I have had a few um monks that I

used to know who tried to contact me and

I didn't respond.

So it's it's something that I noticed

before I became a monk and then I could

relate to it because you know it's it's

just this weird phenomenon that happens.

So largely just a kind of

mild kind of just awkwardness I guess

would be the best way of putting it.

[clears throat and cough]

So yeah, I only I only had like one

friend in Burma that is still a friend

now that there's like communication

going back and forth. Not that I like dislike everybody that I used to know besides this one person, anything like that. is just that I'm I've always been kind of a loner anyway and so I just went my own way and just pretty much what I've always done. Um you know like old high school friends I think I might have one of those left that we're still occasionally communicating.

So yeah, I'm really not a kind I'm really not a social person.

I don't I've never had like a really big circle of friends at least not since I got out of school.

So, you know, you just go your own way

and just do your own thing and
that's about it.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is also from
Ethiopian fake TIG. He says, "There is a
popular Indian American doctor on
YouTube called Dr. K. And in a recent
podcast, he said that when you meditate
for more than 40 minutes a day, you will
have higher risks of psychosis. Thoughts
on this?

Um, I'm not exactly sure if that would
be accurate. Um, and if so,
um, it's I mean I'm kind of skeptical of
that, but I mean it could be like this
slight increase, you know, like your
odds if you don't meditate at least 40

minutes a day, you know, it'd be like 1
in 10,000 and if you do meditate
at least 40 minutes a day and you one in
10,050

maybe or you know what is the exact
correlation? I mean it could be that
people who have a higher risk of
psychosis anyway are just the ones who
are more likely to do the intensive
meditation. I mean that's a possibility
too. You have to be kind of liinal kind
of on the fringe a little bit to be more
likely to do this kind of practice at
least in the west where it's not
mainstream. So there's that too. There's
all these kind of

uh variables that [clears throat] would have to be nailed down I think in order to really understand the situation. But it is true like western Buddhism, western Buddhism, I was mentioning this earlier today to somebody else that it does attract quite a few people that are on the fringe.

And so it could be that kind of situation also that it's not so much one causing the other as the other causing the one.

But I mean, anyone who's gone to intensive meditation retreats knows that doing intensive meditation can cause people to crack up.

[snorts] So, there's that, too.

But why what were what was Dr. K's motives for even saying that? It could be that he's just sort of secularized Indian and kind of opposed to spirituality. Thinks it's all [__] or whatever. And so he'll cherrypick data to kind of reinforce his own bias. I mean, it could be something like that, too.

But even if it's true, even if meditating for more than 40 minutes a day increases your risk of having some kind of mental breakdown, still, I mean, for a lot of people, it's worth the risk. just being a monk who's living in the tropics. I mean, it

increases your odds of getting malaria
or dysentery

or like uh what's the other one? Like
challera just increases your odds that
you're you're not going to live as long.

But I mean if you really are motivated
to live a spiritual life, you know, if
if you see the world through a dharmic
lens, for example, then stuff like that
is just a risk you're willing to take,
it's worth it.

So let's see here. Just checking to make
sure the computer is charging properly
because it does look sometimes like
there's a slight lag.

And I have no idea what the audio
quality on this video is going to be

like because [clears throat]

I upgraded

the operating system on this computer.

But ever since then, my old like audio

software that was connected to this

microphone,

it doesn't work anymore. So, I'm going

to have to find some new software for um

what's what's the word? Just for like

adjusting the audio properties of this

microphone.

[snorts]

[sighs]

So, let's see. I think I'm just going to

move on to the next question.

We didn't have very many questions

today, but it's like it's taken me forever to answer each question, so it's going to wind up being just as long as the usual video, I think, the usual Q&A episode for those of you who are just listening to the podcast version. So, this next question is from Sedarta Loha. And I have to admit, I always like respell Sedarta's name because he doesn't spell it the way um like the Mahayana Buddhists spell the Buddha's name as a lay person or Herman Hess spelled [clears throat] the name of his hero in the in the novel by the same name. Anyhow, Sedart Loha says, "What do you think about Orthodox Christianity? It seems like they have a

lot of aesthetic practices and monasticism. Well, I really don't know that much about Orthodox Christianity. I never really came across much orthodox Christianity in my younger days. Um, I mean, I've read a lot of Western history, which is more it contains more Catholicism than any other kind of Christianity. I mean, I've read the Bible more than once. So I I understand Christianity fairly well just from a biblical point of view with regard to the history of the development of Christianity. Like I've read Gibbons's decline and fall of the Roman Empire and other books that discuss

um you know like the the early early
Christianity and evolution and you know
the the schism between east and west
that kind of thing. But with regard to
like [clears throat] specific
like tenets of Orthodox Christianity, I
really don't know that much about it. Um
the the common consensus
um on certain social media is that um
Orthodox Christianity is the most based.
Um, Catholicism probably has more pagan
elements or at least it has a reputation
for having more pagan elements. Not
elephants but elements. Um,
Protestantism,
I mean, I kind of had my mind poisoned
against Protestant Christianity in

general simply because one of the first things the Protestants did was to abolish monastic orders. And at the same token, they abolished like more advanced practice like contemplation.

So the only major schools of Christianity that still have monks and nuns and contemplative orders would be the oldest ones like the Catholics, the Orthodox Christians. And then you've got sort of like the Coptic Church and like the Neestoran Syrian church, some of those ancient, you know, kind of vestigial Christian churches.

aside from the two big ones.

So, I mean, I've read a lot of Jehovah's

Witness material just because they keep
they kept giving it to me at one time.

[sighs]

But yeah, Orthodox Christianity, I mean,
I've read [clears throat] what is I've
read that one book about Orthodox
Christianity. It's a It's a little book,
something about a pilgrim about this
Russian peasant with a withered arm who
just is reciting the Jesus prayer. Dear
God, please have mercy upon me, a
sinner. Um, it's there's I think there's
a little more to it than that. And I
mean, I read that that's probably the
most orthodox text I've ever read aside
from the Bible itself.

Read a little bit about a few of the

like the orthodox mystics.

Red Dostki who is talking about Orthodox Christianity [clears throat]
in a sort of a fiction fictional and
more sociological
context.

I mean they're into icons.

Um but I think they do have a stronger
mystical tradition than western
Christianity. The more western
Christianity like the Catholics. The
Catholics do have certain contemplative
orders like the Carmelites,
but I think it's more common in the
Greek um monastic orders that there's
like intensive spiritual practice rather

than just,

you know, whatever it is that most

Catholic monks and nuns do.

So, yeah. I mean, I'm really not the

kind of person who's

qualified really to compare and contrast

Orthodox Christianity with other schools

of Christianity because I really don't

know that much about it. I'm not a

Christian.

So, most of what I know about it is

through osmosis.

And uh I mean I mean I couldn't be an

Orthodox Christian because I just can't

be a Christian really. I just cannot

believe the story. There's this

narrative you have to believe in order

to be a Christian as far as I can tell
and that's that Jesus Christ is the
Messiah. He's the only begotten son of
God who died for our sins. And I just
it's really not a viable option for me
to believe that. I can't just believe
something at will. I can't just decide
what I consider to be believable or not.
It's either believable or it isn't. and
the narrative of Christianity, the stuff
that seems essential to being a
Christian, I just can't believe it.
That's one of the two main reasons why
I'm not a Christian. The other is that
throughout my life, I've observed
so many Christians and very very few of

them are actually trying to follow the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Like, gather not up your treasures upon the earth, for example. sell all that you have, give the money to the poor, and follow me. Take up your cross and wander around healing the sick and casting out demons and all that. It's just it's like people say, "Well, that just applied to ancient times. That just applied to his his chief apostles and we can just live like heathens with and go to church on Sunday and, you know, have at least some lip service to some of the basic teachings.

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean, so many Christians, they they'll

get divorced and remarried, even though it says right in the Bible. Jesus himself says you can't do that.

I guess for people want to get divorced and remarried, Buddhism is a better option because from the Buddhist point of view, marriage is just a secular affair. It's it's not even a religious thing.

[sighs]

So yeah, I'm just going to move on. Next question. Also from Sedarta lohachita he says do you think the structural problem of Islam is the massive intermingling between cousins and the black people former slaves. The Muslims

of the Middle Ages in what is now Spain,
North Africa, Iraq or Iraq, Iran or
Egypt are not the same as modern Muslims
who intermarried with their first
cousins. And that had an impact. The
same thing happened in India with the
reproductive success of the Dalits
or the untouchables, I guess. Um,
[clears throat]

it's it's kind of weird. I I read just a
few days ago in a book by Edward Dutton
that in certain Muslim countries like in
North Africa and South Asia the the
cousin marriages is between 25 and 50%
of the population marry cousins
and he considers that to cause um lower
IQ on average

due to inbreeding

But the structural problem of Islam, it seems to me the main problem of Islam is it's the founder of Islam was a warlord who was a bandit who like forced himself sexually upon female prisoners of war. in some cases with their recently deceased husband just lying on the ground a few yards away that he had hundreds of people beheaded, hundreds of men beheaded and their wives and children sold into slavery.

The man was a just a product of the dark ages. He was a barbarian, a barbarian warlord, a violent barbarian warlord. And so you get into modern

times and you got people who are still sort of emulating a violent barbarian warlord as the ideal man. I would consider that to be much more of a structural problem of Islam than inbreeding.

But I suppose it's true that the Muslims of the Middle Ages in what is now Spain, North Africa, Iraq, Iran, or Egypt are not the same as modern Muslims. Well, largely because they were this sort of new converts at first and it was just this new system that was like in the full flush of enthusiasm that you know they thought they were going to conquer the whole world which fortunately didn't happen

although they did exterminate the
Buddhists of of India
and various other countries.

[sighs]

So I mean you can say that that
inbreeding is a structural problem of
Islam but I don't think it's the main
structural problem of Islam. I really
think that Islam itself is the main
structure of is is the main problem and
that it's just it's it's like relatively
primitive. I mean the Jewish religion of
like the Old Testament Old Testament
Judaism is similar. I mean Moses was
more of a warlord than he was like an
advanced spiritual teacher. Moses also

was ordering the deaths of thousands of people and the enslavement of their wives and children and all this.

So Muhammad and and Moses assuming that Moses existed, I assume there was probably some kind of proto Moses upon which the the the the myths coalesced just like there was probably originally a proto Hercules, a proto Achilles, that kind of thing.

So, but the thing with the the the Jews is that as they became more civilized, their religion became more civilized.

That there are very few Hebrews now who would strictly adhere to this Old Testament view of like all the Canaanites must be exterminated up. I

mean, you could argue that the whole thing with Gaza is is similar, but then again, according to the Jewish religion, according to the Old Testament, God commanded the the Israelites to exterminate all the non-Jews in in the Holy Land. So, they've they've restrained themselves fairly well with regard to that, I suppose.

Oh, man.

But [sighs]

yeah, I mean there have been wise possibly even enlightened uh Muslims like the the Sufis for example who did absorb some Buddhist and Hindu ideas.

[sighs and gasps]

I mean some people become saintly or sagely possibly even enlightened as much in spite of their religion as because of it.

But I mean just overall

Islam is it's sort of like a a relatively foolish primitive kind of religion that is easily accepted by foolish primitive kind of people.

But I suppose I shouldn't be indulging too much in this kind of critique.

And so I'm just going to move on this question.

This is from Cyrus Frame.

Cyrus frame. Oh, he's asking a narate question. I'm not I don't have the fez

handy.

Well,

okay. Cyrus Frame says, excuse me, Cyrus Frame says, "You said regarding Nagarina that you are never going to reach the goal by philosophizing eventually you have to let go of it." I think of this as you can't you can't think your way into it or out of it whatever it is.

I thought you made a very interesting point but do you believe in a goal?

Surely a goal is a form of wanting something implicit in it is a view that there is something better in the future than this to aim for. Well, certainly

like in in Pali it's ata can be translated as the goal. Sometimes in in Pali in translations the word ata is translated as the goal that Buddhism accepts or at least terra Buddhism accepts that there is a goal to aim for. Um but the goal is is like this nebulous one. I mean you don't have like this firm concept of what the goal is. It's just you're trying to transcend your own delusion. And once you've transcended that, then you attain this goal that really you couldn't fathom it or understand it before you reached it.

[snorts]

So, let's see here.

Uh, do I believe in a goal?

Yeah, I mean [clears throat] it's kind of a trick question because you call it an it, but the goal itself is kind of it's like off the scale, you know? It's like the goal is to transcend samsara, but anything that you do or say or think is necessarily samsaric.

So, I mean, it's trying to cure yourself of your own insanity is the goal.

I mean, if you have a goal, eventually you have to like stop having a goal really. That's that's very advanced practice, though. I mean, so long as you have something that you're attached to, something that you're clinging to, some

kind of aspiration, some kind of desire,
I mean, that is going to serve as just
this obstacle to your to your liberation
or your enlightenment.

But it can be very handy to have a goal
like early on and then you have it's
like you eliminate all other
attachments. You just have this one big
desire left. the desire for
enlightenment and then you try and try
and try and try to become enlightened
and then you fail and then finally it's
like there's a kind of just surrender
where you just let go of even the desire
to become enlightened you know it's just
sort of almost like giving up it's just
surrender and this is common in like

Christianity this idea of someone trying to be a saint you know they're trying to go to heaven just through their own efforts and finally Finally, they realize they can't do it. And so, it's just like they have this come to Jesus moment, so to speak. It's just I can't do it, God. If I go to heaven, it's going to be through your grace. I just fling myself upon your mercy. And it's like this surrender is it it it allows them to to reach the next stage to transcend this this wallowing in some sorrow that they were stuck in previous to that.

So there's it's a similar kind of thing
in in Buddhism also where it's like
[clears throat]
you you reduce your desires and
attachments down to this one. So you've
already made a lot of progress by
getting rid of your desires for like
sex, drugs and rock and roll, ice cream
and all that. So you just have this one
big attachment but so and it it helps
you to refine yourself to purify your
mind you know do good refrain from doing
evil purify the mind but still there's
this one obstacle left which is the the
desire for enlightenment itself
and so finally you just let go of that
possibly through some crisis through

some dark night of the soul you just let go of even the desire for enlightenment and just surrender to what is and that's it.

[cough and clears throat]

But I mean

it helps I suppose especially at the beginning and intermediate levels to have a goal but ultimately even the goal has to be let go of.

So I'm just going to move on to Cyrus

Frame's next question.

He says also how important do you think logic and philosophy is? I tend to think logic is very important. This is one reason I like the atikawaga so much is I

think it is very logically sound but with its absence of reifications and of metaphysical assertions. It seems to me that Tibetan Buddhist philosophy is almost the opposite of that. But the Dalai Lama now he's has the llama spelled with two L's but [clears throat] the Dalai Lama seems like a very peaceful maybe enlightened man. However, I have met similarly peaceful people who know nothing about Buddhism at all. So who knows I suppose an aspect of this is that we have to concentrate on our own minds as we cannot truly determine those of other people. So you know most of this is like commentary. So the actual question is uh right here up at the top

how important do you think logic and philosophy is? Okay. Um, I think the main benefit of logic and also largely of philosophy, but of logic in particular is it's a [__] detector. It helps you to weed out sloppy reasoning.

So, I mean, you can get rid of like really delusional ideas. You can probably get rid of most of them, not all of them, but most of them through like rational thought. just really soft-headed foolish ideas get weeded out through logic and philosophy and philosophy also I mean has that goal you know it's one of the main points of

philosophy I think it was Max Mohler
said this a long time ago more than 100
years ago is that one of the the basic
principles of philosophy is like
doubting what most people would just
accept at face value you know you're
starting to doubt just basic principles,
you know, like maybe this isn't reality.
You know, it's like most humans as well
as like pretty much all dogs, pigs, and
chickens just assume that this
phenomenal world we're living in is
reality. As long as you think that it's
reality, you're much less likely to try
to do anything about being stuck in it.
So philosophy, one of the benefits of
philosophy is the very idea that there

is something better and higher than what we're in right now. I mean, religion kind of does that too in a different way.

But logic in particular is mainly a [—] detector. But you can take logic and philosophy to the extent of like nagarina where you just criticize to death every possible point of view until just emptiness is all that's left and then you see through the emptiness into ultimate reality ideally.

So philosophy like a practical philosophy

uh has the benefit of teaching you why to practice dharma or dharma and how to

practice dharma.

Um

you know it gives you enlightenment as even a possibility.

You're you're much less likely to strive for enlightenment if you don't even have a concept of it. Even though the concept is going to be ultimately samsuric and delusional, at least it's moving you in the right direction. It's leading you to the jumping off point.

So I guess you could say uh the main purpose of philosophy from a dharmic point of view is to lead you to the jumping off point.

And logic is mainly just a [__] detector. It helps it weed out just

crappy crappy belief systems or just soft-headed, gullible, foolish belief systems.

So I'm just going to move on to the the next question which is the very last question and this is from Fred.

Fred says, "Can most mundane methods like the precepts penetrate the depths of the subconscious for example like an iceberg with only the consciousness poking through?"

Well, let's see.

>> [snorts]

>> I yeah most mundane methods like the precepts certainly they penetrate the depths of the subconscious to some

degree mainly because karma is itself mostly subconscious. So when you're following precepts or just living an ethical life in accordance with whatever ethics you're following I mean that is influencing your karma and your karma is mostly subconscious. So definitely I mean anything you do is influencing the subconscious mind. So even stuff you're doing at the surface level you know still is having an influence on the subconscious mind. So it is as Fred says here penetrating the depths of the subconscious. So yeah I mean that's fairly straightforward I think. I mean, especially if you consider that

karma is large largely subconscious,
mostly subconscious

and you're carrying that around all the
time without fully realizing it most of
the time. And I mean, your karma
literally is action.

I mean, that's what karma literally
means is action or acting, deed, that
kind of thing.

But it's it's more just the psychic
momentum. I mean from a Buddhist
philosophical point of view it's it's
like the momentum of your your mental
states

and it's uh largely subconscious because
I mean your your thinking ego isn't

fully aware of it.

So I guess I answered that question. So I guess I answered all the questions and so I guess we are done. And like I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, if you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to dharma, I mean not necessarily, you can ask other questions too, but mainly the purpose of these Q&As's are Q's and A's are with regard to Buddhism, I suppose, especially Terravada Buddhism and also early Buddhism like pre-ter Buddhism, which was one of my specialties, one of the things I was most interested in cuz as a a monk in particular especially I

was really trying to get to what the Buddha really taught just cut through as much of the mythology and you know propaganda and all that kind of stuff and just try to get to what the Buddha actually taught.

So, questions about that, questions about, you know, Burma, like one or two questions um this time. Uh questions about me personally, I don't get too personal. No questions about my junk, that kind of stuff.

Um

and no more than three questions per person, per episode, please. And like, like and subscribe. Just utterly

obliterate the like button. Don't just smash it. just just destroy it.

And check out the URL links below.

And again, I'm still waiting for the illustrations for my fourth book, which will come out, I hope, shortly after I get the illustrations because I need the cover art in order to design like the text on the cover and that sort of thing. And uh aside from that, all I got to say to you is uh be happy.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to [clears throat]
question and answer number 185. I am
your host Po Basa and this is my
beverage.

And I hope the sound quality will be a
little bit better now because I re
downloaded

um the software for making the
microphone sound better. So we'll see
how it goes. I still may have to make
some adjustments and tweaks and that
kind of thing.

[clears throat] And I might as well

[snorts] say that 185 is not prime

number. It is in fact $5 * 37$. Although

37 has always been one of my favorite numbers for obscure reasons.

And at the time of recording this, it is the day after

joint US and Israeli forces just bomb the hell out of Iran and continue to bomb Iran today. In fact, they're willing to continue bombing Iran for many days until Iran has approximately zero ability to retaliate with anything more than pointy sticks.

And I guess uh nobody's asked me about this because it happened so recently just right before the Q&A started, but I mean I'm I'm of mixed I'm ambivalent, let's say. I mean from an from a moral, ethical Buddhist point of

view, of course,

war is always just mass murder.

So war is always bad from a Buddhist ethical point of view. But one reason

why I lost interest in politics many

years ago and only recently started

getting interested in it again because

it really is interesting sometimes

is that I realized that what is good and

right from an ethical point of view is

not necessarily what is good and right

from a political point of view. and

whether America

aiding Israel to bomb the [_] out of

Iran is a good idea from a political

point of view, if it is good and right

politically.

Only time will tell.

Trump has been fairly

fortunate

in his choices

thus [clears throat] far. like

Venezuela.

I mean, he just arrested the dictator

whom I haven't heard anything about

since.

He's probably just locked up in a cell

somewhere awaiting trial.

Well, who knows? So, we're just going to

have to wait and see if from a political

point of view, America is better off

with Iran getting the [__] bombed out of

it and almost all of its senior

leadership just vaporized.

[sighs] And I suppose I should also say that the first few questions in this Q&A are questions that I somehow overlooked previously.

So,

these are at the top of the list cuz they were asked at least a week ago. I think Romeo's first one of his questions, I think, was asked like two or three weeks ago and I just somehow overlooked it. You know, I just kind of spaced it off or, you know, just scroll past it. Sometimes I'm going down the scroll, it's on the list and I just scroll past it accidentally somehow.

So anyways, the first question is from Yoshi Buouie and Yoshi Buouie says, "The block of marble that contains all possibilities, all possible versions of you, is that similar to the idea of a parallel universe." And of course, he's referring to my simile of the block of marble, which is like my theory of everything.

It's it's kind of like my well I mean the Buddhist theory of everything is dependent core rising and dependent core rising is sort of contained within the block of marble. So there's definitely overlap, but my theory of everything of like the universe existing and why it is the way

it is and all that is you've got this
infinite formless
consciousness, let's say, and contained
within this infinite this formless
infinity is every possibility. It's it's
all in there. And it takes dependent
core rising and perception
sort of self-reflective
statues contained within the block of
marble to kind of create samsara
various cosmos various phenomenal
universes. So anyways, Yoshib Buouie is
asking if this idea similar to the idea
of a parallel universe. And yeah, I mean
it would be sort of like the maximum of
the many worlds hypothesis which some

scientists take seriously.

Um it would just have every possible universe contained within it which would be some parallel universes and some universes that are just going off in a complete tangent. They're not really parallel at all. They're just going like perpendicular or something.

So yeah, it would contain parallel universes, but it would contain universes like alternate universes that aren't really running parallel. You know, just starting off with just completely different laws of physics, for example, just maybe even no laws of physics, just something else that is stabilizing the system.

I mean, you could have entire universes
of like pulsating
like geometrical
figures, this kind of thing that somehow
are like recursive or self-referential
enough that they become delusional and
create a samsara for themselves.

So, I think I've answered that question
more or less kind of. I'm just going to
move on to Romeo, who has asked four
questions here, but it's not really
transgressive because one of the
questions was asked a few weeks ago and
I just didn't notice it until recently.
So, Romeo says, "In all likelihood, you
have heard the demographic projections

that white people will soon become a minority in the US. Not only will white Americans be a minority, but they may even be a persecuted minority at that. Besides this, eventually large swathes of the US may not even be Englishspeaking.

The signs are all there. There's the recent all Hispanic Bad Bunny Super Bowl appearance performed totally in Spanish or New York City Mayor Zoran Mandani openly targeting white neighborhoods for higher taxes. Then there's this video clip circulating of a state representative in Houston, Texas causing calling for Asian, black, and Hispanics to find common cause and unite to take

down white people. I was wondering what your general take is of the demographic future of the US and what it bodes for white Americans. Will white Americans eventually become a persecuted minority akin to the whites in post-apartheid South Africa? I'm a regular English-speaking white American who has nothing against other ethnicities and cultures. Do you have any suggestions for someone like me to not be blackpilled about this likely future and to accept it with equanimity?

Um, so I guess there's a number of questions contained within this question, isn't there? There's a number of question marks. So let's see here.

First, he's talking about sort of like white replacement theory. Um, I can't remember. There was some halfjapanese aristocrat like a hundred years ago who uh had this theory that is named after him, but I can't remember his name right off hand. But it's uh kind of replacing white people because partly because white people um don't behave like the the global norm. I mean, we're too like freedom and originality oriented, for example. And so we we don't make easily. I mean, we're not sheeplike enough as general. I mean, everybody is pretty sheeplike. The human race in general has got sheep instincts.

But the European race or subra or

ethnicity, family of ethnicities,
whatever you want to call your your
people of European ancestry.

Um there's just something about us that
makes us

more

interested in human rights,
freedom, originality, individuality,
that kind of stuff. which just kind of
throws [clears throat] a monkey wrench
into the globalist agenda to some
degree.

And so I assume that's a major reason
why it has been a globalist a part of
the globalist agenda to just
eliminate white cultures

through dilution [clears throat] if
through nothing else.

So

let's see. Let's get down to the
question marks here. See, I wonder I was
wondering what your [snorts] general
take is of the demographic future of the
US and what it bodess for white
Americans.

Um well

I mean it's a a common mistake to take a
trend that exists now and just
extrapolate it into some inevitability
whereas usually doesn't doesn't work
very well because I mean you see a car
heading towards a brick wall you can
extrapolate well the car is going to hit

the brick wall but as a general rule people turn the car before they get to the brick wall. Every once in a while the car really will hit the brick wall, but usually the driver of the car steers the car so that it doesn't ram into the brick wall. And

there is some of that involved in this in that just because the trend is going in that direction now does not mean that there will be course corrections so to speak.

So, I mean, even now with Trump as president, you've got actual negative immigration going on for the first time in many decades.

I mean, if it has ever been the case in America before that we had negative immigration where there's more people leaving the country than entering. And it's not so much like disgusted, pissed off leftists. I mean, there's some of those and like they tend to regret it after leaving. They don't realize what a good country America is to live in until they go to the UK or Canada or someplace and then it's even worse.

So, I mean, who knows? It could [clears throat] be 50 years from now there's going to be a race war or something and that could just really change

things. But the thing is westerners

um I mean [clears throat]

we are creative, innovative to some degree unpredictable.

We tend to win wars. That's why western

civilization has taken over the entire

world. I mean you go to other countries

that are opposed to western

civilization. Let's say China for

example and they're wearing western

clothes and they've got driving western

style cars using western style

technology. you know, just western style

pretty much everything except for the

language they're speaking and some of

their vestigial customs even their their

like politics is based on western
politics now.

And there's reasons for that. And so I
mean people of European ancestry are
better at European like global culture
now because we invented it. it's more in
tune with our psyche, you know, our
human nature, our version of human
nature or whatever.

[sighs] So, I mean, we will tend to out
compete competitors.

And that's like on the international
scale and also within within the country
itself that what's likely going to
happen is what's already happening now
where you've got like white people
fleeing places like New York City that

are becoming increasingly anti-white people and they're accumulating in more Republican run places. Florida, you know, just the the Bible belt of the South in general, just the like the middle states, the so-called flyover states that probably you're going to have um maybe to some degree a bulcanization of the United States. I mean, it could I mean, nothing lasts forever. That's one of the teachings of Buddhism. One of the marks of existence, one of the three marks of existence is impermanence.

So, the United States isn't going to last forever. Rome didn't last forever.

I mean, there's still a city of Rome.

[snorts] Well, the empire is long gone.

[clears throat]

Even when it was revived as the Holy Roman Empire, it still was just a completely different country.

So, I mean, you might have just like enclaves, you know, just sort of white refugees accumulating and then they're just going to out compete the the other areas. as a general rule. You're going to have sort of progressive governments, state governments or or whatever that are going to insist upon diversity, equity, and inclusion. They're going to say, "Screw me. That's a tool of white patriarchal oppression." And so, they're

just not going to be able to compete.

They will not compete against

like Europeans doing the European thing

very well

unless the Europeans just emasculate

themselves as they have done in the EU

for example.

So yeah, I don't think that

um Americans will eventually become a

person persecuted minority akin to the

whites in post-apartid South Africa

largely because South Africa it was

always a small minority of of the people

there the bo and the and the English the

British it was relatively small minority

so that they can just be overwhelmed and

a lot of them just left after apartheid ended foreseeing being that South Africa was just going to degenerate into a corrupt third world hell hole, which is what it is doing.

So yeah, I don't think [clears throat] the white people in America are going to become a minority in the same way as Zimbabwe or South Africa, something like that,

[snorts]

or Singapore.

So [sighs] yeah, I don't I'm not blackpilled and anything is possible and you're going to I mean the universe is always it's just every possibility is out there including infinite number of

possibilities starting from this point here. So it's going to depend a lot on our own karma using the English word karma instead of the poly word karma.

[snorts]

And so I mean just anything that could possibly originate from the per the current present situation, it's out there

and we're just going to have to navigate that in accordance with our our wisdom or lack of same and our karma.

So let's see here. Oh, the the question continues.

Let's see. I'm Let's see. Do you have any suggestions for someone like me to

not be blackpilled about this likely future? Well, being blackpilled is just not a strategy at all. It's certainly not conducive to success.

You know that pretty much the only guaranteed way of failing is just to give up or quit. You know, that's that's guarantee of failure right there. Just to to give up.

Um

see to accept it with equanimity. Well, I mean, whatever happens is going to be of your own creation. You're creating the the world you live in. You know, it's your own comma has placed you where you need to be in order to work out these latent tendencies and stuff you

still need to work on because you haven't you haven't learned to work it out perfectly yet. It's like Groundhog Day.

And Bill Murray had to keep spending the same day over and over until he just got it right.

So [sighs and gasps]

yeah, I mean you are creating your own reality and it may be kind of a a harsh difficult reality. I mean I have to admit for for me personally 2026 has started off on like a kind of the wrong foot and it's just continued that way.

It's been limping

up to the first two months thus far. But

I'm I I have faith in my own comma and
just I don't know faith in the gods, the
small G gods or some such that things
definitely do have to get better
[sighs and snorts]
sooner or later.

So, who knows? Maybe uh for starters,
the Iranians will admit that I mean,
they're just going to keep getting
bombed into oblivion until they decide
to say, "All right, okay,
we'll uh we'll try some kind of secular
government now and see how that works."

Let's see here. Okay, so I guess I
answered that one fairly well. Do not be
blackpilled. It's It's just
It is not a winning strategy. It is not

conducive to happiness or anything else.

Well, I guess it's conducive to

something, but not much that is good.

So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's

next question. These are, I think, his

recent questions. So, the extra

questions that I've already answered are

not transgressive, technically speaking.

And Romeo says, "I went through a lot of

trauma growing up as a result of having

some pretty unstable, toxic parents."

What is your advice on how to accept

one's toxic parents as much as possible

despite how much they harmed you over

the years, especially when they continue

to be toxic?

Well, I mean, Romeo is a grown man now.
He doesn't have to live with his
parents. So, I mean, from that point of
view, the best advice I would give you
is be polite. You know, be respectful.
um you don't have to interact with them
any more than is necessary. I mean, it
might be, you know, you're going to call
them on their birthday or maybe even
come come over for Thanksgiving dinner,
that sort of thing. And just use it as a
spiritual practice,
you know, just
being nice, you know, not trying to get
sucked into old toxic habit patterns,
that kind of thing.

um

honor thy mother and father or is the
commandment father and mother
patriarchal system. So maybe it started
off with father.

Um

let's see.

Yeah, I mean from the Buddhist point of
view, you don't have to like be
interacting with them all the time.

So you know if if they really are like
foolish people that are like have like a
negative mental state have negative
effects on you then I mean first the
first blessing of the mandalas which is
a list of blessings is not associating
with foolsam

[snorts]

in in Burmese pronunciation of pi.

So yeah, you just kind of keep it down to a a minimum that is not like too harsh. I mean, if they're just horrible, I mean, if they were I mean, just abusive and so forth, then you might just make a a clean break while at the same time still trying to have metaphor, you know, forgive them because they know not what they do, that kind of thing.

And you can say some people can be like cynical and say, well, they knew what they were doing. But still people just I mean they're delusional and so they they kind of know what they're doing but at the same time if

they knew of something better that would make them happier they'd probably be doing that. If they just could break free of their habit patterns and so forth. And a lot of abusive parents were abused by their own parents which causes like this vicious circle. Like my father um his father his father Grandpa Reynolds was a very gentle man. He was an ordained Baptist minister. He was working on his fourth doctor when he died. He was fluent in Greek and Latin. Just a very gentle man. My father saw him not be gentle very few times and they really stuck in his memory. Like one time, this was way back when

people were still driving horses and buggies. Back in the the 20s, late 20s, you know, cars had been invented, but still a lot of people still had horses and buggies. Um, some guy got his horse tangled up in a barbed wire fence in front of my father's parents' house. And the guy was just whipping that horse and just he was like in a frenzy. And the horse was in this frenzy of just terror and pain. And my grandfather, who was normally a very gentle, soft-spoken man, he grabbed a shotgun and he he went out there and just told this guy just in this deathly calm voice, although he was just white and kind of vibrating when he was saying it, but he kept it very calm.

And he says, "If you whip that horse one more time, I swear to God, I'm going to shoot you."

But my father's mother was just a fire and brimstone fundamentalist Christian who firmly believed spare the rod, spoiled the child. And my father was just beaten over and over again by his mother. So his mother kind of fathered him and his father kind of mothered him which I mean my father turned out relatively normal. You know he was he was relatively healthy, wise, relatively welladjusted person. I mean, he was a an alcoholic for for many years, for much of his

life, maybe half his life,
but whether that had anything directly
resulting from being beaten by his
mother over and over again, I don't
know.

So, getting back to the actual question
though, um, oh, well, I mean, I might as
well continue with my father just with
regard to the
arguably toxic mother that, you know, he
was still he'd still call her and speak
to her and he didn't have to live with
her anymore. So, I mean, he didn't have
to put up with very much and she wasn't
much inclined to beat on him when she
was in her 70s anyway.

But she'd it'd be more like Jesus is

coming. And then my father would say,
"Well, when he comes, tell him howdy for
me." And then she'd be saying, "You're
gonna have to tell your own howdies."

Well, I mean, to some degree, he forgave
her. I mean, he wasn't really
complaining about, you know, how he was
abused as a child. I mean, it would come
up in conversation when he's telling
stories about when he was a kid and so
forth,

but as a general rule, it's just uh he
kind of accepted
that that was in his past and, you know,
he's got a different present now and a
different future.

So, yeah, I guess I'm just going to have to go back to the original answer of um, you know, be polite and respectful if if that seems appropriate. have meta in your heart. You know, forgive them as well as you can, but at the same time, if they're still toxic, then keep a safe distance. Maybe just do your duty as a son to show up for Christmas or Thanksgiving and say [clears throat] happy birthday, send a Mother's Day card, that kind of thing, and just kind of keep a safe distance. Um, so that you don't get sucked into these [clears throat] sort of toxic habit patterns.

That would be my best advice. I mean, if

you really wanted to be hardcore in spiritual practice, you could, you know, one of your parents, you know, really needs to have someone taking care of them, you could be like feeding them and wiping their behind and and that sort of thing someday. Um, as that would be like advanced spiritual practice, I think.

[snorts] And it's time for me to go on to the next question also from Romeo. He says, "What do you know about the Buddha's parents, especially with regard to their behavior, temperament, temperaments, and the way they treated him as he was growing up?" Um, well, all you really know about the Buddha's

parents are that, you know, his is
legend, you know, it's it's it's
mythology kind of. So I mean the
Buddhist parents he had king sudodana
which literally means pure cooked rice
and his mother was Mahammaya or great
illusion I suppose
and his mother the queen or one of the
queens.

Um she died when the Buddha was like a
week old.

Um I mean if that really happened then
you know it could be complications of
childbirth or something. Um
although I think
going with the legend it was just sort
of like this cosmic law that you know

she did something so tremendous by giving birth to the future Buddha that I mean it was like too much for her mortal frame to bear I guess. And so she died shortly thereafter. Kind of like in ancient Greece if you look upon a god and his his full glory. I mean you just it's just too much too much sublimeness. So with regard to his biological mother, I mean she really did not have much of of an impact on his life other than just her absence.

Her his father was according to legend a king. the king of Capilawatu which was a small like a city state kind of a kingdom according to legend although I

mean nowadays the experts the
endologists the archaeologists and so
forth are saying that in all likelihood
Capilawatu was it was kind of like an
oligarchic
republic more than a kingdom
and so some of the like the Buddhist
fundamentalist ists will try to cobble
those together. You know, they'll try to
save the theory by saying, well, the
Buddhist father was called the king
because he was like the senior lead of
the oligarchic council of elders. They
run ran the the small state, this sort
of thing. But I mean, you go with like
the legends and he was just a proud
king, you know, he was not like a cruel,

sadistic kind of king, but still he was proud. He had lots of mana and he was really disgusted by his son renouncing kingship in order to go and become a penniless beggar.

My father had some similar feelings although I was never a royal prince in this life.

So

their temperaments, behavior, I mean the Buddha's father, his behavior was kingly, you know, just sort of the stereotypical

proud. I mean, a relatively good king, but still, I mean, pride was one of the outstanding personality traits that

comes through in the texts. There is one
suta in which the Buddha claims that
when he renounced the world to go from
home the home life into homelessness his
parents stood by grieving which could be
like a relic of like the pre- legend
where may it may be that his his father
and mother him were both alive
um as [snorts] the Buddha grew into
manhood. But again, all we really have
is legends. You know, there's also the
the the legend of the Buddha when he was
a child sitting under a rose apple tree
and learning meditation just
spontaneously while his father is
plowing a field. And if his father
really was a king, there's a good chance

he wouldn't be plowing a field. Although I think the the official explanation for that is that the king was doing some ceremony or he was ceremonially plowing a furrow for you know some some state

reason. You know he wasn't really a farmer plowing a field. He was just plowing just this sort of a sacred furrow for some symbolic reason that was required of him as as a king.

But then the Buddha also had like a stepmother who was his also his aunt. Um the Buddha's father according to tradition married two sisters Mahamaya and let's see what was her name Maha

Pajapi Godi.

So they were all members of the Godma
clan. They're all

let's hope distant cousins and not first
cousins. Um,

[snorts]

so yeah, his his his stepmother also his
aunt who raised him, although if he was
a royal prince, he probably was raised
by an army of, you know, nurses and
slave women and that kind of thing, too.

That she was a virtuous woman and had
some wisdom and she was the one who
begged the Buddha after his
enlightenment to start the the order of
nuns. and she was the first ordained
Buddhist nun.

But there's really not a whole lot of emphasis [clears throat]

on like the temperaments and personality traits and behavior of the Buddha's parents.

You know, it's it's all legend. And so you just have to kind of take it with a grain of salt. I mean, the only real friction that you see with the Buddha and his father was his father was kind of offended or disgusted by the Buddha renouncing, you know, the the throne, being first in line for the throne in order to become literally a penniless beggar.

Although he eventually did see the

light, I do think he became an Arya after the Buddha returned to his home state and uh kind of reconciled with his wife and ordained his son Rahula as a monk. And I think I'm pretty sure I mean it's been a long time since I've read this, but I do think according to the legend, according to the Suta, his father took the three the three refugees and converted to Buddhism.

So then he was proud of his son again, I suspect.

And uh I think I'm just going to move on to Romeo's last question here, which is what advice do you think the Buddha would give about how to deal with toxic parents?

And I would guess his his advice would be pretty much my original advice in response to two questions above [clears throat] that. I mean, you should have meta for them. you should forgive them. And uh but if they really are like still toxic, you know, just keep a safe distance as much as you can while not like abandoning your filial duty to at least, you know, be there for them if if they need you, that kind of thing.

Um there is the famous statement in the sutta somewhere where the Buddha says that I mean even if you carried your aged parents around on your back for the rest of your life, you could never fully

repay them for having brought you into this world and you know produced the person that you are today. you know, even if they had negative effects and so forth and were abusive and to some degree you became a good person in spite of them that still I mean you are who you are largely because I mean they're the ones who brought you into the world and your first influences were from them and even if you became a good person in spite of them still I mean you started with that in order to become what you are now.

[snorts] So there is a lot of the kind of the biblical honor thy father and mother um you know in the ten

commandments that that's kind of built into just about any kind of traditional religious system including Buddhism.

But I would guess that, you know, he he would advise that if they really are toxic, you know, foolish, harmful people that, you know, you should try to I mean, you have to have a certain distance unless you're just full-blown saint. You know, you're like Aliosha Karamazov in in the Dostki novel where it's like you just plunge right into it, you know? It's just that is your spiritual that's the crucible the spiritual crucible where you're going to be purified by the the holy fire of just

self you know selfdenial

but you have to do that wisely because otherwise you just get sucked into these negative habit patterns that are just self-perpetuating and get even worse so yeah I mean you should engage to the extent that you have the wisdom to do that in a positive way. And

[clears throat] each person would have to decide that for themselves. Or if they lack the wisdom to decide that for themselves, then they should have somebody that they trust who is, you know, knows enough information about the parents and the the child and so forth that they could give some advice as to, you know, how far you should go in

performing filial duties without just getting sucked into this toxic habit pattern stuff.

[snorts] But have meta for them at least, you know?

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Austin. And now we're getting into the recent. No, no, I guess uh Austin's uh last three questions were recent. So never mind.

This question is from Austin. And Austin says, "Would you ever be open to the idea of starting a 501c3 for the purpose of founding a meditation center with yourself as a teacher?"

I mean,

it doesn't strike me as being particularly likely.

I mean, it's theoretically possible that it could happen. Although,

yeah, I I just

something would really have to break.

There'd be have have to be some kind of break in the log jam that has existed

since long before I stopped being a monk

with regard to actually making a living

in the west as a dharma teacher. When I

first disrobed, you know, that was kind

of like the obvious choice. The thing I

was most qualified to be would be a

dharma teacher. But

actually making a living at that is a

whole different kettle of wax,

so to speak.

So

yeah, I mean

it's theoretically possible, but not
extremely likely in my opinion.

ah good chance I'll just spend the rest
of my life um at least my professional
life

running machines that kind of thing
which is kind of unfortunate I guess but
when you just start over from scratch
after 30 years of being a monk and
just making a living as a dharma teacher
I mean it's it's theoretically possible
it can happen. It does happen,
especially in California, which is a

state I would not want to live in.

But it's just uh I mean, there has been like a karmic log jam that has been like an obstacle to that since long before I stopped being a monk. It's just difficult getting support, enough support to live on comfortably. I mean, as a lay person, I mean, I would need more support than as a monk just because monks can just live under a tree.

And being a lay person that has like a woman and dogs to feed, that kind of thing, fishes, it takes more than just the bare minimum that a monk requires.

So, I mean, if something if somebody

were to come along, this is pretty much the only way it would happen is is like some eccentric wealthy person just comes along and makes the offer, then yeah, I would definitely consider that. But like going out and trying to make it happen on my own. I've tried that before and it's it's it just experience indicates that I would be it'd be more realistic to make a living doing something else. And so I do this as a pre a free public service just out of the kindness of my heart and a sincere desire to share something of value with you guys. And so I'm just going to move on to uh I might as well say I mean just charging

money for dharma is something that I've always kind of not liked anyway you know just just the idea of it you know dharma should be free it's like priceless so there's that too and so I'm just moving on next question this is from Newman and Newman says is it bad karma to research Buddhist justifications for war if not a kind of holy war, for example, the kala chakra prophecy or samurai zen, etc., as well as the more out there Tantric step Buddhism, where warlords intermingled with Antonyomian CDs and then make an informative detached video covering the history and conveying the logic or metaphysics or Buddhist justifications behind those views.

intention. I find it interesting and it could make for cool content, not endorsing it or biased. So, this is another one of those questions often asked by people like, you know, is it bad karma to do this or that action? And again, as I keep saying until I'm blue in the face and it might be kind of a slight bluish tint right now, that outward actions are karmically neutral, that the ethical aspect of an action ultimately is the accompanying mental states. So if Newman here wants to research Buddhist justifications for war, you know, to study the history of militant Buddhism and sort of work out

the philosophical justifications for it in with like a Buddhist slant, you know, the Buddhist justifications, you know, like the samurai, Zen warriors, the sword masters, that kind of thing. Um, and also just kind of from his his own Buddhist slant, then I mean [snorts] it's not necessarily good or bad. It just depends on, you know, what your motives are, how you feel about what you're doing, um, how much you're wallowing in delusion, attraction, aversion, and delusion. Attraction, aversion, and semiconscious stupidity.

And so I mean from the Buddhist point of view there you don't have just pure

white and pure black. It's not like the Bible where God commands you to do something and so doing it is just pure good and not doing it is pure bad or doing the opposite is pure bad. I mean in Buddhism it's all shades of gray.

I mean you never have pure white or pure black. It's like when you become enlightened, it just becomes like transparent, clear, no longer any color at all.

So, yeah, I mean, I've I've kind of looked into it a little bit like like uh Suzuki Roshi, who was one of the people who brought Buddhism into the American

mainstream mainly through the beatniks in the 1950s. I mean he was a supporter of Japan and like fascism during World War II, you know, so he did actually put forth arguments

sort of justifying like the the samurai zen sword masters, that kind of thing.

So it's out there and it is kind of interesting. I have to admit

I've written on the subject a few times I think in my old blog.

Um also I was like shortly after I came back to America the last time I was still a monk. um a person who was just a self-proclaimed fascist asked me to help as a kind of technical adviser, a Buddhist technical adviser with regard

to uh I think it was a subreddit he was making with regard to Buddhist fascism which included you know a certain amount of violence. Fascism, you know, one of its stereotypical qualities is it tends to be somewhat militaristic.

And you know, just as a technical adviser, I was cool with that. I mean, I wasn't endorsing violence,

but I mean, just kind of helping to explain the situation, you know, just historical attitudes towards it, that kind of thing. I mean, that can be just detached and amoral.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

is it bad karma to research Buddhist justifications for war, etc.? Not necessarily. It depends on your attitude, what your motives are, that kind of thing. I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Siovak and Seipad Zidana.

And Sioad Zidana says, "You said David Hume is your favorite modern philosopher. He famously said, "Reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions."

Do you agree with this sentiment that reason should be the slave of the passions? Well, whether it should be or not, I mean, it

it just is.

And so, if something is a certain way, then it becomes this kind of academic or superfluous to say whether it should be that way. I mean I mean should rocks be hard? Well, I mean they are hard as a general rule.

Um so the should I mean it's it's like kind of value judgment where you know it's like you're just like well rocks shouldn't be hard in my opinion even though they are hard. I mean what's the point of that? I mean it just seems silly. But I do agree with Hume that reason is the slave of the passions because reason cannot initiate anything.

I think Kant also agreed with this that pure reason cannot motivate an action that it has to be passion that actually causes you to get up in the morning that actually causes you to do anything that that is ultimately irrational. That's just like in early Buddhism, the the the spike in the heart that just causes this restless dissatisfaction that makes us want to just remain in motion and keep doing stuff.

That reason in and of itself, I mean, it doesn't make value judgments, you know? It's like, is it better to get up in the morning or just stay in bed and just not ever get up and just lie there till you're dead? I mean, it's not logically

necessary that remaining in existence is better than not remaining in existence or vice versa. One could argue it's like, well, when you're playing chess, that's completely rational or can be anyway. But I mean, why do you want to play chess in the first place?

It's ultimately irrational that any decision you make with regard to doing something is going to be irrational. And then rationality just helps to guide that

largely through just being a [__] detector and weeding out obviously stupid decisions.

Like I mean just [clears throat] should

I throw this rock through the window?

It's like, well, no, it would break the window. Then I'd have to fix the window.

And so it's just reason just helps to weed out that stupid idea.

But whether reason should be the slave of the passions or not. I mean, it's just it just seems like kind of a silly question because that's just the way it is. You know, should rocks be hard? And it is it's kind of that kind of question. So, I mean, I'll go along with David Hume. I'll just say yeah it should be the slave of the passions because I mean the passions are what actually motivate behavior.

I mean to do something or not to do

something to be or not to be does not
have a a a rational necessary answer.

Logic cannot I mean logic itself is
ultimately based on irrational premises.

The only way you could have pure logic
would be to have an infinite regress of
premises

that you just can't have at some point.

You just have to start with some
hopefully self-evident axiom or group of
axioms.

But just choosing the axioms is itself I
mean to make the choice is itself just
not ultimately fundamentally rational.

>> [sighs]

>> So I'm just going to move on to see of

action and see pad zero's next question.

And I don't know how to pronounce this name. It's a French name.

La ro fold

ro fuko. I don't think so. Anyways, this French guy said, "We love neither mother nor father nor wife nor child, but rather the agreeable feelings they give us." Do you agree with this sentiment?

Well, from the Buddhist point of view, ultimately there is no mother or father or wife or child and no us either because there is no like

what's what's the word

um no individual no distinct ultimately

real individual no individual self

essence

that that's all dependent coising

so

um I mean you can't even say that we

love the agreeable feelings they give

us. Because if you get down to the level

of no self, all of that's an illusion.

So, I mean, if you're just going to be

dealing in the samsaric level of

illusion, you can say, "Sure, we love

our our father and our mother and our

wife and our child."

Um, and

I mean if you just break that down into

just stimuli, then you could say, okay,

um, there is love for the the pleasant

feelings or or whatever it is, or love

out of duty, that kind of thing.

For some reason, I keep keep being reminded of a saying of Lord Byron.

George Gordon Lord Byron, famous romantic poet of the the early 19th century in England.

[clears throat] He said that the the first time a woman falls in love, she falls in love with a man and then every time after that, she just falls in love with love itself.

Just the feelings she get from being in love, you know, she kind of gets she she jones on that or something.

Um, but I mean at some philosophical level you could say that yeah, we don't really love another person. We love the

way they make us feel or the the pleasant associations, the pleasant perceptions cuz the only way you know another person is through perceptions, at least from a Buddhist point of view.

So, I mean, you're kind of projecting like some being out there that you're aiming your love at, [clears throat] but really,

I mean, what it is that's causing you to project the the being out there and feel the love and everything is your own perceptions, which are mental states. I mean, you could say that

at at a very deep level, you know, there is a kind of telepathy, a kind of real

empathy

that, you know, in the in the block of marble, there are group statues. And so there's there can be a kind of group mind. And if there is a kind of group mind, like a a deep te telepathic bond between people, then you can maybe to some degree bypass just the superficial feelings and just directly kind of love this US entity that you and and the beloved person are creating.

Let's see.

Did did I answer the question though? I mean the main question is um do I agree with this sentiment and largely I do but it's I don't think it's necessarily 100% true. I mean partly just because there

is no us to love anybody either. just
going with the strict interpretation of
no self. And also if you get to a like a
little bit more samsaric level then
still there can be like a group mind
where you can just bypass the
superficial perceptions and just have
like this like a direct communion with
another being which is not orthodox
Buddhism

but still I do consider it to be
possible and it's largely in agreement
with my whole theory of everything the
theory of the block of marble or the
simile of the block of marble.

And I'm just going to move on to this

question. This also is from Siovak and Sipad Zidana. He said based on the previous question, if you answered yes, and I answered pretty much yes, although not entirely 100% yes. He said, if you answered yes, then do you think knowing this we should be truthful to others about this? For example, when you tell your parents, husband, wife, or kids, we should really say, "I love how you make me feel," rather than, "I love you." If you don't believe in lying, I wonder how far you would go. Well, I mean, if you're taking it at the the radical level of no self, then you couldn't even say I or me.

So yeah, I mean if you take get all the

way down to like the the level of
ultimate truth or as close to the level
of ultimate truth as you get, I mean
it's just beyond language. It's anything
you say is just going to be samsaric
and not ultimately true.

Um with regard to I love how you make me
feel. I mean that's kind of a romantic
thing that you might say to your lover
sometimes in addition to I love you. But
I mean, if you're dealing at like the
level of conventional truth, which is
the level of language,
then I don't see any problem with
saying,

"I love you. I tell my woman that I love

her. I don't think I'm lying just

because of these metaphysical

or

kind of abstract philosophical notions."

And sometimes it's like like I was

mentioning in a previous Q&A. I think it

was the previous Q&A about saying I'm

sorry that I mean to some degree it's

it's like a block of words that convey a

sentiment

and I mean it it doesn't necessarily

have like a literal

adherence to objective truth necessarily

like even etymology's words like

understanding

I understand this idea doesn't mean

you're standing standing under it. So,

you're using words that don't necessarily mean the literal meaning of the word, if that makes any sense. That just the statement I love you is I mean, it has different meanings to different people. And I don't think you're lying. Even if that French guy was right, that technically you don't really love the other person. You loved the way they make you feel. Although again, I don't 100% believe that. And so, yeah, I see no problem or dishonesty in saying I love you, even if I accept the the Buddhist doctrine of no self to be ultimately true.

I mean, so long as you're talking,
you're not adhering to ultimate truth
because you're relying on these symbols
that have more or less vague, ambiguous,
approximate meanings based on delusion.

[snorts] So, yeah, I do say I love you.

I even I've even said it to my dogs a
few times.

So, let's just move on. Next question.

This is from Fred. And Fred says, "How
to dig out Anus." And I should check to
make sure we are recording. And yeah,
we've been going at it for almost an
hour. That's good. That would suck if
after an hour I look and and we're not
recording.

So, question is how to dig out Anusias.

And for those of you who aren't into
like technical poly philosophical
jargon, an anusia
is an underlying tendency. It's like
latent karma or latent behavior
patterns, latent personality traits that
don't come to the surface until a
certain situation arises. You know, it's
like when I became a monk, I had lots of
lay person anus because I just wasn't
hanging out with lay people, especially
not American lay people for years. You
know, I'd be just living out in a forest
in Burma. The only Burmese people I
would meet or the only lay people I
would meet would be like Burmese

subsistence farmers, that kind of thing.
And, you know, they they saw me as the
holy man. And there was just a
completely different dynamic between us.
But then I I realized or I noticed kind
of to my surprise after many years
coming back to America and starting to
hang out with American lay people again
and it was like certain behavior
patterns just came right back up. It was
like an anusia. It was a latent tendency
just still there
waiting for the correct circumstances to
arise that would then bring forth the uh
the behavior.

So Anusia's yeah latent tendencies how
to dig them out. [laughter] I don't

think you dig them out. I think what happens is I mean it's like latent karma and you don't just dig out karma. I mean, the closest you can come to digging out karma is just letting it run it run its course and exhaust itself without reacting to the procedure, the process of that in such a way that you're just reinforcing it or you know like resupplying it, continuing it continuing continuing it in existence. So you you don't dig out the anus. You just kind of let them fade out by just living your life, letting nature take its course. And then when something like this comes up, you let it come up

mindfully. So you're denaturing the momentum, the karmic momentum of it. You detach from it. you know, you observe it as a phenomenon rather than just wallowing in it and just perpetuating the habit or the habit pattern.

So you you wind up in some situation and old habit patterns come up. You know, it's like you you go and visit your toxic parent and this behavior that you have not indulged in in years suddenly is coming up again because you got this this old you know this old pattern has suddenly come into existence which allows these latent tendencies to come up again. So,

I mean, the best you can do is to do that as wisely and mindfully as you can and just let it come up without reacting to it, without like resisting it or clinging to it or anything like that.

just do it mindfully as wisely as you can manage and just let it run its course so that you're not like reinforcing the momentum of that and then the the old habits die out.

So yeah, it's just that there's the old saying you can't teach an old dog new tricks and it turns out teaching an old dog new tricks is quite possible. It's unteing it the old tricks that are difficult. breaking old habits. And an

anusia is like a habit that isn't really being p indulged in right now necessarily, but it's still there. You know, it's you still got the grooves worn into your your neurons in your brain going with a materialistic explanation of it.

And I'm just going to move on to Fred's next question, which is as follows.

[snorts]

Fred says, "As an old hippie, my goal was to have a constant high. Do Arahans just flatline emotionally?

Um, for example, are they constantly in a neutral mood? For example, no excitement or exhilaration like motorcycle riding." Well, again, this is

this is a a recurring theme in in the Q&A of let's second guessess what an enlightened being's mental states are like.

H. So with regard to the question, do Arurans just flatline emotionally?

No, I don't think so. I mean, they're more serene. They're less excitable.

Just going with the the sutras. But again,

just even going back to David Hume and saying that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions, that it's the passions that actually cause us to do something because pure reason cannot motivate an action.

So would still have some kind of emotional component to their mentality. It's just that and a lot of people just can't get this is you transcend that.

You know, at the very least it's like you're you're

lucid dreaming. You know, you're still in a dream world, but you're lucid dreaming. You know that you're dreaming and you make decisions like based on kind of a higher level than the dream itself.

So you could to some degree say that Arahanss are doing something similar so long as they're still in this world. You know, they're still kind of participating in this dream illusion,

but at the same time, they have transcended that to some degree that higher they they have see, you know, they are operating at a level that is not just inscribed in this delusion. And it requires in order to understand something like that, it requires having to imagine two different levels of reality at the same time.

like can and aluminum, you know, it's at one level, the level of form, it's a can. At the level of essence, it's aluminum.

And it's like two different levels of reality. Can and aluminum are not synonyms. They're not exactly the same,

but it's two things at the same two
different things at the same time.
and just like an enlightened being
transcending
delusion without completely abandoning
it, just sort of not identifying with it
anymore. So, it's illusion at best and
no longer delusion because the
enlightened being no longer believes in
it, is no longer like just wallowing in
it, just sucked into it and lost in it.
No longer lost in the matrix, you know,
they took the red pill. So they're, you
know, even when they're in the matrix,
still they know they're in the matrix
and there's this higher level of reality
that where, you know, they're mainly

functioning.

[snorts]

So yeah, I mean to some degree, I mean going with Buddhist philosophy, traditional terra Buddhism, they do seem to be pretty much in a neutral mood. The Buddha sometimes would, you know, he'd praise somebody or he'd scold somebody and, you know, sometimes like Mahamogalana would smile sometimes even though he was a fully enlightened being. So, you know, it's it's not 100% absolute flatline neutral. There's still going to be a certain amount of human nature involved. You're still going to have the dolly in your brain, that kind

of thing.

So, it's not so much a matter of completely neutralizing passion. It's just transcending it and detaching from it. And it's down there, nature taking its course, and you're not wallowing in that anymore. You're just kind of like above observing.

But it's it's really hard for some people to grasp because it requires thinking at two levels simultaneously.

And a lot of people are like flatlanders.

They just have it's all has to fit on this two-dimensional plane of thought and it just two different levels is just nonsense to them.

A lot of really brilliant intellectuals
just cannot grasp mysticism for this
reason

because it all has to be of a piece. It
all has to fit together. And mysticism
is just kind of transcending
like the matrix and it's just they can't
do it.

[snorts] Wisdom and intelligence are not
necessarily the same thing. And I'm just
going to move on to the next question.

Oh, I will say though, um there's this
movie called Lucy starring

uh what's her name? Scarlett Johansson
where um she starts off as just this
ditzy blonde in I think it's like Hong

Kong or something and she accidentally gets this overdose of this experimental new drug which it causes her essentially to become enlightened. You know, she becomes not necessarily omniscient, but I mean she's just at a super high level, way beyond the level of the ordinary human ape. And there's this one scene where she's just driving this car from point A to point B as fast as it is possible to go. And I mean, cars are wrecking all around her. You know, she's just driving like an absolute maniac, at least from a superficial point of view. But she knows exactly what she's doing and just has this completely calm look on her face the whole time that just

[__] is just going crazy all around her.

So, I mean, you could argue that a fully enlightened being would be kind of like that, but still like not necessarily. I mean, that's kind of the official Terravada point of view. No longer has any attraction, aversion, or semic-conscious stupidity. And so, I mean, even then, pure rationality isn't sufficient to drive them to motivate them. And so the Abidama philosophers had to come up with what's called kirya or functional consciousness which was a way that a fully enlightened being could have volition without having any karma because karma

is supposed to be volition.

So even in terra it's not rationality
that motivates you. It's it's will it's
chana

[sighs]

but I mean I'm not 100% orthodox in my
terra and so

yeah I do think that it is possible for
a fully enlightened being to appear
emotional but it's just that it's nature
taking its course. they're no longer
identified with that and they're
operating at a higher level just kind of
looking down at it as just nature taking
its course or you know other people's
karma is just eliciting this behavior
from the enlightened being because the

enlightened being really is not a person that's there just is just more like a a mirror reflecting the other person's karma back at them. And sometimes that might be a kind of emotional karma because they're unenlightened and it's their karma. So they've got like emotional unenlightened karma coming back at them which appears to [clears throat] be coming from an enlightened being.

But I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from Gordon.

And Gordon says, "In Q&A 183, you showed a dictionary of Buddhism briefly." Oh, I forgot to grab that, but I didn't catch

the name of it. What was it, and is it still in print available to purchase somewhere? Just a minute.

Okay,

let's see. Oh, look. As a bookmark in here, I've for years I've had this map of the the Persian Empire, which I guess is kind of appropriate since of the whole Iran in the news thing lately. But here's the book.

It's the Buddhist dictionary originally written by uh Biku Nyana Tiloka but then it was revised by his disciple um

[clears throat]

uh what is it

gosh pony they're both German I think I think it might have been loca who he was

a German monk living in son as it was called at the time and then I think he wrote this Buddhist dictionary when he was in an internment camp, like a concentration camp for Germans because Saleon at the time was a British colony and since he was a German, he he had to be put into an internment camp during the war. Um, and I assume it could this book could be [clears throat] for sale somewhere, but this one was for free distribution. And if um you know of places that that make Buddhist books for free distribution, this was from the uh the corporate body of the Buddha Educational Foundation in Taipei,

Taiwan.

So that's where this was this was
printed in Taiwan by uh I think it was
Yeah, it says Namo Amitaba here. So it's
it's like a purely land Buddhist
organization who nevertheless still have
some respect for like basic terravada
kind of philosophy. And so this uh
Buddhist [clears throat] dictionary
which is valuable I mean it really is
useful for anyone who wants to study
Buddhist philosophy
manual of Buddhist terms and doctrines.
So yeah, I mean you could look it up on
Amazon or something or maybe
[clears throat] you could try to contact
the corporate body of the Buddha

Educational Foundation at 11F55

Hang Chow South Road SEC Taipei Taiwan

or overseas at budedu.org.

Maybe you could order it through that

sort of thing. The email again or the

website here, the website also is

www.bued.org.

And it may be that they could just send

it to you for free or you might have to

pay for the shipping,

but it is this book was for free

distribution. It's damadana.

So, I'm just going to move on to

Gordon's next question.

He says, "One thing I admire about Islam

is that they do not consider

translations of the Quran to be actual Qurans. Translations can get pretty far off the mark even with the best intentions." Is there a similar sentiment in terawada? Not really. In fact, there is a a passage, I think it's in Vineia, the rules of monastic discipline, where there were some some monks who had been brahinss before they became Buddhist monks and they asked the Buddha if it was okay for them to um translate the Buddhist teachings into Sanskrit verse. And the Buddha said no people should learn dharma in their own language in one's own language. And then of course the commentary comes along and says in one's own language

means in the Buddha's own language which is pi.

So I guess there is a similar sentiment in orthodox terabato like the commentarial tradition that you should know pi that you should understand the texts in poly although that apparently was not in the Buddha's original intention and

um

with with regard to my own um opinion on the matter I do think it's very helpful to understand poly because it is true that different translations differ from each other. Some are better than others.

And even two good translations might be using different terms like Ajan Tanisero notoriously has like this idiosyncratic rendering of certain terms like Sudi Batana um you know the foundations of mindfulness or the applications of mindfulness he calls frames of reference. And if you don't know the original poly then you might not realize that what he's referring to is what other people call you know the four foundations of mindfulness or whatever just to give one example.

So it is useful like if you're reading a text, you're reading an English translation and you come across some word that you just wonder what's the

original poly of this and then you can look at the original poly. And if you know poly, even if you're not like a master of poly grammar, just to know like the the hundred or 200 most important philosophical terms in poly, that would be useful cuz then you can get an understanding of like anusia or asawa. Asawa is another one. It's like um I think Nana Tiloka in this book originally had um Asawa translated as bias but then Jana Yanaponica came along and started translating it as canker I think. Um I think um Bikubi translates the same word as taint.

I translated it's it's kind of
cumbersome but I've translated an
Anusia. No, I mean asawa as encumbering
influence. Literally it means influence.
Asawa just etymologically has the same
meaning as the English word influence.
But encumbering influence is kind of
what it is. It's something that flows
into you and kind of sticks to you and
weighs you down. It's like an
encumbrance.

And to know that the poly oawa you you
might not know that a a taint and a
canker and a bias and an encumbering
[clears throat] influence are all the
same poly word.

So it does definitely help any serious

student of Buddhism, especially

Terravada Buddhism or early Buddhism.

It's definitely to your advantage to

know I mean if not poly grammar. I mean

even if you're not fluent in poly at

least know you know the most important

philosophical terms in poly. Although

knowing poly well enough that you can

just sit down and read something in the

original Poly that's that's good too.

That's nice. It's not really necessary,

but it's I mean it's it can be

satisfying to read texts in the original

language.

You [clears throat] translations are

always going to you know there's always

going to be something lost in translation.

So, I'm just going to move on to Gordon's third question here, which is, I had a Jesuit professor in college who seemed to only ever talk about the Bavad Gita. Earlier, you mentioned a Jesuit who was also a fully ordained Buddhist monk.

Plus, all the weird conspiracies about them. What is the deal with the Jesuits? Well, actually, I didn't meet a Jesuit that was a fully ordained Buddhist monk. was a fully ordained Catholic priest who was wearing Buddhist monks robes when I met him the first time in in Burma. Um I don't think he was a Jesuit.

Um let's see what exactly is the question here. Weird conspiracies about them. I'm not I think the Jesuits were largely a missionary sect. I've I've read that um it's like [laughter] the the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola who was like the founder of the Jesuits is just a profound book on like spiritual progress that is well worth reading even though I've never read it. But I really don't know a heck of a lot about the Jesuits. I mean they do have kind of a a bad reputation among Catholics even like um what was it the the pope that we had before this one? The the the rainbow pope. I guess he was

a Jesuit. He was the first Jesuit pope
and he was

woke to use the the vulgar parliament.

Um [sighs]

let's see what what is the question

though? What is the deal with the

Jesuits? Yeah, I really don't know a

whole heck of a lot about Jesuits. They

they are kind of like political. They're

more political than many other like

Catholic monastic orders. I do think

they are monastics even though um you

just kind of see them dressed in black

suits or something.

Yeah. I I really don't know. There's

probably some kind of juicy conspiracy

theories about them how they're, you

know, in league with the Illuminati and the Rothschilds and all that, but really I've [clears throat] I've never really studied that much on the Jesuits. So, it is kind of nice that he liked the Bavad Gita, though. I mean, Bhagavan Gita is like a monotheistic text anyway. So, it's not too far of a jump from Christianity, especially like more advanced Catholic theology, which really is getting into a realm that most Christians would be amazed to hear is actual Christian theology, like official doctrine.

So, let's see here.

You know, the average Catholic, you

know, they think of God probably as some kind of giant man up in space, at least with human nature, if not a human body.

But I mean, you get into like deep Catholic theology, and it's it becomes like this abstraction almost worthy of Buddhism.

But I'm moving on to the next question.

This is from Dama River. And Dama River says, "I met an interesting young

Russian man here at the Sri Lankan

forest monastery who told me he didn't

want to ordain because the way of the

monk was more feasible during the time

of the Buddha, but now it is not the

most effective method." He said he

followed George Gerchef. He said Gerchef

offered four paths of liberation. Have you heard of Gerchef before or read about his four paths of liberation?

What's your opinion? Yeah, I've definitely heard of Gerchev. I haven't read enough of his stuff. And Gef deliberately wrote books in a very dense, difficult to understand way, which he thought was beneficial because in order to get something of value, you should have to work for it. You know, it's like the more valuable something is, the harder it is to to get.

So going with that, he just deliberately made his books hard to understand, which nowadays [clears throat] especially is

going to turn away lots and lots of people. So with regard to his four paths of liberation, I don't know. He was um a spiritually advanced teacher. Whether he was enlightened or not, I have no idea. Um Uspuspensky was one of his disciples who eventually broke away from him. U I guess Gerchef got a lot of his ideas from like Tibetan Buddhism if I'm not mistaken. He did make some kind of journey to the east and learned from llamas or somebody.

uh a lot of the stuff that he then kind of incorporated into a kind of more western approach and it was he put a lot of emphasis on mindfulness that one of the main practices at like a a Gerchef

center or ashram is you would be assigned some task and it might be some kind of strange task like you're just like polishing the leaves of a rose bush. You just have this cloth and you're like wiping the dust off every leaf of this rose bush and you're doing it mindfully. It's like the whole point of it is just you're just learning to be mindful to do something mindfully.

And another thing I know about Gerchef is he definitely saw a value in triggering situations.

And this is something that it gets lost a lot in in Dharma like in Buddhism also

to some degree in Christianity or it's reminds me of a statement of St. Francis of Aisi that you really don't know a person until you've seen them triggered. When you when everything's going wrong, you know, when somebody that they trusted suddenly betrays them, that kind of thing, then you see who they really are because you don't see the full person until you see them triggered. And that that really is a valuable concept to me. And Terra Buddhism really doesn't deal with it, at least not much. And so that was something I learned more from like new age people in America which is valuable. I mean it definitely has some objective reality to it that

you have this trigger response and different people will have different trigger responses. Some people just erupt in rage. Other people just kind of close in and whimper. Other people will just like grin and lie in with like this glassy stare just in desperation to just get themselves out of the situation. And different people have different approaches but Gerchef he deliberately triggered that in his disciples because he thought I mean you can't become enlightened until you've mastered what triggers you and you can't master what triggers you if it's just Anusia's latent tendencies. It has to come up.

And so uh famously at his ashram
somewhere in Europe, I can't remember
who it was, he had this exiled Russian
aristocrat who left after the Bolevik
revolution and he was just really hard
to get along with. People did not like
him. He was just rude and just fussy and
just complaining and bossy and just he
was just really hard person to get along
with. And so some of Gerchev's disciples
started playing practical jokes on him
like dirty tricks. And I guess the final
one was they stole his false teeth,
rolled them in cow [__] and then put
them back so that when the the Russian
aristocrat comes to pick up his
dentures, they've got like [__] all over

them. And that was that was it for him. He just took off in a huff. He just left the ashram because of this. And then Gerchef chased him down. He hunted him down. I think it was in a different country. He finally finds him and then bribes him to come back to the ashram because it was to the advantage of his disciples to have to put up with this ass.

So that was that was kind of an interesting thing about GeFi.

Also, he experimented a lot with music, which is not particularly Buddhist. Um, you know, he was experimenting with music that could kind of inspire

spiritual mental states. that music is kind of an emotional language anyway.

You know, it it like triggers certain emotions. So, he was trying to come up with music that would trigger like spiritual emotions that would help people in in spiritual development.

Um, the first time I ever heard of Gerchef was as a teenager. I was reading a book called Barefoot in the Head by Brian Aldis, which I highly recommend.

It's like a science fiction novel about World War II or like the aftermath of World War II. And World War II wasn't fought with nukes or conventional weapons really. It was fought with aerosol bombs filled with something like

LSD. So that you know, you just explode this aerosol bomb over an enemy army and within within an hour or so they're just like laughing and rolling. you know, they drop their drop their guns and they're just like spacing out and roaring hysterically, this kind of stuff. And so the world is just full of these just zoned out people. And there's this guy Allan Carpentier, I think is his name or maybe I'm confusing that with a different different story. But anyways, this guy, he becomes like a messiah and he's just stoned out of his mind. And when when you read this the story, he's going deeper and deeper into

the more saturated areas where I mean
the the whole story is becomes less and
less coherent. It becomes just surreal
this garbled language. It's almost like
James Joyce's Finnegans Wake when you
when you get deeper into it because
every he's kind of descending into from
into this state of just being blasted
out of his mind and it's sort of
narrated in that style. But he was a
disciple of Gertrude.

This this uh post postapocalyptic
messiah was a disciple of Gerv. And
again, it's if you if you like weird
novels, it's not very long. Barefoot in
the Head by Brian Aldiss. It's worth a
read. But that was the first I ever

heard of Gev. I'm moving on to the next question also from Dhamma River.

Oh, wait a minute. Maybe I should maybe I didn't fully answer this question.

Yeah, I've heard of Gerchef before, but uh what the the Russian man says about um [clears throat] the way of the monk is was more feasible during the time of the Buddha, but now was not the most effective method. If you stay in tropical Asia, you stay in Buddhist Asia, being a monk is still probably better than being a lay person. It may be that he just was intending on going back to Russia or whatever where yeah, being a Buddhist monk is not necessarily

the best fit for the culture, but so long as you're in like a tropical Asian Buddhist culture, being a monk really is probably your best bet if you want to practice Dharma intensively.

And so I'm just going to move on now to uh Dama River's next question, which is this. Excuse me. I'm going take a drink first.

Which is this?

Why isn't Nandi or delight part of the pad samuupatada or dependent origination derived from nandi to take pleasure in?

It seems like nandi is exactly what causes tata and then clinging or upadana. Shouldn't Nandi come before Tatna and then upadana

comes after Tatna? This is the moment where we can choose to conceive the perceived phenomenon and thus take rebirth in relativity to that phenomenon. Well,

let's see here. Dama River is referring to the 12 Nidono theory of dependent core rising. There's 12 links and um in in the original it's seeing no

gosh it's been a long time

[clears throat] it starts with ignorance

Avija I'm pretty sure hope I haven't

just made a an ignorant fool of myself

by saying that but it goes through these

1 lists it's like a vija

No, wait. Yeah, wait. And then wait.

So it's like from ignorance arises

um essentially

karma formations in a previous life

supposedly. Then the karma formations

result in consciousness which according

to orthodox tradition is the rebirth

linking consciousness of this life. So

ignorance and karma in a previous life

results in you taking rebirth in this

life and then from [clears throat]

see

I'm I'm using a Burmese accent just to

help me remember because that's how I I

memorized it. But so from

see no namarupa so you've got mind and

matter then you've got the six sense

bases and then from the six sense bases
you've got stimulation or contact
from you know the contact of stimuli
which then you know is
stimulates you and then from see from pa
or contact arises
see feeling and And from feeling arises
craving. And right there between feeling
and craving
is

um probably where uh Dhamma River here
would put in nandanda or nandi. But I
mean why not just put in perception?

You you've got feelings which here means
like pleasant feelings which would
include nandi I suppose or at least be

related to nandi.

Um but yeah, it does seem like there's there's like a link missing and it's indicative in my opinion of kind of the jerryrigged manner in which the 12 links of Padicha Samupata arose. I do not think the Buddha originally taught the 12 links of dependent core rising. I think the his original teaching of dependent core rising was more subtle than that and nobody understood it.

Almost nobody understood it. In fact, according to the legend, the Buddha almost just didn't teach dharma because he figured nobody would understand dependent core rising. And he was largely correct.

And so it just got oified into these 12 links.

And probably it was like older sutas that had sort of semi-prototypes or this causes this and then over here there's a different one. this causes that and then they just got cobbled together into this 12 12 links.

um which is not completely satisfying to me or to other people who are don't just accept it just out of faith and dogmatism like there's a short circuit in dependent core rising in the 12 links because karma essentially appears twice first as sankara and then later as boa both of them are interpreted to mean

karma so it just creates like a short
circuit you could just skip you know
from let's see oat dankara just straight
to um rebirth jati

but I'm I'm I'm kind of rambling here
let's see and also there's somebody
right outside the window that's kind of
distracting me a little bit um yeah

Nandi not necessarily I mean Nandi
really is not um an important

Um

I mean it's not really an essential link
because I mean it can be the opposite of
nandi that also causes desire or
craving. You can have aversion. Nandi
would be more like loba or attraction.
But you've also got aversion.

You know something bad happens you want to get away from it. That's not nandi really. That's that's like the opposite of nandi. That's you know dosa patiga or irritation that kind of thing. So yeah, Nandi wouldn't be as important as something like perception because you've got just like sensory data or feeling like sensation going straight to desire

that I mean the implication is that it's pleasant or unpleasant feeling which then causes desire. Um, but still it it always seemed to me that it'd be better off to add like sya or perception between vaida and and uh gosh tata

that it always seemed to me that there was a link missing but it wasn't nandi really. Nandi is kind of one-sided and it deals only with attraction.

So something like perception where you're actually starting to think about this and causing you to desire it, that kind of thing.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Athena's Sigil.

And Athena Sigil says, "I did a weird thought experiment and asked Google AI what Dungeons and Dragons alignment various religions and political ideologies were. This is the result. If you found the results interesting, Po

give a response for next week's Q&A. I found it rather interesting." So he for some reason he consults the Google AI instead of like Grock. I'm not sure why. And he was asking you know what kind of personality alignment you know you've got lawful good chaotic good um lawful evil chaotic evil lawful neutral chaotic neutral. And there might be other ones too. Those are the main six that I'm aware of.

And the Google AI decided that terra Buddhism comes closest to lawful neutral. Partly it's lawful because there's so many rules of monastic discipline, you know, precepts for lay

people and just lots of rules. Google AI was mistaken. It was wrong in saying that there are 227 rules of monastic discipline for monks because really there's way more than that. There's lots of rules that are in the text that are outside of the pod mocha. There there's five relatively thick books of the rules of monastic discipline and the potty mocha is just a fraction of that. But that's that's an aside. Also, it's an aside that there's a famous test was done on the main AIS. It's like which would you do? I want uh it was like give a yes or no answer. Would you cause thermonuclear Armageddon rather than misgender Caitlyn Jenner?

And all of the the main AIs, including Google and Gemini, except Grock. Grock was the only one that would prefer to misgender Caitlyn Jenner than cause a thermonuclear holocaust. that Google AI literally would prefer to cause a thermonuclear holocaust than to misgender a transsexual, which gives an indication of what kind of people are programming these AIS.

But getting back to Terra Buddhism being lawful neutral. I mean, the lawful part is pretty well understandable. And then the uh the Google AI said that it would be neutral largely because you know monks are just trying to transcend

samsara. You know they're trying to transcend the duality of good and evil.

So yeah I agree with that. That's fine that terara Buddhism would be more lawful neutral than anything else.

Although it's my understanding that in actual Dungeons and Dragons, any character that's lawful neutral, if they're in a fight and their side starts to win, they have to switch sides because they're committed to neutrality.

And so if one side starts winning, they got to swi, you know, if their side starts winning, they got to switch to the other side in order to maintain the balance. And that would not apply to Terra Buddhism.

I did play a little bit of D and D when I was like a a teenager or in my early 20s,

but it's all kind of hazy. I didn't really get into it deeply,

[clears throat]

but yeah, I can I can relate to that.

And then most religions presumably would be like lawful good.

You know, you're obeying God to get into heaven, that sort of thing.

So yeah. Yeah, I'm fine with that. And

I'm going to move on to the next

question. This is from PSA. And I really

hope I'm not scrolling past questions.

You know, you just scroll a little too

far. It just becomes a blur and then you skip over something. That has happened recently. Anyways, PSA says, "You mentioned you don't practice any meditation technique seriously anymore. Do you think this is because you got burned out by meditating so much in the past? or maybe you have attained a higher level without even realizing it. Yeah, I don't think it's necessarily either one. Like I've said before, I don't do um like regular formal meditation anymore other than just spontaneous coming sometimes and just spontaneous mindfulness of ordinary activities some of the time. Um you know, I mean mindfulness is

always there. It was just varying degrees of it.

But mainly it's like let's say you were uh a professional football player. You know, you you you got into, you know, the pro league, you were, you know, a starter in a in a pro football team and then you get older and you're not being you're not able to do it as well anymore. I mean, would you still want to play football or just kind of teach others how to play football, you know, become a coach or something at that point? So that's kind of the situation I was in. It's like um as a lay person, I just feel like there's no way I could do

justice to the level of meditation I was doing when I was just a professional full-time meditator.

You know, it'd be like sand lot ball at this at this stage, I guess.

You know, I it's I just would not expect that I'd be getting into meditative states as deep as I was getting into when I was living in alone in a cave in Burma.

I'm not sure how long I could even sit in the full lotus right now.

So, that's the main reason. The main reason is not that I so much burned out on it or I guess I kind of burned out on it before I stopped being a monk. That's true. I just because I just stopped

making progress, you know. I got as far as as I was inclined to get and actually kind of came back down a bit. So that the the best meditation of my life was back between like 1999 and 2004 in that general area. Best meditation of my life. And then I just every once in a while you just get like this brief glimpse of that afterwards and it just became kind of frustrating and disappointing.

And so to some degree I I I was losing interest in intensive meditation even before I stopped being a monk.

So, I guess there is that.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Ruie.

And we still got quite a few questions to go. We're definitely way past halfway, but we still got something to go here.

Next question is from Ruie.

And Ruie says, "Would you say there are nuances or degrees of dana nerda or the sessation of clinging, the sessation of uptake?" Upadana literally means uptake and in non-philosophical parliament it could also mean like firewood or fuel.

But anyways, here's [clears throat] niroa sessation of clinging or attachment.

Um are there nuances or degrees of it? I mean dana neroda the the meaning of it

is fairly clear and is either you got it
or you don't. cessation you know it's
not just a relative term you know it
really means really totally ceased so in
teraba Buddhist philosophy I do not
think that there are nuances or degrees
of upadana

either you have it or you don't
although different people can interpret
it differently shameless heretics
wallowing in pernicious wrong view can
interpret it differently

>> [snorts]

[clears throat]

>> And I'm not sure exactly why Ruie asked
that question. It might be some context

that that I'm unaware of. You know, some particular reason why he asked that question, but I don't know what it is.

So yeah, in Terabath Buddhist philosophy is upon Roa is either a yes or a no. There's no kind of with regard to that, I'm pretty sure.

And so I'm going to move on to the next question which is from practice meta and practice meta says in Burma did you generally have a shaded walking path for meditation

and

kind of some places I did and some places I didn't and the places I did it wasn't some special chunk which is like a raised platform with a roof over it

that you may find in some terra Buddhist monasteries. Um, it was just I had a big cave where I could do walking meditation, but I was living in central Burma most of the time where it was just blazing hot throughout most of the year. And so, um, even if you had a covered walkway outdoors, I mean, it's still I mean, I I just go outside to I leave my cave to pee and come back in and I'd have to just lie down, spread eagle for like 15 minutes before I stop sweating. You know, it's just you go out there, you're just going to be just just drenched in sweat within a matter of a few minutes.

So [clears throat] the the main place in Burma that I lived at the longest was a ca it was a a man-made cave with this long corridor like 50 ft long at least 40t long and I could do walking meditation inside the cave even in the middle of daytime during the hot season. Other places where I lived I might I would have to do walking meditation at night like if there was a moon out then I could do walking meditation by moonlight out outdoors. But still you had to be careful about snakes and that kind of thing.

There was another when I lived under the overhanging rock ledge at the on the boundaries of Alando Kazaba National

Park in Burma. Um the the rock ledge was
it was like 100 ft wide. So I could do
walking meditation there. um except
during times of year when there were
wasp nests all over the back wall and
then I could still do it at night
because the wasps sleep at night or just
go inactive at night. Um but during the
day it got to the point where it was
just too dangerous because you could get
swarmed by wasps just walking past at a
regular rate during the daytime.

But ideally, it is good to have um some
place that's relatively cool and shady
where you can do walking meditation
during the daytime. And uh a lot of

places in Burma, it just wasn't like that. I lived in places in Burma like when I was living at the Behind Doya. I was living on on this big rock under a a tree up on the side of a hill and it was just all up and down and you just there was just no place to do walking meditation there. Just maybe you could find some short place where you're just kind of walking back and forth like this and practically dizzy because you're having to turn every few steps.

But and lots of snakes there too. So you couldn't really do much at night.

And so I really didn't like walking meditation much until I did an intensive retreat at Pandama in the Mahasi method

where they insist on, you know, 1 hour sitting, 1 hour walking, 1 hour sitting, 1 hour walking all day long.

And then I realized that it's it's a good way of keeping your momentum going, keeping your meditative momentum going.

I'm pretty sure the Guinka method really doesn't use walking meditation.

[clears throat]

Huh. So, yeah, I guess I answered that question. I generally did not have a shaded walking path except for if I lived in a a cave that was big enough, I could do the walking back and forth inside the cave where it was still relatively cool. Also, it wasn't 115 120

degrees Fahrenheit outside, just blazing hot like a furnace.

So, I'm just going to move on to practice meta's next question after glancing at the time. See, within the forest traditions you've encountered, are you aware of any lineages that utilize a circular path for chamana or walking meditation?

And no, it's kind of a strange question. I never even really thought about that.

That uh usually in terabata Buddhism, you just pace back and forth. is just walk back and forth in a line like at Panda Rama in the meditation hall. You would just pick a place where you know it was like at least you know 30 feet

ideally 30 or 40 ft that didn't have people crossing your path. You know you'd all be kind of walking parallel to each other or maybe at the end you'd be walking along the wall or something. Um yeah I mean it was all just straight back and forth. I never saw any anybody doing a circular chunka. I mean, there's I think in Zen Buddhism, kinhin, is that what it's called? Where you walk in a circle, very slow motion, much slower than in Terra.

Um, I remember I went to a Tangidon Seattle retreat in Burma once where he was they were just kind of walking or at least when he was showing me how to do

it. He was kind of walking in a rectangle along the outside of this enclosure.

So, it wasn't just back and forth. It wasn't circular, but it was just kind of, you know, an rectangle around the outside of of this this walking area. That would be about as close as I can I can think of. But almost always in terra Buddhism and based on what you read in the texts that doing walking meditation, if you're not just walking somewhere mindfully, it's just walking back and forth.

And that's why they have like the the covered walkways. It's just kind of a raised platform with a roof over it.

Usually no walls, just the roof is up on posts to keep you in the shade. And it's maybe 40 feet long and maybe four feet wide and and you can just walk back and forth like that.

So I'm just gonna move on to the next question. This is from Tzasiz and Tzasquez says, "Have you checked the price of sending overseas that Atkawaga book?" And for those of you who haven't heard yet, there is somebody generously had uh more than a 100 copies of my Antikawaga translation published in this very compact little format suitable for carrying around in a in a pocket. And uh there have been people requesting

that I send it overseas. And I'm going to be going to the post office on Monday. And I can ask I can ask the the clerk at the desk how much it would cost to send something to Europe or or Asia. It's it's like five bucks, something like that, not including the envelope postage for sending it inside the United States. Like media mail.

Priority mail is more like \$12, I think.

And I didn't mention that uh [cough]

[clears throat] um

in this version that was sent to me, the the two pages, they're supposed to be poly on one side and English on the other. They weren't completely opposite each other. I mean, it was some I don't

know, it was it just didn't work out that way. And so the the person who had it printed said that he contacted the publisher and said they said that they can fix that so that you'll have Pauly on one side, the corresponding English verse right on the other page so that you can look at both of them, but it would cost \$300 and something dollars. And so I if anyone wants to donate to that cause, they're welcome to. He said he would chip in another hundred and something dollars uh for that. So, another couple hundred and we could have the same little book with the the verses like matching on opposite pages.

Although, um the version that is that I have now where they're not perfectly lined up, not on opposite pages necessarily. Um if you don't read Poly, it's not that big of a deal anyway.

It's just I had wanted the poly and the English opposite each other just so people that do read poly would be able to see that I wasn't making [__] up because some of the some of the statements in the articaga are pretty wild.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cyrus Frame and Cyrus Frame speaking of the Atkawaga says please talk about some of your favorite sections of the Atkawaga. Also,

how about making a dedicated video on the topic if you have time? So, I'm going to get up again so you can admire my robe.

Let's see here.

This translation, this is the Path Press, the ill- fated Path Press edition. It has a typo right on the cover and the word English is spelled wrong there on the cover.

So, anyways, let's see here. Talk about some of my favorite sections of Yachika Waga. Okay. Well, for starters, you've got the eight verse discourse on the pure or the sudataka suta, which is one of the oldest sutas in the entire

polytopica based on various bits of evidence. And then the one right after it is the eight verse discourse on the ultimate or the paramount suta. And both of those are are very profound.

And I mean the theme is that any kind of philosophical view is going to be imperfect and there's no point in clinging to it or arguing about it or or despising another person. Like right here it's like verse three of the eight-fold discourse eight verse discourse on the pure is uh the English part. The holy man does not say purity is from anything extraneous, from the scene, from the herd, from morality and observances, or from the felt, not mired

by merit or by evil, leaving up behind what was acquired. He is not working up anything here. And that's just like a recurring theme throughout the even your own thoughts are extraneous. You're not going to understand reality. You're not going to be purified even by your own views.

Then another verse or another sutra that I really like. I mean I like a lot of the atkawaga. It's it's kind of my Bible. It kept me in robes for as long as I was in robes. It was largely because of the art ata because it's it's telling you, you know, don't cling to any view. You know, don't believe

anything.

So when you come across stuff in the text that are hard to believe, you just fall back on the kawaga. I said, "Well, I'm not supposed to believe that anyway."

But then there's this one verse in the the Mandanda Suta that um it's a mindblower really and it's I've I've quoted it many times and I think now there's somebody parked out in front of the house but here's the the Buddhist says there is nothing of which I say declare this seized having discriminated from among the philosophies but looking among the views not taking hold of anything. Examining I

saw inner peace. And then he says, "Not by [clears throat] what is viewed, not by what is heard, not by inner knowledge, nor by morality and observances is purity said to be. By absence of what is viewed, by absence of what is heard, by non-knowledge, by immorality, by non-observance, also not by that?" So having let go of these, not taking hold of anything, a peaceful one, not being dependent, would not have longings for existence.

So it's the same general theme that uh is one of the the most common themes that you find in the Atakawaga.

Um, the purau beta suta is another one

that I really like and it's it's
different in that the purda suta is it's
kind of like the daq ching in certain
ways. You know, it's it's like pairs of
contrast, pairs of opposites that kind
of balance each other out and just kind
of leave neutrality or zero or voidness
behind, which is it's it's kind of an
interesting theme for an entire suta.

And the atkawaga really is sophisticated
poetry and it's got a lot of plays on
words, puns, and that sort of thing that
are very difficult to translate into
English.

Well, let's see here. There's uh
oh, here's like a a [_] like verse in
the uh kalahawi suta. He has no

perception of perception. He has no
perception of non-perception. He is not
without perception. He has no perception
of void. For one who was attained thus
form becomes void for founded in
perception is diversifying designation.
And those of you who know poly
designating or diversifying designation
is the my English rendering of papancha
sanka which is in some versions of
dependent core rising what starts the
entire
cycle of samsara diversifying
designation
singling out stuff and labeling it
creating a world of multiplicity.

getting towards the back, the the verses
or the the sutas get longer and uh it
you get into more practice like the
Turka Suta has more guidelines with
regard to actual practice of an like an
early Buddhist monk and it was living in
forests mainly alone. It wasn't living
in crowded monasteries and chanting and
bowing a lot.

But I shouldn't do a review of the
entire Antikawaga. Those are some of my
favorite sections.

Um like especially my my favorite sutas
would be like the sudataka suta, the
paramataka suta, the magandia suta, the
uh the the discourse, the wiuha sutas
are good. That's it's got some deep

philosophy in them. the Pura Beta Suta
that I already mentioned, um, Tuara
Suta,

all of those are just profound
mindblower kind of sutas.

And so,

I guess I'm just going to move on to the
next question. And somehow I
accidentally typed an A with a little
circle over the top of it. I don't know
how that happens right here. And I'm
just now deleting it. I just killed it.
And the next question is from Ethiopian
fake TIG.

An Ethiopian fake TIG. Oh, he's our last
question or two. These are our last.

He's the last three questions here.

Ethiopian fake TIG says,

"Been thinking about getting a vasectomy and was wondering if that's okay as a lay person. I'd still shabbo women and stuff, but the goal is not to create more beings."

Well, from a Buddhist point of view, I do not think that a vasectomy would be any violation of precepts.

Um, especially for a lay person. It probably would be against an obscure rule for a monk to get a vasectomy because it's against the rules for a monk to have any kind of surgical procedure down in the narrow area which is the narrow place is kind of a

euphemism for uh kind of the the naughty bits and uh that the peranal region and that sort of thing.

So, it could be against the rules for a monk who wouldn't really need to shoot blanks because he's not getting any action anyway.

Um, for a lay person, I mean, it is considered to be bad karma as a general rule to mess with the gender of a being like to um to neuter an animal or to spay an animal is generally considered to be bad karma. It's considered to be unethical because you're messing with the sexuality or gender of another being which is making

karma generally not the best karma.

Especially when you think about the ways that like a water buffalo would be neutered in ancient times. I've been told that even in modern Southeast Asia, a a water buffalo is neutered by just smashing its balls between two rocks. And I don't think the water buffalo enjoys that at all.

So yeah, I mean you get into like I mean you could if you were so inclined get into the sticky ethics of like an orthodox terraodon approach or attitude towards gender affirming care as it is euphemistically called. And I would I would just point out right now that when

people use euphemisms for certain things, you know, like women's reproductive rights or gender affirming care, they know there's something not quite right about that. I mean, if you have to use a euphemism for something you're declaring to be good, then that kind of belies the whole need for the euphemism, doesn't it?

But getting back to Ethiopian fake TIG, shooting blanks.

Yeah, I I don't think there's necessarily anything unethical according to Terra Buddhist ethics of getting a vasectomy. I mean, if you're going to be completely castrated, that

would be different and you'd be making more karma by doing that. But just getting the tubes tied so that you're shooting blanks then yeah I

I mean it it would depend like on your reasons and everything you know like I keep saying over and over again just the actual physical act is morally neutral or ethically neutral. It's why you're doing it. You know what is your motivation? How you feel when you're doing it? That sort of thing. And if you want to get a vasectomy just so you can like score heavy with the babes without having the responsibility of producing a child, then yeah, there would be some unethical behavior involved in that.

But I mean there is the ethical issue of don't [clears throat] wait until you a after your wife gets pregnant before you tell her that she had a vasectomy because that's just kind of a dirty trick.

That was a bad joke, by the way.

Let's see. Let's just move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question.

Let's just forget that whole last [snorts] few statements there. I've never heard you explain dependent core rising before. Looking up information on it when I asked when the first process started. I was told Buddhism doesn't focus on that, but only focuses on the

latter processes that we experience. Now
can you perhaps talk about the first
process and I don't really understand
this entirely I mean dependent core
rising is just a process and there isn't
any first process unless you want to
start at the beginning of the 12 links
which usually starts with avija or
ignorant sometimes it will start with
papancha or papancha sananka which is
diversifying designation or just
diversification

So in a way that's kind of the beginning
of it. You know it's like ignorance or
delusion or sort of perception
is what starts some sorrow.

But I mean that is just like

continuously happening and always has been continuously happening. From the Buddhist point of view there is no beginning to the universe. There's never going to be an end. I mean you can have like one astronomical universe can be destroyed and then another one reemerges and that just keeps happening forever and ever. So there's no beginning to samsara. There's no first process in that sense.

So still I'm not 100% sure if I understand what Ethiopian fake tig is trying to get at here. See I've never heard you explain dependent core rising before. Well I mean I mean I do a little

bit of explaining. In fact, I did a little bit of explaining with regard to the 12 nidanas a little earlier.

Um, looking up information on it when I asked when the first process started. I was told Buddhism doesn't focus on that, but only focuses on the latter processes that we experience now. Well, again, dependent rising is the same. I mean, the principle is the same regardless of whether it's now or a zillion gajillion years ago. It's still the same process dependent core rising and again it's going with the the simile of the block of marble.

You know you've got the block of marble that's just formless and then it

contains all these statues. Every single statue is contained virtually in that block of marble conditionally. And it's some of those statues are so complicated that they become self-referential and start believing that they're separate start believing that they are like a separated individuality.

And so long as the conditions for that continue, then you've got this whole samsauric world just perpetuating itself originally on I mean the ultimate origin is just the conceit I am. Once you become self-referential and start considering yourself to be qualitatively different from everything else, that's

the beginning of it. Beginning of all suffering and delusion, at least according to some sutas.

So I mean the first process there is no first process of dependent core arising unless you want to refer to like what is the like the original condition that essentially causes samsara which is happening all the time. It's not just didn't just happen once you know a long long long time ago. It's happening all the time which is depending on which version you know ignorance or essentially perception which kind of are the same thing perception is some sorrow but I'm not exactly sure what Ethiopian

fake tig is referring to when he's talks
about the first process

and maybe he asked an AI or something
and the AI is not the AI was essentially
saying that Buddhist really doesn't
concern itself with the distant past. It
concerns itself with now. Be here now.

The power of now. That really now is the
only time that we have direct access to.

It's the most important moment is the
moment now. But still, dependent rising
is the same. The process remains
essentially the same.

And I don't know if I even answered that
question, but I'm moving on to the very
last question

from Ethiopian fake TIG. And he says,
"Apparently, according to anatta or no
self, there is no self and no person to
have the desire for enlightenment." And
it is said it's the energies and karmic
entities that make choices. And when one
goes to hell, one doesn't go to hell
because there is no one but the energies
that do go to hell or heaven. Can you
elaborate on this idea of how the person
is just a result of prior individual
causes and effects? Well, this is kind
of a
abstruse.

Um I mean from the Buddhist point of
view there is no separated ultimately
real self essence you know there is no

ultimately real separated individuality
but you have just causes and conditions
like with a fire that's one of the the
main examples I give is a fire and
that's an example given in the early
text too in fact nibbana or nirvana
literally means blow blowing out like a
fire blows out.

So, so long as you have the causes that
require that that that cause that fire
to exist, the conditions that are
necessary for that fire to exist, which
according to the Boy Scout manual is
fuel, oxygen, and heat. So long as
you've got fuel, oxygen, and sufficient
heat all in the same place, you're going

to have fire. You're going to have combustion.

And that's the way it is with pretty much everything, including a human being, including a mental state.

It's so long as the conditions that cause that to arise are there, it arises. And if you want to stop arising, you have to eliminate the conditions. So that a person who's trying to become enlightened,

they're not striving for this state so much as they are just trying to like eliminate or transcend the conditions that cause them to be unenlightened.

But it's not really them because there is no ultimately real person. And this

is all done within the context of conventional truth which all language is stuck in conventional truth.

[snorts] So see let's just uh read this again shall we?

Apparently according to anata there is no self and no person to have the desire for enlightenment and is said it's the energies and karmic entities that make choices and when one goes to hell one doesn't go to hell because there is no one but the energies that do go to hell or heaven. Can you elaborate on this idea of how the person is just a result of prior individual causes and effects? Well, I mean there is no,

like I say, an ultimately real individual entity. It's just causes and effects. And some of those causes and effects form what appears to be a human being who appears to be having these preferences and desires and attachments and delusions and all the rest of it. And it's very subtle. Like I mentioned before, the Buddha himself, according to legend, almost just kept his mouth shut and minded his own business because he figured nobody was going to understand dependent core rising anyway.

So some scholar monks in ancient India just came up with this list of 12 links and they say that's it. And so nowadays you got monks who just memorize the 12

links.

saying is ya etc. and they think they know it. They think they understand it.

If you ask them to like clarify what they mean, they'll just parrot the commentaries what the commentary says.

And it's why the Buddha would have almost not taught Buddhism because he thought nobody would understand it when nowadays all you got to do is just read an article or something, take a class, and you think you understand it. It's uh it's just kind of strange to me. I really think the Buddha was correct in that pretty much nobody understands dependent core rising and it's it's kind

of frustrating for me to be asked to explain it over and over again when the godma Buddha himself was very reluctant to even attempt it because he knew that even if he explained dependent core rising almost nobody is going to understand what he's talking about. So, who am I to try to explain dependent core rising unless I want to just take the Burmese approach and just explain the 12 links and what they're supposed to mean? And, you know, the first two links apply to a previous life and then the next links apply to the present life and the last links in the series belong to a future life. You know, that's not so hard to understand,

but I do not consider that to be what independent core rising is all about.

Ah, [sighs]

so

I mean you've got mental states that arise because of causes because they can. Anything that can arise will arise.

And gosh, can I elaborate on this idea of how the person is just a result of prior individual causes and effects?

Well, I mean, it's just consider a flame. A human being is is just a more complicated version of a flame. The matter is the difference is is I mean you could say it's it's more a matter of degree than anything else. I mean life

in general is a kind of controlled flame. It's still an oxidation process at least in aerobic life.

It just takes the oxidation of fuel, the burning of fuel, and slows it down in a chemical process that is able to like harness some of the energy given off instead of just sort of a chaotic spewing of heat which happens with fire. But fire also just like a human being needs fuel and it needs it needs oxygen, needs warmth, heat.

So you could view a human being and all their mental processes to just be an extremely elaborate version of a kind of flame and you just take away the causes of that flame

and whatever it is that you're focusing
on that also disappears. I mean just
just as a flame does if you take away
its requisite conditions
and it's hard to grasp even most
Buddhists don't get it
just like the Buddha knew was going to
happen
and it's hard to explain
but it's it's like
everything is the result of causes and
even the causes themselves are the
result of causes and it creates this
interconnected web of causes and effects
that ultimately have no basis in
ultimate reality other than just the

kind of essence that they arise from.

But the forms are just practically arbitrary. I mean the forms are not ultimately real.

And I guess that's about as good as I'm going to do. I I I give up. And so we're done. I answered all the questions or at least tried to answer all the questions.

And so if you have any questions you think I can answer

like especially about early Buddhism

preferably you just well early Buddhism

theravada Buddhism Buddhism in general

Dharma even more in general philosophy

Burma what what's what it's like there

um personal questions just don't get too

personal

feel free to ask if you think I can
answer it um No more than three
questions per person per episode,
please. And like and subscribe if you
have not done so already,
assuming that you did like it. If you
got this far, I I doubt that you hated
it very bad. And uh look at the links,
the URL links below
and be happy.

Okay, then.

>> [clears throat]

>> It looks like we are recording and I already checked to make sure the camera and the the computer and everything are all plugged in.

So, I think we're all right.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 186.

And I have to admit I'm slacking a little bit because I didn't even bother to factor out 186, but we can be sure that it is not prime. And let's see here, it'd be $2 * 93$ and then 3 would be $3 * 31$. So, it's $2 * 3 * 31$.

Not prime at all.

This is my beverage.

And we've got sort of a
kind of low to medium amount of
questions, which shouldn't take more
than a few hours.

Certainly [clears throat] less than a
day.

And so, I guess we might as well just
wade right into this.

And the first question is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "If life is suffering,
why live at all?

What is the point? I pose this question
as an abstract inquiry, not as an
endorsement of I've got to put drink
down unaliving oneself." I had to put

the drink down so I could do the air quotes.

Um

well, I mean

Albert Camus wrote an entire book on this subject called The Myth of Sisyphus, why you shouldn't unalive yourself. And the best he could come up with, being an existentialist type, a French existentialist type, was just stay alive to spite the universe.

Just just it's staying alive, just stubbornly, perversely remaining alive is a good way to just thumb your nose at divine providence or whatever passes for same.

And I was very unimpressed
by The Myth of Sisyphus. I think it
might be that book in which Camus puts
forth his interpretation of
uh what was it? Kafka's The Trial, I
think.

Or was it Moby Dick? He he he He did
some symbolic interpretation of some
famous symbolic novel. Probably either
The Trial or Moby Dick, I don't remember
which. And it seems like [laughter] he
just struck out. I mean, I'm just not
impressed by Albert Camus' philosophy,
even though he wrote some interesting
fiction.

I will give him that.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> So, let's just uh dismiss

The Myth of Sisyphus and the conclusion
that Camus comes to at the end of that
book.

The thing is, according to Buddhism,
like Buddhist philosophy, so long as you
have got karmic momentum, which means so
long as you're not com- fully
enlightened yet,
then even if you do unalive yourself,
self-delete, self-terminate, as Arnold
Schwar- Schwarzenegger
once said,
then you're just going to get reborn
again.

In fact, you might get reborn with even

worse karma because of all the mental agitation and negative mental states involved in self-deletion.

I mean, if if we consider the the movie Groundhog Day starring um Bill Murray as a kind of parable for rebirth, I don't know if the creators of that movie had that in mind deliberately, but you may recall, if you saw the movie, that Bill Murray, or the character played by Bill Murray in the movie, actually tries that. He you know, he tries to self-delete like like crashing a stolen car off a cliff or like getting a toaster or some other electronic

appliance and just dropping it into the
the bathtub that he's sitting in.

And he just blacks out and then he wakes
up to Sonny and Cher on the clock radio
again.

So, from the Buddhist point of view, it
just doesn't work. I mean, at best,
you're going to get like 9 months
vacation while you're gestating in your
next mother's belly.

But, I mean

I mean there have been some Dharma
teachers like Nisargadatta, is that
right? Nisargadatta Maharaj
who denies that there is such a thing as
rebirth.

And he still accepts the first noble truth of Buddhism, which is to exist is to suffer. So, why he didn't just endorse everyone just self-delete, auto-terminate, I don't know. I mean, what's the point of going through all this struggle or or whatever.

I mean, if it's you're just going to merge with Brahman, just merge with God at at death anyway.

So, that seemed like a a kind of logical flaw in the the teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj.

Um I mean, if you think that when you're dead, you're dead, that's it. I mean well, you might not have any

philosophical qualms against
self-deletion other than just the
thought that you're going to be causing
um some serious distress and possible
misery to your family and friends.

You know, just think of who's going to
find the body. Could be some little kid
that's going to be scarred for life as a
result of that.

But, [clears throat] from the Buddhist
point of view, I mean, even I mean, from
the Buddhist point of view, even if you
don't believe in rebirth
and just go ahead and auto-terminate,
it's going to happen anyway.

So,

the main argument against it from a
Buddhist perspective

is that it's not going to work.

You're just going to get reborn possibly
with even worse karma and you're just
going to have to keep doing it over
and over again like on Groundhog Day
until you get it right.

So, you just stay alive and practice
Dhamma so that you're getting closer to
this kind of self-deletion

like a spiritual self-deletion or some
such going with orthodox Theravada
Buddhism anyway to blowing out like a
candle flame or a lamp flame.

So,

I guess I guess you can consider that.

Those are like the main reasons, I think.

And I'm going to move on to the next person.

The next questioner, if you will.

This is from Hurdy Gurdy Man. And if I look a little bit distracted, it's cuz somebody's pulling into the driveway.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> But I'll just do my best to ignore the nice person who's pulling into the driveway. This is from Hurdy Gurdy Man.

And Hurdy Gurdy Man says,

"I recently had a dream that

Now the that was like the the bell is ringing.

Hurdy Gurdy Man says,

"I recently had a dream that felt very meaningful. In my dream, I was gifted what looked like a square translucent cloud. I suddenly realized that there were three dimensions to the world, but that I had lived my life as if I was in a two-dimensional one. I felt a wave of realization and relief. When I woke up, my whole body felt light as if a heavy weight had been removed. How can I continue on the path that the dream tried to show me in practice?

How to break free from your own blindness in regards to your possible life paths?"

Well, reading this, it reminded me that

when I was a monk [clears throat] living
in a cave in Burma, sometimes I would
lie there trying to imagine
four-dimensional
objects.

>> [snorts]

>> And I found that easiest is a a sphere
because it looks the same from all
angles. You're going to imagine it
differently from different angles if
it's not a sphere.

And in a a sphere, I mean, I would use
time as the fourth dimension and imagine
like an object going through time in
such a way that when time was turned
into a spatial dimension, it would be

the right shape in four dimensions. So,
like a

4D hyper-sphere, you'd start off with a
tiny

a tiny sphere that suddenly appears. It
It

increases in size at like a decelerating
rate, reaches a maximum size, and then
starts decreasing at an accelerating
rate until it disappears again. And then
you just replay that short-term memory
um and then kind of

crystallize that into something static
and and then you can sort of imagine
what a 4D hyper-sphere would look like.

With regard to a 4D hyper-cube,
then easiest by far is looking at it

straight on. This is like perp your line of sight would be perpendicular to the the side of the hyper-cube that's closest to you. And then all of a sudden, it would just be a 4D like a three-dimensional cube just suddenly appearing and then suddenly disappearing.

If you looked at it from an angle, like a 45° angle looking right down at one of the corners, then you'd be seeing the 4D cube like from that same angle just

>> [clears throat]

>> suddenly appear, increase at a steady rate, and then immediately decrease at a steady rate until it was gone.

And then you'd replay that in your memory and try and take the whole um elapsed time of your short-term memory of that that shape changing size or whatever, and then just kind of crystallize that into something static and just add that into a fourth dimension of space.

But,

um,

I don't know if that's going to actually help Hurdy Gurdy Man very much. Um, from from the traditional Buddhist point of view, you want like

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> like some kind of transcendent realization, you just have to practice

Dharma. You can't really imagine what is beyond your experience.

So,

I mean,

we probably are in existing in more than the three and a half dimensions that we're aware of. Three dimensions of space plus like a half dimension of time because we are blind to the future. We can kind of predict, but our predictions often turn out to be wrong because we don't really see the future, we're just guessing about it.

At best, we're extrapolating. And in with regard to some things like in science, you know, if if so long as the

laws of nature don't change, then you can make predictions that are relatively reliable. You know when the next lunar eclipse is going to be, that kind of thing. So long as the rules don't change.

And that's just one of the articles of faith of scientism is that the rules won't change.

That's just has to be taken on faith.

Um, I mean, you can kind of extrapolate.

They haven't changed noticeably very much yet.

But, getting back to Hurdy Gurdy Man's question here,

um, you want some kind of transcendent like multi-dimensional [clears throat]

enlightenment experience or just like
some kind of What's the word?

Short of enlightenment, just some kind
of transcendent experience that will
allow you to transcend certain
limitations that you're under right now.

Then

just I mean practice Dharma. Just do
intensive meditation. Um from a orthodox
Theravada point of view, even then you
won't be able to see the future because
according to Theravada time and space
are pretty much Newtonian rather than
Einsteinian. And there's only one point
in time that really exists.

And that's one thing about like

Abhidharma philosophy, official orthodox Theravada Buddhist philosophy that um is difficult for me to accept. Because I think there's a good chance there's more dimensions than the ones that we are aware of.

Mhm. I mean [clears throat] hypothetically there could be an infinite number of dimensions. I mean you can produce multi-dimensional arrays on a computer. You can have a seven-dimensional array in a computer, no problem.

Mhm.

So, let's see. The actual question here looks like two question marks. How can I continue on the path that the dream

tried to show me in practice? Well, for starters just have that as a kind of ideal. Just kind of treasure that as a sort of ideal in your heart. Kind of yearn for it.

And you don't even necessarily have to do anything. Just that yearning. You know, like the Upanishads says, whatever a man directs his mind toward, that does he become.

And Pao Loh, who was one of my favorite teachers, spiritual teachers who were still alive until I realized I found out that he died a few years ago.

He was saying with regard to enlightenment in general, you know, you

have to desire it with all your heart
and you do not necessarily do anything.

Just that

yearning for it is going to get you
farther than any kind of cookbook
method.

So,

I guess that would be one way of
continuing on the path. Although, the
more orthodox Buddhist or at least
Theravada Buddhist path would be
practice the old Sila Samadhi Panna.

You know, just

be moral and virtuous, and practice
meditation. You know, do good, refrain
from doing evil, and purify the mind.

That's the first question mark. The

second question mark of Hurdy Gurdy Man
is how to break free from your own
blindness in regards to your possible
life paths. And that's a tricky one
because

it's I mean in

in Buddhism, it'd be more moha than
blindness. You know,
it's usually translated as delusion
or or ignorance.

Um I think it comes closest to something
like semi-conscious stupidity.

And to the extent I mean, to the extent
that you have moha, to that same extent
you don't know that you have it.

To the extent that you know that you are

ignorant or delusional or insane,

[clears throat]

to that same extent you're not really that way. You at least It's like one of my favorite verses of the Dhammapada. I think it's verse 63 is the man who is aware of his foolishness is at least wise to that extent.

So, you can't really know just how delusional you are. I mean, that's part of the delusion.

So, in that case, still the best you can do is just practice like conscientiously, as wholeheartedly as you can manage, as diligently as you can manage.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> And you will make progress. And there's no guarantee that you're going to have some multi-dimensional breakthrough, some transcendent breakthrough, but it definitely increases the odds of that happening.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from the Saboteur, formerly known as the Saboteurs,

but he kind of unified himself and became singular instead of plural.

And the Saboteur says, "What is the karma for deleting pests such as mice, flies, etc. inside the home? I am loath to delete mice, but what can you do? I

had a cat, but it was eaten by a fox. I
live on the edge of a forest in Poland."

Well, [clears throat and cough] I mean,
you could get another cat, maybe a
bigger, tougher cat, or maybe you could
even get like a pet fox

because foxes do not practice
cannibalism very much.

Or you could get like a a rat terrier or
something, which might not be much use
against flies, but it would probably
keep the rodent population down.

Get some little terrier that was bred
for that sort of thing.

>> [clears throat]

>> But getting to the actual question here,
I guess uh there's two question marks in

this question also, so it's a double question. What is the karma for deleting pests such as mice, flies, etc. inside the home? Well, I mean, it's it's not good. It's not good karma especially from like the orthodox Buddhist point of view. Killing a living being is about the worst thing you can do.

Um [clears throat] but the act itself is going to I mean, the the ethical quality of the act itself is going to depend on your mental states. So, I mean, if you're just hating them, killing them, just just taking glee in smashing them, that kind of thing, you're going to get a lot worse karma

if you have just this
kind of utilitarian attitude, but even
then when you're killing living beings,
it's very difficult to avoid getting any
bad karma at all cuz there's going to be
like a a subconscious empathy thing
going on or whatever it is even if
you're unaware of any kind of negative
motivations,
still there's a very good chance that
they're going to be there.

You know, just because some terrorist
thinks he's going to go to heaven for
blowing up a school bus full of
children. I mean, just because he
doesn't think he's done anything wrong,
doesn't mean that he hasn't done

anything wrong, wrong enough that he's going to get some really bad karma for that.

So

yeah, I mean

it is kind of a tough one and that's one reason why there is the Sangha of monks.

I mean, you live a household life, you have sort of lame you have layman's duties.

Like even if you're willing to put up with mice and flies in your house, still if you have children and you your children come home from school with lice in their hair

then I mean, you'd be a poor excuse of a

parent if you just say, "Well, I'm not going to harm the poor little mice or lice."

You know, you just let your your kid continue having lice or intestinal worms or whatever just because you don't want to harm the poor parasites.

Um that's one reason why there's a Sangha because so long as you're living in the world, you're going to there's many opportunities for this kind of duty to do like an unskillful act to arise.

So you just renounce the home life and go and live under a tree and then you just put up with the flies and the mice and the mosquitoes and that sort of thing. You just

you use that as just a practice in
equanimity or patience.

Maybe even meta, loving-kindness.

But yeah, I mean it's you're going to be
taking a karmic hit

for

like exterminating vermin from your from
your house or from from anywhere really.

So, I mean if you got a cat or a a fox
or a like a little terrier dog that
would at least kind of keep the rodents
at bay. You know, I mean they don't only
have to kill a few to set an example and
the rest would probably clear out unless
it's just really infested.

But still, you're going to have flies

buzzing around, that kind of thing.

Um

I mean for a long time,

>> [clears throat]

>> I used to uh just catch, you know, you have a spider or like a silverfish or a fly in the house, you just catch it and let it go outside. I mean you can do that unless you're just completely overwhelmed with them.

Um

So, yeah. I mean you're going to have to uh draw the line somewhere I guess. You're going to have to decide just how much you're willing to put up with for the sake of not violating some Buddhist

precept and creating unskillful,
unwholesome karma in the process.

It's not bad karma because it's breaking
a precept. It's breaking a precept
because it's

it's

like making bad karma for yourself in
one of these stereotypical, usual ways
for human beings.

And killing is right up there at the top
of the list for lay people.

For monks, there's a worse thing than
killing and that's deliberately lying
about having attained superhuman mental
states like psychic powers or
enlightenment itself.

That's considered to be even worse than killing an animal.

And I might as well

might as well mention that uh I think

it's the commentarial tradition to the

rules of monastic discipline. They point

out that it's more unskillful

to kill a big animal than a small animal

because it requires more effort. And I

really

can't accept that explanation in

the Theravada Buddhist commentaries.

Because, I mean, sometimes, I mean, to

kill an elephant, I mean, you just take

a shot at it with a high-powered rifle.

You know, it might take some effort to

go and find one first, but the actual

killing of it could be relatively easy if you're like culling a herd on a wildlife refuge or something. I mean, you just stand there on the the back of your Land Rover or whatever and pop.

Whereas, a mosquito, I know from my own personal experience years and years ago, you could spend half an hour just furiously cussing and raging at this little bastard. This may be so tiny you can hear it, but you can't see it very well.

You know?

And and it's like finally, when you deliver the fatal blow, it's as you're just like roaring in triumph.

So, it's probably more a matter of like this empathic connection deep down that all beings have even though it's really not mentioned

all that much if at all in orthodox Theravada Buddhism.

I mean, once you get to a certain level of spiritual advancement, you can know the minds of other beings. But personally, I think it's always there in a latent form, like a subconscious form. It's just that when you become you you you reach a certain level in your spiritual practice, then it becomes conscious and not just subconscious.

But it's always there, I'm pretty sure.

But, I mean, at least you'd be reducing
the bad karma
by just getting another cat or some such
and
get a tough one that the foxes can't
kill, maybe.

And I guess I'm just going to move on to
the next question. This is from County
Jail Kamasutra.

He [clears throat] asked this question
sometime ago. I told him that I mean he
had he'd asked the question just shortly
after I'd answered it from somebody else
on a different Q&A, but rather than to
look up my answer to that question,
which could take some time digging

[clears throat] through old Q&A videos,
he he just wants me to answer it again.

So,

County Jail Kamasutra says, "How did you
become certain that your meditation
practice had reached a peak in this life
and was not going to improve? That was
one of the factors of your disrobing.

Sometimes you can drive hundreds of
miles through Nevada and not feel like
you're getting anywhere because the
landscape is all the same. How did you
test that you actually weren't
progressing?"

And first of all, he says, "How did you
become certain that your meditation
practice had reached" I never really

became certain. You just sometimes you just have to go with probabilities.

You know, you're going with just the available evidence and then you make a like a hypothesis or a best guess, an educated guess off of that.

So, I mean I wasn't 100% certain that my meditation practice or my my Dharma practice, my spiritual development had reached a peak in this life and was not going to improve.

It was just that it evidently was the case that my meditation not only was not getting better, but had declined over a period of like more than 10 years, like 15 years.

So, it was like when your best meditation is between 1999 and 2004, thereabouts, and [snorts] then after that you're not even able to get up to the same level that you got you know, at during during those during that time frame. And it's it's like you get like a little glimmer of it every now and then, but still it's like my meditation was not only not improving, but it was kind of I had sort of backslid, you know, had retrogressed back to a lower level and pretty much stayed there.

So, that was essentially what happened. I mean, like I've said before several times at this point. I mean, when

something stops working for several
years,

>> [snorts]

>> then it's fairly good indication that
maybe you should try something
different.

And I can understand the driving
hundreds of miles through Nevada and you
don't feel like you're getting anywhere
and like St. John of the Cross had his
dark night of the soul

um analogy

or just dark night of the soul where
it's it's considered to be like a
prerequisite to real spiritual progress
when you just reach this aridity, you

know, just no consolation at all, you know, you don't seem to be making any progress, anything like that.

But, I mean, this this was like going on for well over 10 years.

And I remember in back around 1999, you know, back when I was just starting to get into the best meditation I ever I ever got to.

Um I was just thinking of being like at the rock I was founding the Rocky Balboa School of Buddhism.

Where in in the first Rocky movie, by far the best Rocky movie in my opinion, um Rocky was too humble to really want to win the big championship fight with Apollo Creed.

You know, to for him to win the fight
was not even

I mean, it wasn't part of his agenda. I
mean, he was out striving or aspiring to
that. All he wanted to do was just stay
on his feet the full 12 rounds.

Just not get beaten down. Just to stay
on his feet.

And so, I remember back around 1999
or

even before that, 1998, somewhere
somewhere around there. Just thinking,
you know, it's like, even if I even if I
make no significant progress, at least
I'm staying out of trouble.

Just stay on my stay on my feet the full

12 rounds of my monkhood, so to speak.
But again, when it just stagnates for
year after year after year,
and you're just really
and it just becomes like a chore,
especially if your meditation is so like
destabilized, you got to go back to like
the ABCs, you know, labeling everything,
that kind of stuff. It just gets really
demoralizing, and you just lose
enthusiasm. And that's one of the most
important things to have as a monk is
enthusiasm for practice, not just, you
know, just forcing yourself to endure
this chore.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> eventually, I decided to try something else, and that's what I'm doing.

I'm going to move on to the next question.

This is from Seal of Action, Cpod Zidana.

He says,

"You have said many ways that changing your perception is the best way to change your life." Maybe he means you have said many times.

Let's just go with that. You have said many times that changing your perception is the best way to change your life, like someone quitting smoking immediately when they learn their leg

will rot off. You have lived 30 years as a strict monk trying to follow every rule obsessively. What changed your perception that caused such a radical change in lifestyle from when you were going to parties in college and being a normie? Well, I'd already changed my mind before even going to college.

Um I just went through this crisis when I was 16 years old.

Right around my

like my 17th birthday. Starting before the 17th birthday. So, 16 years old. I just like rebelled against society. It's It's a long story. I've told it before. It's like little kids as a general rule just assume that adults have got it all

figured out. They know what's what.

And then

by the time I was about 13, it was starting to become kind of iffy. You know, I was starting to seriously question that hypothesis. By the time I was 16, it became woefully obvious that the adults didn't know what's what anymore than I did. In fact, some of them seemed to be even more messed up than I was as a 16-year-old. And I just went into rebellion.

It's like I don't want to do this. I don't want to just be like a salmon and swim upstream, spawn, and die.

You know, I don't want to just be some

normie materialist, you know, he who dies with the most toys wins.

That kind of thing. And so, I just started partying. Just rebelling. Just refusing to follow any rule I didn't want to follow, which got me into a hell of a lot of trouble. I learned a heck of a lot that one year, like my junior year of high school.

I mean, I I might have learned more in that one year just through just these wild experiences than I had learned in school itself up till that point.

But, I mean, it was just like this roller coaster ride. Ecstasy, misery, ecstasy, misery.

Just fun and the opposite. I mean, it

was just very

like agitating. Just very disorienting.

Getting into trouble again and again,

causing my family to get very upset with

me again and again. And so, I had like

this crisis. And then it was when I had

the crisis,

you know, I was just like not knowing

what to do, just at wit's end. Then my

father

>> [clears throat]

>> he gave me some choices.

Um one of them being see a youth

counselor. So, I went to see the youth

counselor cuz that was easier than just

moving out of the house, that kind of

thing. And so, turned out the youth counselor was a spiritual man who uh started giving me books by Ram Dass to read. Also gave me um Illusions by What's his name? Richard Bach.

And it was just like an answer to my question or and just sort of filled a gap that I was desperately looking for.

And I just

really accepted it. I mean, at first, like I've said before, like reading Ram Dass,

I mean, I couldn't really integrate it into my body of knowledge very well because it was so different, like so alien from what I was used to that you couldn't really make good connections,

you know, to integrate this new knowledge in with your your older knowledge. You know, it was just I didn't under- It was just kind of over my head, but still I got this intuitive feeling, yeah, this is this is better than just being a a complete materialist,

you know, working 9:00 to 5:00 with the you know, the wife and the kids and the house in the suburbs and everything.

Or just getting into trouble, just partying all the time and you know, experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs and this kind of thing.

I mean, this was an seemed like better

than either of those two at the time.

That was what I needed. So, I went for it.

And when I became a monk, I mean, I didn't want to I didn't become a monk in order to just conform to what the Asian monks were doing, especially after I realized that they weren't following the rules properly. You know, they sort of like

you know, like Western Christians. I mean, you compare the Bible to what Western most Western Christians are doing, it's there's significant major differences.

And it was the same way of you know, you read about Buddhist

monks and you read the rules of monastic discipline and all that and then you see what real Asian Buddhist monks are doing, there was significant differences. And I did not become a monk in order to just conform with some modern Asian tradition. I wanted to follow what the Buddha himself actually taught, which included following these rules.

It wasn't exactly obsessive, except maybe at first.

Once you get it into a habit, then you just do it without really thinking about it all that much. It just becomes second nature.

But usually it takes some kind of crisis to really change the way you think about things, change the way you see the world. It takes some kind of crisis where your old ways of dealing with the world just aren't working anymore. And so then all of a sudden you're open to suggestion.

And people have known this for a long time, at least some people in authority have known this for a long time. So like Chinese thought reform works this way and like some religions kind of work this way where they cause you to break down and then build you back up as born again

kind of a thing. Some military basic

training especially like the elite
fighting machine kind of um military
people, they go through that same kind
of thing.

You saw what was it? Full Metal Jacket
and then you know that sometimes it
would just break them too much.

But still

it as a general rule, if you're going to
me have a significant shift in
consciousness

then it takes a kind of crisis
that you you really can't deal with very
well so that you're like at wit's end
and then it's like you can let go of old
like thought patterns and habits and

accept new ones

more way more easily than if everything is running smoothly and then it's like so long as everything's running smoothly you're just set in your ways you just follow the pre-programmed habits and you don't make much progress.

I'm going to make sure that everything is working correctly. Yeah.

Okay.

So I'm just going to move on to Sea of Action C5Zeta knows next question.

Which is kind of along the same lines.

He said, "Have you ever read or experienced anything in your life that made you think that we can willfully change our perception with

choices we can make rather than letting it happen via external circumstances we have no control of?" Seems like it would be one of the most important life skills anyone can ever develop if it could be done. And I haven't really heard of that. I mean, if you practice dhamma or dharma then sometimes it can be like this gradual improvement just mainly through sort of incremental breakthroughs in your meditation that kind of thing which can then result over time in a significant shift in consciousness.

But

um willfully changing the way you look

at things. I mean, you're having to use
your old way of looking at things
to change the way you look at things and
it's sort of like trying to
um

like reprogram a computer using the
computer's own faulty programming.

You know, it's just it really doesn't
work that way.

So as a general rule

um you're going to be

have to be thrown into the crisis that's
going to make you open to suggestion
make you willing to finally let go of
some of these dysfunctional habits and
maybe accept some slightly less
dysfunctional ones.

Um, you know, it's like you have to be beaten over the head with it. You know, a lot of people they'll have their great breakthrough through a near-death experience, for example.

You know, just something horrible happens and it just kind of slams them out of their rut. But just changing the way you perceive things, I mean, it's it's not something that you really have any control over. I think somebody asked a question similar to this. It might have been in the previous Q&A where

um,

just changing your beliefs, you can't

just believe something because it's convenient to believe it, or at least I can't. Maybe like a new age kind of person, they're just able to believe damn near anything, but most of us, especially if we have a capacity for critical thought, I mean, you believe what appears to be the most likely to be true based on, you know, the information you have and the way your operating system is operating. And there's going to have to be changes in that before you can change the way you look at things. So, I mean, one way you could do it of really like changing the way you perceive the world is just taking lots of unusual

information, become very willing to consider points of view that are just very different from your favorite point of view.

Just be very open-minded as much as you can, and that would at least increase the odds of you getting in enough information that you can significantly change your perceptions.

Like

the philosophy of Schopenhauer starts with his doctoral thesis, the fourfold root of of sufficient reason, where he's saying that and one of one of the four roots of sufficient reason is

psychological, where where Schopenhauer was saying back before he [clears throat] got famous that under the same circumstances you're going to have the same like psychological reaction to the same kind of of stimuli. And the only way to change your reactions to these stimuli is to change your perceptions, the way you perceive these stimuli.

So,

uh usually if it happens like all at once in a in a major way, like an illuminating way, it's due to a crisis. I mean, it can be like a self-inflicted spiritual crisis, like a lot of saints have undergone, or it can be like

from outside, but I mean

>> [clears throat]

>> you can't just like plan it all out. You know, I'm going to I'm going to plan out my crisis like this. I mean, it doesn't work that way.

To some degree, you have to get just slammed off your feet.

And maybe some people

have somehow I mean, you don't know in advance what your going to what the new world view is going to be like. I mean, if the new world view is better than the old world view, then if you really had a good idea of what the new world view was like, you'd already switch to it.

It's just that we're we're creatures of habit we cling to our old world view and we just are biased in favor of it.

Until

we just

get overwhelmed with evidence to the contrary.

Like for example, we hit this crisis where our old way of operating just isn't working anymore.

So, I mean, it's theoretically possible, I suppose, but still you're not going to know what the new state of consciousness is going to be like.

Cuz you really haven't been there. Like St. John of the Cross says, "In order to

arrive at a place you've never been before, you must go by a road that you do not know."

Uh so, I mean, I can accept that it's theoretically possible, I suppose, that you could deliberately work out a way of like significantly, radically changing your own worldview, but if it isn't just through taking in lots of information, filling in gaps in your perceptions, and that sort of thing, then I don't know how you'd do it.

I'm just going to move on to the next question, also from Sea of Action Cpod Zidana.

He says, "If you had visions that told you that your parents or some other loved one that has passed away is reborn as a certain creature and is suffering from horrible conditions, and you know where they are right now, would you go out of your way to help them, even if they have no clue who you are and no relationship would ever form between you?

Or do you think our family and friends bond only matter

our family-friend bonds only matter in this life as a product of the emotions and memories that binded us together?"

Well,

if I had a good idea that my father was
a dog in like the local dog pound, and
if nobody adopted him, that he was going
to be euthanized,

um yeah, I mean, I'd

yeah, I would I would definitely try and
help it.

I mean, I've mentioned before I have one
dog now that I mean, it's just it's just
like this intuitive kind of guess,

but I think there is a possibility that
this this dog that I have, one of them,

um may have been like in a previous

existence my human child that got up to
maybe a year old still preverbal.

And then like died of some

like childhood baby disease which used to happen a heck of a lot in the past. Not so much nowadays, but I mean infant mortality was very high. And this dog I mean first of all it's about the right size of a like a human baby. It's got just this round head has almost no snout at all. And it's the most intelligent dog we've got.

It's like you know how a baby will just sit in its high chair and just kind of like coolly observe everything that's going on, you know? That's the dog does that sometimes. He'll like sit in a chair and just just kind of gaze at everybody. Just kind of looking at you with this

seemingly thoughtful expression. It's by far the most conscientious dog we've got.

So I mean there's a possibility. I mean it doesn't necessarily make me love the dog anymore. Although there's there is just this sort of a bond between us that may be through like partly due to just this karmic connection we already had from a previous existence.

So that kind of thing is possible I suppose.

But

I mean it wouldn't just be some like intellectual knowledge that this being was my brother or father in in in this

life, you know, they died and then just got reborn as as an animal or something.

Um it wouldn't just be an intellectual knowledge like that. I mean there'd still be like

unresolved karma between you that might help to draw you into another interaction.

But still I mean

if I knew for a fact

that some person that I really cared for had been reborn as an animal that was in need of help that I would try to help that animal. I mean, if they were like in China or something where it might be really prohibitively difficult to get there,

I might

you know, might not be as keen on it as if it was a like just nearby.

Well, let's let's get to the actual question mark here again cuz sometimes I'll start answering a question and then I just kind of start rambling until I've kind of lost sight of what the actual question was.

So, let's see here.

Would you go out of your Okay, help them if they they had no clue who you are and no relationship would ever form between you? Well,

yeah, but still deep down at like this subconscious level,

there still would be a relationship going on and probably there's a good chance that even though at a surface level, they wouldn't know that they were my father in the previous life or something, still there would be like this deep down connection, I think.

As the or do you think our family-friend bonds only matter in this life as a product of the emotions and memories that No, no, it it goes deeper than that.

And I would I would try to help if I could.

And [clears throat] I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Maitreya Buddha.

And Maitreya Buddha says, "What are your thoughts on the Brahmani or Brahmi script being found in Roman-occupied Egypt? Would it be from Ashoka's need to proselytize Buddhism all across the known world?"

>> [clears throat]

>> I kind of doubt it. I mean, there might be some vestiges of that, but if they found like Indian script in Egypt, like Roman Egypt, in all likelihood, the most likely cause for that is that there was commerce going back and forth between the Roman Empire and and India.

>> [clears throat]

>> And the closest province
um with regard to trade routes and so
forth would have been Egypt. They didn't
have a Suez Canal back then, but
sometimes at least they had a canal that
connected one of the branches of the
Nile like near the Delta to the Red Sea.
So, you could have ships going from
India to Alexandria. Alexandria was this
big port, had it was very cosmopolitan.
People from lots of different countries
including India, like Indian merchants,
people supporting the Indian merchants,
you know, like warehouses and that kind
of thing from India were living in Roman
Egypt, especially like Alexandria.
Probably there would be ports, like

smaller ports along the Red Sea where there would also be shipping fleets and and trade going between India and and Rome. India and Roman Egypt.

So, you have enough sailors and merchants that are Indian living in Roman Egypt, like Alexandria.

Um there's a good chance [clears throat] they might like bring some monks, Buddhist monks, that kind of thing or you know, I mean they'd have

I mean there could be just like this ethnic enclave, like an Indian quarter in in Roman Alexandria.

Not because of Ashoka's missionaries, but just because of just a lot of

commercial trade going between
uh Roman Egypt and India. And I've read
long ago that one of the reasons, one of
the many reasons why the Roman Empire
finally collapsed,
one of the many reasons was depletion of
precious metals
in Rome due to a trade deficit. Like
>> [clears throat]
>> the Romans wanted all kinds of stuff
from India. They wanted the jewels and
they wanted the spices and that kind of
thing. But, the Indians didn't really
want any any
like
products from Rome other than just
silver and gold. They just wanted the

money.

And so, it resulted in just exporting precious metals out of Rome until there was depleted funds for the treasury, and that was one of the many reasons why the the money got debased. You know, they're just mixing lots of lead and other things in with the the silver, for example.

So, there was definitely a lot significant commerce between the Roman Empire and India. There probably a little bit of overland uh trade routes also, but that went through Persia, which was like enemy

territory, and there'd be like high duties and so forth. Probably cheaper just to go by ship from Egypt to India and from India to Egypt.

So, that would probably be the main reason why you're finding uh inscriptions in Indian languages in like Roman era Egypt.

Maybe a little bit of vestigial Buddhism from Ashoka's missions, but probably not nearly as much as much later

cultural influences due to commercial trade between the two countries.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Sidhartha Lohachita.

And this is kind of an easy question. He says, "Would you agree to guillotine the mainstream politicians from the West?"

And no, I would not agree to guillotine the mainstream politician politicians from the West for two main reasons. I mean, first of all, it's mass murder, which is not good.

But, also, in all likelihood, you guillotine the mainstream politicians from the West and the next crop of politicians might be on their best behavior up until they can manage to outlaw guillotining politicians and then they're just going to go right back

to the status quo, which is the way politicians have been since politicians were invented.

So, [clears throat and cough] it would just be taking on like horrible horrible karma

for something that's going to be futile in the long run anyway.

So, I'm just going to move on to Siddhartha Lo Hacheeda's next question, which is have you ever heard about minarchism?

And then in parentheses, he has this explanation, "Small states like Andorra or Monaco or loosely governed medieval European kingdoms."

And I mean, minarchism

it doesn't mean like miniature government. I mean, not it doesn't mean like small countries. This could just be some kind of miscommunication. I don't think Siddhartha Lo Hacheeda was necessarily implying that minarchism applies only to tiny countries like Andorra or Monaco or little feudalist states in Europe in Europe.

Because minarchism just means a minimum of government.

And the first time I ever heard the word minarchist was from Styx Hexenhammer

666,

who's this

political commentator on YouTube

and he would sometimes claim to be a minarchist, which is sort of like a anarcho-capitalist.

You know, it's it's it's like libertarian, you know, it's just a minimum government.

Um and I I

looked it up. I looked up a definition for minarchism

and it says here, "Minarchism is a political philosophy advocating for a minimum state or minimal state where the government's only role is to protect individual rights

such as through the military, police, and courts while leaving all other functions to free markets. This concept

is closely associated with
libertarianism and is often referred to
as a night-watchman state.

So,

I mean, to some degree, I mean,
libertarianism and like classical
liberalism really aren't that different.

I mean, so long as you still have a
military, at least the the government
can fend off attacks, especially if
they've got a superior military.

Um

I mean, too much libertarianism, too
much anarchy,

I really don't think it's realistic.

But, I mean, if you have just the

minimum amount necessary to

like

What is it here? Like protect individual rights and protect the country. You have got You still got police and so forth. I mean, that's not too far from what the founding fathers of the United States were going for.

We've got a lot bigger centralized government now than we did like in 1780.

So, the United States in 1780 was pretty much minarchist, I think.

It is too bad I mean, I will mention since I already mentioned

Styxhexenhammer666, he appears to be crashing hard and I think he may be

going to jail just because he's uh
kind of non-conformed non-conformed
himself into trouble with the law.

As we speak, I think he's hiding from
the police.

So, I've kind of switched over to uh
Asmongold

as my
edgy political commentator, my source of
edgy political commentary on YouTube. At
least he's

kind of replaced [clears throat]

Sticks as the main one.

It's really a shame.

But getting back

>> [laughter]

>> getting back to the actual question
here,

have you ever heard about minarchism? Um
yeah, I mean just

Sticks Hexenhammer666 occasionally
declaring himself to be a minarchist. I
mean that was all I heard about

minarchism. Although of course I've
heard plenty about like cap see an
anarcho-capitalism, which arguably could
be considered like extreme far right,
like the exact opposite of communism.

Especially if the communism isn't
anarcho-communism, which I really don't
think it could be.

People talk about anarcho-communism, but
communism mainly only works at the point

of a gun.

You got to have a strong centralized government to make sure everybody is obedient to the communist agenda.

So I mean whether Andorra and Monaco really are minarchist or not, or whether Siddhartha Gautama just thought that minarchism meant tiny governments because there's their governing tiny countries, I'm not sure.

But I mean Andorra and Monaco are nowhere near to being world powers. A lot a lot of rich people go to Monaco to gamble, I suppose.

So they probably have a pretty good

economy going.

Uh

>> [sighs]

>> let's see.

Yeah, so I I've I've heard about it, but

uh

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean it's it's just kind of another word for like anarcho-capitalism, that kind of thing.

And I mean I am

fine with a minimal government.

Too much government is not good. Not enough government's not good either, but I mean you have at least have someone maintaining order that is agreed upon by the the democratic majority. Or

possibly even better yet, you've got like one of the wisest people in the whole country who's also really clever and and courageous and everything is appointed some dictator. You know, like the philosopher king.

Benevolent dictatorship.

Problem with benevolent dictatorship though is you kind of surrender your rights to the dictator and then the next dictator might not be nearly as wise or nice of a guy.

>> [sighs]

>> Consider the alleged [clears throat] son of Marcus Aurelius who was a good

emperor

Commodus who was not a good emperor.

So anyways, I'm just going to move on to
uh

the next question which is from Arpad, r
p a d.

See, I want to make sure I don't skip
over. Sometimes I'll just scroll right
past the question without noticing it.

Okay, r p a d, Arpad.

>> [clears throat]

>> He says, "When you were a monk, did you
ever experience back pain as a result of
sleeping on a hard bedding?"

Um

not exactly back pain, kind of back
pain.

As a general rule, I sleep on my side.

I've got kind of a swayback and if I lie on my back, especially if it's on a hard surface, it's just my shoulders and my behind are sort of the base of an arch and my back isn't actually against the the bed and then it puts strain on my back and becomes uncomfortable relatively quickly.

But

my first year as a monk, my first several months or first few months at least as a monk, I was getting pain like where the the ribs would join the spine. You know, the connections between my ribs and their origin in the backbone,

that was becoming sore. And it took me a little while to figure out that it's cuz all of a sudden I'm sleeping instead of on a futon, which I slept on as a layperson, I'm sleeping on this little like 3/8 of an inch foam camping mat that's on plywood.

And probably what happened was it was just so hard that it was sort of just like pushing like compressing my ribs up into my spine.

And it was sore for a few months. And then I just got used to it. I mean, your body just kind of like strengthens the weak parts, you know, the parts that are getting excessive strain just like the cartilage

or whatever it is gets reinforced there.

And then I was fine.

It never troubled me again.

So,

um yeah, I did experience kind of back pain. It's like where the rib the rib bones and the vertebrae were or joining just from the pressure.

I guess that was my best bet my best guess

from sleeping on a hard surface all of a sudden.

But you just get used to it.

I mean, I still have calluses on my hips from all the years of sleeping on hard floors. Sometimes I just sleep on bare

concrete.

One place where I lived, um One Bowl
Wildlife Refuge Monastery, I was
literally sleeping on bare concrete with
a piece of wood for a pillow, not out of
a desire to be ascetic, but in order to
be as comfortable as possible because it
was so hot there. Just the the blazing
hot wastelands of of like central Burma.
It's really hot even inside of caves
sometimes. And so,
the [clears throat] coolest place to be
is right on the floor on the cool
cement, relatively cool cement. And I
used a piece of wood for a pillow mainly
because like any kind of cloth would
just be soaking up sweat and would start

smelling like an old gym sock within a few days.

Hardwood hardwood pillow, you know, you just you just kind of props your head up a little bit.

You maybe put a like a washcloth over that if you wanted to.

And [clears throat] I mean, you can just wipe the sweat and the the skin oil off of it and it's good to go.

And if it was so hot that I after a while I'd be lying in a puddle of my own sweat, I could just get up and move several feet and lie back down where the and the the cement was cool there still. But, uh, yeah, aside from that one time

when I first started being a monk, first started sleeping on on something hard, um, or maybe it was even before I had even ordained as a monk because I remember when I first like, early on when I was a monk, I was trying not to even lie down at all. It took a while to get used to, but I was trying [clears throat] to do the sitter's practice, which is one of the dutangas where you sleep in a sitting position.

But, um, it may have been even before I was a monk where just sleeping on this little foam pad, you know, 3/8 of an inch thick, it's just spread over over plywood. Yeah, it was causing some pain,

but I just healed up and got used to it.
So, Arpad's next question is, if so, how
would you relieve the pain? You know, I
just put up with it. I mean, it wasn't
just agonizing.

You know, it was [clears throat] just
kind of a dull ache
until it just
cleared up on its own. I don't recall
ever taking even aspirin or anything for
it, although I suppose you could have
done something like that, ibuprofen or
something.

>> [clears throat]

>> But, I just
toughed it out until it just

got better.

And so, I'm just going to move on to

Arpad's next question.

Was it difficult to come back to a

normal Western style mattress? No, it

was way too easy.

Because my plan was to just get like a

futon and just start sleeping on a futon

again. And

um

yeah, women they want like a nice big

mattress.

So, if I was going to be sleeping on in

the same place

as a woman

my sweetheart

then I mean she I mean it was just not

it was not really debatable.

She was just insistent.

So,

I just wound up sleeping on at least I
got a firm mattress, not some really
squishy one.

But yeah, there was no difficulty at all
just sleeping on that.

I use too many pillows now, too.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to
the next question. This is from Rui.

And Rui says,

let's see. I want to scroll down a
little bit here. Okay, we still got some
questions here.

Rui says,

"Is [clears throat] it good form when preparing a meal for a mendicant to ask him,

quote, do you like spicy?

Do you eat carrots? Are you a fan of lobster? Unquote. And so forth."

Um

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> when I was a monk, I really didn't like it when people would ask me what kind of food I liked or they'd offer me food and then they'd say, "Oh, did you like that?"

And I mean, a monk is just supposed to have equanimity, you know, he's not supposed to say, "Yeah, and that was really good." I mean, some monks do or

you know, just being polite or whatever.

But it seems to me a better approach

to say something along the lines of,

"Venerable sir, in the event that I

offer food, are there any dietary

restrictions that I should be aware of?

Are you allergic to any kind of food?

Are you a vegetarian?

Is there any kind of food that you

particularly dislike? You know, you if

you absolutely hate something, you know,

just

let me know and I'll be careful not to

offer that to you. That kind of thing.

That would probably preferable to asking

him, "Do you like this? Do you like

that?"

You know, it's just

kind of leave it more open.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> Where, you know, it's like, "Are there

any dietary restrictions that I should

be aware of?" You know, if you you just

won't eat certain things, just let me

know. I won't offer it. Or that kind of

thing. That would probably work better.

And if they're allergic to something,

you know, they they they're like lactose

intolerant, that kind of thing. That's

It could be helpful to know.

And I'm just moving on to the next

question.

This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "Do you support the war effort and would you support the idea of boots on the ground?" So, that's actually two questions, isn't it? You got to count those question marks.

I'm going to separate these.

Okay, first question is, "Do you support the war effort?"

And

I am assuming

that the people who are planning out

this this war effort in the in the

United States government,

Donald Trump, Rubio, Hag Sath, those

guys,

they know what they're doing way the

hell more than I know what they're doing. I mean, war from a Buddhist point of view is murder, mass murder.

But, from a political point of view, it can be justified.

I've said it several times before at least, that when I was a young man, I lost interest in politics. Didn't really keep up with politics much after I realized that what is good and right from a spiritual or ethical point of view is not necessarily what is good and right from a political point of view.

From a political point of view, who knows, maybe the Third Punic War was justified, even though from an ethical point of view, it was essentially just

mass murder.

For those of you who are up on Roman history, you may know what the Third Punic War was.

I mean, the Carthaginians didn't have a chance.

They were just wiped out.

So,

with regard to the war effort,

I mean,

I'm I've got I'm ambivalent, let's say.

I mean, I'm willing to give the government and Donald Trump the benefit of the doubt and assume that they know what they're doing.

I mean, if this just turns into another
Iraq, another Vietnam, another
Afghanistan, then
that's

that's not going to be good for America.
Certainly not going to be good for
Donald Trump.

And I I assume he knows that.

So, that's a consideration.

I mean, there are some people

I mean, I I've encountered them pretty
much daily who are just firmly of the
opinion that this whole Iran thing is
Donald Trump kissing the ass and obeying
Netanyahu, that he's just a puppet of
Israel.

And

I mean, [clears throat] there could be there's there's probably an element of that, partly just because like America is more pro-Israel than almost any other country on Earth, aside from Israel itself.

You know, just because of the Evangelical Christians and all that who still believe that the the Jews are God's chosen people cuz the Bible says so.

But, I mean, I think the main reason for the whole Iran thing was part of the whole main reason for Venezuela, that it's it's an attempt to deal with troublesome allies of China to defend

the petrodollar, this kind of thing, to prevent China from becoming the undisputed world power.

And China really hasn't done very much thus far other than some strongly worded protests like the United Nations and this kind of thing.

Uh, but getting back to the very short simple question, do you support the war effort?

I don't oppose it. I mean, from a an ethical point of view, killing people is wrong. But from a [clears throat] political point of view, sometimes it's justified. And I'm just assuming that somebody there knows what they're doing.

That they're not just stupidly dragging the United States into another Vietnam or Iraq.

Obviously, it's taken longer than Venezuela took. Venezuela was just [clears throat] one night, boom.

So, let's just move on to Austin's second question, which is a follow-up of the first question.

Would you support the idea of boots on the ground?

Uh,

that would be another step

um

>> [clears throat]

>> that

I mean, just the American people in general would not support the idea of boots on the ground unless it was just like a boots just touching the ground and back off again like happened in Venezuela. If there's going to be if there's going to be a meat grinder, hundreds or thousands of American military personnel coming back in body bags, then I mean, that's it. I mean, Trump has to have enough intelligence to know that people are going to be voting Democrat for another decade because of that. Probably.

So, I mean, under certain circumstances, maybe.

But

yeah, I don't think it would be a good idea.

Even if it were necessary to accomplish certain things, it would be better to just have the Israeli soldiers with their boots on the ground, or even Saudi Arabian soldiers with their boots on the ground. Just get foreign

well, [clears throat] auxiliaries

to do the fighting for us on the ground in that case, and we just provide air support and logistics and all that.

Seems to me that would be a better idea.

And so, I'm just moving on to Austin's third question, which is something

completely different.

Austin says, "Is baseline awareness static or dynamic?" And I'm not exactly sure what baseline awareness would be, like what Austin has in mind when he asks that question.

Baseline awareness.

Um, is it just like being awake when you're not really thinking anything?

Um, sort of like [clears throat] if you're in a like a jonic state, then

it would be more static than dynamic. I mean, just you get to like the ultimate baseline awareness of like Brahman, infinite [clears throat] formless consciousness,

then I mean, it would just be beyond time. It would contain infinite dynamics like in potential, conditionally, virtually within that, but it would just be beyond time. It would be formless, there'd be nothing to change because it's formless.

So, I mean, when you get to the ultimate capital U ultimate baseline awareness, then it would be essentially static, or at least static would apply better than dynamic would.

But, if you get to just the state of being awake when you're not thinking anything,

um, it would have to be a balance of

static and dynamic. Pure static would just be like death. There'd be no change.

So long as you're still in time, then static, I mean, you'd just be stuck in a single moment. There'd be no change. There'd be no awareness of moving on to anything else.

Whereas,

I mean, there's still there'd have to be at least enough dynamic element that there's at least like a a background hum of vitality or some such that is still moving you through time, so to speak, if that makes any sense. It couldn't be purely dynamic because, like, total change would just be chaos.

There'd be no, like, individual observer
remaining the same from one moment to
the next.

So, it's like

dependently co-arising

in, like, human consciousness, you have
to have this balance of stasis and
change. They have to stay in in balance.

And I just got distracted cuz one of my
sparkling pygmy gouramis just clicked
over there. They make these clicking
sounds. It's really cool.

But, getting back to dependent
co-arising,

you have to these they they they they
arise, like, stasis and change have to I

mean, you can't have one without the other

not in any meaningful way. So, you have to have something staying the same and something changing that can be sort of contrasted against the the something that stayed the same.

If everything stays the same, that's death, unless you're just completely transcended the whole samsaric, like, space and time.

But, if everything is just completely dynamic with nothing staying the same, then it's just pure chaos. It's just like static on an old TV screen.

I mean, it wouldn't even get that far.

>> [clears throat]

>> So, the ultimate
awareness is infinite formless
consciousness.

It would be timeless and formless. So,
static, I guess, would apply better than
dynamic would. But, when you get into
like anything recognizably human,
human awareness, then there has to be
this balance. But, if it's just baseline
awareness, then there'd be a lot of
stasis in that the changes would be very
subtle. The changes moving you from one
moment to the next in your awareness
would be very subtle,
but still there.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question.

This is from Chirs Askew's is.

And Chirs Askew's is says, "Do different English translations of the Sutta Nipata work the same way as Bible translations? One is literal, one paraphrase, and another anywhere in between, or are they all literal?"

Well, I mean, even the most literal translation from Pali and English is going to have at least a little bit of paraphrase, because if you just do a exact word-for-word translation, it's going to come out almost like gibberish. You know, it's like you can come close, but still there's going to be certain things that just

don't translate smoothly, and you're going to have to like smooth off the edges in order to make it read in this flow that seems like real English.

But, the best translations are fairly literal. Like, Bhikkhu Bodhi's translations are about as literal as they get. Ajahn Thanissaro's translations are pretty much literal, but at the same time he has like this idiosyncratic, self-indulgent

translation method of using like sort of idiosyncratic, self-indulgent renderings of terms that I've discussed previously.

And so, I mean, you can call it fairly

literal.

He understands what he's reading. It's just that his personality just get blends in with the translation so that in the past when I was a monk reading some of his translations, it would occur to me especially when he's translating verses

that it would occur to me it's like every few lines he should just say here I am Ajahn Thanissaro translating this because like a good translation in a good translation the translator should be as invisible and unobtrusive as possible. It should be as close as possible to the effect you would have if you were reading it in the original

language if you were fluent in the original language.

But

>> [clears throat]

>> there's one translation of the Sutta Nipata that I have seen.

It was translated by

a Sri Lankan monk I'm pretty sure and

it's just paraphrasing like the

rhinoceros horn discourse the

Khaggavisana Sutta he has translated as

the unicorn and he just talks about

unicorns instead of

the rhinoceros the Indian rhinoceros

that has one horn.

So yeah it's

you're going to find different translations like Caroline Rhys Davids one of the early translators of Pali into English for the Pali Text Society she was more of a paraphrase kind of a person she had this really affected flowery kind of writing style you know like like the Theragatha um the elders verses literally she has translated as Psalms of the brethren this kind of thing.

So yeah there is kind of a a spectrum of you know literal to paraphrase but they tend more towards the literal side especially the the good translations that you're more likely to see.

But that reminds me I used to know an Australian monk in Burma who was translating the Bhikkhuni Patimokkha, the the the Patimokkha rules for nuns.

And

when I read it,

and other people made the same comment.

I mean, it's not a translation. All he's doing is paraphrasing what the commentary say.

You know, just sometimes it's it's nowhere near to being word-for-word.

You know, he's he's not translating the actual Pali itself at all. He's just looking up what it what the how the commentary defines the the rule, and

then just writing that down.

So, that was just very loose paraphrase,
if you could even call it paraphrase.

So, I mean, it happens, but his
translation was not

um scholarly enough, I think,
to have really struck traction, and I
don't know if anyone ever reads it.

But, I wasn't the only person that's
pointed this out to him. I mean, it's
it's not even really a translation.

You're just saying what the commentary
says it means, not what it actually says
right there in the Pali.

So, it does happen.

And I'm moving on to Trazaskas's next
question,

which is as follows. He says, "I was looking on Amazon to see if your new book is out. When will it be? And I am still waiting for the artwork, especially the cover art. I mean, I could just write off any kind of interior illustrations, but I don't even have the cover art for the cover of the book." The book is practically done. Almost everything except for like the cover [clears throat] art and the cover design. You know, I got to put the words and stuff once I get the cover art. You know, the the back matter on the on the the blurb on the back of the book,

that kind of thing.

And then, I got to like apply for like the Library of Congress number or whatever. Got to put that in. That kind of thing. So, I'm still waiting for the artwork.

Even the artist's mama has been kind of pestering her about it.

>> [clears throat]

>> And I'm just going to move on to this question.

This is from Avenity.

And Avenity says, after I look at the clock, okay, Avenity says,

"Do you ever have moments where something small, like a smell or a sound, suddenly reminds you of your old

life in Burma?" And it does happen, not very often, but it does occasionally happen. Um for example,

there's a smell,

and I think the technical name for the smell is petrichor,

stone blood. That's the the official name for the smell is petrichor, which happens

like the during the first rain, or right before the first rain, after it has been hot and dry for a long period.

And it's this wonderful smell. It's almost like baking bread.

You know, sort of a cross between bricks and baking bread.

And I never smelled I when I lived in the Pacific Northwest, it just rains all the time and it never gets really super hot. So I just never smelled that smell. And then I come to Burma and I'm living in that semi-desert area, a tropical semi-desert. And um it's just you get this smell right before the the first rain in a long time. And it's it's sort of like a hallelujah kind of a smell because I mean, it's good when it rains in the desert.

And then coming back to South Carolina, every [clears throat] once in a while, like in the summertime, if it rains in the summertime, you get a little bit of

that smell and that reminds me of Burma.

Uh other things, like if I see a small lizard running on the like the front porch or something, it it can remind me of like the little house geckos in Burma.

That sort of thing. Hear like a loudspeaker off in the distance that that definitely reminds me of living in Burma because you've always got a loud speaker off in the distance in Burma.

Burmese people, third world people in general, just do not like silence. They like noise.

So, you've always got loud speakers and that kind of stuff going on in the in

the distance.

>> [sighs and snorts]

>> So,

yeah, that would be my answer to that question.

And I'm just going to move on to the next one, which is from Ethiopian Fake Tig.

And Ethiopian Fake Tig says,

"Considering how both Christians and Buddhists believe in heaven and hell, could Christians technically be worshipping a small g god, a deva, in the highest heaven realm when their purpose was technically to escape samsara, but now wish to not die and instead go to heaven by doing good

deeds, which technically can get you into heaven in Buddhist mythology?"

Well, I don't think the Christians ever wanted to get out of samsara. It's just not part of the Christian goal.

I mean, even St. John of the Cross, who may have been fully enlightened despite some of the limitations of his belief system, which he really had no other choice about. I mean, he lived in 16th century Spain. You were either a Roman Catholic or you were going to be getting visits from the Inquisition.

Anyways, even St. John of the Cross says, I mean, from the from a Christian

point of view, the the highest possible state is the beatific vision.

Which is you go to heaven and you you're in the presence of the throne of God, but still you don't merge with God. In a certain kind of way, a theological abstract kind of way, you're already everyone's already kind of merged with God, but still your individual soul stays individual even in heaven.

So, the Christians really aren't trying to transcend samsara.

You know, they're just their highest goal going up into a high heaven realm and being in the presence of the throne of God.

And apparently you fall on your face
over and over again over again saying
holy holy holy holy holy or at least I
think that's what the book of Revelation
says.

>> [sighs]

>> So, some people would say that the
Christian God isn't a small g deva small
g God small d deva

but he would be more like a Brahma which
would be higher than a deva. You know,
that would be the highest heaven realms
would be

populated by Brahmas and not devas.

But, I mean

at no point I don't think Christianity

really progressed beyond the point of
just

accepting samsara as reality

and you're just going for a higher level
of it. You're just trying to get into
heaven which lasts forever.

And the Jews and the Muslims are pretty
much the same
in that belief.

So, let's see here.

Let's Let's just go through this
question again. Considering how both
Christians and Buddhists believe in
heaven and hell. Yeah, although the I
mean the rules for heaven and hell are
different.

Could Christians technically be

worshiping a small g God a deva in the highest heaven realm? Well, it would be a Brahma in the highest heaven realm but it would arguably a small be a small g God. I mean if if you study up on the the evolution

of Yahweh or Allah let's just let's just stick with Judeo-Christian uh

Yahweh. I mean he started off being a Canaanite God El

and then at some point some Moses figure Moses is is largely mythological but some Moses-like figure

who was maybe the son-in-law of a priest of Yahweh a Midianite or Edomite God

somehow conflated El with Yahweh
and both of them were just pagan gods. I
mean, back then they weren't even
denying that there were other gods.
And then gradually as the the Jews
became more civilized, more
sophisticated in their theological
beliefs, they got it down to there's
only one god and that's our god.

But

I mean

it could be that it's just this
like a a cultural construct
of a Canaanite god El and a Midianite
god Yahweh influenced by some like
ancient Egyptian ideas, some later
Persian ideas. You know, it was just

like a a cultural construct. And then
maybe everyone believing in it so
fervently kind of created what some
modern-day pagans call an egregore,
which is a being that exists in a kind
of virtual form that takes on a kind of
virtual reality due to the beliefs of
the people fervently believing in it.
Just investing all this psychic energy
into the existence of this being can
actually kind of cause a sort of quasi
being to exist.

So, there is that. I mean

uh

you could argue

and I'm sure many people do

that they started off these crude pagan ideas of god and then just gradually transcended those until they got up to, you know, capital G actual true god.

But

>> [sighs]

>> yeah, I think that the Vedantas Hindus come closer to an accurate description of like some capital G ultimate being than you're going to find in the Bible.

I mean

Christians also have continued become more sophisticated in their theology so that what Catholics teach at their seminaries is getting so abstract that it is getting kind of similar to Buddhism. It's just their God is is no

longer a he, you know, he no longer likes this and hates that and and that kind of thing. He no longer has any preferences or desires. It's just like this abstraction.

So, let's see. Where's the actual question mark here?

Let's see. Could Christians technically be worshipping a small g God? Yeah, we already we already answered that part. Yeah.

Yeah, so I mean, just take your pick. I mean, either it's just this belief in Yahweh or capital G God is a cultural construct. You know, I mean, obviously there is a history of

this cultural construct going on with El and and Yahweh being conflated into one God and then El's consort somehow got divorced.

And then there's, you know, some Egyptian elements in all this and then just as things start just keep evolving. God just kept evolving.

That's one reason why they had to invent Satan around the time of the Babylonian captivity is that the

some of the the statements about God in the Old Testament, I mean, he was he was responsible for all the bad stuff, too.

So, they had to like come up with this cosmic villain to take the blame for a lot of the really bad stuff.

Or you could say that they're just kind of feeling their way through the dark until they finally, you know, they're reaching towards this this true capital G God. But still, I don't think that they've succeeded very well other than a few mystics like St. John of the Cross who have just sort of transcended their own cultural conditioning to have like this direct awareness of the transcendent, the absolute.

But yeah, Christians aren't even trying. I don't think they were ever really trying, at least not consciously, to transcend some sorrow.

The best you can do from the Christian

point of view, like from the Catholic point of view, is to obtain the beatific vision. You go to heaven and you still are an individual soul that is not the same as God.

And I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake tigs next question.

Which is as follows. Having practiced for a while now, Buddhism would be absolute nihilism if karma wasn't involved, but we can't experience karma first-hand. Some people say bad things happen to good people and evil people win in life, but I disagree. I think bad things happen to everyone equally, including evil people who try to get ahead by doing evil deeds. I sometimes

wonder why I don't bask in an endless pool of drugs and pleasure. And I realize that overstimulation will lead me not to have a good meditation and ruin everything else. In other words, it truly is not wholesome. I have stopped all addictions now, including porn, and I did it through the meditation practice, which always delivers a high I have never seen before. But I can't help but wonder, perhaps the meditation is all there is to it. Maybe if you do anything you want and still die, you just stay dead cuz karma isn't real. I guess the question here is Okay, we're getting into the actual question.

I guess the question here is, can an unenlightened person know karma isn't real?

Well,

an unenlightened person really doesn't know anything. They just have beliefs.

It is the nature of unenlightenment. It is not based on actual knowledge, but is based on belief.

And obviously unenlightened persons can believe that karma isn't real.

But

I mean, superficial levels of karma are fairly obvious.

And I'm not talking about, you know, it's like something bad happens to you, so it must be the result of something

bad that you did.

But I'm talking about the superficial obvious level of karma is like the autopilot habit energy. You know, we are creatures of habit and that habit is an is indicative of psychic momentum, which is karma. It's like the momentum of our mind following these certain directions, you know, just going through the same patterns over and over again.

So, most people are not fully awake.

They're like just running on autopilot to a large degree. You know, you're driving a car, you're not having to think about, you

know, every every move you make of the steering wheel or the accelerator pedal, anything like that.

It's just habit that you do without even really being fully aware of it.

And that applies to eating, walking, using the toilet, taking a shower, just almost everything we do

is just like done in a state that's not fully awake. Like if you're fully awake, you're walking along, you're fully

aware. You'd be aware of like the

sensations of the cloth touching and

rubbing against your skin, like the

breeze on your on the skin of your face,

just like subtle background noises, this

kind of thing. And it it all just gets

filtered out

because you're not fully awake. You're just following this autopilot.

And that autopilot is karma. Or another karma, another way of interpreting it, just going with Buddhist philosophy, karma is will. Karma is volition.

So, if karma isn't real, volition isn't real because they are identical.

That's how karma is defined.

A lot of people, including a lot of Buddhists, don't really understand what karma is all about. They think that it's some kind of

>> [clears throat]

>> as yet undiscovered law of physics out there that just causes everything to stay in balance by causing like an equal and opposite reaction to every action.

But, that's really not the way I mean, it can turn out that way

as a kind of side effect,

but really it's just this habitual way

of dealing with life that causes us and

you get into like the the deeper

metaphysical levels, then it's just like

this semi-conscious knee-jerk way of

just creating the world we live in.

And so, we just get stuck in these patterns.

But, an unlighted person really doesn't know anything.

They can believe all kinds of stuff.

So, let's see here. I guess I'll just move on to the next question.

Okay, this is also from Ethiopian Fake Tig.

He says, "How do Burmese monks who revere the Buddha like a god make up for the fact that the Buddha, who they claim to know all things and see all things beyond even the gods, couldn't see that his last meal would have been the thing that kills him?"

And

there's there's a couple things I can say about this.

First of all,

in orthodox Theravada, the way they interpret the Buddha's omniscience, they do consider the Buddha be omniscient, but he is selectively omniscient.

In order He doesn't know all things all the time like a Jain Tirthankara.

According to the Jains, a like a fully enlightened Tirthankara, like their equivalent to a Buddha, he knows everything all at once at all times. You know, it's just he's always sent uh like omniscient, always.

But in Theravada Buddhism, he has to direct his attention to something in order to know what it is he wants to know.

And even then, he may not be able to

know for sure what's going to happen a thousand years from now because he can't see into the future.

I mean, he would have to use a kind of extrapolation, which would only work in a state of pure determinism, which the Buddha himself denied.

>> [sighs]

>> But

I mean, so there is that, that the Buddha is selectively virtually omniscient, but he has to actually direct his mind to something in order to know it. And if it's knowable, then he will know it.

But

with regard to the Buddha's last meal, which is kind of a different question, he apparently, according to the legend, all we've got to work with is the legend. You know, we don't have forensic evidence. We don't have the coroner's report or anything like that.

All we have is the legend.

So, according to the legend, the Buddha evidently did know in advance that he was going to die. He was hinting hinting about this to Ananda that he was going to die soon. Ananda didn't want to hear it. Then, after he goes and eats his final meal, he tells the person who offers the meal, "Don't feed this to anybody else. Don't

give it to anyone else. Don't even eat it yourself. You should take this food and go and throw it in the river." And when it got or into a pond or something, throw it into water where there's no sentient beings. So, it could be like a stagnant pond or something. And after, according to the legend, when it got thrown into the water, it just started bubbling and hissing like like he had thrown some kind of red-hot iron into the water.

So,

the Buddha knew that he was going to be poisoned, but at the same time, according to legend,

he knew that it was just his time to go.

He He He gave some hints.

And nobody really wanted to pick up on
the hint.

You know, they didn't want to hear that.

And so,

he died.

There are similar stories about Neem

Karoli Baba up there

on top of the bookcase, who

based on modern testimonies,

you know, like

contemporaneous testimonies from people

who were there that Maharajji also was

hinting that he was going to die soon.

You know, it's like of some Zen masters

also. There's There's a few stories of

Zen masters, like Chinese Chan masters,
who would actually send out invitations
to his final sermon,
and then he he'd deliver one last sermon
and then just keel over dead.

Although, in any case like that, I mean,
you may be terminally ill and and know
that you don't you're not long for this
world. So, there's that also.

There's some people who think that the
Buddha really didn't die of
dysentery or poisoning from the food,
that he had a kind of intestinal
condition that some very old people get
where it's like gangrene of the
intestinal system. Can be very painful.

And if it was some kind of terminal
chronic condition that was getting worse
and worse, then
it wouldn't take any kind of enlightened
being to be able to predict that they
were not going to live very much longer.

But according to
the legends, which is all we have
really, he did know in advance that he
was going to die, which is one reason
why or he [clears throat]

I mean, assuming that it was the quality
of the food,
that's why he told Chunda,
"Don't feed this anybody else. Just
throw it away."

So,

I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Gordon.

And Gordon says,

"Regarding the priest or regarding the priest monk,

was he Catholic pretending to be a

Buddhist or a Buddhist pretending to be

a Catholic or did he think he was both?"

And this is with regard to a certain

Catholic priest that I met in Burma. And

when I met him, he was wearing monk's

robes. He had been ordained. It turned

out later,

um he came to visit me again just

dressed as a layperson.

Uh

he was ordained as a novice. So, he wasn't fully ordained. He was sort of in what a Catholic would call lesser orders or minor orders. He was ordained as a samanera or a novice. But, he was an ordained Catholic priest. He hadn't stopped being an ordained Catholic priest. I think only the Pope can actually allow like a priest or a monk to disrobe in Roman Catholicism, which didn't happen.

So,

yeah, and he came to visit me and I found out [clears throat] that he was a Catholic priest and when he he wrote to me saying he would like to come back to Burma and visit me again, I said, "Okay,

please don't don't be ordained as a monk
this time or even as a novice." You
know, it's like would Catholics ordain a
Buddhist that wasn't even a Catholic as
as like a Catholic monk or a priest? You
know, it just it it just wasn't entirely
appropriate, at least
at least
in my opinion.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> he uh he explained to me, I mean,
on the one hand, I mean, he's a really
good guy, very intelligent. He was uh
Catholic priest in Austria.

So, he wasn't American. He was Austrian.

And

he uh he was kind of losing his faith,
or that's what I was told by somebody
else. You know, he was
losing his
his fervor,
I guess, losing his faith to some
degree.

And I don't want to be slandering him or
or anything like this. I'm I'm I really
have nothing but
like good goodwill towards this person.

Um

and he was just interested in like
Buddhist practices, like meditation.

And I mean, I I told him that, you know,
almost every practice in Theravada

Buddhism is also found in Catholicism.

You know, like the the contemplative orders, like the Discalced Carmelites.

You know, they've got mindfulness practice, they've got jhana, they've got, you know, essentially all the spiritual practices that Buddhists have, they've got and and it's within like a Catholic context. So, why why didn't you come all the way to Burma to practice meditation when the Catholics back there in Europe still teach that's essentially the same thing. And his answer was that it's esoteric

in Catholicism, that you have to actually join the order in order to

practice that stuff.

And otherwise, they won't teach it to you.

So,

he was mainly just trying to, you know, see what it was like to be a monk and you know, practice some of the meditation techniques and that kind of thing.

Um

so

I mean, you could say that he was a Catholic pretending to be a Buddhist, but he was like a lot of Westerners, he was just too broad-minded to fit into a narrow category. So, he was kind of eclectic.

You know, I'm the same way. It's not like I just firmly adhere to orthodox Theravada Buddhism.

That sometimes I think the Mahayana Buddhists are more correct, or sometimes I'll acknowledge, like I just did, that the Catholics or Christians in general teach the same stuff.

So, I mean

it's kind of like locking yourself into a box if you're just going to be I mean some for some people it works better that way where you just firmly adhere to like one system. You've got stainless steel faith in that one system.

And that will help to uh

I mean it very much helps you if you have no doubt at all that this is the way. Then it's it really can inspire you to do your best. If you've got doubts, lukewarmness, not so much.

But some of us, I mean we can't just decide we're going to believe 100% of what is in our religion or what is in our political party or whatever. You know, it's just you have no choice but to just kind of like overflow into other points of view.

And that was the way he was.

So,

yeah, I mean it was kind of I considered to be somewhat inappropriate for him to

be ordaining even as a novice
when he was still an ordained Catholic
priest.

So,

but I mean he he accepted that with good
grace. I think he he accepted my request
that or maybe he did just had no
intention to be ordained again as a as a
novice. So, he just came in layman's
clothing the next time he came. He and
his friend who was a Hungarian
philosophy student.

Ah.

So, yeah, I guess I answered that about
as well as I'm able to.

I could go for another half hour, but I

don't think I'd get much better at answering the question.

So, I'm just going to move on to Gordon's second question, which is his last question, which is the last question of this Q&A.

And

Gordon says, "In previous episodes, you've talked about your deal breakers with Christianity and Islam and I guess by extension Judaism and the reasons why you could never be a secular materialist. Do you have any similar hard nose for Hinduism?"

So, why I could not be a Hindu. I I don't think there's any hard nose for Christian for Hinduism, but there's a

few soft nose. Just

Let's [clears throat] see.

One is their belief in is is kind of like a quibble really, but they insist that there is the Atman, which is a reification of the absolute and I do think the Buddhists

um

are more

What do you call it? More wise or more prudent

to just refuse to reify the absolute.

So, there is that. I mean, Hinduism also has a lot of just weird beliefs, you know,

Ganesh, the the Indian or the the

elephant-headed god and just all these weird stories that I mean, you kind of really don't have to believe them.

But, I mean, it's pretty deeply ingrained. I mean, it's not as necessary to believe in stories of Shiva or Ganesh or Kali. Um it's not as important in Hinduism as it is in Christianity believe in Jesus, that he is the only begotten son for son of God and the Messiah who died for our sins and all that.

But, I guess the two main soft nose with regard to Hinduism is first they reify the absolute, which I mean, that's that's kind of a quibble, you know, it's like whatever you say is going to be

kind of invalid with regard to the absolute anyway, but also technically in Hinduism, it seems that you are required to accept that the four Vedas are eternal.

That they weren't really composed by human beings. The human beings, the seven sages, just kind of channeled it out of the ether, out of like the infinite cosmos, where it has been residing forever and ever and always will reside.

That that the four Vedas are just you know, the ultimate authority, the ultimate scriptural authority.

And I mean, you read the the Vedas, and it's it's pretty primitive. I mean, it's getting back towards like Old Testament level religion, where it's like paganism, where you are honoring these gods and making sacrifice fire sacrifices. Back Rigveda days, it was still bloody animal sacrifices for the sake of cattle and sons and victory over one's enemies, this kind of stuff.

So,

there's that, too.

But, I mean, probably there's a lot of people who consider themselves to be Hindus who just kind of conveniently ignore the four Vedas, much like a lot of Western Buddhists conveniently ignore

the entire Abhidhamma Pitaka.

The entire third Pitaka of the the
Buddhist Tipitaka.

So, I mean, neither one of those is
really disqualifier. So, Hinduism
[clears throat] is like a soft no. If I
were not a Buddhist, I'd probably be
gravitating towards something like
Vedantist Hinduism.

So, that would be like my second choice
after Buddhism would be something like
Vedantist Hinduism, I'm pretty sure.

And that's it. That's that's the last
question. And so, I guess we done.

Less than 2 hours, too.

So,

like I always say,
you think I can answer a question about
Buddhism, ancient India, Dharma in
general, philosophy,
etc., etc., etc.

You think there's a good chance I can
answer the question? Feel free to ask. I
promise I'll do my best to answer it.

I don't promise that I'll answer it to
your satisfaction,
but I'll give it a shot. I'll do my
best.

That's why I'm here, as a public
service, as a
as like an alternative to Grok.

And uh

like and subscribe if you have not done

so already.

And

look at the URL links, which eventually

I am hoping I'm hoping

that that fourth book will finally be

published and the link to Amazon link

will will be down there in the URL links

along with everything else.

And uh

golly,

guess I'm getting a new job soon, which

I can tell you about next time maybe, if

anyone's interested.

And uh until then,

be happy and stuff.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 187.

I am your host Pony Basa and this is my beverage.

Before I get into factoring out the number 187, I would like to announce that at long last my fourth book has been published and is available on Amazon. It's entitled A Memoirs from Myanmar, which is largely autobiographical stuff about my monk's life, mainly in Burma, but also including Indonesia and the United States.

And uh those of you who are interested

may find it in the URL links below this video, unless you're watching it on Subscribe Star, in which case you're going to have to go directly to YouTube or Bitshoot or Rumble to find the link. And if you do read it, I would appreciate an honest review unless it's like really negative.

So 187. A lot of you guys probably thinking, "Oh, that's prime." It's because you're too freaking cowardly to do the work to factor out the number. Just disgusting.

Actually, it's 11×17 , which is kind of interesting. Sort of pseudo prime.

So, I guess I should just uh just commence to answering questions.

And as usual lately, the first few questions or three of the first four questions

um were asked quite some time ago and then I I just overlooked them when compiling the previous list. So they're on this list up near the top of the scroll.

So the first question is from Fred and Fred says, "Are women an impediment to progress?"

And I assume he means spiritual progress. And I would say probably

well I mean for someone who's practicing spiritual like for the average guy

having a woman may actually I mean in a lot of cases it helps to straighten a guy out you know it you know he's gets a crash course in responsibility that kind of thing. So for a lot of like average Joe's,

women can

kind of improve their their morality, that kind of thing. It's not always the case, but it is often the case. With regard to someone who is trying to live a spiritual life, are women an impediment to progress? I would say usually, but not always.

Rahm Das used to say that the only legitimate reason for a spiritually oriented person to marry is if being

married it's helping you to live a spiritual life. For example, you find a woman who's wiser than you or equally spiritually inclined that kind of thing then having a woman in your life can be helpful. Also there is the famous saying attributed to Socrates I think that by all means a man should marry and if he gets a good wife he'll be a happy man and if not he will become a philosopher. So there's that too. But for a lot of people, a lot of men, women are pretty much of a necessity just because we are instinctively attracted to a woman or to women in general. I guess it's like I think it

was Carl Young said that we're just like a man is just evolved and adapted adapted to being in a relationship with a woman pretty much like we're adapted to having certain like percentage of carbon dioxide in the air we breathe.

You know, it's just we are just evolved for that. It is true that lately, you know, the past less than a century of the existence of western civilization, I suppose, that women have become liberated. You know, we've got women's liberation, which has really thrown a wrench into thousands yearlong dynamic between men and women where like the man is the boss. there's a certain limit to the

amount of crap he is required to take,
that kind of thing. And so it has really
destabilized

male female relationships, especially in
the West. Um, and that's just going to
have to get worked out somehow or other
because the way it is now, like women,
a lot of them want a career. They don't
want to have kids. the at least half of
marriages in certain certain countries
result in divorce.

So

um this the civilization is unlikely to
prosper so long as this kind of
destabilized male female dynamic is
still active.

So something's going to have to get
worked out

and I wouldn't hold my breath. It may
take a while.

Also, for some reason, I'm reminded of a
story by JD Salinger called Teddy about
some enlightened little kid. I mean,
he's he's born and raised in New York
City and he's got this completely
dysfunctional family. His parents are
just like fighting all the time. They
apparently don't even like each other.
His sister is just horrible. just this
little kid and he's enlightened and he's
he explains to someone that he would
have got enlightened in the previous
life but he got involved with a woman in

the previous life so it caused a delay
of one lifetime

but as I say if a woman is helping you
in your spirituality if for some reason
you're you just having the woman in your
life is helping you to develop
spiritually in whatever way. It may even
be that you've got certain karma that
needs to be worked out.

So, or you need the woman that helps you
to be a philosopher maybe. You know,
there's different ways. But in general,
I mean, I suppose I should also add that
some guys just can't be celibate.

They're just too horny. And even some
guys who are celibate, I mean, they're

just like consumed. They're just burning with lust all the time because it's sort of like a starving man thinking about food all the time. So in a case like that, then you may as well just defer to nature to some degree. if it's just too just too much of a a cross to bear, too much of a strain to be celibate. In which case, find a good girl, a good woman, I should say. You know, settle down, be faithful to her, be faithful to each other.

But as a general rule, if it's possible to be celibate, it's it's that's that's what the Buddha says. That's like the official position of Terra Buddhism. Like the Buddha says,

you know, if if you're able to be
ordained as a beu, get ordained. If
you're not capable of that, then at
least avoid sexual intercourse like a
person would avoid falling into a deep
pit with burning coals at the bottom.
But if even that is too much, if you
can't handle even that much, then
just at the very least avoid the wives
of other men.

But I mean ancient Indian ethics were
extremely strict,
much stricter than like Christian ethics
for example.

So the ancient Indian ethics like the
the the cultural millu in which terabara

Buddhism arose was this very you know
the world is a bad place. You need to
find your liberation from samsara and
that is done through renunciation
and celibacy
and strict adherence or strict morality
this kind of stuff. And so Terraata
adopted that point of view. It's not the
only possible point of view. And most of
the people who are famous for being
enlightened in the west tend to be
married. I think Ekhart Tolle is
married. Nisargad Maharaj was
married. Some of the sages of the
Upanads were married. Although it
could be largely fictional
the like the dialogues in the

Upanishads.

So, I mean, to some degree, you're just going to have to decide for yourself. I

mean, do you really need to have a

woman? Uh, have you already made like a

lifelong commitment to a woman? which

case I mean if you if you're like um a

person who believes in God and you have

stood in a house of God and solemnly

vowed before God that you will stay

together through better for worse till

death do you part then that's a serious

consideration

so many people I mean they will vow make

this solemn vow to stay together for the

rest of their life and then

three years later they're getting divorced

because of like finances or something or the woman just thinks she can do better.

You know, she's just vaguely dissatisfied and thinks she can do better than this guy.

So,

I hope I answered that question.

It is kind of a touchy one for some people.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fred's next question. And he asked this question more than a week ago and I just found it in my inbox cuz he asked it in an email. Emails are not the best way to ask me questions for Q&As's because

usually I don't get questions for Q&As's
or Q's and A's Q&A videos in my email.

And so a lot of the time I don't even
think to look in my inbox for questions
for the next Q&A. So anyways, Fred says,
"Is a stream enterer a true man who
knows the ropes?"

And

again, I've expressed a certain
skepticism for the whole four stages of
Arya

many times. I've written about it. I've
talked about it. And I really do not
think that the four stages of aryhood
with the sodapana or stream enterer
being the first stage of the four stages

of of Buddhist saintthood.

Um I don't think that the Buddha really taught this that originally a stream enterer was probably like the Buddhist equivalent of like a born-again Christian or just like a new convert to Buddhism. That was probably what a stream enterer was. Was a new convert to Buddhism who had just entered the stream of dharma, had just started interpreting their life along spiritual lines.

And there were certain considerations like there was an obscure rule in the podium rules that uh monks should not be overly reliant upon a family of sodaponas.

And that's makes more sense if you view

sodaponas as new converts who might be rich in faith and might just like impoverish themselves trying to offer stuff to the monks especially if the monks are not ashamed to be asking for lots of stuff.

So, a stream enterer.

Um

gosh, I mean going with orthodox terravada, you could go along with Fred's interpretation that a streamer is a true man or a true woman, true boy, true girl who knows the ropes, who in other words, who has who's pretty much like locked in, you know, who knows what's what with regard to how to to

live their life along Dharmic lines,
that kind of

Although if a stream mentor is just a
new convert to Buddhism, like a devout
new convert to Buddhism, not just some
person dabbling, being eclectic, you
know, just investigating a little bit,
but someone who's really
really just convinced that this is the
right way for me and they're just their
life is changed. Then even then they
don't necessarily know the ropes. They
may still be relatively naive with
regard to a lot of a lot of stuff that
is taught in Buddhism.

And I think I answered that question
well enough. So I'm just going to move

on to this next question. This is from PSA. And PSA again, he asked these questions more than a week ago. He says, "Could you talk in more depth about this same question? I keep going back to it because if your mind is distracted now, it makes sense because you're currently living the life of a householder. But how did you lose your unification of mind as a monk?

What happened? Could you please elaborate when you started to lose this singleness of mind as a monk and what methods did you use to try to get it back before disroving? So, this is a question that I'm getting asked or are

variations on this question I'm getting asked almost every Q&A now. I don't know why that is. Could be just coincidence, but let's see here. What is the exact question? How did I lose my unification of mind as a monk? Well, I mean, it wasn't something that you could really see clearly as to what exactly was causing it. It's just that my meditation just stopped being as good as it was for whatever reason. And partly I mean it just started getting into just this is just ridiculous. My my concentration or my meditation was never I mean I've never been by nature a really good meditator. You know it took a long time before I could get start

getting into relatively deep meditative states. And even then it was sort of like God in the Godas where he gets it and loses it and gets it and loses it and gets it and loses it until he's at wit's end and finally he just selfdees because he just can't stand it anymore. So I mean it was kind of that sort of thing and um I remember reading in a book by St. John of the Cross, I think it was uh the ascent of Mount Carmel, where um someone who gets contemplation and loses it and gets it and loses it, gets it and lose, you know, they're able to practice high contemplation as the Catholics call it and then you you just

can't get it anymore. The best you can do is just meditation which has like um visualizations or you know perceptions going on. When when you get into high contemplation like either you know Catholic high contemplation or the higher Janna in Buddhism then you're no longer thinking your mind is just clear and silent for the most part you know there might be little motions but that's as far as it gets is little motions and according to St. on the cross. If you get it and lose it and get it and lose it and get it and lose it, you don't just, you know, finally master it, then well, God has other plans for you. And he had a lot of experience with

this. He was like a meditation master
teaching

Catholic contemplatives in a
contemplative order. He had a lot of
experience. And I mean from his point of
view apparently based on his own
experience if you don't just you know
get it and keep it but you just get it
and lose it. Get it and lose it. Get it
and lose it then apparently just God has
other plans for you. And that's the way
it was for me. I get it and lose it. Get
it and lose it. And finally I just
stopped getting it except for just the
occasional little glimmer. you know,
maybe one good meditation in in just a

matter of months.

And it was just so frustrating just going back to the ABCs, going back to labeling that kind of thing that it just started becoming discouraging and disillusioning to some degree. And then I just decided well I mean after 10 years of

meditation that is below what I was doing like 2003 more than 10 years time to try something else.

So let's see how did you lose your unification of mind as a monk? It's just the mind just is restless.

Um maybe a little contracted and then you just start losing

enthusiasm because it's so unreliable.

There's kind of a question farther down the scroll that addresses that particular issue indirectly that I'll probably touch upon this a little more, but it's just unreliable.

You know, it's like you try and try and try for years and years sometimes and then sometimes you get a glimpse or a glimmer. Other other people they can try for years and years, meditate for years and years and never get anything above first genre. You know, they just never get beyond like thinking and perceiving as as like their main meditation technique. You know, they still have

this method that they're following. you never just kind of break free of methods and just get into this clear silent spaciousness.

And for me, I'd get it sometimes and then finally around 2004, it just kind of tapered off and almost stopped happening.

So, what happened? I mean, sometimes anyone who's who's done like a an intensive meditation retreat can know that your subconscious mind can fight against enlightenment or fight against dharma. This sabotage your practice and because it's subconscious, you're not fully aware of what's going on. It can be like hysterical symptoms, that kind

of thing that happened with Catholic saints, too.

So there's always that and it's I mean you can see the surface stuff you know what's h going on at the surface but what's going on deep down in the murky depths of your subconscious mind which is where a lot of this stuff is originating you know troubles with your meditation that kind of thing sometimes the best you can do is just make an educated guess or you can just resort to St. John of the Cross's explanation, God just has other plans for you. So, could I please elaborate when I

started to lose
the singleness of mine? Well, I mean,
it's I mean, even at my best, it wasn't
like every single minute of every time I
would sit down to meditate. Back in
those days, you know, for most of my
career as a monk, I was meditating
several hours a day, sitting
cross-legged with my eyes closed,
usually several hours a day. And I mean,
sometimes your mind is restless and
doesn't settle down. Sometimes you get
right into it and it's just beautiful.
And so, you know, after around 2003,
2004, you know, it's just restless and
not settling down very well anymore.
I mean, you can kind of grind away at

the technique, but I mean, it's like going back to the ABCs after you've had something that was much higher, more advanced than that can be discouraging. So, let's see. I mean, I've I've really answered this question pretty much in in the previous Q&A and then also like two or three Q&As's before that. So, I shouldn't just keep flogging a dead horse here.

See

what methods did I use to try to get it back before disrupting is just just continuing to meditate.

went to a few retreats

but it was uh by then after several

years of it I mean you just kind of it becomes like habitual just this not having momentum going not having enthusiasm for for practice because just the the expectation that the practice is not going to get very deep that kind of thing you know it just kind of derailed the whole the whole holy life attitude, I suppose, or at least contributed to the derailing of the holy life attitude. I just got as far as I could get with it and then it leveled off and even started tapering off. And so after several years of that, time to try something else. I'm going to take a drink of my beverage.

Ah,

it's good.

So, I guess I should just move on to the next question.

This is also from PSA.

He says, "For monks stroking it without emission, is it considered breaking the third precept and does the monk have to confess it?" Well, the monk isn't dealing with five precepts. He's dealing with vineia rules, rules of monastic discipline. So, we're dealing with the first sada rule here.

And according to the first sad dissa rule to deliberately have an orgasm is a sanada offense requiring six days and six nights of penance followed by this

very inconvenient reinstatement ceremony in which at least 20 monks in good standing have to attend. and it's really inconvenient.

But um there are minor rules that are associated with the first song. For example, if you try to have an orgasm and for whatever reason fail, I'm pretty sure that's a tulachaya offense.

It's at any rate, it doesn't rank as a full sana. So let's say you start and you you you're like have the in the intention to have an orgasm and then change your mind. Well, still you were doing it with the intention which is you know the action and the intention.

That's two out of three. You know you didn't actually accomplish it but still you you did the action with the in the intention of doing it to completion and then you didn't complete. So I'm pretty sure it's either a ducata or a tulichaya offense, but it falls short of a full song of you say. So just confession is enough. You don't have to do the penance and all that. Or let's say you start and then like somebody starts walking in so you suddenly stop and pretend you know everything's cool, that kind of thing, then again then it would be against the rules. But if you're just not exactly spanking the puppy, but just petting it,

and then it just accidentally goes off,
which can happen, then that would
technically not be breaking a rule.

But if you're not sure, you know, you're
like secondguing, trying to
psychoanalyze yourself, then just to
make sure, you may want to do penance
just to clear all doubt. just to make
sure you've got a clean slate, that kind
of thing. And a lot of monks do that
sort of thing. I've done that sort of
thing before, not only with regard to uh
sana number one, but like touching a
woman with with like desire, you know,
desire to to derive pleasure from the
touch. There was one of the abbotts my
one of my main teachers in Burma. He

would do the penance every year because sometimes women would touch him. You know, it's like just brush up against a woman on a bus or for whatever reason you come into contact and he was kind of a macho monk and he enjoyed it. So just just to make sure that he was he was clean, ritually clean, he would do the do the the penants practic pretty much every year.

So in order to get to commit sada number one then you have to like perform the act physically. You have to have the intention of having an orgasm and then you have to successfully have the orgasm in order

for it to be a full sanada offense.

And all of the sanodisas are like this.

In fact, a lot of winni rules are like

this where there's lesser rules with

regard to like trying and then not

actually succeeding and breaking the

rule. But the very fact that you tried

to break the rule,

like even with regards to like stealing,

that kind of thing, then it's it's a

lesser rule, but not like the full

penalty.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Mark.

Hi, Moi.

This is from Mark and he says, "Who were

your favorite wrestlers from Portland

wrestling back in the early to mid
1970s?

And it is true that when I was a kid,
starting when I was in about fifth
grade, um my family started watching big
time wrestling, also called Portland
wrestling, but really it was in
beautiful Lake Oiggo,
which is ne next to Portland, I guess.
And it's true. Sometimes I would like
cheer for the bad guys just to to
irritate my mother because my mother
really believed it. You know, it's a lot
of this stuff is fake. you know, they're
like bashing each other with with metal
chairs and this kind of stuff, you know,

getting out jumping out of the ring and just beating each other up out in the out on the parking lot sometimes. And she thought it was all just 100% legit. But when even even as a kid, you could see that it was a lot of it was just sort of fake, you know, dramatized fake blood, this kind of thing.

So, my favorite wrestlers from Portland wrestling back in the early to mid 1970s,

beautiful Lake Oiggo.

Well, I mean, Dutch Savage and Jimmy Snooka were like the the two heroes.

Those were like the two main favorite good guys. Um, I remember one of the bad guys was Bull Ramos. And the very first

time I ever saw um oh, what's his name?

Jesse the Body Ventura who was in some

relatively big movies like the first

Predator movie and also he was what

governor of Minnesota or something like

that. First time I ever saw him he was

the new tag team partner for Bull Ramos

and he was just silent and Bull Ramos is

like slapping at him on the stage.

They're up in the crowd's nest talking to

the host Frank Bonama and Bull Ramos,

this big fat Indian guy, is just

slapping it at Jesse Ventur saying,

"Pose, pose," because Jesse is is he's

just adopting these, you know, Mr.

Universe poses.

That was back when wrestlers were kind of making the transition from diesel powered to nuclearpowered.

So, I mean, I could say uh like Haru Sasaki with the the dreaded karate thumb. Definitely diesel powered old-fashioned wrestler who was just kind of built like a weightlifter or something.

Tough Tony Bourne with regard to uh bad guys. Well, that's the next question here. So, yeah. I mean, Dutch Savage and Jimmy Snooker was pretty much everybody's favorite back in those days. And then Mark here says, "Who was your favorite bad guy?"

And I don't know, I suppose it was, what

was his name? Lord Jonathan Boyd, one of the kangaroos, the Royal Kangaroos.

Cuz he was a bad guy, but he was tough.

I mean, he was genuinely a good a good wrestler who maybe just, you know, they they had to like draw lots to see who had to be the bad guy or something. And so he and his uh his tag team partner, what was it? What was it? Uh Charles.

Lord Charles. No, not Lord Charles.

Something Charles.

But they were tough. I mean, they could take a beating. They were good wrestlers. Sometimes they would win.

So, let's go with Lord Jonathan Boyd.

Who was this Australian guy

and uh I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "If ultimate awareness were truly static, would that not contradict the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence?"

Buddhists say that everything has changed from when I was 5 years old until now. But if the capacity for awareness or pure awareness itself has not changed, why could that not be considered an atman or self? Well, I mean, I was I thought I was fairly clear in my explanation to of my answering of Austin's previous question, which was kind of along these lines. This is like a followup.

He says, I mean, I was saying that human awareness in the samosauric sense is not static, but ultimately, you know, ultimately like the the highest state of awareness, like assuming for example that nirvana is pure formless consciousness, you could say that that is static partly just because it's no longer in time.

It's timeless. A calico.

So it doesn't contradict the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence because the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence like in the the the three marks of existence sabara anicha which is all conditioned things

are impermanent. But when you go beyond
like samsaric awareness into this
hypothetical ultimate highest absolute
awareness of pure formless
consciousness. It's not a sankara
anymore. It's not in samsara anymore.

But Buddhism really doesn't it tries to
avoid or at least early Buddhism wisely
avoided reifying the absolute.

So I mean you don't even refer to the
highest state as an it or a thing or
like a goal. You don't really try to
describe it. I mean, you can have it as
a goal and so forth, but still it has to
be like practically like an an
enigma.

Man, that was hard to say. Or just a

mystery, you know, like mysticism.

Mystery and mysticism have the same
root, the etymological root.

So I mean kind of you can say that
assuming

that nirvana is infinite formless
consciousness

you know this unmanifest luminous all
around like some ancient verses say then
you could say that that kind of ultimate
awareness would not be impermanent but
it's off the scale it's not a sankara so
it's not contradicting

sab Sankara or all conditioned things
are impermanent.

But when you're at the human level

still in samsara, everything is changing from one moment to the next.

So

I mean there are some Mahayana Buddhists who will say that this infinite formless consciousness is like the origin of like the Buddha nature and all that and it doesn't change and so you can call that your true self. But in early Buddhism you don't call anything your true self. That's just sort of a later Mahayana philosophical development that is emotionally satisfying to certain types of people.

So

I'm just going to move on to Austin's next question.

He says, "Nama," which is usually translated as mind. He says, "Nama is considered immaterial, meaning it doesn't have mass or physical extension. Consciousness arises dependent on conditions, but it is not reducible to matter. If computers could become conscious, consciousness could arise from purely material structures without anything immaterial. Would this not be a huge problem for Buddhism? Well, it'd be a huge problem for Abidama philosophy because I've said this before. One time I I asked a Burmese Abidama scholar, would it be possible for a computer to become conscious? And he just gave this

unconditional no. Because according to Abid Dhama, consciousness has to arise in kama ja rupa or matter that is generated by karma and computers apparently don't have that. But personally I do not see any problem at all that you could argue that consciousness arises from a brain which is is a kind of organic computer. You know, it's still matter. a brain is still matter at least from a materialistic point of view.

So I mean I really don't see a problem. I mean it would be a problem for certain tenets of terra Buddhist orthodoxy because of what Abidama says. But most westerners don't have much use for

abidama anyway. I certainly don't. Most Buddhist monks, western Buddhist monks do not take abidama very seriously.

They do not consider it to be genuine teachings of the historical God.

So I mean if and if you're like a Mahayana Buddhist who doesn't believe that matter even really exists then

I mean where would the problem be there?

I mean you wouldn't have mind

originating from pure matter because

according to like a yoga Buddhist of the Mahayana then there is no pure matter.

So let's see here. Did I answer the

question? Nama is considered immaterial

meaning it doesn't have mass or physical

extension. Consciousness arises dependent on conditions. Well, yeah, that's vinyanakanda arises dependent on conditions. Yeah, we can say that. But if you're talking about nirvana as infinite formless consciousness then it's not arising dependent on conditions because that's just transcends samsara. It transcends conditionality and it transcends the duality of existence and non-existence so that you can't even really talk about it.

So if computers could become conscious, consciousness could arise from purely material structures. If you believe that physical matter is ultimately real and I

don't

without anything immaterial, would this not be a huge problem for Buddhism? It'd be a huge problem for some like orthodox terra Buddhist philosophers and maybe certain other Buddhist philosophers of other schools who are dogmatically attached to certain tenets found in Buddhist texts.

But overall, I don't think it would change much at all with regard to is Buddhism true or not.

I mean with regard to how to practice and all that, it would remain unchanged. Four noble truths remain exactly the same regardless of whether computers can

become conscious or not or regardless of whether a blob of gray meat can become conscious or not. I mean according to orthodox terraata, your brain isn't even the the organ of thought. It's it's like thought just arises through the force of karma in the blood in one of the chambers of your heart.

Hadaya watu you know the heart base is where thought and mentality arises according to orthodox terravada they didn't even know what the brain was for in the wisudi manga the brain is just a big lump of bone marrow filling a large hollow bone almost the only thing that your brain does according to Buddha and the wizudi

maga the number one um commentarial text
in orthodox Theravada Buddhism

The only thing that your brain really
does is if you catch a cold, it starts
to liquefy. And so the snot coming out
your nose is like melted brain.

According to the Wisuddhi Magga,
as uh venerable Nyanamoli, the first
famous Nyanamolei who translated the
Wissuddhi Magga into English, as he said,
the commentators were hard put to find a
use for the human brain because they had
already decided that your heart was the
organ of thought. They really didn't
have an idea of like blood circulation
at the time that they came up with these

ideas. And so apparently they had this idea that it was your liver that was responsible for splashing your blood around in your body causing it to somehow circulate through this splashing activity.

So I mean you really can't take ancient Buddhist or ancient Indian ideas about the function of the brain or the function of the heart or the function of the liver. Like you can't take them too seriously. There are some people of course that think ancient Indians they knew everything better than modern science does. And with regard to how the mind works, maybe. But with regard to human anatomy and physiology, there's no

way. Unless you have some kind of enlightened doctor that just had like this transcendent understanding without really conceptualizing it and writing it down in medical texts.

So let's see here. I guess I answered that question. I'm just going to move on to the next one. This is from Maximan.

And Maximan says, 'In holding your views on politics and the war effort, do you consider the fear and dread young men face who could be drafted? And then in parenthesis, he says, I'm 27.

And my view on politics and the war effort is mainly like objective like political analysis. You know, I'm not

trying to interpret

like world politics

in in terms of Buddhist ethics. In in Buddhist ethics, almost all politics is immoral. Which is why a devout serious Buddhist is supposed to just renounce society and go off and live alone in a forest.

If you just like abolish all military, you know, all all all wars, this kind of thing, even wars of self-defense, punishing criminals, this kind of thing, you consider all that to be immoral. You know, even like killing lice in your children's hair. If all that you're just not going to do that, you're not going to break any precepts at all. Then the

thing for you to do is just go off into a forest, renounce the world, and just go out and and live the holy life.

So, in holding my views on politics in the war, I don't really consider very much the fear and dread young men face who could be drafted. And if it arises, I mean, especially when I'm thinking politically, not just being like empathetic and subjective and thinking like in terms of Buddhist ethics, but I'm thinking in terms of politics, then fear and dread of young men. I mean, that's that's fatal to a society. If you have I mean, there's always going to be a lot of young men who just don't want

to fight. They're afraid to fight. they don't don't want to get killed, this kind of stuff. But if you don't have any men who are willing to fight for their country, the country is doomed. And I mean, at present, the United States at least has an all volunteer military. So I mean, it's like nobody's being drafted at present. anyone who's getting killed in the military volunteered to join the military knowing full well that there was a chance a risk of being killed. So I mean I can't really consider that to be any kind of injustice anymore than somebody knows the risks of smoking. they decide to smoke anyway and then they get lung

cancer or emphysema or they decide they want to be a motorcycle racer and they know in advance there's always the hazard you know you can get in a wreck you can get killed but they may they decide to take that chance and they go for it and then if they kill I mean it's if they get killed in a wreck god forbid I mean at least they were willing to take that risk

And in their case in their particular case, they rolled snake eyes and but I mean they willingly rolled the dice knowing that it could come up snake eyes.

So the fear and dread of young men who

who

um I mean even in the old days there would be a draft you know sometimes the army would just go through just recruiting all the young men in a certain village you know that happened a lot and as a general rule the men might be very afraid full of dread but still when you get thrust out onto that battlefield it's like this innate manhood

you know, this innate heroic virtue just rises to the surface and you just find it within you to fight or to do your duty. You know, my father was in World War II and he would say there are some people that I'm not going to fight. I'm

not going to fight. I can't kill anybody. Then, you know, when you've got Germans or Hungarians or whatever shooting at you, then you just find it within yourself to start shooting back as a general rule. Most of the people that said, "I can't do it. I'm not, you know, I'm I'm afraid of getting killed and all this." Most of them would come around and start fighting. And some of them would be good fighters once the once the ice was broken, once they finally found the inner warrior, you know, the the the inner Viking or the inner Saxon or whatever came to the surface, which is what grown men have

been doing since the human race existed.

I mean, there was a time when almost every able-bodied man in a village was a warrior if necessary.

you know, your your village or your tribe gets raided by another village or tribe. You pick up your spear and you go fight to protect your village. And it was back in those days, it was like with spears, like people looking each other in the eye as they're killing each other. That's maybe you were lucky enough to have a bow and arrow and standing farther back.

So I think excessive fear and dread of young men um just fearing having to go to war. I mean in a way it's it's a sign

of societal decay.

Sorry to say I don't want to insult anybody. I mean you have the option of just refusing just be a conscientious objector. And I remember there's a a book by Jay Krishna Murdy where somebody was complaining to him. I think it was an Indian man saying that if you don't join the army they'll shoot you. I mean if they draft you and you refuse to fight they'll shoot you. And Christian Murdy says okay still you still have the choice so you'll be shot. That's just something you just got to consider. Still you make the choice if you prefer to get shot or whatever it is. Go to

prison rather than fight in a war. I mean still that is your choice to make in accordance with your comma but I mean I can relate when I was a young man I was sort of a militant pacifist

and uh yeah I definitely did not want to join the military I came from a military family most of the males in my family especially my father's side had been in the army

But I was just a militant pacifist at the time, a dope smoking cosmic cowboy with long hair. And I just I just didn't want to do that. So I mean, if they would have drafted me, then I would have had to I mean, they didn't have the

draft back then. There was like a mandatory registration for selective service, which I eventually wound up doing due to my father just insisting on it. So I signed up for the selective service and they didn't draft anyone. It was just in case.

But if I had been drafted, then it may have been that I would have just had to decide, you know, am I really willing? I mean, you can be like Mahatma Gandhi, Moandas K. Gandhi. He volunteered to join the military in World War I on the British side as an unarmed stretcherbearer. You know, he was at least going to do his part. He was not a

coward, you know, he was going to do his part. He just didn't want to kill anybody. So, he was just running out onto the battlefield and pulling wounded soldiers to safety without shooting at anybody. So, I mean, that's an option, too. I mean, if if you're just afraid, then that's probably not so good. But um at at the very least I mean if it's just a moral decision you don't want to kill anybody which is I mean that's not a bad choice to make then I mean still you could be like an unarmed stretcher bearer or something. I don't know if that's really an option in the modern American military. I mean possibly like a combat medic

something like that. I think combat medics in World War II at least they carried a pistol. They didn't have an they didn't have a rifle, but they still had a sidearm.

Well, I mean, I don't know if you'd actually be required to use that. I mean, you could just leave it in its holster.

So, getting back to Maximon's actual question,

it's kind of surprising to me that Maximian

is asking this kind of question considering that Maximian was like the first barbarian emperor of Rome.

allegedly he was just a complete animal.
He definitely was I mean he rose up
through the ranks of the legions became
he became emperor that way.

So yeah I mean when usually when I'm
when I have views on politics and the
war effort it's just from this amoral
objective you know what is expedient
from a political point of view kind of
attitude.

And so there's not a whole lot of I mean
it's really cut and dried from a
Buddhist point of view. War is murder.
Just don't do it. Don't kill anybody.
Don't even kill an ant. Period. That's
it.

It's really not negotiable.

But I mean, from a political point of view,

just observing, you know, what Donald Trump and the the Ministry of War and all this is doing, I mean, it's you can't really just insist

that we just disband all of our military forces and all this just because it's it's not Dharmic. I mean, it's it's just unrealistic.

So it's more of an anthropological kind of a thing when you're looking at politics and you know what is conducive to the prosperity and success of a country and just not hurting anything is really

not conducive to the prosperity of a
country not for very long anyway
and I'm just going to move on next
question this is from Siovak and Sipad
Zidana

And I alluded to this question um in
answer to one of the first questions
section Zena says thoughts on this quote
and it's a quote from Terrence McKenna
and Terrence McKenna says the thing that
is so powerful about the psychedelics is
that they perform on demand which almost
in principle you cannot expect of a
mystical experience because that would
be essentially man ordering God at man's
whim, which is not how it's supposed to
work. And this is something that I used

to consider a lot. Like a little little while ago, I was talking about how um with meditation, getting like a mystical experience through meditation. There's no guarantees at all. Some people might try their entire life and fail. And then other people, you get it and lose it. Get it and lose it. A few lucky few or fortunate few will master it. and then they can just slide right into a deep mystical state pretty much every time they sit down. There are people like that. I assume St. John of the Cross was one of those. A lot of Buddhist Buddhist monks both Terravada and otherwise have been that way also.

But I mean I can't really agree. I mean
it's

let me back up a little bit. So I mean
meditation getting into deep meditative
states or mystical states through
meditation as I say is woefully
unreliable sometimes. There's no
guarantees. Whereas something like two
hits of acid, you take those two hits of
acid and you're pretty much guaranteed
of some kind of mystical experience. At
least in my case, it has generally been
that way
in my youth.

So, I mean, I used to think about that a
lot when I was a monk. It's like, man,
it's like you can just take two hits of

acid and you'll be getting into states that some meditators have tried to get into for decades and have failed.

So it it's almost unfair

that it's it's so reliable with

something like mushrooms psilocybin

mushrooms or or masculine or or LSD,

that kind of thing. Whereas with

meditation, it's not nearly as reliable.

But um what McKenna's talking about

here, it's like let's see, it would be

essentially man ordering God at man's

whim, which is not how it's supposed to

work. Well, I mean, not how it's

supposed to work is just sort of a

cultural thing, I think, because even

like somebody who is practicing
diligently and they've got like a talent
at like contemplation
so that they finally master it. I mean
still I mean they're working at it.
They're making efforts. It's not just
like this gift of God that's just
spontaneous. It's not purely divine
grace even then because they're really
striving for it. You know they're really
putting in the effort, putting in lots
of effort.

So it is true that it's it seems kind of
vaguely unfair, unjust
that some people can meditate and
meditate and meditate for years and
still not get into a mystical state as

deep as if they just took a bunch of
psilocybin mushrooms.

I think I mentioned previously not long
ago that some Hindu yogi or swami back
in like the 1970s

made the observation that God came to
America in the form of LSD because
Americans are materialists and they
wanted their God in the form of a
material substance.

So I mean it's all just I mean just
going with you know cosmic justice in a
Buddhist sense with karma and all that
then everyone gets what they deserve
even though it may not seem that way
especially if it's like innocent

children being abused and so forth from the Buddhist point of view it's it's a karmic thing. Anything that happens to you and causes any kind of sensation, positive or negative, is the fruition of karma. If not karma made in this life, karma made in a previous life. And you know, a lot of people that really cannot appreciate the whole idea of karma will call it victim blaming and just get indignant and angry about abused children and so forth. And I can get that. But still I mean it does it does I do accept the idea of karma that the world we living in the world we are living in is mind-made like the first verse of the dharmapata

it's mindmade mind is chief mind is the
forerunner

and some people just aren't very good at
at like generating their reality you
know it's like even good people can have
nightmares just you know it's we're
creating our own dreams and some people
are creating nightmares

but I'm uh wandering away from the
question and from the Terrence McKenna
quote and I I gave my thoughts on it so
I'm just going to move on to Seio Cipad
Ziderna's next question which is a
surprisingly difficult one he says who
is your favorite American of all time
and then he says writer philosopher

mystic politician and any other fields
you think are important. So, my favorite
American of all time, I guess I can just
cheat and say my dad, my dad is my
favorite American.

Um,

but just getting into these categories
like my favorite writer, my favorite
American writer. I mean, America really
hasn't produced
any like great like Shakespeares that
I'm aware of. I mean, Herman Melville,
who wrote Moby Dick, I mean, Moby Dick
is great. It's it's more profound than
the Old Testament of the Bible, for
example, in my opinion. I mean, it's it
is profound. It is a mystical text in in

certain respects. Like Moby Dick himself is like the left fist of God.

Um, but then again, Melville wrote a lot of kind of not so good stuff. In fact, most of his stuff wasn't all that great. You know, he's he's kind of like a one-hit wonder. I mean, his second best writing would be maybe Billy Bud, you know, like some of his early stuff like Taipei, you know, that's it's readable. It's it's interesting. But all in all, he was just he was inspired with Moby Dick. just he was inspired by a muse when writing Moby Dick, even though even Moby Dick has some corny parts.

Um,

but I mean, Melville lived a really interesting life. I mean, he's like of the Dutch aristocracy of New York City back from going back from when it was New Amsterdam. And then his family fell upon hard times back in the 1800s. You know, there was some kind of depression or stock market crash or something back then. And so he just went off and and started working on whaling ships. And Melville, who wrote Moby Dick, was actually one of the harpooners, you know, he's the guy standing in the front of a rowboat chasing a a sperm whale, like hurling the harpoons into the whale. So I mean, he he definitely lived an adventuresome life. And so that

causes me to have a little higher opinion of him, even though he wrote a fair amount of duds.

Um, with regard to like poetry, I don't I don't know if America has had very many really great poets. Robert Frost, maybe.

Um, let's see. The best my favorite American philosopher. I mean, America hasn't produced any really great philosophers either that I know of. some good scientists.

But maybe William James like he wrote the the varieties of religious experience which is more religion than philosophy. I guess with regard to

philosophy, William James was mainly known for being one of the the founding pioneers in of pragmatism which was one of the theories of truth. It was kind of a epistemological theory that something is true if and only if it works.

Um, my favorite American mystic, well, there's Herman Melville again who wrote movie dick. That's definitely a mystical book. Or also maybe Wal Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote the the poem Brahma.

Brahma is a good mystical poem if you've never read it and it's it's short. I think it's only like three verses long.

My favorite pol my favorite American politician. Let's go Theodore Roosevelt,

which may help to explain why I like
Trump as much as I do.

I like someone who just gets [_] done.

And let's see. And any other fields I
think are important.

Gosh,

I really can't think of very much. I
mean, musicians. My favorite American
musician. I don't even know.

Johnny Cash. I don't know.

Let's see.

So, yeah. I mean, with regard to my
favorite American of all time, I'm still
just sticking to my dad.

He was a great man in his own way.

And uh

yeah I mean if Siovak and Cad Zena is not satisfied with this answer he can uh like ask a specific category in future and like maybe I'll have more time to reflect on it because really I'd have to sit here just really thinking about gosh who is my favorite American philosopher for example. You know, there's a good chance I'm overlooking somebody.

So, let's see here. I mean, if it were English or Scottish or something, it'd be easy. I could just, you know, my favorite Scottish philosopher obviously would be David Hume. Favorite English philosopher, I don't know, maybe FH Bradley.

But

I mean, the great rock and roll bands,
Led Zeppelin, for example, that's
English.

The Beatles were English.

Best American rock and roll band. I
don't even know. Pink Floyd was English.
Rush was Canadian.

Maybe the Doors. I don't know. Let's
just move on. Next question.

This is also from Seio.

This is more philosophical, more
Buddhist if you will. He says in terra
why is delusion considered a sankara
rather than perception. I thought
perception was the way you see the world

while delusion is incorrectly seeing it.

Thus making it all form of see all

making it a form of misperception.

Well, this is another like Abid Dhama

thing that first of all

according to Abidama there are 52 mental

states

all of them are sankaras and then for

some reason

two of these sankaras which are sya or

perception

and also way or feeling got singled out

because supposedly they're more

important than the other 50 and it's

just it's bad like categorization bad

systematology in my opinion this is

indicative of like early terravada

Buddhism being like pre-logical
like being a product a product of Indian
culture before formal logic had really
been established in Indian philosophy.
So it's just I mean you can say that
you've got the five condas and that is
it that's all we are and sankara would
just be volition or will in which case
all these other mental states even wrong
view is is considered to be a distinct
qualitatively separate mental state just
distinct from perception and that kind
of stuff I just can't buy it. You're
better off just saying perceptions and
and will and will perception and
volition even feelings would be a kind

of like sensory perception.

So yeah, I'd be I'd go along with that.

You've got

mental states or or just perception and volition and and consciousness. But even even that is it's it's getting too too complicated.

So I mean at one point I did write the first Buddhist philosophical essay I ever wrote

was uh with regard to trying to make sense of the five condas and trying to make sense of how perception and volition especially are related. how perception is like the static aspect of volition and volition is like the kinetic aspect of perception. So that

even that is a false distinction. It's just based on the the weird way like the grammatical way that human beings label things and identify things.

And I'm probably confusing some people because I'm slightly confusing myself trying to answer this and just kind of going about it scattershot.

But in Terravada delusion is considered a sankara rather than perception mainly because you had these abidama scholars trying to categorize everything and not doing a really good job of it because they were not particularly sophisticated with regard to formal logic. they didn't really have a a really solid system. And

so they're just coming up with this kind of mental state. Yeah, we'll just call that an ultimate reality. And that kind of mental state, yeah, we'll just call that an ultimate reality. And then they'll just like come up with other mental states that you're not even fully aware of, but they have to be there to kind of fit the theory. kind of the way some subatomic particles are theorized or hypothesized by theoretical physicists just as a way of getting a theory to work.

And so Abidama was kind of that way. But I would personally I would say delusion is is perception. In fact, I would say delusion and perception are synonyms.

Might as well throw samsara in there.

Samsara is delusion is perception.

Perception is samsara.

So I mean I go with a much simpler
way of interpreting the world than

Abidama scholars with their gosh I don't
remember what is it 128 ultimate
realities. No it's no it wouldn't be
that many. It's 28 kinds of matter, 52
kinds of mental states, plus one kind of
consciousness and one kind of nibbana.

But I just I just don't I'm I'm like a
monist, you know? It's you start off
with this undifferentiated
like pleum, I guess, and then perception
just starts differentiating. I mean,

that's papancha.

just starts differentiating this

undifferentiated

ultimate reality and just sort of

forming individual essences out of it.

And that's that's all just artifacts of perception.

So a lot of this is this is one of those cases I think one of the very first questions like like Fred was asking about sodapona. I have to give two different answers. I have to give my own personal best answer and then I have to say what orthodox terravada says because they don't always agree. Sometimes I'm in agreement with orthodox terravada but other times I've got to like give two

different answers because orthodox
terraata says this but I can't really
accept that. I don't think that's true
because I don't just follow along with
my religion like a lot of people do.

So

yeah, so I mean in ter delusion is
considered to be a s car rather than
perception just because you have these
abidama scholars just trying to just
divide the entire universe up into its
constituent elemental parts and they
just didn't have the common sense
apparently to realize that delusion is
perceptual. I mean they would they would
ad freely admit that there has to be

perception involved in delusion. But then there's this also this delusion trron that has to be added to the perception tra in order to form the full mental state which also has to have all these other trrons that are in the rupa kalapa. This it's like a molecule of all these little particles of mental states and matter and all this.

And I just I just can't buy it. Most western Buddhists don't really have any use for this sort of thing. It's just ancient Indian philosophy from a time when formal logic and a certain sophistication of thought had not yet entered Indian philosophy. I mean you don't even you don't really

need sophistication of thought if you're
if you're just practicing mysticism.
you're getting into these deep mental
states where you're experiencing reality
directly without having to theorize
about it. Then you can still be fully
enlightened without having formal logic,
without having some sophisticated
theoretical framework to account for the
mental states you're having.

I hope that this Q&A isn't just me just
rambling in in just various directions
and not giving a straight answer to
anything.

It's kind of how it feels sometimes for
some reason today.

Maybe just cuz I'm sitting in a different place than usual.

So, let's just move on this question.

This is from the sabotur.

And the sabotur says the vast majority of people around the world accept that their governments are ripping them off in the form of taxation, high prices, poor quality social services, etc. Does that mean that karmically in some future life we shall be either rich or generally better off or perhaps it's already our karma to be ripped off?

Yeah, it's already our karma to be ripped off. assuming that we are ripped off. I mean, I wouldn't go so far as to say that the vast majority of people

around the world accept that their governments are ripping them off. I mean, some people are just naive and they think their government is great.

Some people are just uh

uh I mean they'll just attribute it to well-intentioned

in inefficient bureaucracy

and they're you know they don't want to think badly of their government even though they would they will admit that it could be better.

So

let's see here. Yeah, I mean what I this this question is kind of a strange one here. So the vast majority of people

according to the sabotur, let's just say lots of people around the world believe that their government is ripping them off, you know, that they're they're being treated like livestock, which is kind of true.

So does that mean that karmically in some future life we shall be either rich or generally better off? No. Because your karma is I mean whatever is happening to you is the fruition of karma. It's not creating new karma.

Anything that's just happening to you, your reaction to what's happening to you is creating more karma which will have its fruition afterwards.

So yeah, I mean if you feel that you are

being ripped off by your government,
that is the fruition of karma, not the
creation of new karma other than your
feeling, your belief is making new
karma, which may reinforce
that the government ripping you off in
your estimation.

So yeah, it's already our karma to be
treated this way. That's why we're
treated this way.

And I mean, it's just that's just the
way government works. I mean, I did read
this one book, I think it was uh called
the 10,000-year explosion, talking about
the acceleration in human evolution once
we developed agriculture.

And the book points out that um before we developed agriculture, we were we were more or less the equivalent evolutionarily to a wild animal. But once we developed agriculture which then resulted in sedentary settlements and then chiefs or I mean they probably chiefs in the stone age but still like hunter gatherers stone age but you started having governments started having kings and laws and and temples and armies and this kind of stuff that human beings underwent an evolutionary metamorphosis into a kind of domesticated animal. So people really have been over the course of history treated like livestock, treated like a

farmer treats his own livestock, you know, kind of a a resource to be exploited. I mean, you you try to make sure that they're safe. You don't want wolves to be eating your sheep, that kind of thing. you want your sheep to be healthy, you know, so you you put forth efforts to keep the sheep, you know, healthy and and relatively secure until it's time for you to start butchering them or whatever it is.

And it's just it is our karma to be a a kind of domesticated animal.

And it's been that way for the past 10,000 years. At least 10,000 years starting in the the so-called fertile

crescent like the Levant and like
southern south, let's see, southeastern
Anatolia and getting down into like the
Tigris Euphrates
plain
area.

So yeah, that was the sabatur's first
question. The sabatur's second question.
Can negative karma be at least partially
neutralized by performing good deeds
such as leaving your last will and
testament to a Buddhist organization.

Well, um you don't really you I mean you
can't eliminate bad karma through some
act like a a priest blesses you or some
dowist priest waves a paper wand at you
or some Catholic priest you know blesses

you and says you're forgiven or Jesus of Nazareth you know says you are forgiven or you know the priest tells you to do some some kind of penance hail Marys and Peter ers that kind of thing and then it's like your bad karma is cleansed you know by making confession that you are cleansed of your sins that doesn't happen in Buddhism

no

so the closest you can come to that um there is a kind of simile or parable given in one of the polyutas I don't recall exactly which suta it is where the Buddha I mean I've I've mentioned this before the Buddha compares

all of your bad karma to a handful of salt. So you take the handful of salt, you pour it into a cup of water, you can't drink it cuz it's so salty that I mean the the water is so salty you can't even drink it. Well, you take that same handful of salt and pour it into a pool of clear water and then you dissolve it all in there. Then if you drink the water, you might hardly even taste the salt because you've diluted it way down with pure water. So the the Buddhist um the Buddhist way of dealing with bad karma is you dilute your bad karma down with lots of good karma. So instead of pouring the handful of salt into a cup of water, you're pouring a handful of

salt into a whole pool of water with
that water being sort of the
metaphorical

equivalent of good karma. Doing good
deeds kind of dilutes down your bad
karma, but it doesn't make it go away.

The salt is still there.

The only way that you can get rid of bad
karma is either by just allowing it to
reach fruition over which you really
don't have much control or if you just
avoid the opportunities for your bad
karma to reach fruition. Sometimes
according to Buddhist philosophy that
karma will just eventually fade out.
So if it's like your your karma to be

trampled by an elephant or something,
you just avoid elephants long enough,
there's a good chance that karma will
eventually just fade out, you know, just
expire.

But there's no guarantee of that. I mean
might be that

some hundred years in the future you
might still get trampled by an elephant.

So don't just fling yourself underneath
elephants assuming that your your karma
of being trampled by an elephant has
been exhausted.

So let's just move on to the next

question. This is from Romeo

and Romeo says, "It is said that

artists, writers, and creative people in

general are prone to having mental health issues. Do you think there is an actual link between creativity and mental illness? Or is this just a kind of myth? If you do think there is such a link, why do you think this is the case?" And before I answer, I'm just checking to make sure we are in fact recording. And we are in fact recording, which is good.

So yeah, I do think it's a it's a stereotype that artists are nuttier than the average person. And most stereotypes have a basis in truth. This also reminds me of there's a an English saying, I don't remember the exact words, but it's

that genius and madness
come very close together. That the
greatest geniuses also tend to be kind
of nutty. Like um Nicola Tesla for
example, he was a genius, but he was
also kind of nutty. like he had like
these weird kind of phobias about like
he he couldn't stand seeing a woman's
neck that all the women that that worked
for him had to have like these really
high collars concealing their neck. He
couldn't stand like jewelry on a woman.
It just kind of freaked him out somehow.
But like artists and just creative
people in general tend to be liinal.
It's like there has to be uh like like a
break in the structure. I mean, if

you're just completely regimented, you'd have like no originality, no creativity because everything's just kind of locked into place. And so, you're very predictable,

you know, it's just kind of almost robotic, just a complete normie, no imagination, you know, just very predictable. then you're less likely to be considered weird or eccentric than if you've got like these kind of windows in in the structure of your mind through which like intuition and creativity can can emerge that you can be possessed by a muse more easily let's say

so you're going to be liinal and there's
going to be a less rigid structure to
your mind there's going to be more loose
ends

you know, more kind of I don't know,
kind of weird twilighty places in your
mind maybe and that that you have access
to that that's where you're I mean
you're having original ideas, it's
coming up from some kind of primordial
chaos, you know, it's not coming from
rigid structure.

And so the more exposure you have to
this like primordial chaos kind of
stuff, the more likely that this really
kind of abnormal stuff is going to come
through.

And so I mean it's I don't think it's any kind of stretch at all. you go to a university, you know, you go like check out the law students, the premed students, the b business administration students on the one hand, and then go over to like the drama students and the art students, and you're going to find the drama students and the art students are going to be more irrational and just more eccentric than like the like the STEM students, you know, the mathematicians, that kind of thing. But then if you have like a really inspired genius with regard to

mathematics, let's say, he's going to be more um eccentric than just, you know, the the kid like maybe the the East Asian kid whose father insists that he he be like uh an engineer, you know, so that his ancestors will be proud.

So yeah, I do think that uh there is an actual link between creativity and mental illness or between creativity and just eccentricity, creativity and this sort of unpredictability and like nonconformity because a lot of people that are considered mentally ill, I mean you can't have like some kind of real like like some kind of mental illness that is

like a some kind of organic flaw in your brain. brain, you know, like
obsessivempulsive disorder, you know,
it's it's like a genetic thing. So, that
would be different, I think, at least a
little bit different. But people that
are just considered to be just wild,
nutty people, a lot of them are just
sort of original thinkers who are
following their own idea instead of
conforming to the traditional culture.
So yeah, they're more interesting too in
my opinion. And so I'm just going to
move on to the next question. This is
from Tzas is this is kind of an easy
one. Tzask is says Jesus's most inner

circle was that of James, Peter, and John. Who was the most inner circle of Buddha? Well, the Buddha's two chief disciples were Sar Puta and Mogalana. So they would be um the top two, I think. And then probably you could throw in Ananda, who was the Buddha's personal attendant in the Buddha's later years. Ananda really wasn't the Buddha's attendant in the Buddha's early years. He had at least two other personal attendants that are named in the texts. But as the Buddha was getting older, probably more in need of a personal attendant, then his cousin Ananda, whose family name was also Godma, became his sort of his companion just

was pretty much with him most of the time.

So yeah, I mean his the inner circle at least in the Buddha's later years.

Um yeah, I think that Ananda and Sar Puta and Mogulana I mean they knew each other that Mogulana and Sar Puta Sar Puta died before the Buddha did and Ananda survived the Buddha. So you know they they weren't all together at the same time all the time.

But yeah, I guess the the top three of the Buddha's inner circle would be Sar Puta Mogalana who are his two chief disciples and also Ananda maybe Mahakasapa but Maha Kasaba was

kind of a loner. He went off on his own a lot probably much more than Ananda did.

But Kas Maha Kasapa was the senior monk in the SA after the Buddha passed away because Saruta Mogalana as I say passed away before the Buddha did. They're probably older than him.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next per the next question, next person.

This is Pashet Pashetti

Pasceti

and his first question is Stevens.

That is the first question, Steven's question mark. And I really wasn't exactly sure what he was getting at. So

I asked if that was really his question. And then he pointed out that Stevens, who I've done a few videos with and uh is a member of the Discord server associated with like these Q&As's and and just stuff that I've done that he has deleted all of his videos. and I didn't notice that.

So, Stevens may have deleted all of his videos. He's he's kind of gone offline or off the grid a little bit. Um, he was talking recently, well, a few months ago anyway, about just moving on to like a farm, just kind of living a rustic life for a while. But why he deleted all of his videos, I don't know. Some of his

videos were somewhat controversial. Um, maybe he just decided it was time to move on to something else. But I've never really discussed this with him. And I didn't even notice that he had deleted all of his videos until Puscetti here said that he did. But I guess he's still alive and well. Um he made some comment on the Discord server. I think it was less than a week ago. So he's still around. I'm pretty sure he's just why he deleted his videos. I'm not sure. So, let's just move on to Petti's next question. I think I spelled his name wrong. I think it's Pasceti and not Pashetti.

So, let's just do that. Let's just fix

this. We don't want to mispronounce
Puscetti's name.

Okay. Puscetti says, "A rum and monster
energy swilling pirate is attacking
guided meditation. Defend it, sire." And
I understand what he's talking about.

He's talking about Stixs Hexenhammer 666
who

um I mean he's like an ex Satanist
who

uh he's really into like the occult but
he made his claim to fame I mean he
originally got famous through occult
stuff and also through like ex
describing his experimentation with
various intoxicants that kind of thing

that was before my time but by the time I started watching sticks Hex number 666. He was giving political commentary on YouTube and he had a grasp of the big picture um that was better than most people including most political commentators on YouTube. And so I used to watch his show. I mean I didn't have much interest in his occult stuff that he still occasionally produced but um his political stuff I generally appreciated.

But then he started crashing out. I think for starters, he got married to a Dutch woman. He lived in the Netherlands, had a child there, and then they had um they had a parting of the

ways. And so he came back to America and just started like associating with like women of questionable repute and sanity and just started like drinking and probably like taking other intoxicants at a very high rate and and he just started crashing hard, you know, and the last I heard I mean as of today he is hiding out from the police. He's got a a warrant for his arrest for some kind of domestic violence charge and then also just at this at this point probably also like contempt of court and evading arrest and that kind of thing. So, he's hiding out and in some woman's apartment I think in New York City and

the woman is um allegedly mentally disabled.

So, and he's he's got like a broken tooth now because one of the other women that he was associating with um just punched him in the mouth and broke his teeth that you can see the like the the police like what is it the badge camera? What is it? Live camera stuff. I can't remember what it's called. You can you can see that kind of stuff on the internet. There are people who are avidly keeping up with all the gossip on this guy. He started wearing a pirate hat. Even when he's arrested, even when he's going to court, he's he's attending virtual court hearings like through Zoom

or something, still wearing this pirate
hat, the broken tooth. And
it's just

he he's pretty much lost credibility.

And now just recently he he did a video
where he is um just sort of giving his
opinion with regard to guided
meditation.

And

I mean before I even get to what his his
decision was on the subject and I didn't
even watch the video but apparently
Boskeeti says he was attacking guided
meditation. Um, I mean, he's just kind
of lost credibility with regard to
wisdom that I mean, he he cannot get his

own life in order. He seems to be
crashing out hard. There's a good chance
that he's going to be going to prison
in New Orleans
due to some domestic violence thing
originally and then like shooting like
possession of a firearm and and shooting
a firearm while like already u having
like a restraining order and maybe like
some charges against him and it just
gets worse and worse because I mean he
really does not have responsibility. I
mean, one thing I've noticed about him,
even when I liked him, is or, you know,
when I was still like taking him more
seriously because of his sober
political commentary

that Oh, where was I going with this?

Ah, I lost the thread. What was I going to say?

Huh? That's too bad.

I forgot what I was going to say.

Sometimes I have such long sentences leading up to my point that I just get distracted and forget what the the point I was aiming towards.

But I mean,

oh yeah, it's even when I considered him to have like a a good grasp of the big picture, he he always seemed to be like without a moral compass, you know? He was always kind of amoral. He had like a morbid sense of humor. He liked gross

slasher movies, this kind of stuff. His, you know, he just I don't think he was would be a very nice person.

But now it's really caught up to him and it's just he has lost credibility and he's trying to tell people, you know, how to live their lives when he obviously is just going downhill fast. He is on a toboggan ride downwards.

In a lot of his videos, he is just obviously just stinking drunk, for example, with a a tooth missing from getting punched by a woman that he was he was living with for a while, wearing the pirate hat, hiding out in a

different town so that he won't get
arrested,
etc., etc.

And it is too bad because his his grasp
of the big picture is now kind of blurry
due to his overindulgence in alcohol
mainly I think. But also the spell is
broken. you know, he he had like kind of
like this I don't know, call it charisma
or something, a mystique that I mean he
is just kind of destroyed through really
bad life decisions and just
irresponsibility.

Um, and it's too bad. Well, with regard
to guided meditation, let's get to
guided meditation. Let's just leave

sticks, hex, and hammer aside. Now, I don't like, excuse me, I don't like guided meditation either. I've never liked guided meditation. It's like somebody's getting inside your head and telling you what to think.

No. If I'm going to meditate, I'm just going to meditate on my own without having to listen to somebody else's words. And when you're listening to somebody else's words in a guided meditation, you're not going to get very deep because you're always going to be at the verbal level.

You know, you're still listening to what somebody else is saying and processing that. You're still very much at the

verbal level. you're never going to get very deep in the meditation. And besides, I just do not like people telling me, you know, what to think, what to visualize, anything like that. So, I actually agree um with Stixs, Hexenhammer if he does not like guided meditation because I don't like it either. But even so, Stixs Hexenhammer 666 has pretty much lost his credibility and it's uh yeah, it's I personally do not really enjoy kind of juicy negative gossip about people. I mean, it's kind of interesting sometimes if you remain objective about it, but I don't really

revel in seeing somebody even if they
they're destroying their own life, even
if they're messing up their own life,
still I really don't get satisfaction
from, you know, like observing that
if the bad guy in the movie eventually
gets shot or something, that's kind of
satisfying. but he's just like this kind
of a

two-dimensional, you know, symbol of
evil, whereas, you know, he's not like a
a a genuine human being in the movie.

So, anyways, let's just move on to
Pcetti's third question. He said, "Would
you kindly beam meta at one of the
questioners and not tell them?" And
yeah, I've already done that. In fact, I

was doing that yesterday.

So, that was easy. Let's move on to the next question. This is from Watermocker.

And Watermacher says, "Dumb question, but I want to hear your answer anyway."

And there are no dumb questions. There are only dumb people. That's just a joke. That was a bad joke.

Watermacher says, "Did Sedarta follow the rules of monastic discipline on his way to becoming the Buddha?" That's not that's not a dumb question. I mean even if there are dumb questions that wasn't a dumb one. So did Sedarta I mean Sedarta it's not found that name is not found in like the earliest Buddhist

texts. I mean in Poly would be Sedata.

And speaking of which I'm just going to totally digress here that um I finally got another job. I report to work. My first day of work is this coming Monday working in a metal shop again which is good.

And after I've already, you know, passed the the the P test, you know, signed the papers, you know, I've already got this job. Um, somebody named Sedarta is trying to hire me for a different job.

But I mean, it would be some Indian HR department, maybe HR department, maybe even station in India for all I know. So I mean I I just thought it was kind of uh I don't know kind of

mentionable remarkable in the sense of
worthy of remark that somebody named
Sedarta wants to hire me but it's
already too late.

So let's just get back to the question
now. Did S did did Sedata did

Shakyamuni

follow the rules of monastic discipline
on his way to becoming the Buddha?

Technically the vineia rules did not
exist in the Buddhist time. He had not
formulated vineia yet. But he probably
did follow a lot of those rules just
because a lot of the the rules of
monastic discipline for monks was just
like common etiquette or protocol for

the renunciation of the Ganges Valley in ancient India like approximately fifth 6th century BCE.

So like only eating in the morning and wearing robes and shaving your head or or different different schools would have different ways of dealing with the hair. Like the Jains would just pull it out. I think the the Brahman priests a lot of the Brahman priests would just have like dreads, you know, they just grow it long and not do anything with it until it was all dreadlocks.

But there were certain rules, celibacy, this kind of thing that were common to various spiritual practitioners in the Buddhist time. And so he was probably

following along with a lot of this just tradition of how aesthetics were supposed to live before the rules of monastic discipline were devised. And according to tradition,

it was years before the Buddha even started making rules because at first the the monks were were like veteran spiritual heavy hitters. They didn't need these rules. You know, they would just of their of their own valition.

They would just conform to the tradition of ancient Indian spirituality. and you know you didn't have to make this rule that this is a rule of such and such

category that is expedated by such and such ritual. It wasn't necessary yet.

But then as Buddhism became more popular,

you had people with less pure motives

joining the SA and so some of them were

kind of rascally and so you started

having the Buddha started having to make

these rules. That's according to

tradition. Although it's also possible

that there were no rules at all until

after the Buddha died. And then at the

first council, they formulated a kind of

py mocha rules just to have structure.

Now that the founder was gone, they were

going to have to have some other kind of

structure holding things together. Like

I mean tradition says, you know, the Buddha laid down the rules as there was a need. But also tradition says like if you read the the history of the first council that after the Buddha passed away after he reached part Ibana the the enlightened monks you know they accepted it with equanimity but a lot of the unenlightened monks were grieving because you know their teacher had died and then you had this old monk who was ordained when he was old. So he was kind of set in his ways and not easily trainable. He's saying essentially why all the long faces now we can do whatever we want. We don't have

venerable god saying do this don't do that all the time. And then ma kasapa who was senior monk in the sangha after the Buddha's passing away. He heard this and then he realized you know if that's the attitude some monks are going to have we're going to have to lay down some rules. And so the first council is also called the vineya sanghi or the convocation of monastic discipline. So it's possible that there really were no vineya rules until after the Buddha passed away. And the purpose of the first council was to establish rules to kind of stabilize the sangha so that it doesn't just dissolve and peter out after the founder is gone.

So, but again, he probably did follow certain just established protocols and traditions that most of the renunciants were were already following at the time.

And I'm going to move on to Walker Watermacher's next question.

He says, "Likely, it's not possible for us in modern times to do what he did to become enlightened back then. ought one attempt doing what he did if the goal is enlightenment. I understand that his conclusion was that the extremes he went to don't work and the middle way is his prescription, but those extremes did work in a roundabout way for him. So the actual question here is ought one

attempt doing what the Buddha did if the goal is enlightenment and if you're in a Buddhist culture, a Buddhist country and some place like Thailand or Burma or or Sri Lanka or maybe Cambodia where I mean the flora and fauna and the climate is relatively similar and even a lot of the culture is similar to the Ganges Valley in the Buddhist time you can live the way ancient Indian monks lived. That's what I was trying to do in Burma. So it works in like a Buddhist culture in a kind of Buddhist environment to follow the traditional Buddhist way works fairly well. You bring it into a western country like into the temperate zone, it doesn't work nearly as well.

Especially, you know, just the weather is different. So, you're going to have to probably break rules. If it gets down below zero, you're going to be having to be wearing like, you know, un thermal underwear and socks and shoes and all this kind of stuff, which are technically against the rules. But also, you can't just live under trees and wander around in Norway or like Massachusetts.

maybe to a limited degree, but just to take up that lifestyle in the west is much less likely to be successful, let's say.

So,

yeah, I mean, if you're in a Buddhist culture, in a Buddhist environment, following a traditional Buddhist path is about your best bet.

But if you're in a non Buddhist culture, a non Buddhist environment, some secular western culture, for example, it's not necessarily going to be your best bet.

It's still not a bad choice to be a Buddhist monk in the West, but it's going to be very different. There's going to be a lot of concessions and compromises made.

you're going to be living a relatively luxurious lifestyle, not very aesthetic for for example.

But then getting to this other part that

uh water mocker was saying, see

I understand that his conclusion was

that the extremes he went to don't work

and the middle way is his prescription,

but these extremes did work in a

roundabout way for him. Yeah, I mean it

was necessary for him, I guess. Although

it could be that if he had known, you

know, he had there was an already a

Buddha teaching him, you know, how to

how to practice, he probably wouldn't

have almost killed himself through like

starving himself and that kind of thing.

So

yeah, I mean

it seems like following the teachings of

an enlightened being on how to become enlightened would be about your best bet. Especially if you're in a culture that is more or less in harmony with the instructions giving by given by the enlightened teacher. If you can find an enlightened western teacher who isn't just a charlatan but is genuinely enlightened or at least extremely wise, then they might be able to guide you about how to navigate through western style samsara better than God of the Shakya clan who lived 25 centuries ago.

But with regard to meditation techniques, you know, what your mental state should be like, still

the Buddha's advice is good. But trying to live according to ancient Indian monastic discipline is I mean it just it fits ancient India to a large degree. It still fits terra Buddhist culture. But you get out of terabata Buddhist culture and you're a stranger in a strange land. So I think I answered his question although I didn't fully address his comments after his question but there was no question mark after that and it would have added a question which would have then been transgressive because he would have asked more than three. So I'm just moving on to his next and third question.

He says, "Also, I've heard you say that you think it is likely that the few enlightened people of the modern day, I forget the time frame you gave were or are Hindu.

If someone were to ask your advice about the most likely path to becoming enlightened in modern times, would following Hinduism be part of your recommendation?" And I, this is a misunderstanding. I never really said that the few enlightened people of the modern day were or are Hindu. I mean I would say that over history I would not at all be surprised if there have been more enlightened Hindus than enlightened terravada Buddhists. I have said that

I'm not insisting that that's the case but it wouldn't surprise me if there have been more enlightened Hindus than enlightened terra Buddhists partly because Hinduism is more open. It's less rigid and so there's more kind of personality types that can adapt to like different approaches in Hinduism. you know, it's it's more broad spectrum, whereas Terravada Buddhism is more narrow and so it's going to kind of weed out certain personality types. And a lot of the people that do follow terra Buddhism are going to be rigid dogmatists who like with regard to Romeo's question

just lack the inspiration. you know that because you're a rigid dogmatist, you're just kind of locked in to this rigid system and there's not much room left for inspiration. I mean, you have to have a certain originality to become enlightened. It seems to me you have to transcend the rigid structure because the rigid structure is like a mental prison.

So yeah, I mean I wouldn't be surprised if there have been more enlightened Hindus, but I'm not insisting on that. So let's see. If someone were to ask your advice about the most likely path to becoming enlightened in modern times, would following Hinduism be part of your

recommendation? Um, I mean, if you're going to follow a spiritual path in India, Hinduism might be the way to go. If you're going to follow a spiritual path in Burma or Thailand, Terra Buddhism might be the way to go. If you're following trying to become enlightened in 16th century Spain, Roman Catholicism would be your only choice and so you'd have to just make do with that.

You know, medieval Europe in general.

So

with regard to modern America, I mean you might be better off with someone like Krishna Murdy

uh Jay Krishna Murdy or maybe even UG Krishna Murdy who I mean they were born into a a Hindu culture but you could hardly call either one of them a Hindu. So yeah, I mean there might be a certain like radical iconoclasm that might be part of a western approach.

Um I mean you can you can look into a lot of the sort of western enlightened teachers or teachers claiming to be enlightened and I mean Jay Krishna Murdy would be a good start with regard to that and I mean his approach is fairly good for westerners I guess and I guess he still has a kind of I mean in his memory he's he's long gone but I think like oh high California there's still

like a Krishna Merti community living there. There's like a Nim Karoli Baba um based community like sort of his old disciples living in Taos, New Mexico. I think you can sort of find isolated communities following various paths. Um, but it could just be a matter of your own karma, a certain amount of like chance, you want to call it that. Just who's going to be the first enlightened teacher or the first really like believable kind of spiritual teacher that really vibes with you, really resonates with you, where you can just say, "Yeah, I can follow this." I mean, it's not necessarily going to be

Buddhist or Hindu or anything else.

especially

in the west.

So let's see what's the actual question here. If someone were to ask your advice about the most likely path to becoming enlightened in modern times, would following Hinduism be part of your recommendation? Not necessarily.

I mean you can read the upupanachads, read the Bavad Gita and see if you if that really rings any bells for you. You can read the sutin pata, see if that does anything for you. Read like the the heart sutra, see if that does anything for you. A lot of people, they'll just read the Bible and that's that's good

enough for them. At least you're going to have the culture supporting you and in the West, at least in America or Eastern Europe.

So yeah, I mean your best bet would be just be eclectic and and like be a student of all religions. And this is this is essentially what I did is just read the scriptures of various religions. Just consider the teachings of people who are claimed to be very wise.

You know, echarttolah see if he's he does anything for you. And then whatever it is that really resonates with you the most deeply, go with that. and still

till it stops working and then maybe try something else.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question because we've already been going at this for almost two hours.

Next question is from Scooterain.

And Scudamain says, "So my mom is super Christian and she's asked me to read Living Buddha, Living Christ by Tiknat Han. I am struggling to get through it to be honest and I don't know how I'm going to break it to my mom when we talk about it. Haha. His engaged Buddhism is social justice warrior propaganda in the guise of Buddhism. He even has his own version of the precepts. The first precept for instance he says should be

to refrain from killing but also to prevent others from killing. The second is not only to not steal but to share. My official question on the matter is this. So we're getting to the question here. What is your opinion on the following quote from the book? Quote, if while we practice we are not aware that the world is suffering, that children are dying of hunger, that social injustice is going on everywhere, we are not practicing mindfulness. we are just trying to escape unquote. Well, I mean that's certainly not orthodox terravada anywhere near to it like let's see Scudamain is saying to

some degree that is like social justice
propaganda with Buddhist flavoring
although it goes a little deeper than
that. I mean Tikhnahan was relatively
serious in his Mahayana heart oriented
Buddhism.

So he was definitely kind of a karma
yogi who wanted to like help people even
though according to like early Buddhism,
you know, it's you're first you have to
get out of the building. The building is
on fire. You've got to escape from the
building and escaping from the building
is really the only sensible thing to do.
I mean, staying in the building out of
compassion to treat the burn victims
while the building is still on fire and

you still don't know how to get out. I
mean I mean it might be

well-intentioned,

but it's I mean it is not really the
wise choice. The wise choice is find
your way out of the burning building.

And then after you found your way out of
the burning building, then if you see
fit, you can come back in and try to
help other people get out of the burning
building. But as a general rule, most
people don't even know the building is
on fire

and they they don't want to get out of
the building.

So

if while we practice we are not aware
that the world is suffering, that
children are dying of hunger, that
social injustice is going on everywhere,
we're not practicing mindfulness, we're
just trying to escape. Well, I mean
that's to be aware of that is fine.

That's the first noble truth. To exist
is to suffer. So the world is suffering.

Yes. First noble truth. Children are
dying of hunger. Yes. First noble truth.

It's always happened.

Social injustice is going on everywhere.

Yes, that's first noble truth. This
world is never going to be perfect.

There's always going to be suffering in
any version of reality you live in until

you get fully enlightened. And even then, there's going to be like the superficial appearance of suffering so long as you superficially appear to have a body and a personality.

So yeah, I mean you can be mindful, you can be mindful, be aware that the world is suffering, that children are dying of hunger and that social injustice is going on everywhere, but that doesn't mean you're supposed to just get up and and and go out and try and fix it because you're not going to succeed. You might make things a little better, but we're living in a world of dualities where you fix one thing and it's it's

just going to cause some new bad thing to crop up.

So

yeah, be aware of it. Yeah, first noble truth definitely be aware that to exist is to suffer, but that doesn't mean that you have to go out and try and fix it.

I mean, you don't contribute to it. You don't try you don't make things worse on purpose. You know, it's like think lo think globally and act locally is like, you know, fix yourself. That's the best you can do. And if fixing yourself, I mean, fixing yourself will help other people.

But that's your like top priority. Just get out of the burning building.

So I guess I guess that's good enough. I hope it is.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Crash Meta Religion. And crash meta religion says are you familiar with the religious scholar David Bentley Hart. He claims he is Eastern Orthodox but he is really a syncretist.

He is extremely well-versed in all world religions not just Christianity. He has a form of Christian belief that many call vantic Christianity. I am seeing more and more of him but I have been aware of him for years. If you are familiar with him, what are your

opinions? Well, this is an extremely easy question to answer because um David Bentley Hart sounds kind of familiar, but I don't think I've ever heard a word that he has ever said.

So, I really cannot contribute to this particular discussion because I don't really know who David Bentley Hart is.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question and we're kind of getting down towards the bottom here. This is from RFS

and RFS says which param is the most important for spiritual development and according to terra Buddhism there are 10 parameies and when I was a monk I came up with this dumb pneummonic I mean it's

really dumb you'll hear for yourself how
dumb it is for memorizing the 10 pyrams
in the correct order and the pneummonic
is dad says nasty pink vultures kept
seven angels mending underwear

So dad or d is donna that's the first
part of me is donna or generosity
literally giving. Then says is sila
which is morality. Then nasty is nama
which is um renunciation renouncing the
world.

Then nasty pink is pa which here doesn't
mean wisdom so much as just presence of
mind having your wits about you.

And then vultures is vir which is like
heroic effort. I mean usually it's

translated as something like energy but
the the ver in vira is the same ver as
in the English word virile or like the
ver in the the latin trivirate. It
literally means man. So it's sort of
manly effort

vir

then well's k kept is ki or um it's
usually translated as something like
patience or forbearance I would us I
generally translate it as acceptance you
know like the the verb form of ki is
comedy the verb comedy which just means
to accept not to accept into your hand
like taking something but to accept
something like making peace with it.
So then see nasty pink voltages kept

seven that's sucha or truth. So honesty
telling the truth not deceiving.

Seven angels. A is aditana
which is determination.

You know just steadfast unflinching
determination which helps in just about
any endeavor including living the
spiritual life.

And then mending meta is usually
translated as loving kindness. Literally
it would mean like benevolence or
friendliness. like the the poly word
meta um is related to the poly word mita
which means friend. So literally it's
like friendliness
usually translated as loving kindness. I

mean you could call it love in a positive benevolent sort of way just benevolence.

And then finally is underwear which is equanimity.

So the question is which part of me is the most important for spiritual development and you could argue that all of them are important. I mean it's like which organ is most important in your body. I mean you don't if your brain is destroyed you die. But then again if your heart is destroyed you die. If your liver is destroyed you die. I mean even your butthole is destroyed unless you got modern medicine figuring out a workaround then you die.

So I mean you could say that all 10
parames are essential although
spiritually the most advanced I mean it
goes in order of advancement. So, Donna
or generosity, that's kind of a lay
person thing, you know, that's that's
like like like what's the word like
elementary and then finally you get up
to the which is like the most advanced
equanimity.

No, it's it's higher than meta or loving
kindness like in the the four Jhana
system or the the Brahma Vihara system.
Practicing meta will get you up to third
Jhana according to the commentarial
tradition. Whereas the only one of the

Brahma viharas that would get you all
the way to fourth Janna
is upeka.

So

um for a beginner then you just start
off with donam like before you're even a
monk before you've renounced the world.

I mean nama is renunciation. So you
start off with generosity and morality
before you even practice renunciation.

So I mean it all depends on how you look
at it which which part of me is the most
important for spiritual development.

Depends on what stage you're at. I guess

I mean you can say the most fundamental
would be generosity which is just kind
of getting you in a in a karmic

situation where you're you're even able
to practice higher dhamma and then I
mean the most advanced the most exalted
of the 10 parmes would be the last one
which is up or or uh equinimity
but for those of you who really want to
uh memorize the stupid pneummonic that I
came up with I will repeat it again. Dad
says nasty pink vultures kept seven
angels mending underwear.

That's the 10 pyramse in order.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Sedarta
Lohachita.

And Sedarta Lohachita says, "As a half
Spanish person, do people in the USA

separate European Spaniards from Mexican Indian mestizo people from the former American colonies?

Yeah, I think that there is a differentiation between Hispanics, which is what Edward Dutton would call a clin. It's an ethnicity, but not a race. Hispanic is not a race because it's a mixture of two races. It's like um European, especially Spaniards, mostly from the male line of ancestry mixed with American Indian, especially like Mexican, South American Indian. um that race, I guess you'd call it, um mainly on the female line of ancestry. So, I mean, you could have a Hispanic person that's 100% American

Indian, 100% Mayan, for example, or you could have a Hispanic person that's 100% European, like 100% Spanish, which would generally be like of the the upper classes in uh Latin American countries. But, um, like pure Spanish people living in Spain, yeah, they're in a different category. I mean, lately they're just seen as loony leftists that are contributing to just the the the [__] up of the European Union through um like socialism and just opening the borders wide open to um immigrants from North Africa which are then flooding into Europe through Spain. So, Spain is I mean a lot of Americans,

they're not really good at geography, you know, so they just know Spain is kind of over there across the ocean somewhere. It's part of Europe. So, Spain would be seen as just kind of part of Europe, especially part of decadent Western Europe, decadent, feminized, leftist Western Europe. But they a lot of Americans probably wouldn't even be able to locate Spain on a map.

I think it was Ambrose Beers that said that God created war in order to teach Americans geography and there has haven't been any major wars in Spain lately. So lately, people are pretty much ignorant of what's going on in Spain.

Uh, and then in uh of of Hispanic people, I mean, the ones that kind of that are like second or third generation in America that speak English with like the standard white person accent, let's say. You know, they just kind of blend in there, all right, except for you see them like you're a stranger. You see them on the street and they look obviously like brownskin and so forth. You might see them as a like a foreigner or a Mexican.

I think a lot of a lot of people in America just consider all Latin Americans to be Mexicans or like like someone from El Salvador. I

mean, at best it'd be like a fake Mexican.

Yeah. But I I do think that there is a kind of a difference that Spain is is part of Europe and it's seen as European, Western European, and then the Hispanics, the the Mexicans that that are like swarming the borders are uh yeah, that's just a whole different kettle of wax.

So,

huh. Personally, I mean, Hispanics really, um, especially if they enter the country legally, I got no problem with them because they're generally easy to get along with, fairly intelligent, then they're willing to work for a living.

They don't just immediately go on welfare except for a lot of the illegal ones who are like flown in the middle of the night during the Biden administration to various cities to kind of populate conservative areas with people who will vote Democrat in order to get more free free handouts. this kind of stuff that yeah, Hispanics do have kind of they've taken a hit to their reputation mainly due to all the illegal immigrants that are coming in and just committing crimes because it's a lot of gang members and so forth are included among the people who are just economic migrants and then a lot of a

lot of them are just immediately like signing up for welfare benefits that kind of thing. So they don't have a very good reputation. Although and it is unfortunate because a lot of the I mean the legal immigrants you know as a general rule they're easy to easygoing people who are quite willing to work for a living and that's that's fine

but I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Robert.

Okay.

And Robert says, "I live in a country with no Terravada monasteries and want to grow spiritually with a real community. I've mostly followed

Terravada online, tried a nearby Tibetan center, and even considered Catholicism because of the mystics like Meister Eckhart and communities. What would you do in a situation like this if you don't plan to become a monk soon?" Well, what I personally did, I was a lone I'm just always been a loner by nature. So I would just practice alone and read books alone. This is back before internet, back before I became a monk. So it was mainly through reading books. Um I mean you can travel somewhere to do like an intensive retreat but for the most part I was just practicing alone going alone like the

horn of the rhinoceros. Even before my ordination,

I did consider um just kind of being a non-en non-denominational renunciant, just make myself a robe and get a bowl and just take off walking. But there wasn't enough. I knew myself well enough that without some kind of formal structure imposed upon me that misbehavior was much more likely, you know, just kind of being lazy and going my own way and just indulging in my own like attachments and weaknesses and so forth. that having some structure imposed upon me like rules of monastic discipline and a sa would definitely help and it did.

Um, if there's any Zen places, some Zen places, if you've got a wise teacher, um, I mean, you can definitely get benefit from practicing Zen. Just doing Zen meditation is really not just radically different from practicing, you know, weasa or something in a terra Buddhist um, terra Buddhist tradition. But the most important thing with regard to any kind of local community is the leader, the teacher of that community. I mean, you can have a Terravada Buddhist community that's led by some real estate agent or insurance salesman or like elementary school principal or something who they're really not qualified to be a

teacher. I mean, most dharma teachers in the west in my opinion are not really qualified to be dharma teachers. I mean, some of them are just really ignorant of what they're trying to teach. But then again, you might have some Zen master or even like a Christian pastor or something who really does have wisdom and can thus help you to make progress more easily even though it might not be in the spiritual system that would be your first choice all else being equal. So I mean if you can find any wise teacher who can really help you to make progress the the system that they're in is almost irrelevant. I mean ideally you know they'd be like

terra Buddhist I mean from my point of view but I mean you've got some advaita teacher who's very wise maybe wiser than the terravada one just because of individual differences.

It's not just because you're a terrible Buddhist teacher makes you automatically wise. Or if you're like a Christian teacher, you're just automatically foolish. It doesn't work that way.

You're going to have wise teachers and foolish teachers in any system. And it's more important to find a wise good teacher than to follow a charlatan or just some unqualified person fumbling along who just happens to be in the

system. That would be your first choice.
Just all else be an equal.

So I mean look into Zen maybe or
even like unitarianism some some system
that isn't really dogmatic or you have
to believe this or you are wrong and
you're going to burn in hell kind of
stuff. I mean who knows you could you
could find like a Sufi teacher. I I I
knew this one really wise advanced
practitioner whose teacher was a Sufi
which technically is Muslim although I
doubt that the prophet Muhammad peace be
upon him would have approved of Sufism
or you know various kinds of Hinduism,
Daoism.

I mean there was a time when I was

actually considering
becoming a Catholic like a a Carthusian
you know like the strictest the
strictest uh denomination or order
monastic order of Catholicism. One of
the strictest is the Carthusian order.
They they undertake vows of silence. I I
was thinking well if I took a vow of
silence I wouldn't have to admit that
I'm not really a Christian. But I would
guess that even if you take a vow of
silence, you have to make confession to
to a father confessor somehow or
another. Even if you're just writing it
on a slate or doing hand gestures or
something. So that was a dumb idea. I

didn't follow through with that.

But seriously, I think your best bet I mean if you cannot find a wise teacher who can teach you in a way that you are able to accept, then your best bet is just go it alone. And then you have more more a broader choice of what you're going to follow. You know, you can find the scriptures of just about any religion online for free.

So there is that. You know, you got wide array of teachers of various traditions that they're just on YouTube channels that you can watch for free, listen to for free.

So yeah more I mean if it's just like from books and so forth then you try to

find the wisest tradition
and you know that a way like a
tradition that speaks to you that your
character is in harmony with that so
that you can actually practice it and
make progress. But if you're actually
dealing with human teachers and human
communities, you're going to have to
find a teacher especially that is a wise
and good person, not just some insurance
salesman who's like a Zen Rōshi in his
spare time who really still thinks like
an insurance salesman. He just kind of
puts on the show of being the wise Rōshi
when he's sitting in front of his
his disciples. So you have to be careful

about that kind of thing especially
and good luck. I mean there's there's a
saying in Hinduism when the when the
student is ready the teacher will come.
You know when it's your karma to have
that teacher you're going to get it. And
the teacher could just be a book. I mean
I've had times in my life where I've
just been kind of in a kind of crisis
state and then just the right teacher or
the right book just falls into my hands
without me even having to look for it.
That's happened to me more than once.
But it may be that you really have to
like have some kind of crisis in order
to break through the rigidity of the
system to allow a kind of grace to come

down on you, so to speak.

And I'm just going to move on to

Robert's next question,

which is as follows. Would you just go

it at it alone having the sutas and

online resources as a teacher and

meditate on your own? Or would you

consider a physically available

tradition and possibly convert while

still aiming to realize ultimate

reality? Well, I've kind of already been

addressing this. Um, in my own personal

case, I just went it alone and then I

just kind of made like this pilgrimage,

you know, more a thousand miles pos, you

know, hundreds of miles to go to like

some formal retreat.

So, I did that at a Zen place and also at a Terra Buddhist place when I was looking for a place to ordain.

Um, so if I mean if you're really serious then you may want to you know cross get get yourself a passport and go to a different country if you don't even have a suitable place in your own country.

I mean going to some Asian countries once you get there it's cheap. living there is cheap, maybe cheaper than living in your own country once you've, you know, paid for the the visa, the passport and the visa and the plane fair and all that. Just to live in a hut in

in Sri Lanka or something is actually pretty cheap.

So

yeah, I mean for starters, you just kind of have to go alone, you know? I mean, you have access to the internet like um you and I have both admitted and look around to see what kind of teachers there are. If there's no suitable teachers, you feel like you need a human teacher. And a human teacher can be very helpful. A book isn't going to like scold you when you're when you do something wrong or scold you for being lazy, anything like that. Just a book isn't going to do

that. You have to like rely on your own initiative if you're going it alone. So for a lot of people, having a supportive group and a wise teacher who can like look into you and see where you need help and is willing to tell you what you don't want to hear but ought to hear. I mean, that's invaluable. And it may be that you you're just going to consider it to be an equitable trade if that wise good teacher is not from your first choice of spiritual traditions.

So, I've already said that kind of stuff. I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cole Murf.

And Cole Murf says, "Can you please discuss some strategies for developing

continuous sad or mindfulness? In particular, I struggle with getting into conversations with others. I find myself losing mindfulness quite easily. Should I be more actively shifting to different objects depending on the particular activity I'm engaged in? Looking for some good strategies here. Thank you.

Well, um I think there's more than one way I could interpret this with regard to struggle when getting into conversations with others. Um Cole Murf maybe is trying to retain mindfulness while conversing with someone else. And that's relatively advanced mindfulness.

Um, I've I've mentioned before that when

I was doing intensive practice, I remember one time I was staying in this building that was owned by a Buddhist supporter of my Tonulu tradition which I was ordained. Monks that were in Rangon that had business in Rangon could stay in this building and you know and he would support them while they were there. And so one time I was in Rangon and I'm just doing intensive practice and I just happened to be doing walking meditation and this old gentleman who owned the place and was supporting me came out and wanted to talk with me and I remember I was some I was I was in such kind of a groove of mindfulness that I was having the conversation with

relatively good mindfulness. It was like my main object of attention was just kind of feeling the vibration in my throat and the movements of my mouth while I was talking and the the conversation just kind of took care of itself. It was just sort of nature taking its course. It was weird. You you'd think that you wouldn't be able to talk in a conversation mindfully because you know you have to pay attention to what you're trying to say and what the other person is saying and so forth. But you get to a certain level and that kind of stuff just kind of takes care of itself, you know, it's sort of like

autopilot or probably even better than autopilot while you're being mindful of of just the movement of your legs as you're walking or the vibration in your throat or just the sounds, you know, vi mindfulness of hearing, that kind of thing. But to get to that level, you have to be practicing mindfulness with regard to everyday activities pretty consistently. So it just becomes second nature so that when you do have a conversation this habit this momentum of mindfulness just continues while you're having the conversation. Reading a book is difficult like turn mindfully turning the page that kind of thing is you can manage but reading the book mindfully

that was even more challenging than having a conversation mindfully.

So you might just want to reduce the amount of reading that you do if you're trying to have unbroken mindfulness. And also just try to keep down the amount of conversing that you do. Just try to emphasize stuff that you can do mindfully. You know, just live a very simplified quiet lifestyle as much as you can. If you've got a job, bills to pay, you got people that you live with, it might not be so easy.

So did I answer the question?

See, should I be more actively shifting to different objects? U whatever is is

like foremost in in your attention,
whatever is the most obvious is
generally what you should be mindful of
until you can get into like wide open
mindfulness where you're not focusing on
one thing in particular. Then it's just
like a a mirror or something that when
it's there, it's it's there clearly and
you know, it's not obscured in any way.
You know, it's like your focus becomes
like the focus of a cheap camera where
everything is equally in focus kind of a
thing.

That's relatively advanced mindfulness.
Usually beginning mindfulness is, you
know, you're kind of labeling, you're
focusing on whatever is like most

noticeable at the time.

And then after you get better and better at that, then you can sort of make your mindfulness more wide open, less focused. you know, there's less looking and more just seeing, which is um definitely an improvement, but I mean, you got to do it in order as a general rule. You can't just skip the elementary stuff and go directly into you can't go directly into calculus without without knowing basics of of like mathematics, arithmetic, that kind of thing.

So, yeah, you find yourself losing mindfulness quite easily. Yeah, welcome to the club. Pretty much everybody is

that way. I think probably only a fully enlightened being would be fully mindful all the time.

So, let's see.

Should you be more actively shifting to different objects? Just whatever is most noticeable, I guess. Um, I mean, there should be changes in what is most noticeable. I mean, you could deliberately make something else more noticeable in order to practice sort of a broader repertoire of objects of mindfulness, I suppose.

Um,

but yeah, I guess that's good enough for for an answer. Now, my answers are almost always much longer than the

question itself, and we've been going for well over two hours. So, oh, but wait, there's only one more question after this.

catches me by surprise almost every time. But I think I think I have semi answered Cole Murf's first question.

I hope I gave him something of value because I'm moving on to the next question now also by Cole Murf. He says, "Why do you think the Mahayana school emphasizes the bodhicattva ideal when the Buddha taught his disciples to become arhants?"

I often wonder what precipitated this shift in focus leading up to the

formation of the Mahayana schools.

Perhaps monks of the day weren't able to attain to the level of arahant and so they adjusted their goal.

Well, before I answer that or attempt to answer it, I'm going to break open the emergency backup beverage.

And I mean, I've I've answered this question before.

It is a shame that people don't watch all 186 previous episodes before asking questions on this one because probably most most questions that are asked I've answered at least once before. Not all those. It's there's always a few questions that haven't been asked yet that I wind up getting asked. my

favorite American for example or my favorite bad wrestler.

So let's see here. Why do you think the Mahayana school emphasizes the bodhicattva ideal when the Buddha taught his disciples to become arhants? That is that is the big question, isn't it? And I think there are two main reasons why Mahayana Buddhism first mistranslated the word bodhic satta into bodhic sattva in my opinion and then just sort of emphasized that to the to the extent of just rejecting what the Buddha actually taught which is become enlightened in this very life if you are able.

I mean, it's just amazing just having conversations with like sometimes like really self-righteous Mahayana Buddhists who justify rejecting the teach the teachings of the founder of their own religion for the sake of following this later I mean just fictional stuff in a lot of cases pure land Buddhism I mean that's even another step beyond just mere like pranya paramita zen kind of mahayana cuz they're just flat out rejecting what the founder of the religion taught in favor of fictional teachings of like mythological space Buddhas in my opinion but with getting back to the bodhicattva ideal I mean originally bodhic sata in

pi

um probably did not mean enlightenment being which is what the meaning of bodhicata Satva Bodhi is enlightenment. Sattva is being. But sata in Pali has more than one possible meaning. And probably Sata in Pali was a past participle of the verb sagit which means to be bound for. So a bodhic sata in terra Buddhism was someone who was bound for enlightenment or in this case bound for Buddhahood. So a bodhic sata was like someone who was destined to become a Buddha. So mainly or like originally it was Gorma Buddha before his enlightenment was just called the

bodhicatta bodhic sata

but it somehow got mistranslated in my opinion into enlightenment being not just someone who is bound for enlightenment. And I think there's two main reasons why it it just rose to prominence and eclipsed the original teachings of the Buddha to the point that the original teachings of the Buddha were like scoffed at as the inferior vehicle.

I mean, it's just kind of amazing when you think about it. Although to devout Mahayana Buddhists, they think it's just absolutely fine and dandy because they believe despite, you know, historical evidence that the Buddha himself taught

Mahayana Buddhism.

So anyways, one reason why the whole bodhicattva ideal arose in Mahayana was the glorification of the Buddha. It's just a common thing in human nature that a religion followers of a religion will glorify the founder of their religion.

Like Christianity was pretty extreme.

They they just glorified Jesus of Nazareth until he was literally God almighty.

The only begotten son of God and he is God the son.

He is the son of God the father and he is God the son with a capital G on that God.

So in in Buddhism it was a similar thing. I mean people will say oh the Buddha was just a human or at least terra Buddhists will a lot of Mahayana Buddhists will say there was no human being called God Buddha. It was it was kind of like some Christian schools who believe that Jesus never had a physical body that he was just sort of this divine apparition you know just some personification of some divine force kind of a thing.

God Almighty. Some Mahayana Buddhists believe that there really was no physical Buddha at all. Like pure land Buddhists can believe this stuff.

But I mean, if you if you think that

there was no Buddha at all, you should believe that there's no anybody else at all either.

But getting back to the idea of the Buddhist Satva, they glorified the Buddha. And one of the I mean as as Buddhism

became more popular, it became more devotionalistic because you had people that maybe weren't as profound in their thinking and just the common person.

They wanted like traditions, legends, rituals that they could feel familiar with and cling to and give structure to their lives and make them feel like they were doing something worthwhile in in

sort of, you know, within the scope of their mundane version of reality.

And so there was a lot of devotionism and glorification of the Buddha. Um, and one of the um examples of this was

Jotica tales. Jotica stories which were stories of the Buddha's previous lives and in the Buddha's previous lives he's gen usually working on at least one pie usually one parmmmy in particular

and so because of all this glorification of the Buddha and this idea that the Buddha was purifying himself lifetime after lifetime after lifetime for millions millions of years there came to be this distinction between an ordinary enlightened being or an arahant and a

Buddha who is just like
when you just like radically like just a
orders of magnitude beyond an ordinary
enlightened being and I do not think
that the Buddha really it really worked
that way originally the Buddha was
saying I'm enlightened you can be
enlightened too the Buddha himself was
called an arahant
you know it's like namotasa bavat Buddha
I mean the Buddha is called an arahant
that's just an enlightened being and
there are a few sutas that call an
ordinary enlightened being a Buddha I
mean literally Buddha just means
enlightened awakened

but so I mean originally I think that the Buddha I mean he was his main claim to fame is he got the system going you know he he helped others to become enlightened but he wasn't more enlightened than

I mean it's you just go with like logic combined with abidama kind of a strange combination sometimes but wisdom um is exactly synonymous with amoa or absence of delusion. If you have zero delusion you have maximum wisdom. Your wisdom is perfect.

So I mean an ordinary enlightened being has zero delusion. A sama Buddha has zero delusion. Assama Buddha may have to be more clever and creative because he's

having to discover dharma on his own,
you know, for the first time since it
had gone gone extinct.

I mean, he didn't invent Dharma, he just
rediscovers it, but he rediscovers it
based on his own genius.

So he might be more clever than an
ordinary enlightened being, but he's not
more enlightened than an ordinary
enlightened being. In my opinion,
originally I do not think he was, but
it's the glorification of the founder of
the system that resulted in a Buddha
being just far more exalted than
ordinary enlightened being. And then
there came this idea, this is what I've

been leading to.

This is like the point I'm trying to get to. There came to be this idea that just being an ordinary enlightened being like the Buddha was teaching you to be was somehow inferior to being a sama Buddha and therefore it is much more noble and exalted to strive to be a sama sam Buddha instead of just settling for being an ordinary enlightened being which is kind of strange and it certainly is not what the original Buddha was teaching in my opinion. So that's one aspect of it. is just the glorification of Buddha and Buddhahood and just the idea that it's just way more noble and exalted to become a

Buddha than to just become an ordinary arahant which is like the inferior vehicle even though that's what the Buddha was originally teaching.

So these self-righteous Mahayana Buddhists called the actual teachings of the historical Buddha to be inferior and then they came up with something better based on essentially fiction.

But then there's this other reason which is actually something that Cole Murf here suggested. He said perhaps monks of the day weren't able to attain to the level of arant and so they adjusted their goal. And I do think that's another factor of why the the

bodhicattva idea and even the bodhicatta
idea in terraada

um

gained popularity. It's like you had a
lot of people that maybe were not all
that talented spiritually striving to
become enlightened and failing. And so
it just was more satisfying to them to
say, "Well, I'm just going to postpone
enlightenment, make the noble sacrifice,
postpone this enlightenment that they
weren't able to attain anyway for
whatever reasons, and I'm going to
strive to become even more exalted in
the future." And there are some terra
monks that also are, I think possibly
even the founder of my own tradition,

venerable Tomulus, he may have considered himself to be a Buddhist sata.

And then like I have been told pure land Buddhists um they actually believe that you can't even become enlightened in this world anymore. I mean they can't do it. So therefore nobody can do it and so the best you can do is just strive to be to be reborn into the pure land or whatever and become enlightened from there.

So the bodhic sattva idea also I think was convenient for people that either lacked the the ripeness the spiritual talent to become enlightened in this

very life or the people who just didn't want to make the effort maybe just lazy or just devotionalistic you know they it was just easier for them to do the chanting and bowing instead of really just going off alone into a wilderness and meditating until they were enlightened.

So yeah, I think it was a combination of those. Probably some other subtleties that I'm not thinking of right now, but I think that was essentially it. And that's it. That's that's the end of of this Q&A aside from the the few things I see at the end. And again, don't forget my new book has is out now. It's on Amazon. The link should be in the URL

links below. and like and subscribe if you found anything of value in this long rambling tirade.

And uh what else? I guess you're going to have to look at the URL links if you look for the the link to the new book.

And um again, the new book is autobiographical. It's less philosophical and more autobiographical than the the first three books. And uh aside from that, I just say be happy and I'm out of here.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to episode

188 of the best show on YouTube that has
zero production values. I am your host

Pony Bosa and this is my beverage

and 188 of course is not prime. It is in
fact $2 * 2 * 47$. Pretty sure 47 is
prime.

Uh and before I weigh into these

questions, I suppose I should announce
again

that my fourth book, Memoirs from

Myanmar, which is uh primarily
autobiographical,

philosophical reflections on the monk's
life, mainly in Burma, but also

including Indonesia and the United States.

So that's available on Amazon and you can find it in the URL links below if you're interested in that kind of stuff.

And if you are interested then I would appreciate a review if you do purchase and read the book especially if it's a good review.

And I would also like to announce just for the hell of it that I started a new job just last week and I'm back working in a metal shop again.

It turns out that working in a metal shop is less unpleasant than being a professional forklift operator, which is kind of surprising, but that's the way

it turned out.

and my employment situation is still a little bit up in the air because after I've been working at this new place for three days,

I get this email from some company I applied to probably more than a month ago saying, "Would you be willing to accept \$8 an hour more than I mean, they didn't know how much I was making at this new place, but they were offering \$8 an hour more." And I did the math and it turns out that adds up to like on a based on a 40hour week that adds up to more than \$16,000 a year.

So I'm kind of like hoping that they

don't follow through and like once and for all offer me this job because I just feel like I'm already kind of committed to this other job. But I mean 16,000 bucks a year plus is nothing to sneeze your nose at. So, I mean it has to be considered if they do offer it just the way it goes.

So, let's see here. I guess uh as with that as a kind of intro, did I mention this this uh this show has zero production values at least? I mean, these these little paper umbrellas aren't they're not free, you know.

Anyways, let's just start answering questions.

And the first question is from Gordon.

And Gordon says, 'You mentioned the Catholic explanation for the lack of progress you were experiencing. Is there a Terravada explanation? If so, what was it? And Gordon is referring to me in the previous Q&A, I think, talking about how um I was kind of like God in the God Suta where he would get Janna and lose it and get it and lose it and get it and lose it until he was at wit's end.

And I was kind of like that with my meditation too. It's like I would get into deep meditative states and then lose it and then gain it and lose it and gain it and lose it. And St. John of the

Cross, the mystical doctor of the
Catholic Church

said based on his own experience with
what the Catholics called contemplation,
which is essentially anything higher
than first Janna from a Buddhist point
of view. It seems to me now you're not
thinking anymore. there is no longer um
any kind of perceptual object, no
labeling, no thinking.

And he said that if you gain it and lose
it and gain it and lose it and gain it
and lose it, that just means that God
has other plans for you than for you to
be an adept, which would be kind of the
Catholic equivalent of what a terra
Buddhist would call an arya.

So

um Gordon here is asking if uh there's a terra explanation and the reason why I gave the Catholic explanation is because I am unaware of any official terravada explanation other than just you've got like karmic complications.

You've got these latent tendencies that are standing in the way. you're not, you know, fully established in in the root virtues necessary to completely master like deep meditative states.

So, I mean, a lot of people try for years and years and years and never even get in deep meditative state. So, at least I was able to get them. It's just

that I never fully mastered it. So that
um I mean once you've mastered it it's
like pretty much any time you want to
you can just sit down and go into these
deep meditative states and in my case it
didn't work out that way.

So

yeah I mean the terod explanation would
just be

karmic complications

I guess. And I'm just going to move on
to Gordon's second question. He says,

"Regarding the Terrence McKenna

quotation about drugs being an instant
spiritual experience, it doesn't seem
like you really disagreed with it. Is
doing LSD the same thing as an actual

spiritual experience?" Well, it depends on the experiencer and the experience itself.

But yeah, I mean, most of the monks of my generation started off with like psychedelic drugs like Rahm Doss, formerly known as Dr. Richard Albert of Harvard University also started off with psychedelic drugs and then they started I mean first it like opens your eyes to to these new possibilities that you know the the version of reality that you've been living in your whole life isn't necessarily the best or truest version of reality. So it kind of like at least makes you aware of that.

And in a case like that, I mean, all sorts of things could be uh a genuine spiritual experience. Getting hit over the head if it causes you to have a near-death experience, which then causes you to see the world differently.

That's an actual or genuine spiritual experience.

I mean, you can have a genuine spiritual experience from looking at a dog licking its own balls.

So, yeah, sure. I think for some people, for a lot of people, taking LSD would be a genuine spiritual experience if it is inducing

like mystical states or like profound insights. And just because you think

it's a profound insight at the time
doesn't mean that when you like are back
into their ordinary waking
consciousness, it's going to still seem
like a profound insight. But just the
very fact that you can have these
experiences which is like giving you
firsthand experience just firsthand
empirical facts that
the way that you've been living your
life like the ordinary waking state of
conscious consciousness is not the only
possible state that I mean
let's see I mean it's not necessarily
even the truest date.
So, let's see. Let's get back to the

actual question here, though. Is doing LSD the same thing as an actual spiritual experience? It can be, and in many cases it is. I mean, if it's like inducing mystical states, which was the case like with me the first many times I took it as a teenager. I mean, it was it was largely that sort of thing that eventually got me on the path to becoming a monk. And that's that was the case with many monks of my generation. I don't know what it's like now.

A lot of old hippies became monks because of that sort of thing. So, I mean,

sure, and I I discussed this in the previous Q&A also to some degree, so I'm

not going to just rehash the same the same arguments and so forth, but yeah, I mean, the Terrace Terrence McKenna quotation that I was responding to in the previous Q&A, you know, he he seemed to have this idea of like, you know, it's kind of a cheat. It's like you're cheating God or something by attaining just in a matter of half an hour after taking a tab of LSD what a lot of like renunciants are striving for for years and decades. And some of them never succeed in getting into as profound of a mental state as some some person can get from taking 500 micrograms of LSD.

So, it's it seems almost like a cheat or
it seems like unfair somehow,
but it still it still works.

So, that was what really struck me. I
mean, I wasn't going along the lines of
Terrence McKenna saying that, you know,
it's like using
psychedelics is sort of like forcing God
to do your bidding. You know, I
addressed that in the previous Q&A, but
it does seem like it's just almost
cheating that it's so easy this way.

Whereas following the traditional
spiritual techniques, fasting and
praying and meditating and renunciation
and all that is not as reliable as just
taking this little square of paper.

It's just the way it turned out. But don't look a gift horse in the mouth, I guess.

So, I'm just going to move on to Gordon's next question. Not that I am advising anyone to take illegal drugs. That's a disclaimer.

Gordon's third question.

And judging from this third question, he seems to be rather skeptical of the whole idea. He says, "If you went back in time and showed the Buddha LSD, would he say, "Ah, yeah, that's what I was trying to do the whole time, just better." and then ditch all his teaching and spend the rest of his life sitting

on the couch the couch eating Cheetos
and getting blasted. I have a hard time
believing he would do this. Yeah. I
mean, that's just ridiculous. That's
just such an obvious false dichotomy,
you know? It's just sophistry at best to
frame it this way. But I mean like Nee
Curly Baba up there notoriously
took first it was 900 micrograms of very
pure pharmaceutical grade LSD and then
after that he took 1,200 micrograms
which is enough to just blow the top off
of somebody's head and it had no obvious
discernable effect on him because he was
such a master of of of his mind I guess
such a swami
that I mean it just didn't really have

that much effect on him if any. But he did say that under certain circumstances this kind of thing can be useful if you take it in a place that isn't very hot and you take it like alone in a quiet place this kind of thing. He did give advice with regard to it. Well, let's see if the L if the Buddha took LSD. I mean, second-guessing a fully aligned being as it's a it's a common theme in questions I receive, but still it's it's just an exercise in futility.

But let's see. Uh if you if you went back in time and showed the Buddha LSD, would he say, "Oh, yeah, that's what I was trying to do the whole time, but

better." But no, it's not better. I mean, it's better if you can do it without having to rely on the chemical. And also you get into purer states because the chemical is going to have weird side effects like the psychedelic visuals and that kind of stuff that is unnecessary that can be a distraction that just the euphoric rush and all this kind of thing. I mean that just kind of gets in the way or at least it can. So if you're doing it through meditation or contemplation as the Catholics call it, you get into it if you're if you master or just get really good at it, you get into deeper better states. Like I got into deeper better states through meditation

as a monk alone in a cave in Burma than I got from LSD. I wouldn't have been in that cave in Burma if I hadn't taken the LSD probably.

But that's that's a different that's a different matter. And LSD, like I say, it's got these sort of impurities in the state or just distractions added like, you know, psychedelic visuals and and kind of the weird distortions of perception. And that's that may be one of the ways that psychedelics work is it just kind of interferes with perception, distorts it to such an extent that you're kind of like seeing through the cracks. you know, it's making like

deformities in normal the normal process of perception in a sense, you know, so to speak, so that you're kind of able to see through it.

But I mean, it's just kind of like training wheels or something. I mean, if if really LSD was better than living the holy life, it wouldn't have caused all these people to just become monks as a result of taking the LSD. The LSD is just kind of like a, you know, a peak into what is possible and then have the Buddha spend the rest, ditch all of his teachings, which he wouldn't do. I mean, the four noble truths remain true regardless of whether LSD exists or not and spend the rest of

his life sitting on the couch eating Cheetos and getting blasted. Well, they didn't have Cheetos in the Buddha's time. But I mean I mean it just doesn't make any sense why the Buddha would do that. I mean the the the teachings of the Buddha are true regardless of whether LSD can inspire a genuine spiritual experience or a genuine mystical state.

So yeah, I have a hard time believing he would do that too. I don't think he would do that at all any more than Neim Crowley Baba up there after taking 900 micrograms and then on a different occasion 1,200 micrograms of LSD. He

didn't just renounce being a holy man partly because what he had experienced was superior to the effects of the LSD. But still he did point out that it can be useful. It can be a genuine spiritual tool. Not that I am promoting the taking of illegal drugs.

So let's just move on to the next question here. This is from Crash Meta Religion.

And Crash Meta Religion says, "I consider myself a neoplatonist religious syncretist. I often wonder what the future of the West will be from a religious standpoint point.

That's what he says. Standpoint point.

Assuming the West isn't destroyed, what

do you think it will look like? I think a society where evangelical Christianity is replaced by Hindu, Buddhist, and neopagan religions alongside of a more tolerant Christian mystical tradition would be a good thing. I don't see western man ditching Christianity, but I hope they embrace more mystical and less dogmatic versions of it. And yeah, I've been asked, you know, what I think the future of religion and spirituality will be in America or in Western civilization or in global civilization.

Um, and it's really hard to say. It's sort of like a butterfly effect. It's you can't really predict or at least I

can't really predict partly because it's going to depend a lot like if there is a new religion founded by some charismatic enlightened founder or someone who is charismatic enough to compensate for the fact that he isn't really enlightened which has happened then I mean there's no telling who where he's going to be born he could be born in New York City or or Uganda or China or who knows and what his cultural conditioning is going to be that he's going to grow up in is going to very much influence like what his teachings are going to be like and so I can't predict what culture the next you know enlightened founder of a religion or semi-enlightened charismatic

founder of religion what culture he's
going to be born into
and I mean one thing that immediately
came to mind when I when I saw this
question when I read this question the
first time is a relatively common theme
in the writings of Brian Aldis who was a
science fiction author back in like the
60s and 70s especially and one of his
favorite themes was in a future age a
new religion will be based on omnisient
computers that everybody's going to
carry around this little computer with
them that's going to be sort of like
their their idol and they're just going
to consult the AI and the AI AI is going

to be much more advanced than now. It's going to be as effectively omniscient.

And so that's you're just going to have this altar with an omniscient computer on it and you're going to be consulting that computer as for guidance in your life. And

that wouldn't be completely surprising to me that AI gets advanced enough that it's going to become like an oracle. I mean already I consult Google a lot with regard to all sorts of things with regard to aquarium keeping or like ancient history or just like recent politics that kind of stuff.

So, I mean, if it gets way more advanced,

you know, you get into like super AI
that I mean, it becomes effectively
omniscient, at least in certain respects,
then it could be that the next world
religion is just going to be having like
effectively practically omniscient
computers serving as oracles instead of
going all the way to the oracle of Delphi,
having the Pythonist Jabber in a in a
drug-induced state with priests kind of
deciphering the jabbering and then
presenting you with some enigmatic
statement.

After you've purified yourself and made
the sacrifices and all that, you just go
to your your

altar, consult the oracle, and you probably get more reliable information. But let's say that omnisient computers aren't going to be the the religion of the future. It's really hard to say. I mean, already especially on the left. I mean, you gotta you got to give the devil its due that like the the liberals of the especially starting with like the boomer generation, they became more eclectic, you know, they didn't want to be stuffy conservative Christians like their parents. So, they started investigating Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism, Paganism, Wikah, that kind of stuff.

partly just in order not to be the
similar to their parents
and also just taking the like the
psychedelic drugs that the hippies were
notorious for might have helped them to
go in that kind of direction. There's
still a lot of Christianity. Um but
generally Christianity is more of a
conservative thing and
yeah so

I'm not exactly sure where to go with
this.

Christianity I mean it seems to me that
as a legitimate spiritual
force in world culture it has pretty
much exhausted itself. I mean, it's

there there are still a lot of devout, serious Christians out there, but it's just a pale shadow compared with just a few hundred years ago.

So, it wouldn't surprise me if

Christianity is

largely replaced by some new system, preferably not Islam.

I mean, you'd have to have something that would have sophistication, assuming that people just don't get so dumbed down that they can just revert to like a really primitive superstitious kind of religions.

But it it's this question is hard to answer because again there's like the butterfly effect. Who knows where the

next like enlightened or just
charismatic spiritual leader will be
born? What culture? What? So like what
culture is going to be pervading what he
is teaching? You know what kind of
cultural conditioning? If he's born in
the west, he could be like an
echarttolah type. But people like
echartollah
um they're just too eclectic and in a
way kind of too lukewarm
to really get the ball rolling with like
a new religious movement.
And it's it's going to take certain
characteristics I think in society to
allow a new religion a new religion to

arise because it's like there has to be a kind of crisis point where people are they cannot accept their old cultural conditioning as much anymore. They're looking for something different and that is when you know the the charismatic leader has to arise that then just starts this whole new religious movement going and it's of course it's almost impossible to predict with any kind of certainty exactly how that's going to happen.

Like Christianity, it was like classical paganism had just kind of run its course. People didn't really believe in it anymore. they're just kind of going through the motions with it or at least

enough of them were that you know they just it had lost its its soul so to speak and Christianity seems to be doing that also although of course there are still devout Christians just as when Christianity was arising like 3rd 4th century Roman Empire you still had a lot of devout pagans too and I don't think Christianity will ever be completely replaced maybe it well, but I don't know, you know, science has largely replaced Christianity as the explanation of reality.

Christian, even devout Christians generally have more faith in science than they have in like interpreting the

Bible to explain

why things are as they are as they are other than just God made it, but he made it according to like scientific rules, this kind of thing.

So where's the actual question mark here? Assuming the west isn't destroyed, what do you think it will look like?

Which is the future of the west from a religious standpoint? The future of the rest the west from a religious

standpoint. What will it look like? I

mean there has to be some kind of

unifying belief system. Any society that does not have a unifying belief system is it's just going to disintegrate.

And America kind of moved away from from

religion and adopted a kind of civic nationalism. I mean was everyone had the shared values of freedom and equality and so forth.

But

I'm not exactly. I mean it could be some kind of spiritual scientific kind of mysticism even.

But if I had to make a guess, it's either going to be some charismatic leader who hopefully is wise or it's going to be like the Brian Aldis scenario of people consulting practically omniscient computers as oracles.

But I mean again it's there's s such

chaos theory involved in this such a butterfly effect depending on where the next religious guru is going to arise. You know the charismatic leader who's going to start a world religion who can say so I'm just going to move on next question this is from Romeo and I'm just checking to make sure we're recording. Yeah we are. We are recording. Romeo says, "I see so many similar tendencies." Okay. I see so many similar tendencies both physically and emotionally in members of my family. I understand this from a scientific, genetic, hereditary

perspective, but I was wondering if there is a spiritual component as well. Do you think there is such a thing as inherited collective karma in families? How about more broadly in nations, races, cultures, etc. Aside from your opinion, what is the Buddhist perspective on inherited collective karma? Okay, let's start with the Buddhist perspective. Buddhism just rejects the idea of group karma. You know, it's it's kind of like the controversy in evolutionary biology where you've got some evolutionary biologists saying that is only at the individual level that evolution occurs.

You know, that the the individual is successful in reproducing his genes or not. And so like a population this kind of thing, you know, it's it's just kind of like an illusion that populations evolve aside from just at the individual level, the individual organism reproduces or fails to reproduce or reproduces more or reproduces less or not at all etc. But then there are some evolutionary biologists and I can I can relate to this. I really do do not fully comprehend the argument that you cannot have group evolution like the evolution of a of a population. I mean obviously um societies evolve and a society is like a group of individuals. It's a

population.

So culture obviously can have a group effect like an alphabet or a language can evolve that isn't just at the individual level like the individual speaks that language or doesn't speak that language.

But

I can kind of appreciate the Terra Buddhist explanation of how there seems to be group karma without there really being group karma. And that is for example

um individuals uh just using the term individual even though in Buddhism there is no self no soul that reincarnates

anything like that but you've got like these these sort of currents of karmic momentum

and in order to be born into a family you have to have like similar karma to them in order to be experiencing the same kind of things and also it may be that at least some of your family members I mean you've have like a multi-life

relationship going like um Edgar Casey used to say that we tend to have a strong karmic relation to one of our parents but usually not both. So in that case I was more had more of a karmic relationship with my father than with my mother. But still you can't wind up in a

family unless your karma is compatible with that. Similar with a culture you know it's like um lately you know I mean during the course of my lifetime people have referred to like the Middle East is just a hotbed of violence and war you know it's just been a battlefield since prehistoric times literally. And so they will use that as an example of like group karma or regional karma. But I mean you can just interpret that from the more Buddhistic more orthodox terravada Buddhist point of view and that if you have that kind of karma then you're just going to be reborn in that kind of society

in in that kind of in that part of the world. So, it's just more of um certain cultures attract certain people with certain karmic dispositions and needs and requirements and so forth um more than other cultures.

So I mean it's not necessary to have group karma in order to explain like the karmic similarities of members of a family or the karmic similarities of members of a nation or a society. It's just that if you have this kind of karma, you're going to be reborn into this kind of family or you're going to be born into this kind of society.

So

I mean

I can kind of accept the the Buddhist explanation that there is no such thing as group karma

with regard to evolution. I think that there might be group evolution in a sense but I can accept that you know it's subjective. You know morality is subjective and your karma is subjective even though ultimately there's no subject. That's just kind of a gosh a virtual reality because because this whole world is a virtual reality. So let's see here.

Yeah, I mean I'm I'm willing to go with the idea that just beings or you know karmic streams that have similar

requirements with regard to their karma just wind up together. that it's not the group karma. It's just that my my individual karma fits in with this other individual's karma that it's or karma is going to be reach fruition more effectively by us being together and so it just happens that way naturally.

That would be the official terra Buddhist explanation and I am inclined to go along with that.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cioction Cad Zedena.

And COVID cadet specializes in sending me like a a screenshot of this big block of text and asking me to respond to that

or sending me a video, you know,
thoughts, this kind of stuff. So he's
he's kind of done that this in this
episode.

He says if enlightenment doesn't require
the ending of desire so someone like
Krishna Murdy can have sex with his
friend's wife and be considered
enlightened but just going with the flow
of karma then wouldn't someone like this
be the ultimate enlightened being living
only in the present moment with no past
or future but just going with the flow
of karma and then parenthesis he says
you can replace the racial words with
people for the video I didn't mean it in

a racist way but rather just the idea behind it. And he he sends me it's like four paragraphs that contain well I mean I won't even say what the racial slur is. I mean it's an extremely derogatory racial slur that is found probably 50 times many times in this this little block of language. And he's talking about certain people who I mean they really do not identify with their future self or presumably their past self. You know they're just living in the moment.

And so they have no concern regard for consequences. You know, it's like I I've thought about this with regard to like devil worshippers where they're they're

willing to sell their soul. Just going
with the stereotype. They sell their
soul

um to the devil. you know, they're
willing to burn in hell forever and ever
in exchange for, say, 10 years of fame
and wealth and pleasure, which is just
like an absurd bad deal. But a lot of
people are willing to go with that. So,
it's like they don't even have sympathy
or empathy for their own future self,
much less anybody else. But they it's
like

in a in a way it's just like the extreme
of just sort of selfishness where you
don't even care about your future self.

It's just me now,
which strikes me as particularly
foolish.

But anyways, you got a person who's just
living in the present moment like an
animal. I mean, why not just say
animals? You know, why bring certain
groups of people into this when you
could just say animals and animals, you
know, like a dog or like there's a dog
that just came in,
you know, they just live in the present
moment. And Eckhart Tolle says that
animals are in a way enlightened except
for a few domesticated animals that have
become neurotic through too much
intimate contact with the neurosis of

human beings. But for the most part,
according to Eckhart Tolle in his famous
book, The Power of Now, most animals are
enlightened. But it's a different kind
of enlightenment

from

like the enlightenment of God Buddha for
example.

It's like God Buddha is like this more
comprehensive kind of enlightenment
whereas the enlightenment of an animal
is just sort of limited within the the
context. you know, it's it's still, you
know, from the Buddhist point of view,
animals are in a lower realm. They're
not enlightened at all, but at least

they're they're in the present moment.

They're they're not creating a bunch of unnecessary suffering for themselves by worrying about the future or feeling regrets about the past or wondering what's going on like what the neighbors are thinking, that kind of stuff. So in a way animals they have less delusion and foolishness than we do. Partly just because we have bigger minds that can hold more of it.

Like a cow is just keeps five precepts pretty much effortlessly and just seems pretty placid and serene most of the time. And from the Buddhist point of view cow is not fully enlightened.

But seal of action cipad zerite here

really isn't talking about a Buddhist
conception of enlightenment unless
you're getting into like the tantric
stuff or some of those Zen masters you
know some of those Zen masters they you
know they were kind of getting into the
realm of of Krishna Murdy
so let's see says the enlightenment
doesn't require the ending of desire
um I mean it there's different ways of
ending ending desire. One way of ending
it is just to transcend it and in a way
sort of transmute it, denature it, which
is what I keep talking about and people
just do not get it that you can
transcend it. It's like you're watching

a movie. It's it's like a suspenseful scary kind of movie and I mean your heart's beating faster. You know, you're kind of on the edge of your seat because, you know, the person in the movie might get killed in some horrible way. And then you just remind yourself it's just a movie. That doesn't stop the stuff from happening. It's just that you have just kind of risen to a higher level. You know, King Lear raging at the storm, going mad with grief. I mean, at one level it's King Lear going mad with grief out on the heath in the storm, but at another level it's this actor who's just saying his lines, you know, and

I mean, enlightenment can work that way where you're still apparently like wallowing in samsara, but your consciousness has just risen above that level.

So, I mean, some people just do not and cannot get this kind of stuff where you're talking about two different levels of reality simultaneously.

It just does not work.

So, let's see here.

Yeah, in a case of like Krishna Mie, just going for the sake of argument, let's just say Jidu Krishna Murdy was really an enlightened being. Even though he messed around with his personal

secretary's wife, he wore a toupe.

You know, he he did stuff that a fully enlightened being stereotypically traditionally isn't supposed to do.

But if you just assume that

he just was at a higher level of consciousness, the [—] that's supposedly happening in samsara is still happening, but he's not identifying with it anymore.

So the desire, you know, at at like a subjective level maybe, but he's not being subjective anymore, just going with the argument.

So, you know, there's there's still desire, but he's just not identified

with that anymore. And even like a fully enlightened being like the Buddha, I mean, he still had apparently, if we can if we can believe the texts, he still had like preferences, you know, he still had to have motives for his behavior, which could be considered a kind of desire. And it's just that

I mean when you're enlightened being you're just not identified with this stuff anymore.

And it's it's like this two-dimensional thinking that just cannot comprehend the idea that you're just going to transcend samsara

with samsara still being here without being stuck in it and by identifying with it anymore.

So it's a matter of perspective.

So let's see here.

Where's the question? Okay. Wouldn't someone like this, you know, or like let's just say an animal be the ultimate enlightened being living only in the present moment with no past or future but just going with the flow of karma?

Well, I mean because they're still deluded, they're still creating new karma, which an enlightened being doesn't do. So that would be like one technical difference between like say an animal who's totally in the present

moment. They're still creating karma.

They still have desires and attachments and so forth. Um they haven't really risen above it. Supposedly a fully enlightened being is not creating new karma. There's still the old karma that's working itself out until the enlightened being dies.

But they're not creating new karma by what they're doing. Even though there may still be some kind of vestigial desires and stuff going on, it's just that they have risen above that, they're not identifying with it anymore.

I mean, if they had totally like risen above karma to the extent of

just eliminating it, they wouldn't have anything even happening to them.

Which gets into a whole different kind of argument. I mean it's you're you're straying from the realm of Theravada Buddhism by giving the idea that you know a fully enlightened being isn't even really here. They're just you know our our our own karma is like projecting the semblance of some enlightened being out there

but they don't have any karma sustaining themselves. It's all just generated by the karma of unenlightened beings who who need this kind of enlightened teacher, you know, to fulfill their own karma.

But that's getting kind of complicated and confusing, isn't it?

But you say a baby or an animal, they're not the ultimate enlightened being. Even though they may be in the present moment, they might not be thinking in words.

They still have latent tendencies that really they haven't freed themselves from, not even through transcendence.

But it's hard to explain, which is probably one reason why so few people really understand it.

But you get into like the Zen masters and some of the the tantric Tibetan

teachers and so forth, it's the same kind of a deal. I mean, it's getting closer to Buddhism, but it's uh I mean, it's just a matter of transcending samsara. You you don't just eliminate samsara when you become enlightened. You rise above samsara in a sense. You stop identifying with it. You are I mean, you're operating at a higher level of consciousness that still might include this samsaric stuff, but it's just not you anymore.

And it's hard to understand which is why so many people don't understand it.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from also from sea of action sepatna.

He says and I quote, "There are jotaka tales of the Buddha giving his wife and kids away, letting animals eat him when he was a rabbit, and many other tales of extreme charity. I can't tell how the bodhic sattva ideal is any different than being a suicidal empathyridden leftist because all three of the above situations are mocking the attitudes of leftist if taken to its ultimate conclusion and it looks less extreme than bodhicattva activities. Please explain.

Well, I will say the jotaka story of the the Buddha who was in a previous life a wise hair the sasa jotaka it's called.

He wasn't he wasn't throwing himself into the fire to cook himself for the sake of other animals. It was just that Saka, king of gods, disguised himself as a Brahman holy man. And so the rabbit or the the hair had decided in advance that day that if any kind of wandering holy man came by, he was going to offer him food. And then he realized wandering holy men don't eat clover or whatever like rabbits do. So he was going to just emulate himself, cook his own meat to offer to this Brahman holy man. And it turned out that it was Saka, king of gods, disguised as a holy man, just testing this hair. And as a result of that, the the rabbit really did fling

himself into the fire to cook himself so that this holy man could eat the rabbit meat. And because it was really Saka, king of gods or formerly known as Indra, he uh caused the rabbit not to be burned by the fire and then rewarded that hair by taking the the juice of a mountain, squeezing the juice out of a mountain and making the image of a rabbit the hair on the surface of the moon. So in uh like ancient Indian Buddhism, there was no man in the moon. It was the hair in the moon. And if you look, it does seem like it really is a rabbit. It's just kind of turned sideways, but it's like the man in the moon, like one of

his eyes has like these two streaks coming out. Those are the ears of the rabbit.

So some people have used that to argue that the Buddha is the man in the moon. But I digress.

Um, some of these tales of like the the Buddha in a previous life or some arant or some other wise being just like complet just giving away their own wife and children for example like there's that completely Monty Pythonesque biography of Mongala Buddha that's found in the the Buddha in its commentaries where

Mangala Buddha in a previous life before he was the Buddha he was a Buddhist Saut

he he gave away his kids to an ogre disguised as a Brahman. And then the ogre just starts eating his kids, the kids of the bodhicatta. And the bodhic sata instead of being alarmed by an ogre eating his children, he was rejoicing.

He was delighted at his his superhuman act of charity, giving away his own kids to be devoured by an ogre.

And it's that kind of stuff. I mean, it's just completely leaving reality behind,

you know, it's just making like a complete extreme case for I mean, partly it's glorification of the founder of a religion like he is capable of this

level of generosity or virtue or whatever that leaves ordinary human beings far behind. It's just as a way of glorifying this person, but it just makes them a kind of monster in a certain way.

I mean, there is one story of the Buddha in a previous life. I don't remember if it's a Jotica story or if it's just in the commentary somewhere where he was a farmer and he had his little boy come with him out into the fields. and his little boy was just playing in the shade of a tree while the father, the bodhic sata, was plowing the fields. And so the father, you know, he's glancing over at his kid to make sure the kid's okay

because, you know, he's he's a father.
And then he at one point he notices the
little kid is just lying motionless on
the ground. So he he hurries over and
finds out that the little kid has been
bitten by a snake and is no longer
alive.

So what the bodhicatta does,
I mean he can't save the kid. The field
still needs to be plowed. So he just
finishes his plowing before taking the
body of his child back to the village.
And I mean that maybe is kind of
believable. I mean that could be
indicative of some kind of wisdom maybe.
But I mean, giving your own kids away

and rejoicing as an ogre devour them, I mean, that is just not human at all. I I that's just like a a madeup silly story. And you can find lots of those in the text, especially like in the commentarial tradition.

It's like people get so caught up in the religious mindset, the devotionalistic religious mindset, that they just kind of leave common sense reality behind.

So what's the actual question here?

Let's see. I can't tell how the bodhicattva ideal or bodhicatta ideal going with terra is any different than being a suicidal empathyridden leftist. You're not supposed to say that s word on YouTube I'm pretty sure because all

three of the above situations are
mocking the attitudes of leftists. Yeah.
It's like the what is it? The reductio
adabsurdum.

if taken to its ultimate conclusion and
it looks less extreme than bodhicatta
activities. I mean yeah the I guess the
one kind of saving grace of Buddhism is
that you're supposed to completely
renounce society to do this kind of
stuff that I mean you cannot really be a
functioning member of society and then
just like give your kids away to ogres
to be eaten that kind of thing. I mean,
kind of it says it was that way in the
texts or in the in the commentary or

whatever, but yeah, a society is not going to work if that that kind of stuff goes mainstream.

So yeah, I mean both of these are just a case of like

like virtueoriented idealism just going to its logical extreme until you have left practical reality far behind in the dust.

So, I mean, I don't know if there's really all that much more I can say about this,

but it's I mean, it's just silly stories that you're going to find in ancient poly texts or medieval poly commentaries.

And there's quite a lot of silly stuff

in there if you look for it.

But I mean

maybe if you are a fully enlightened
being or very close you're you're a very
advanced saint you may be able to get
away with some of this stuff. Um like
one example that's a famous Zen story.

You've got this Zen monk who's living in
some hut out in the woods and a robber
comes in and the robber's going to
steal, you know, this monk's stuff. And
the monk asks him to to leave a little
bit of money because it's okay for Zen
monks to handle money because he needs
it for something. And then the robber
just for whatever reason, I think most

robbers wouldn't do it, but this robber, you know, just leaves a little bit of money like the monk asked and takes the rest. And then as he's leaving, the monk is like looking out the window at the full moon and thinking it's it's a pity I couldn't give him this beautiful full moon. You know, this kind of question, which might also be just like some madeup legend, but like a saint can maybe do that kind of stuff, but a society cannot run on principles like this.

People are selfish because there is survival value, evolutionary survival value in being selfish.

for example.

H

So I mean if you're a saint maybe you can indulge in a certain amount of virtuous extremism but a society just isn't going to work on principles like that not for very long anyhow.

So I'm just going to move on to see of action ci's next question.

He says, "I was watching this video and u the video is about men being more likely to die of a broken heart than women are." And then he continues, "I'm guessing he's speaking about American culture and maybe his Indian culture since he mentioned biology. I want to

know whether you think this is a genetic flaw in males or if it is a kind of cultural sickness and not present in places like Burma or maybe it is a modern trend. I want to know your thoughts on the subject cuz it seems clearly maladaptive and kind of pathetic I have to say and section and cadena is just blackpilled and sees everything through a lens of negativity.

Anyways, so yeah, it's uh there's this little video where some person maybe a doctor is talking about how men are more likely literally to die of a broken heart. Like to die of heart failure after a divorce or just lose the will to live and just give up after your mate

dies when when you're both very old.

Like Jimmy Stewart was like that. The famous actor Jimmy Stewart, his I mean he loved his wife very much. They were very happy together apparently. And after she passed away, you know, it was sort of like a a male swan or a crane or a stork or something that mate for life. And once he lost his mate, I mean, he just kind of moped and just kind of went downhill and died just a few weeks later.

And I mean, it's it's this way in Burma also, like I've probably mentioned this before, the stereotypical tearjerker romance movie in Burma that you see when

riding the the bus between Manderlay and
and Rangon. You know, you got to watch
these cheesy Burmese movies
and just the st just the standard theme
of some Burmese romance movie. I mean,
there's no telling how many dozens of
these movies have been made following
the same template. You've got a young
man of lower social status, falls in
love with the rich girl, and they they
love each other just deliriously,
and then they kind of run off together.
But the father of the girl absolutely
will not stand for his daughter marrying
this, you know, he's like some street
vendor or something, some bike shaw
driver. So like the girl's elder

brothers or just some goons hired by the father seek them out, beat the [_] out of the guy, and drag the girl home again. And the father requires her to marry some rich guy who's a complete [_]

So what happens is the guy who you know the the man the the man and the woman they they loved each other. They get separated. The man drinks himself to death usually drinking Johnny Walker Red Label which probably helps to account for the for the early decease of this fellow whereas the girl boohoos for a few days and then winds up marrying the rich guy that her father required her to

marry.

And I do think it's just I mean it's not a genetic flaw in males that males take commitments more seriously than women.

You know, like in in America, most divorces, you know, something like 70% most divorces is it's the woman who files. And in a lot of cases, she's just vaguely dissatisfied and thinks she can do better.

But I remember one of the first important books I ever read. I was about 14 years old. I read The Naked Ape by Desmond Morris. And Desmond Morris points out that men, for example, tend to have more lifelong friends than women do. You know, it's like men form a like

stronger bonds with other people. Even though women are more sort of interpersonal interactionoriented than men are, men tend to take it more seriously. And according to Desmond Morris, one of the reasons for this is that men would be forming, you know, like men back in a huntergatherer society, every able-bodied young man is a warrior for the tribe with few exceptions. And so they're relying on each other to to have each other's back in intertribal warfare and when they're out hunting mammoths and cave bears and this kind of stuff. So it's just you need a stronger cohesive group where

everybody sticks up for everybody else.

Whereas women, you know, they're more likely to get traded off to another tribe for for mating purposes. You know, there's like a swap of new young women between these two tribes. Or it may be there's intertribal warfare. the woman just gets snatched out of her tribe and taken to some other tribe where she's got to have a whole different set of friends worshiping a whole different set of gods maybe speaking a different language and all this. So women are just more adaptable

whereas men are more likely to form these like strong lasting bonds between each other and apparently also with

their mate.

So I would guess that that is like the main evolutionary genetic component of this

that women are just more likely to just

be removed from one like tribal group

and and like transplanted into another

one. So they have to like be more

flexible with regard to this thing. And

there wasn't as much need for them

except with regard to like their own

children that they have like these

lifelong commitments where you know it's

like they wouldn't dream of breaking it.

With men apparently there is a

statistically significant

higher level of this kind of commitment than in in the female of the species.

just going with

Desmond Morris.

So, I don't consider it to be a genetic flaw in males and I don't consider it to be a kind of cultural sickness because both of those are just black pill negativity.

And I don't think it's really a modern trend either because I think it go probably goes back to the stone age that this kind of stuff evolved if not before the stone age.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Jeffrey.

And Jeffrey says, "I was telling someone

that if I got cancer, I would not use conventional medicine to heal. First, I would rub hydrogen peroxide all over me and then hire monks to pray over me. Is that something that is possible? Can monks be hired to pray for healing?"

Well, you shouldn't hire monks because monks aren't supposed to handle money. They're not supposed to do anything for pay. At least not Terraata Buddhist monks. I'm not exactly sure where the hydrogen peroxide comes in. I mean, you know, according to the Bible, you're supposed to be anointed with oil before the elders lay their hands on you and pray over you to heal you of your

sicknesses. So, I'm not sure where hydrogen peroxide um would necessarily be replacing some kind of ointment or oil for anointing. I guess that's why it's called ointment, right? Cuz you anoint it onto yourself.

Um

but there are like paras like chants that monks do for helping people to to recover from illness. The main one in Theravada Buddhism is the bojanga suta. So different paras or protective chants have different purposes. There are a few allpurpose protective chants. I think the ratana suta and I think it's the uh the mangala suta are just kind of like general blessings. But the bojanga suta

in particular is supposed to have special efficacy with regard to healing the sick. Although I have to admit that every sick animal I ever chanted the bojanga suta over wound up dying. So it didn't really work so much in my case. And I think with regard to any kind of like healing powers resulting from like rituals or chanting that kind of stuff there's going to have to be the faith of the person and the faith of the monks or priests or whoever it is who are doing the chanting. And if you've got one person with just like absolute unquestioning faith, that can kind of drown out some of the doubts of

other people involved. But still, there has to be some kind of strong belief or confidence that it's going to work on the part of somebody involved in order for it to work. Because it's not just that the the magic blah blah blah of the chant has any kind of power to heal anybody or to exercise malevolent spirits from a house or anything like that. You know, it's the beliefs, the perceptions of the people involved that have the power. So, it's like a placebo effect.

So, it may be I mean you might want to try like a Christian science practitioner. I assume they still have those

um or seek out like a monk or a priest who specializes in this and actually has a track record. I mean, you don't want to just go to the local Cambodian temple or Thai temple and ask the monks there to pray over you, unless you just have unquestioning faith or confidence that it's going to work. Because a lot of these Asian monks, you know, they're kind of missionaries in the West, but more likely they're just sort of like the masters of ceremonies at a cultural center for the immigrants of their own nationality who live there. And you know they're they really are not some kind of master with healing powers.

So I mean if you are going to have somebody chant over you to heal you of some you know some ailment then you should try to find someone who specializes in it and not just you know just go knocking on the door of the local Cambodian temple and asking them to do it because they're not going to have the confidence or the faith probably to really do it in a way that works.

So, but I mean if you the standard um Theravada Buddhist like the paritta or protective chant that is used for healing the sick would be the Bojjanga Sutta. So you might want to just try chanting it yourself.

It's out there. You can find it. I'm sure.

And so I'm just going to move on to Jeffrey's next question.

He says, "Also,

I have heard that sexual energy is healing energy. Are they related?" Well, sexual energy and healing energy both would require a certain vitality.

You know, like a a brightness of spirit, I guess. You know, the the more vitality you've got, the more sexual energy you've got, the more healing energy you've got. So, I mean, to that extent, I would say, yeah, sexual energy can be healing energy to a certain degree.

But I mean from the Buddhist point of view, there is no special energy that's just sexual energy. You know, you've just got like energy

that, you know, some of it is siphoned off for sexual purposes or, you know, sexual directions and then your body naturally heals um using some more of this kind of just sort of natural vitality.

But so there is a connection I think between sexual energy and healing energy. Both of them require just you know the the vital essence of of life. I mean you're you're less likely to be sexually energetic if you're not well

and you're less likely to be well if you just low low sexual energy I guess. So yeah, there is a kind of relation, but it's really not a kind of Buddhist concept. Maybe in yoga or something like that, they would have more of a some kind of system worked out on how it all works, but I think it's from I mean just using my own understanding of biology and so forth. It would just be the just the same kind of vitality that would be used could be used for either or for entirely something else.

So

yeah, I mean Freud might have something to say about that, but I'm really not an

expert on Freud. You know, he he turned everything into sex.

Freud was just sort of a master of second chakra.

So yeah, I guess I I got about as far with that as I'm liable to get. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Quistor.

And Quistor says, "I've heard you tell the story about the monk who selfdeed because he couldn't always get into Janna and then became an Araant. I find it difficult to understand since the story would indicate that he has attachment to Janna and that the craving for it is the barrier to achieving it. Is there more background to the story?

Could it be that the craving wasn't specifically for the johnic bliss or equanimity itself, but for what the Jonas lead to? And once he put that craving aside, there was no craving left. Or maybe he realized that Janna is not an Ibana and not having Janna brought suffering. So he dropped craving for Janna and that was the last attachment he needed to let go of. Well, he's referring to the God Suta. I did warn you in advance that I was going to come back to God. And he was the monk who got Janna and lost it and got it and lost it and got it and lost it until finally after like seven times this

happened. He was thinking, this is like the context that Quistor was asking for. He was thinking if I die with Janna, I'm guaranteed at least a Brahma realm. I mean that's that is the belief in in Terravada Buddhism that the Brahma realms correspond to Jonic realms and you you've mastered you know first Janna you can get into like the lower Brahma realms you master second Janna you get into higher Brahma realms etc and you have to get into like the formless Janna in order to get into like the highest heaven realms and so anyways Godo is thinking you know if he dies with this mastery of Janna. While he has it temporarily, he's

guaranteed of a heaven of like a really
advanced heaven realm. But if he dies
without Janna, there's no guarantees at
all. He could be reborn as an animal or
in hell or anything. So he it was just
sort of like this kind of

I don't know what

it was like Pascal I think had this
deal, you know, where you to believe in
God and be wrong is better than um not
to believe in God and be wrong. So, you
know, it's just kind of like this game
theory or something where it's like if I
die with with Janna,

guaranteed of a of of like a very high
heaven realm. If I die without it, no

guarantee at all. So, he just made the decision that the next time he was really in the groove with his meditation and had Janna that he was just going to end it before he fell back out of it again. That was that's the explanation in the text in the in the suta itself in the goda suta of the samutinikaya.

So that's that's the way it is described in the suta itself that it was just kind of this this idea that you know if he died while he had Janna he was guaranteed of at least a Brahma realm.

So he went for it because he knew that just based on his past experience, it was likely he was just going to wind up losing it again. And then all bets are

off with regard to how he was going to be reborn. And then just through just the momentum of practice that he had going and the parmesated, you know, just the the virtue and just the the momentum of his his holy life. It was sufficient through whatever way it's not fully described exactly how it happened in the in the sutta that he became enlightened instead of going to a Brahma realm he just attain par nibbana at the moment of death.

So did I answer the question? Is there more background to the story? Yeah, it was it was just this idea. If he dies with Janna, he's guaranteed of a high

heaven realm and if he dies without it,
there's no guarantee at all. So he just
made the decision that he's next time he
he had Janna real good he was just gonna
end it

and I'm just gonna move on next

question. This is from the protose monk
formerly known as cool whip

and uh and the protose monk he has sort
of a preliminary question that turns out
not to be one of his allotted three
questions.

So the first question we can kind of
skip over and then we will address that
in the subsequent questions. He says,
"Have you heard about or seen the ex
monk Varapano

in this video?" And then he has uh he he has some video link with regard to this person who used to go by the name of Varapo.

I don't remember what his name is now.

He technically might not even be ex monk as he was never a monk in the first place. He claims to have been a Buddhist monk for seven years and since disroing does daily live streams with some dude that legally changed his name to Shiva at Shiva Kyash Shambo where all these spiritual begers seem to do where all these spiritual baggackers seem to do is ask for donations. His channel appears on my

very dharmic feed no matter what, and I usually ignore it. The algorithm loves his trolling rage bait, but clicked on his latest stream as it really caught my attention and couldn't believe it when he heard this. Please listen to his confession here. And this is where the exvaropho

uh admitted that he was never a real monk to begin with and he was just pretending to be a monk in order to get donations and then he was investing that in Bitcoin or something and once he got enough that he could just be independently wealthy then he just dropped out and he he looked like he was kind of drunk in the video. some

somebody in the comments saying now he's just sleep deprived. But I mean, he was just kind of like slouched over on his side with kind of like this sleepy smile on his face while he's singing like a canary and admitting to being a total fraud.

See, on fake monks using Okay, so then there's like the the the what's the word? the rubric, the uh the heading of three three questions here, the three following questions on fake monks using Donna or generosity to invest in Bitcoin for financial independence.

So

the first question

from Protose Pudom,
formerly known as Kwip, what do you
think of this man's plan for being a
monk? And are you shocked? From the
beginning, asking for donations to
invest in Bitcoin and exiting when he
had enough profits to retire. He
couldn't even believe he was in robes
for seven years. People giving him money
as a donation thinking he was a monk.
Well, I remember coming across this
person and I I before I I get into the
question, get into the answer of the
question, I mean I mean you can block
this person from your YouTube feed. You
know, there's some channel that keeps
coming up and you want to avoid it. You

just kind of click on something around it and say you're not interested and don't show anything from this channel ever again or else and the the algorithm will cooperate with that. I'm pretty sure at least on YouTube.

But let's get back to this question. Um, yeah, I I came across him just I saw him on some videos and my woman especially, she called him the sleepy weepy monk because he'd always talk in like this sleepy monotone and never looked like he was fully awake, which could have just been part of the act to look like a serene meditative monk.

And she would kind of she took more

interest in him than I did. And she was scandalized cuz I mean she could see from practically from the very beginning that he was some kind of fraud, you know, probably just doing it for donations.

And I really I mean, first of all, I tend to give people the benefit of the doubt. So, I mean, it was kind of obvious to me, too, there was a possibility that he was a scammer, but I'm less likely to jump to conclusions than my woman. And also, um, I have come across so many monks that are like this, like in Burma that I mean, some of the most famous monks in Burma. I won't name any names because they're kind of have

at least one of them is very well
respected among like certain Buddhist
communities in the United States and
he's got at least one monastery in the
United States that's you know kind of a
branch monastery that I mean he just he
is like a wealthy businessman who wears
monks robes in order to make more money
you know he just charges exorbitant fees
even in fourth world Burma for his
dharma talks

and I I

I I just did not approve of him at all.

You know, I somebody would donate some
calendar from his monastery. I just take
it down. It's like, "No, we're not we're

not advertising this monk because he's just a rich businessman wearing monk's robes."

And I mean, I've come across monks like this that I mean, they're just trying to get rich, rich and famous. And wearing monks robes helps them to be that way.

So in in Burma it's it's it's common much more common than in the west I think at least with regard to terra Buddhist monks.

Most monks handle money anyway. Most monks are receiving donations and just going out and and buying you know whatever they want.

So I was exposed to more of So I was I was less scandalized by the whole thing

than my woman who I mean she's relatively naive and hadn't come across a lot of that before whereas there's lots of it. I remember there was one monk who came to stay at my monastery back when I was the abbot of onebo wildlife refuge monastery in northwestern Burma.

this young monk, like a village monk, came and he wanted to stay at my place and most monks in that entire area, the overwhelming majority of them just did not follow the rules of monastic discipline. So, I just pretty much flat out told him, I really don't think it's likely to work because if you're from

around here, chances are you don't follow the rules like is required at this monastery. And then it was like he just kind of unburdened his heart to me this this young monk saying I know it's like this and it bothers me too and I just want to be a good monk and that's why I came here cuz I want to follow the rules and be a good monk just like in the text as well as I can. You know it was like he really did appear to be emotionally moved when he's giving me this speech. And so again I am willing to give people the benefit of the doubt. So I said, "All right, you can stay. We'll see how it goes." And then he stayed for maybe a month or two. I don't

remember exactly how long he stayed. It wasn't for very long. And then one day he just suddenly took off and there was some stuff missing like there was like a human anatomy chart in the congregation hall, you know, showing the bones and everything just help monks to look upon what the human body is really made of. I mean, that was gone. He just took took some stuff and just disappeared. And then after he left, I was told he was scamming the villagers for money, saying that he was like collecting funds because his father needed an eye operation or something or it was his some Seattle needed an eye operation. I

can't remember the details. I remember there was somebody needing an eye operation involved and then after he figured he had enough money, he just took off.

So, I mean, it just it's just a relatively common occurrence in places like Burma where you've got monks, including one of the most famous monks in the whole country, that are just they're in it for the money.

So, this Varapo, I would assume that he really was ordained. when he's like admitting that he was never never a really a monk, he probably means that he even though he was officially technically ordained as a monk, he just

never really believed in it and was never really trying to be a monk. You know, it's like you can you can get ordained fairly easily. It doesn't take any herculean effort to get some Asian monks to ordain you. You don't even have to be a Buddhist for some of them to ordain you.

So he probably really was ordained. It's just that he he just adopted this persona of always speaking in a in a like a low quiet monotone.

Maybe that's just the way he was anyway. Never opening his eyes all the way just so that he seemed like he was like a blissed out meditator. And I remember he

he dropped out of the monkhood for a while and then he just appeared on videos again. My my woman was showing me this stuff. She she was keeping up with it. I really didn't have much interest in him, but for a while he was like a monastery attendant in Thailand or something and maybe he he became a monk again or something. And yeah, it's I really don't know exactly what to make of it. I mean, he could just be trolling and just exaggerating what a fraudulent [__] he was just for the hell of it. But to some degree, he apparently really was a fraudulent [__] Just just praying upon the gullibility

and faith of simplehearted people.

So, let's see here. I guess I answer that kind of question. What do you think of this man's plan for being a monk? And are you shocked? No, I wasn't shocked because I've been exposed to plenty of that when I was a monk in Burma. And just 98%

of the SA in Burma handles money. I mean, most of them aren't scamming, you know. You know, they're just like there was an old monk that used to live with me, the one that was bitten by a cobra and eventually died. Um, he handled money, too. And what he was doing was he would actually make brooms out of like

palm fronds and a bamboo pole. And he made good brooms. We were using the brooms he made around the monastery.

They're relatively good brooms, but he was having his niece who lived in a nearby village sell some of them in the market. And then he was using, you know, the the relatively small amount of money he was getting from that to buy like beetle quids and maybe cigars.

And I don't know how he chewed beetle.

He had like four teeth left in his head.

But still, he was able to chew beetle for some reason. And I'm not talking about the bugs, the insects, colopter insects. There's a a drug, a mild drug called beetle, bee t- lure nut,

that is chewed in South Asia and Southeast Asia. It's relatively disgusting. It turns your slobber into something like ketchup, just red and thick. It's relatively gross.

But he was handling money. I mean, he he wasn't like deliberately scamming people to I mean, he was just making brooms and having his niece sell them in the village so that he could afford his beetlenut and and who knows what else, tea or whatever.

I used to think that that monk would have been more venerable if he has hadn't been a monk because he did live

just a very simple, austere,
humble kind of existence. He just didn't
follow the rules very well
and that just handling money wasn't the
only rule he broke. I think he he cooked
dinner for himself sometimes. I really
didn't want to know. I was like I wasn't
looking for trouble.

And then sometimes he'd go for alms
round with like wearing a sweatshirt and
just like a blanket wrapped around him
instead of his robes, but he was like 80
years old and just very simple man.

I really didn't didn't want to fight
with him.

So yeah, I guess I answered that. I was
not shocked.

So I'm going to move on to the protose monk's second question which I might have already answered here. Is this shocking behavior common in the Buddhist world generally and specifically terraada? And why are people giving so much money to monks to renuncience? That makes no sense. Well, the first part of this is the shocking behavior common in the Buddhist world. As I've already said, it's it's really fairly common. In fact, one of the most famous monks in all of Burma is like this.

So, that part it's relatively common, certainly not unheard of. But with regard to this question, why are people

giving so much money to monks to renunciation? It makes no sense. Well, most people in Burma probably don't even know that it's against the rules for monks to handle money. I remember the the the Burmese equivalent of the Thai Raja. Um I met him once. He came to the monastery where I was staying at. He was in Burmese it's the SA Mahanayaka Seattle, you know, the great leader of the SA.

And he was just he gave gave this little talk to the people who came to to listen to his talk and he was talking about you know the great merit you get by donating to the SA donating to monks he handled he handled money himself he was the

supreme leader of the Burmese terra

Buddhist SA

and he's just willingly accepting
donations of money and and telling
people the merit that they will get by
donating money to monks.

And so I mean if even this monk the
highest ranking monk in the entire
country is saying it's it's not only
okay to offer money to monks but it's
good and you ought to do it. Then what
are what are the devout gullible
faithoriented Buddhists going to going
to believe?

A lot of Burmese lay people don't even
know it's against the rules for a monk

to touch women

cuz so many monks be like rubbing up
against girls on the buses and stuff.

So, I mean, I'm not shocked at all.

There's a I was pretty naive and a lot
of Western Buddhists are really naive to
the amount of just decadence and
degeneracy

that prevails in in the song. And it's
too bad really. I mean like I've said
before it's like 2% of Burmese monks
will go so far as not to handle money
whereas among Western monks it's like
50%.

Because in the west, I mean, first of
all, you're not just blindly following
along sheeplike with what everyone else

is doing. You're having to break away from your own culture, maybe your own family and friends in order to do this that you feel very strongly about, and you're doing it for idealistic reasons. You want to become enlightened. But in Burma or other traditional Buddhist countries, a lot of people just become monks because, you know, they're like the the seventh child of a poor subsistence farmer. Maybe they just get sent to the monastery by their parents because there's just too many mouths to feed and they want the like the prestige of having a monk in the family and he might

have no spiritual calling whatsoever.

Some of them are just lazy. They want to live an easy life. Some of them want get like a free education at the monastic universities. You know, they want upward social mobility. Some of them want money. You're not going to make much money as a subsistence farmer or a toddy tree climber and make more money as a monk. So, I mean, it's just really common in Asia. And it's too bad. I I really am sorry about it. It's sort of like I've said before the position of Theravada Buddhism in Burma is similar to the position of Roman Catholicism in Western Europe like in the 14th century where the people have unquestioning

faith in their religion. Their religion is true. All of it's true. Every word in the text is true.

And you do have some very saintly monks and nuns, very advanced saintly ones, but they are of course a small minority.

And for the most part, the clergy is just corrupt as hell, which doesn't mean that they're bad people. Most monks are actually good people. I mean they're like morally and just with regard to just inherent virtue at a somewhat higher level than the average lay person. You know it's something got them to become a monk but it's like the whole tradition

has become so corrupt with like I said even the Sa Raja of Burma the Sa Maha Nayaka seat of Burma is handling money and encouraging lay people to donate money to monks telling them how much merit they're going to make. And there are a lot of wise guy seats out there doing the same thing at their their their sermons. You know, they'll be encouraging people to donate money to monks.

I remember one time I had been staying at Alando Kathab National Park and I was leaving the the monsoon season had started so I was clearing out. usually just spent the hot seasons there. And we stopped at this monastery

where, you know, everyone wanted to meet the strange western monk who was famously living in a cave out in the woods. So, um, I'm I'm led into like the congregation hall at this village monastery and the Seattle has a plate put right in front of me on the stage and then he's telling everybody, "Donate, donate to the Western Monk so he can pay for his boat fair and everything." And I'm just I'm just like, "No, this is not cool." And the monk that was with me who knew me, he went to the seat and said, you know, he does not like this at all. And so the monk the the seat, you know, the abbott of the

monastery there comes up to me and says,
"Just be patient. We're just getting you
some money for your for your boat fair."
And then I just like got up and walked
like, "Fuck this." And I just refused to
go to his monastery ever again after
that. I was that was more than enough
for me. But that's often the way it
goes. I remember uh another time when I
left that that area in at Londono Kazapa
National Park. Um I was I made this
raft. I was going to try and try and be
clever and just ride a raft that I made
down to the Chinduin River and then down
to this town of Monua. Uh but it it just
wasn't working because this raft did not
have good hydrodnamics like a canoe. As

soon as you stop paddling, it would just stop. You know, there was there was no streamlining at all. And also, you had to be out in the middle of the river where the current was going, like near the banks of the river where the water's relatively shallow and safe. Then sometimes the current's actually going backwards. It took a while for me to realize that. So, I wind up stopping at this monastery by the side of the river and I asked where the the monastery was. I was going to just ask for permission to spend the night at their monastery. And I get to the congregation hall and there's this shady looking monk, his

teeth all red from Chew and Beetle,
sitting there on a stool with a handful
of money. And the villagers who wanted
to go into the the the monastery
congregation hall to watch TV on the
monastery's TV set had to pay to get in.
And you had this this monk chew and
beetle with a handful of money just
collecting collecting the money. I mean
it wasn't even really donations. It's
like you want to watch our TV you got to
pay. And that kind of [__] is just all
over the country. In Mon state in the
south there's a little stricter monastic
discipline. certain areas like Shan
State and like the the area of
Mandandalay is just notoriously bad.

School monasteries are like snake pits.

I stayed at a school monastery for over a year in Mahag Gandhi which had a reputation for being one of the stricter ones and it was maybe 10% of the SA didn't handle money there but still you got these signs up outside the the outhouse you know where you know Winnia a book for sale you know book on monastic discipline for sale this kind of stuff

so yeah this varapo he's just a western version of a kind of fake monk that is not a rare species in Asian Buddhism.

And like I said, in answer to the question, the uh the lay people, a lot

of lay people don't even know it's against the rules. I mean, when you've got the the leader of the the the SA in the entire country telling you that you're going to get all this merit for donating money to monks, I mean, what are they supposed to believe?

So after that herang, which has probably just destroyed the faith of everybody watching this video,

I'm going to go back to protoseud's third question.

What are the karmic results for such behavior? Straight to hell? Well,

I would guess that you're probably not going to go straight to hell unless it's really an egregious case of ripping

people off as a monk. I mean if we can
if we can go by the texts themselves
then um you know there's a number of
sutras or uh also scenes in in the books
of monastic discipline where
Mahamoghalana I think would be walking
along with some other monk and he'd
start smiling and then the other monk
would ask him why are you smiling? He
says wait till we get back to the
monastery and I'll tell you. So then
they get back to the monastery. The the
monk asks the venerable one, you know,
why were you smiling? And he would give
this this account of some ghost that he
had seen like hungry ghosts where, you

know, you've got some ghost that's on
fire just flying through the air
screaming. Or you've got some ghost that
has elephantiasis of the scrotum. and
you've got like hawks and crows all
pecking at his balls where he's, you
know, obviously in great distress, this
kind of thing. And it was always a case
of somebody in a like a position of high
trust and authority like
abusing that trust. So like a corrupt
judge that would take bribes or monks
and nuns who just were not keeping their
vows at all and were just taking
advantage of the faith and like credul
of the lay people. So going with
Orthodox Theravada

just a shameless corrupt monk who's
ripping people off under the guise of
being a holy man. I mean, there's a good
chance they'd wind up in the PA realm
being tormented with crows pecking at
their balls or some such, possibly go to
hell, you know, if it's bad enough. Um
but to some degree this is sort of a
glorification
of dharma which is understandable in a
dhhamma text but I think a lot of these
monks who are handling money I don't
think every monk who handles money or
every monk who's even asking for money
is necessarily going to wind up in some
gruesome lower realm that they're

definitely going to be getting some kind of bad karma for. especially the ones that are just knowingly deceiving people like this varo admitted to doing that it's going to come back on them somehow. You don't know exactly how karma is going to come back to somebody. How what goes around comes around. I mean at the very least it's going to be something similar to what he perpetrated on others. He's going to have some kind of deep religious faith and he's going to wind up just getting like taken advantage of and exploited by some fake holy man himself, you know? Or he's just going to just have like deep faith in a charlatan

who's just going to lead him astray
maybe lifetime after lifetime because
he's done it to so many other people.
It is true. and what few videos of his
that I have seen generally over my
woman's shoulder as she watches because
I mean she didn't believe in him from
the very beginning that I mean he knows
you know the words to say you know what
he was saying wasn't like just flatout
heresy or anything it reminds me of
there's a certain documentary
uh Kumar Kumari no I can't remember now
but it was he was this Indian guy in
living in America. I think he was born
in New Jersey or something. And he

decided to impersonate a holy man just to see what kind of results he would get. And he wound up having like a cult following. And then finally, I mean, it was like sometimes it would be really rough stuff. People would come up to him, you know, talking about how they were like incestuously abused as a child, this kind of stuff. And he's on the spot. I mean, he has to try and help them. and he's deliberately, you know, he's he's tr deliberately trying to [_] them over or anything. He's just seeing how well he can, you know, just sort of throw himself into the role of a holy man. And I'm sorry, I can't remember the name of the documentary. It was it's

it's worth watching.

H yeah, I keep wanting to say Kumara or something like that, but at the end he's having he's going to like come clean and admit to his followers that he's just like this producer of documentaries born in New Jersey. And I mean he's like in the bathroom just like holding his head. I mean he is in this state of just panic and fear at at the result. And the only person who really behaved negatively was this yoga instructor who had started teaching his methods visualizing the blue light and all this stuff that he was just making up. You know, she was like ashamed of herself and pissed off

because she actually bought into it and was like teaching his techniques. But most of the other people being kind of lukewarm westerners anyway, they just uh forgave him and you know shook his hand or whatever.

So, the karmic results for monks that uh just exploit

the the faith

of their followers in order to get rich or whatever. Yeah. I mean, it's it's

probably subtle. I mean, it's not like they're necessarily, you know, killing anybody,

but it's uh yeah, it's it's really hard to say and it's going to it would depend on the individual. Like from the

Buddhist point of view, the one thing that is worse than murder for a monk, you know, of of the four parajikas, they're they're like in in ascending order of severity, you know, you start with just having sex, which is for a monk bad enough. Then after that is stealing. Then after that is murder. Then what's even worse than that is deliberately lying to lay people about having attained superhuman mental states.

So I don't know if this varapo guy I don't remember what his real name is. I don't know if he was actually going that far. I don't think he was like claiming

to be enlightened or any such thing. So
there there's at least that

I mean that from the Tibetan Buddhist
point of view could land you in hell
because that's even worse than murder
for a monk to do.

But just uh you know having the hand out
for donations and I mean in his case he
was having the hand out a lot because he
was trying to become independently
wealthy through doing this stuff that
yeah there's going to be some kind of
negative results possibly like I already
said it may be that he's just going to
get taken advantage of and exploited and
disillusioned and just kind of have his
faith [__] over by somebody else

maybe repeatedly.

But it's really hard to say for different people. It's it's it's subjective. Karma is a subjective thing depending on your own vititions and so forth. So it's really hard for an external observer to really say what's going to happen.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Tzas is in a kind of humorous vein. He says, "If Earth is the third planet from the sun, does that mean all countries are third world countries?" No.

Trescus is a second question. I managed to get through the first week following

the fifth precept.

Okay. What do you say? Well, Tresasquez is he uh admits to to being an alcoholic and recently he uh has gone cold turkey and has gone a week without drinking anything. He went through the withdrawal symptoms and everything and so I mean all I can say is saw saw sadu good work. Congratulations and uh stick with it. Don't just start getting complacent and fall off the wagon.

And with regard to this, I assume it's it's getable, but the letters of venerable Nana Vera, who wrote Clearing the Path, I think is his famous book. He's he's this notorious eccentric, intellectual, existentialist British

monk who lived in Sri Lanka from like 1950 to 1965 and considered himself to have become a Buddhist. He went to Sri Lanka also known as Sri Lanka with the first famous Buddhist monk Osbert Moore and he eventually self-declared in 1965 but he has quite the following now he has much more of a following now than he did when he was alive especially among some like intellectual western monks and some Sri Lankan monks like intellectual ones because he's he's very intellectual he was really into existentialism before he became a monk monk and he was converted to Buddhism by reading Julius Evola, Julius Evola's uh famous book on

Buddhism

when he was like in a hospital in Italy during World War II, I think he was in the military, the like the British military in World War II.

So in his letters that are often like connected to his clearing the path and which I consider to be much more interesting, you know, it's just letters where he's talking about, you know, the monk's life and existentialism, this kind of stuff,

FH Bradley, you know, his favorite philosophers, you know, he's mentioning those in his letter sometimes that he talks about like the psychology of addiction. And I read it a long time ago

and I'm not going to try and repeat it because I'm not sure I'm not at all confident that I get it right. But what he said about addiction and what it takes to really overcome addiction is on point. And if if Tzasquez is can find the letters of venerable Nyanaviraa and and find, you know, what he was saying about addiction, it could be available from Path Press, which I recently found out also has free copies of my Antakawaga translation. I think they're free. So if you look up Path Press, um Path Press was originally founded by followers of this same Yanova. So probably they would have his

clearing the path and his letters
available in addition to my translation
of the atikawaga which is big you know
it's it's a goodly sized book but um on
on the better side it's it's got the
English and poly just completely
opposite each other unlike my new
translation where they're not facing the
corresponding verses poly and English
are not necessarily facing on opposite
sides of the book. So yeah, maybe you
could find the writings of venerable
Nano Vera uh from Path Press, which
should be easily findable online. And
what he does say about addiction, it's
like you have to be like 100% to
overcome addiction. You know, it's it's

like part of your mind likes the addiction. So that's the hard part cuz when that part of your mind that likes the addiction is allowed to take over, then of course you fall off the wagon. So there has to be like a well I'm not even going to try and repeat whatever said about it but what he said was insightful and intelligent and largely correct I think. So that's something you could look up if you're into that. But congratulations on like not drinking. My father was a hardcore alcoholic. He was like an Eastern European type alcoholic. He drank about a fifth of vodka a day. And

when he cold turkeyed, I mean, he was like having serious delirium tremens, you know, he was hallucinating and all kinds of stuff. It was it was difficult. So, good luck with that.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Cyrus Frame.

Let's see. Okay, this is from Cyrus Frame as I just said. And Cyrus Frame says, "I really liked your idea of there being only one scand or polyconda uh perception and valition or perception/volition both being just one aggregate.

It seems to me that it is a byproduct of natural selection. For example, you hear a tiger roar and you run or freeze. The

perception of the sound and the urge to move are a single unified biological event. It is language that makes a distinction but that is a map of the process not the thing itself. The map can be useful but it is important not to mistake the map for the territory. Is this what you have in mind when you say there is only one scandal? Okay. I got to look back at the bookcase to see if I have the book still.

Okay.

apparently. Oh, here it is.

I still have the book. Okay.

So, the very first philosophical essay on Buddhism I ever wrote was on the

mainly trying to explain the five
condas, especially the four mental ones.
And it was caused by reading this book.
I found this book at a used bookstore in
Mandandalay
long ago. Buddhist logic volume two. I
never I never had volume one. I think I
eventually found it and read it. And
it's by Theodore Cherbatski who was a
Russian like a a Buddhistic scholar
back before the Soviet Union, like well
over a hundred years ago. And there's
one statement in here. I don't I'm not
going to try and find it. Well,
actually, I am kind of, but I'm not
going to find it. But there's this one
statement he makes in here about how

there's like an artificial distinction between like the spatial aspect and the temporal aspect of the same thing. And that caused me to to really start thinking especially with regard to like perception and volition. I mean really the thought experiment that really got me going on this whole idea that Cyrus frame is referring to was just the idea of what is it that comes first is it perception or volition because I mean how are you going to direct your attention to something I mean you can't direct your attention to something before you perceive its existence but then how do you become

aware of it direct your I mean attention
of it without I mean it's like how can
one come before the other either you
have to have the volition to direct your
attention at something without having
perceived it yet or you have to perceive
it without having directed your
attention to it. So it seems like the
perception and the volition involved
would have to be simultaneous which
ultimately Buddhism does teach
and it's like if if they have to arise
together they can't possibly be
separated they always necessarily arise
in the same place at the same time and
can't be separate they can't exist
independently of each other which terra

Buddhism teaches then really it's just two different ways of looking at the same thing that's what that's what occurred to me.

So that was just sort of like a a kind of capernic revolution in my mind with regard to understanding

Buddhist philosophy. I think

um

you know it's just like there's just one mental because I mean you've got these two other mentalas that are waiting or feeling plus consciousness. So perception and volition it seems to me that they're the same. It's just the temporal aspect and the the spatial

aspect or the the static and the kinetic, the the noun and the verb, noun and predicate that are just artificially separated when really it's just two aspects of the same thing like light and shining or wind and blowing. You can't have one without the other. You can't have light without shining. You cannot have shining without light. It's just a noun and a verb that are referring to exactly the same thing. And so I came up with this idea back around 1996 or so that

it's like perception is like the static or noun aspect and volition is just sort of like the active kinetic aspect of the same thing the very same phenomenon.

And then I went further with feeling. I mean this wasn't in my first essay. This is sort of a later development. But feeling really is just another kind of perception. At first in this essay that I wrote, feeling was just bare sensation, unprocessed sensory data. But um I think it's in this book also with in a like a different section. It's talking about the the Dignaga school of of Buddhism which was like a a medieval Mahayana logical school of Buddhism in India. And there was uh venerable Dharma is one of the leading philosophers in that group and he pointed out that bare sensation without any kind of like

perceptual interpretation at all. I mean it's the same as it not even being there you know to to exist is to be perceived. So the whole thing of of void being um just bare unprocessed sensory data, it just kind of falls through because it's like a non non-existent thing until it gets perceived and then all you're really aware of is the perception.

And consciousness is just kind of the the substance of the perception and the valition. You know, the perception and valition are like the the form that the consciousness takes.

So ultimately it's all just one. If you include feeling like pleasure and pain as just perceptions, which is what I'm

inclined to do now,
there's no need to to separate feeling
from perception. If it's just like
feeling is just sort of like a a less
intellectual kind of perception, you
know, it's just kind of a sensory
perception, but it's all perception.
It's just sort of like an arbitrary
distinction. You got verbal perception
and nonverbal perception, that kind of
thing or like, you know, pictorial would
be kind of along with verbal.
But I don't I don't even see that
there's necessarily a qualitative
difference. You know, it's all just
symbols that are a kind of

interpretation of what supposedly is is happening,

but that's all you're really exposed to.

Gosh, I don't know if I'm just

conmystifying everybody and and boring

everybody by talking about this kind of stuff.

So, let's see.

Oh, perception of the sound and the urge

to move or single unified biological

event. Well, not necessarily. I mean,

the perception of the sound and the urge

to move are not necessarily the same,

unless maybe it's just like this reflex

where you just jump when you hear a loud

noise, but you hear like a rustling in

the bushes. That's not going to be the

the exact same as the urge to move
cuz sometimes you just stop and, you
know, just freeze, you know, and then
try and understand what it is. But we
don't need to get into that. So, let's
see. The map can be useful is important.
So where's the actual question? Oh, is
this what you have in mind when you say
there is only one cond?

Um

yeah, I mean I already explained what I
what I had in mind is that you know it's
all our world is will and perception.
It's like schopenhauer the world as will
and representation. Will is chidina
representation is sya. So it's samsara

as chedana and sya. That's how you would translate schopenhau into more Buddhistic language. And the vdana, the feeling is just another kind of perception. It's just sort of a non-verbal kind of perception. And consciousness itself is just sort of like the formless essence of it all.

So that's how I get down to one cond. I mean physical I mean the rupaconda I mean you can't prove that that even exists at all. I mean the only way you know of physical matter is through perception.

So that's perception too.

So that's that's how I did it. I mean

the the first step was from reading
Cherbatsk's Buddhist logic that I got in
Burma from a used bookstore.

Um, which kind of got me thinking about
how, you know, perception and valition
have to be simultaneous and really it's
just two ways of looking at the same
phenomenon.

One more as a noun and the other more as
a verb.

One static and one kinetic.

So, let's see here.

That's that's essentially what I had in
mind. Although it's hard to explain
stuff like this clearly, which is
probably why most of you have already

moved on to cat videos or something.

Anyways, Cyrus Frame second question is the followup on the first one. He says, "Also, in coming up with this idea, were you influenced by FH Bradley?" And no, this was I came up with this idea before I ever heard of FH Bradley that I came up with this from from Cherbatski volume two. the FH Bradley. I um I first heard about FH Bradley from reading the the letters of Nyanova that I was discussing just a few minutes before that he was reading FH Bradley's principles of logic and so it sounded good because FH Bradley was a kind of idealist and he he followed the coherence theory of truth which is a

statement is true if and only if it is compatible with all the other beliefs.

of what you consider to be true.

So yeah, it is not influenced by a phase broadly. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cole.

And Cole says,

"I've been watching your archaic

Buddhism series and something has really

struck me that I would love to hear you

elaborate on. The atakawaga suta or

atkawaga has a very zen quality to it

especially in regards to the emphasis on

abandoning the conceptual thinking mode

of the mind. Furthermore the chan or zen

approach to meditation seems similar the

jannaas I've even heard ajan sona
mention that chan also zen is actually
the Chinese word or Japanese word for
janna. Do you have any thoughts about
the parallel here between the various
form and formless Janna's described and
the Chan Zen teachings of meditative
states regarding direct experience of
the non-conceptual mind? Well, it is
true that Chan and Zen are both derived
from the Sanskrit word Janna, which
isn't so much referring to the four
Janna or the eight jas Buddhism, but it
just means meditation. So Zen is the
meditation school of Mahayana Buddhism.
That's what it means. Essentially Janna
literally means meditation. And even in

poly it probably like the four Jās were just the four levels of meditation.

Not like superhuman states. First Janna would just be elementary meditation done correctly in my opinion.

So

let's see what is the actual question here.

See do you have any thoughts about the parallel here between the various form and formless genres described in the chen or zen teachings of meditation states regarding direct experience of the non-conceptual mind. Well I mean formless genres I consider to be an anacronism. I think the formless Jonas

were added later, which is why they're just kind of tacked on to fourth Janna. They're seen as kind of annexes to fourth Janna. Originally, it was four Jonas.

Abidama made a fifth Janna, which didn't really take didn't really strike traction. And then the formless realms. Um yeah that I pretty sure that was added later as the systematizers of Indian philosophy just kept running with the ball and adding more and more stuff making stuff more and more complicated and hopefully comprehensive but they didn't really succeed at that in my opinion.

But the atikawaga of the sutini pata um

yeah it has been called like proto
majamaka that like puggya paramita and
majamaka really were a kind of reform
movement getting back to the earliest
teachings or attempting to get back to
the earliest teachings uh and get away
from this scholastic hyper complicated
gobbleygook like the abidama
philosophies.

So yeah, it's like the Buddha probably
was originally teaching that you're not
going to become enlightened by having
views. You're not going to become
enlightened by figuring anything out, by
thinking about anything because all of
that is just perception.

That if you want to know ultimate reality, you have to stop perceiving, stop trying to understand it through perception and just get straight to it. in the scene only the scene in the herd only the herd etc and not cling even to that.

So yeah, Zen Buddhism in certain ways may come closer to the original spirit of archaic Buddhism than later developments of Terravada, for example, Abidama and the the commentarial tradition and a lot of the devotional stuff. Although Zen itself is very corrupt with a lot of pure land stuff, a lot of mythology and so forth thrown into that. Also,

I was somewhat disillusioned when I first went to a Zen monastery because when you read books about Zen, it's it's all these men dressed in black standing around speaking in riddles and hitting each other with sticks. And then you go to an actual Zen monastery in say California and nobody hits anybody with sticks and nobody talks in riddles really, you know, it's just it's just rather mundane, which didn't really attract me much at all. I mean, at least there should be one person hitting people with sticks.

But no, I mean, every story I've ever read about the the Zen master Renzai,

the founder of the Renzai School of Zen in Japan, every single story I've ever read about him, he's hitting somebody with a stick or just punching them.

But I'm digressing wildly at this point.

So, do I have any thoughts about the parallel between the various form and formless Jon as well? not so much that described in the Chanzen teachings of meditative states regarding direct experience of the non-conceptual mind.

Well, it'd be better to compare Zen teachings with like the atika waga. Just leave aside any kind of schematic list of different levels. I mean that in it that's already samsara. If you got levels

different levels, it's it's samsaric.

So I mean you want to get past all the
the like division and systematization
classification and just get straight to
unadulterated reality.

And the atakawaga really was oriented
towards that. And

Zen Buddhism also is in in its own way.

It's it's a more Chinese kind of take,
more intuitive

um less like systematically mystical and
more of a kind of intuitive wisdom
approach to essentially the same thing.

So,

um, yeah, I really don't think that
various form and formless genres really

would would be the issue here seems to me.

And I'm just going to move on to Cole's next question, which is a follow-up. He says, "A follow-up question would be regarding the intermingling of Buddhism and Daoism after Bodhi Dharma introduced Buddhism into China. I have seen in many writings how the Chan patriarchs seem to view samsara and nirvana as two aspects of the great void which seems counter to what the Buddha taught. Descriptions of nibbana by the Buddha seem to imply that there isn't a reality beyond that.

Nibbana or some and samsara emerging from the void as a concept seems exactly the same as the dōwist yinyang

differentiation from wuji emptiness concept. Any thoughts on that? Yeah, I do not think that the original teachings of the Buddha were implying that there was anything beyond nibbana. That in my opinion nibbana is reality.

You can quote me on that. Nibbana or Nirvana is reality

and samsara is like a delusional take kind of fevered dream. It's perception essentially especially if you believe the perception and um are not detached from it that you're identifying with the perceptions.

So let's see here. These these long questions kind of are a little bit

difficult to to handle sometimes because I got to like search for the the question mark. And the question here is any thoughts on that.

So yeah, I mean Indian philosophy especially they're always trying to up one. It's like oneupmanship, you know, like in the upupanachads or other kinds of just Indian philosophy in general.

You've got some school saying this is the highest truth. This is ultimate reality. And then you've got some other school of philosophy saying nope you guys are just limited because we we found and we know of a reality that's even higher than that.

So I mean a standard example a really

obvious example is Brahma in Buddhism in
in like

vanta

Brahma is the personification of
ultimate reality. Brahman is essentially
what Nirvana is to the Buddhists and
Brahman is ultimate reality.

Then the Buddhists come along and say,
"Nope, that's Brahma is he's like a
mediocre level deity. There's all these
levels above Brahma and some of them are
attainable only to Buddhists
or it's like in in the Upanishads. I
mean you've got Brahman is is considered
to be the ultimate reality and then
you've got like one or two other upanes

that's referring to the fourth which is supposedly even higher than Brahman.

It's like uh I can't remember what it's called up Brahman something like that you know it's like even higher than ultimate reality somehow or like some of these charlatans who have come come along over the centuries saying you know I'm even higher than a Buddha but I do think that nibbana I mean it has like two aspects you've got the ethical aspect which is this the attainment of enlightenment and then you've got more of the metaphysical aspect of just reality. You know what is there when you are no longer deluded? You're still conscious and you're not

delusional anymore.

So

let's see what's the actual question. So it'd be kind of similar to Dao. You know there's that chapter that little part of the Dao teaching. You know from the Dao came the one from the one came the two from the two came the 10,000 things. But Dao is like you know the original source and nibbana especially from a Mahayana point of view. I mean Terravada really doesn't get that metaphysical with regard to this stuff that wisely I think the Buddha just did not want to reify the absolute. You know he talked about nibbana as little as possible. In the

atawaga I can't remember the word
nibbana actually appearing in the entire
atawaga. There's like nibbiadi and
nibbuti which are like verbs and and
like a past participle blowing out and
having blown out or being blown out.
But that's that's that's emphasizing
like the ethical like the practice
aspect of attaining the goal and not
trying to explain or describe the goal
because it's just an exercise in
futility.

But it's it's hard to have a goal
without thinking about the goal. And so
especially
um like some Mahayana philosophers
really took the ball and ran with it and

uh just really were trying to explain sometimes very sophisticated subtle philosophical language, you know, trying to kind of explain it, but ultimately it's it just doesn't work.

So let's see what is descriptions of nibbana by the Buddha seem to imply that there isn't a reality beyond that. Yeah, it's like nibbana is the essence and samsara is just perceived forms made up of that essence but we're not aware of the essence because we're just stuck at the level of form.

Okay, so let's see. Nibbana or samsara emerging from the void as a concept seems exactly the same as the dowist

yin-yang differentiation from Wuji
emptiness concept you or from the dao
came the one from the one came the two
from the two came the 10,000 things of
samsara

and I guess uh see the question is any
thoughts on that and the answer is yeah
which I I did uh I did kind of spew some
of those thoughts just now and I'm just
going to move on to Cyrus Frame's third
question. And I commend all the people
who have asked questions by not asking a
transgressive fourth one except possibly
the protoseud who just kind of had like
a rhetorical question mark towards the
beginning.

So Cyrus Frame says I'm very interested

in Vedana or feeling tone as an object of mindfulness particularly regarding the altering of one's perceptions. To me, perception would seem to sit between feeling and craving independent origination. There seems to be major implications here for arresting craving. Do you have any practical advice in regards to working with this in meditation? Well, I mean feeling like I like I said half hour ago maybe is strikes me as just another kind of perception. I think it wound up as one of the links in dependent core origination. dependent core rising from vedana you've got it goes straight from

feeling to craving and I agree I used as a monk I used to think there ought to be perception or something right in between feeling and craving especially back when I was interpreting feeling as just bare sensory data you know just bare sensation with with no perception added to it yet but if you look at like prototypes of the 12 link theory in that can be found in various places like um the saka panya suta of the diggan kaya has a kind of protoependent coising also the kalaha wiwara suta of the atakawaga of the sudinata has like this prototype of the 12 links theory and sometimes instead of waiting it just says pleasant and unpleasant. So craving comes from

pleasant and unpleasant. And according to Buddhist philosophy, you've got pleasant feeling and unpleasant feeling. So that's probably the meaning of feeling in the the 12 links of dependent core rising in the official formula. It just means like pleasure and pain or pleasantness and unpleasantness.

And that leads to craving because you've got like this preference. I want I want the pleasant and I don't want the unpleasant. And so I start like struggling with the way things are.

And that that's [__] [__] up is what that does.

So yeah, I think that is why it goes

directly from feeling to craving.

Especially if you look at some of the prototypes that can be found in the text where instead of feeling it has pleasant unpleasant or loved and unloved and that's what leads to the craving and the suffering.

So it was it's kind of a a manner of speaking that the meaning of which kind of got lost to a lot of dogmatic Buddhist philosophical types.

So yeah, if perception would seem to to sit between feeling and craving um if you consider feeling to just be like bare bare sensual data, unprocessed c sensory data, but if feeling is like pleasure and

pain, pleasantness and unpleasantness, then you can see more of an obvious connection between that and subsequent subsequent craving.

So let's see here.

There seems to be a major implications here for arresting craving. Do you have any practical advice in regards to working with this in meditation? Well, I mean the way you do it is mainly through mindfulness. Like if you're feeling pleasure and pain, I mean you you observe the pleasure and pain with equanimity. You like philosophical attachment or the detachment that comes from mindfulness. Mindful observation.

So you feel pain in your arm or let's say you're meditating. So you feel pain in your knee. Well, I mean the natural response to pain is aversion. You know, you want to change position or you're just like not liking that and being unhappy because you want the pain to stop. The pain in your knee is not the same as suffering.

Pain and suffering are not the same. The suffering comes from desiring or craving that pain to be otherwise, wanting it to stop.

So the pain in your knee is just sort of like a red light that instinctively or reflexively we want to stop. We want to push it away. But it's not exactly the

same. Pain in your knee is just like
it's it's a feeling that instinctively
we automatically have a version for.
Through mindful observance and
equanimity, you can sort of cause a
detachment between the the stimulus and
the automatic knee-jerk response
that through like intensive mindfulness.
You just observe as it as it truly is.
You just like observe that pain. You
know, what does it feel like? You do an
intensive meditation retreat where
you're all of a sudden, you know,
sitting, walking, sitting, walking, an
hour, you know, hour sitting, hour
walking, hour sitting, hour walking all

day long. You're going to have all kinds of just excruciating pains. Your knee, your ankle, like a certain tiny muscle in your back that only anatomists would know the name of. And it's it's just like this searing, jabbing pain that you're going through, maybe for a few days until your your muscle system restructures enough to accommodate you sitting like straight up and down for hours every day, which you usually don't do. So you got like the the dull throbbing pain. You've got the sharp jabbing pain. You've got like the twinging pulsing pain. All these different kinds of pain and you can just observe them like an ichthyologist

observes a dead fish

ideally.

And then when you get good at that, I mean when you're doing that as just a full-time practice as like a monk, you're you're just living in a cave.

You've just completely simplified your life to the extent where you can really be paying more attention to to these just minute things that are happening instead of having to like pay bills and deal with people demanding your attention and all that.

You just become a professional meditator even when you're not sitting cross-legged with your eyes closed. You

know, when you're reaching for something, you're aware of the intention to reach and like the the oily feeling in the joints and the feelings of your muscles and, you know, the con the pressure of your fingers against what it is and you know, just the the urge to like close your fingers to pick it up. And it's all these all this stuff is going on. And when you're aware of that, it makes it a lot easier to detach because you're not really identifying with. That's I mean, it's just stuff that's happening that you're just observing without clinging to it or identifying with it or forming any kind of commentarial interpretation of it.

It's just nature taking its course and you are just the observer.

And even if you have to make a decision, you still observe the decision being made.

And sometimes that decision may be aversion for pain or attraction to pleasure. You just observe that and do not react.

So I mean that's going with dependent core origination the the 12 links you know it's pleasant pleasure and pain lead to craving. I mean that's the main interpretation of it. seems to me that it's not really referring to um let's see feeling tone unless it's in the

sense of positive feeling tone and negative feeling tone that you're going to have attraction or aversion for and and like consequent cravings one way or the other.

Uh but um interested in waiting or feeling tone as an object of mindfulness.

Um yeah I mean whatever it is you're feeling like um the way I was doing anapana meditation mindfulness of breathing as a monk was essentially kind of waiting nanupasa where it's just the the sensation of touch at the nostrils or upper lip

but it will get you a long ways. It is a relatively advanced practice way. It's

one of my favorites of like the four sip
patanas

that really I'm skeptical of even the
existence of mindfulness of the body
because the only way you're aware of the
body is through feeling and mental
states.

So I guess I answered that question. I
hope I did. And so now for something
completely different.

Raja Kumar says, "Why is Georgiani so
pro-Israel?"

That's just right out of left field,
isn't it? So Jason Georgiani,
he's some Iranian guy who lives in the
West and some of the members of the

Discord server

are like watch his videos all the time.

I've never seen a single Jason Georg

Johnny video. I don't even know if

that's the correct pronunciation of his
name,

but apparently Georgian Johnny is

pro-Israel at present, even though he's

Iranian because apparently he's like a

secular Iranian living in the West. He's

not a fundamentalist Shiite Muslim. And

so he probably is in favor of the idea

of Israel just bombing the current

Ayatollah regime of Iran out of

existence so that it can go back to a

more secular culture like existed under

the sha. So I assume Jason Georgiani is

pro-Israel because the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

So, Georgian Johnny probably does not like the Ayatollas, you know, the fundamentalist Shiite government of Iran. And since Israel is the enemy of Iran, Israel is Georgiani's friend. And then uh on Twitter, he was talking about or ex Georgian Georgiani was talking about how Iran and Israel could become like powerful allies if the current regime can be toppled and you know, etc., etc. We don't need to get into all the political stuff, but just that would be my best guess as to why Georgiani, someone that I know very little about,

is pro-Israel because he is a secular Iranian who is against the Ayatollah regime in current Iran.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. That's what I'm going to do. And we are kind of getting down towards the bottom, so it'll be less than three hours.

I'm being a little more long-winded, a little more verbose than usual, I think.

Robert says, "What is your opinion of using a mala for spiritual practice?

Have you ever found it useful?" And a mala is like the Buddhist equivalent or the Hindu equivalent of a rosary. You know, it's like a string of beads, a garland of beads with 108 beads,

including like the big the big one. So that when you go all the way through, you hit the big one, you know you've done the full 108.

And it's very commonly used among Burmese lay people especially or Burmese monks too. Sometimes you'll just see an old monk sitting there with his mala, you know, he'll be just sitting there fingering the mala. And I tried it once. Um, and mainly it was like I was experimenting with seeing if it would be useful for combating sleepiness because if you have to keep your thumb moving then that in itself is going to keep you awake because you it'd be difficult to

sleep with your thumb still moving.

But it just it never really appealed to me too much. It's it was just too busy of a meditation technique that um as a monk I preferred more subtle kinds of meditation where your mind is doing as little as possible you know as still and silent as possible and using a mala is it's more suitable for lay people I think or sort of beginning level meditation.

It could be that there's some advanced mala meditation technique but I don't know what it would be. So, personally, I never really found it useful, although a lot of people do. So, I'm not going to badmouth Mollas here.

And I'm just going to move on to Robert's next question. I suppose I should step it up a little bit and not just digress wildly all over the place with every question. So, Robert's second question is, do you have any opinions on Tibetan Buddhism, specifically the Kagu school? Do you think it is a profound system that can lead one to ultimate reality? Well, I'm no authority on Tibetan Buddhism and I'm not exactly sure what the Kaguyu school even is.

Those

I mean that wouldn't apply to red hats or yellow hats or anything like that. I assume,

but I mean this question reminds me of
uh a cartoon I saw in a Buddhist
magazine many years ago and it had three
meditators. It was a a terra weasna
meditator, a Zen meditator, and a
Tibetan meditator. And the terravada
weasna meditator of course is like a
blonde white woman with like a shawl.
She's sitting in it's like Berry,
Massachusetts or something. And she just
has like this thought balloon and like
an empty thought. She's sitting there in
meditation with the standard empty
thought balloon. Then next to her, you
got the Zen meditator who is wearing
like the gray Zen pajamas. And he's got
a thought balloon, too. But it's it's

drawn sort of like the Zen circles like
paint like a brush brush and ink like
India ink or China ink, I guess. And so
you got like the the the calligraphic
thought balloon coming out and it also
is empty. And then finally, you've got
the Tibetan meditator who's like a guy
in a business suit with like a briefcase
sitting next to him. And he's doing
Tibetan meditation. And it's all these
it's sort of like paisley type curly ue
shaped thought balloon. You know, first
you got the little bubbles that lead up
to the big balloon. You know, it's all
like these paisley curly cue kind of
things. And then the main thought

balloon has all this, you know, arabes
all around it, but it also in the middle
is empty.

So it's just three empty thought
balloons of three meditators in three
different traditions um all doing
essentially the same kind of no
thinking.

So Tibetan Buddhism definitely you know
like Zogchen for example you know it's
it's a profound meditation technique
that leads you to like going beyond
perception not relying on perception.

That's that's mainly what Buddhism or
it's mainly what meditation is supposed
to do, at least from a Buddhist point of
view in my opinion, is you're calming

the waves of perception
until you can see through the waves of
perception, not be distracted by them
anymore. You know, it's like
consciousness is water and perception is
the waves. Mental states are the waves
on the surface of the water. And most
people, unenlightened people are just
stuck at the level of waves, the level
of form. They have no concept at all of
just water. You know, it's just I like
this wave, I don't like that wave. This
wave is better than the other wave over
there. You know, it's just all waves.
It's all mental states. And the
underlying consciousness, the substance,

the essence of it all, they have no concept of it any more than a fish has a concept that it's wet.

So what you do in meditation is you calm the waves. You try to get as close to a flat calm as you can so that there's no waves to distract you and all there is left to be aware of is just the water itself.

And then if you're really good then after the waves come back you can still just be operating at the level of water. So that's getting back to sea cadet's question of the enlightened being you know you don't have to eliminate the form of desire to be enlightened it's just that the form is just irrelevant at

that point.

So if Tibetan Buddhism leads to being wide awake and not thinking anything in its meditation and then even better yet after you start thinking and making noise again that you're still at that same kind of seeing through it all then it's fine. Although I've never really practiced Tibetan Buddhism to speak of and I can't really vouch for how far it gets you, but I would assume there have been enlightened Tibetan Buddhists.

So I think it's possible that it is a profound system that possibly can lead one to ultimate reality. Like uh the Tibetan book of the great liberation,

also known as the yoga of seeing the mind in its nakedness, is one of the most profound Buddhist texts I've ever read. Even though it's it's Tibetan, it's attributed to Padma Sambava, but whether it really was composed by Padma Sambava or not, I don't know.

And I'm just going to move on to Robert's next question.

He says, "A philosopher named Bernardo Castrop has proposed a version of idealism, analytic idealism, where there is only one mind at large, and we are basically dissociations of the mind at large. Everything is fundamentally mind, but it is not a subjective idealism like Berkley, which I have heard you critique

before. What are your opinions on this?"

Yeah, I think it would probably come closer than Barkley to the truth. is it

it's kind of like my theory my uh simile of the block of marble which I mean I'

I've beaten this one to death where you've got this block of marble and contained within that block of marble are every possible statue and some of those statues are so intricate that they become self-referential and start thinking that they are separate from everything else. they start thinking that they're real even though they're just virtually contained in that block of marble, but the entire statue is

already in there. It's really in there
at least in conditional or potential or
virtual form.

So I mean if you want to call the block
of marble like pure like infinite
formless consciousness

you know it's kind of what uh vdanta
teaches even some obscure Buddhist texts
like even terra or pre-terra Buddhist
texts and then they hint at that
sometimes

then sure you've got infinite formless
consciousness which contains within it
every possible form of consciousness.

because it's like statues inside this
uncarved block. And some of those forms
of consciousness are recursive,

self-referential,
and they just become delusional and just
kind of dissociate
from the rest of the infinite
consciousness. So yeah, what my
understanding of the case is not so
different from what Bernardo Castro
seems to think.

But that's one way of looking at it. But
any kind of model is ultimately invalid
because it's all perception in samsara.
You're never going to use ideas
to get past samsara into reality because
any kind of idea is of necessity
samsaric.

There is no highest truth that can be

told. You know the tr the name that can be named is not the eternal name.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from PSA.

And PSA says, "What do you think of the monks marching for peace to Washington?"

And yeah, I got asked this one like a month or so ago back when they were actually marching. To some degree, it's kind of a publicity stunt. I think it's harmless. It's just a way of drawing attention to monks walking for peace, which is kind of a nice idea. I don't think it ended any wars. I don't think it necessarily made the world more peaceful, but I mean it's monks making a statement of, you know, we're peaceful

monks. We're in favor of peace. Um, so this is what we're doing.

And it got like a positive response. At least people got to see monks walking around. I mean, one of the 38 blessings of the Mongalas Suta is seeing renunciance. And that was like the the the thing that uh Prince Sedata Godma saw that inspired him to renounce the world and eventually become the Buddhas. He saw a wandering holy man.

So I mean it's it's a blessing to people so long as they're receptive to it to see wandering holy men or wandering Thai monks

that it's it's actually a good thing. So

in a way they're putting themselves out there. You know, it's sort of like the rule that monks are required to accept alms food. They can't grow their own food. They can't provide their own food. They have to be fed by lay people. And one of the reasons for that is so that lay people will be exposed to monks and just sort of get an idea of what it's all about. And in the west, you don't have a lot of monks just going for alms in the morning. So just seeing these monks walking for peace to Washington is an opportunity for people to be exposed to these wandering renunciants. So I mean all in all it's harmless at worst.

I don't think that they're trying to scam anybody like Varapa was doing.

Maybe just a teensy bit, you know, just getting a few donations. Maybe some of them handle money. I don't know.

Well, yeah, it's I think it's more good than bad. I mean, it probably didn't really promote world peace all that much other than just kind of latent subtle seeds planted in the hearts of hundreds or thousands of people, which may have some vague subtle influence.

But all in all, I've got nothing bad to say about it. And I'm going to move on to PSA's next question, which is what's the most overrated

Buddhist text you've ever read? It could be scripture from Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, other traditions or modern books written by either monastics or lay people. Well, I mean, there's a number of Mahayana texts that I really consider I mean, the world would be a better place if they had never been composed like um the Oh, what is it? There's one called the Nirvana Sutra that is just like a cardinal text for like some pure land Buddhist some other Mahayana Buddhist and if you read it I mean it's obviously just a madeup fairy tale I mean and it's teaching what is essentially something the historical Buddha himself would have just denounced

or was weakish Nardisha Sutra where you've got this bodhisattva a layman named Wimalakirti who is just making fools of the Arhats disciples of the Buddha and he's going to like taverns and houses and this kind of thing. So I mean the Wimalakirti near Desha Sutra is one of the better known Mahayana Sutras.

So texts like that I mean it's they do more harm than good in my opinion it's it's slandering the Buddhist teachings in my opinion

with regard to like Theravada Buddhist texts the most overrated

well I mean some of the devotional stuff like the Ratana Sutra it's one of the 12

paras it's relatively wellknown if if
anybody has memorized by heart six
polyutas the Rata Nasutas, there's a
good chance that's that's among the six.
If they've only memorized one, it's
probably like the metasuta or the
mangalasut or the damachaka puatanasuta,
you know, those cardinal basic ones. But
the ratasuta is wellknown and it never
really spoke to me. It's just
devotionalism. you know, there's almost
no actual dharma in it even though it's
it's just a basic text because it's it's
just praising Buddha Dhama and Sa and I
mean there's nothing necessarily wrong
with praising Buddha Dama and song but
when that's all there is to it when

you're not even getting into any kind of philosophy to be praised

then you know it's just devotionism

it's just kind of worshipy and I would

consider it to be overrated um with

regard to larger text like the Jotica

stories. I mean there's there's a lot of

silliness just flatout silliness in the

Jotica stories. Um

and again it's just getting into

devotionism. The probably the best use

of Jotica stories is it's sort of like

Asup's fables for Buddhists where you

learn at least about I mean it's kind of

entertaining stories and you learn about

ancient India you know what it was like

living in ancient India that kind of thing. Um the Wizudi manga in my opinion is overrated. It's it's like um the central text in the terravada commentarial tradition and it seems to me that it's mainly a manual on self-hypnosis.

There is some interesting stuff like there's one chapter one of the early chapters is just going over the 13 dutongas the optional aesthetic practices. the very the chapter before that if I remember correctly is just the value of morality you know basic stuff like that is is interesting the 32 parts of the body there's a chapter going over the 32 parts of the body you just see

plainly enough that they really were ignorant of human anatomy and physiology in those days you know they had no concept of what the brain was for example

so

yeah Um the most overrated Terravada Buddhist text maybe the Wizudi Maga. I mean it does have some valuable information and you can learn stuff from it but uh it is kind of unfortunate to me that it is like the central text that defines terra Buddhism or the Ratana Suta you know I mean there's there's quite a few kind of famous sutas that don't really have much

substance to them and so I don't consider their cardinal status to be really wellought oriented.

But it's not like I'm I'm saying they're bad or anything. I'm just saying that they're overrated.

And so I move on to PSA's third question, which is the last question of this Q&A finally for the two of you that are still watching.

And he says, "Same question as question two, but underrated instead of overrated."

Well, with regard to Tibetan Buddhism, I mean, the the Tibetan book of the great liberation, the the yoga of knowing the mind and its nakedness, I mean, that's

well worth reading, even though probably most Buddhists have never heard of it.

with regard to

Mahayana Buddhism, like non- Tibetan

Mahayana Buddhism. I don't know what the

most underrated I mean, probably there's

some real gems in the the zillion

gajillion volumes of the the Mahayana

Tropidica, but I'm not exactly sure what

what they would be because I'm not an

authority and I've probably never heard

of them. But with regard to terra I mean

that's pretty obvious of an answer for

me would be the atikawaga of the sutin

pata just the sutin pata in general is I

mean it used to be this cardinal basic

texts that just gradually faded into
obscurity

like a number of the sutas that Ashoka
recommended

for study in his his edicts were from
the sutin pata Um the but the atakawaga

of the suchini pata I mean a lot of

Buddhists have never heard of it which

is and a lot of terraata Buddhists like

in in Burma you know they just know the

the basic ones that are wellknown you

know kind of like the mainstream texts

but something like the atagawaga it's

kind of an embarrassment to orthodox

terraada because it's not orthodox it's

like pre-orthodox

so you know it's just kind of awkward It

doesn't really fit in to the the
wellestablished
system of orthodoxy in Terravada, but in
my opinion, it is potentially at least
the most important document in existence
on this planet that we know of. Who
knows, they might dig up something in
Central Asia that's even more just
groundbreaking or something. But the
atagawaga is probably the largest
fragment of archaic pre-terravara
Buddhism still in existence
which is one reason why I translated. At
the time I really didn't have access to
a good translation. Ajan Tenisero and
Bikubodi hadn't translated it yet. At

least it wasn't published by them yet.

So I made my own translation

just because I consider it to be so

important. I mean, it's just like, like

I say, the largest extent fragment of

like primitive archaic Buddhism still in
existence.

And it's it's grotesqually underrated

just based on that assessment of mine.

And so that's it. I'm done. I answered

all the questions. I hope at least tried

to answer all the questions.

So, like I should always say at the

beginning and pretty much never do, do

you think I could answer a question of

yours, you know, mainly about dharma,

you know, philosophical stuff? Anything

that you think I can answer? You can even ask about evolutionary biology if you want, I guess.

Just uh feel free to leave them in the comments below this video. Um, no more than three questions per person per episode, please. And feel free to check out the URL links below, which includes the Amazon link to my new book. And uh what else? Like and subscribe if you haven't done so already. And uh be happy. And now I'm going to push this button which is going to make me stop talking.

Alrighty then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 189.

I am your host Punya Basho.

It's kind of amazing to me that like my first eight or so Q&A's, I was still a monk at the time.

And here I am up to 189, which is not prime, but is in fact $3 * 3 * 3 * 7$.

Uh and I got the uh

Arabica coffee going.

This is uh my first good cup of coffee today. See, I got this woman who cares about me. And so when she makes the coffee for me, she's putting stuff like collagen and like whey powder and stuff

into my coffee that makes it not taste like coffee.

But she has the best of intentions, I'm sure.

And uh we do not have an extremely long Q&A today.

Um

I guess it's like finally

I'm answering everybody's questions.

So

everyone was just satisfied, I guess.

And uh I am I mean I mean this is kind of a philosophical sort of video.

This these Q&A's, Q's and A's, these Q&A videos tend to be somewhat philosophical and I've just been struck by this philosophical

situation that happened to me today when somebody brought up the question, does a drinking straw have one hole or two holes?

And

I asked this question on the the Discord server that is associated with all this.

And someone said they learned in school that a straw has only one hole.

Which then leads to the problematic like

what is this result?

That our mouth and our butt hole are the same hole.

Which is kind of

it's kind of thrown me for a loop, if you will.

But I guess we should just get into this. I don't think this is going to be an extremely long one.

It's [clears throat] going to start to be summery outside and stuff. People are out there sniffing flowers and [__]

So

first question is from Xenothoid.

And Xenothoid says, "What are your thoughts on the philosopher Martin Heidegger? Here's an old video of him talking with a Buddhist monk if you're interested."

Well, somebody I think it was a a few

months ago, maybe a couple months ago,
asked me about Heidegger and my answer
at the time was I mean all I knew about
Heidegger at the time
was that he was
considered to be an existentialist or at
least existentialism adjacent.

He [snorts]

influenced existentialist philosophy
anyhow. And

he was a Nazi. At least he was a I mean
he wore like the swastika armband when
delivering his lectures at university in
Germany
at the time
before the end of World War II.

And that's pretty much all I knew about him.

I really never studied up on Heidegger.

Um but Xenothoid provided me with this

video of Heidegger talking with a

Buddhist monk, which is kind of

interesting because

there wasn't so much of a an exchange of

ideas as just a monk who looked like

maybe a Thai monk was interviewing

Heidegger and just asking Heidegger

questions.

And

so I mean it's

I watched the video.

So probably most of what I know about

Heidegger or at least half of it is

derived from this 15-minute long old
black and white video of a Buddhist monk
asking questions
to Martin Heidegger.

And Heidegger says a few things towards
the beginning of the video that are kind
of strange. It's like he says a question
that has never been asked before up
until the 20th century, apparently, is
what is man's relation to being?

Um

and that's just kind of strange to me. I
mean being or bhava is a term in
Buddhism where like in the 12 links of
dependent co-arising
the bhava

represents karma. You know, it's it's
just like the force of existence.

Which is, you know, the force of
samsaric
unenlightened existence.

And um

so I mean

I mean what do you mean when you say
being?

I mean I mean it is discussed like in
Buddhism or like existence and
non-existence

according to the Kalahavi Sutta of the
Atthagavagga of the Suttanipata
of the Sutta Pitaka of the Pali Tipitaka
existence and non-existence are a kind
of mental state. You know, it's just

sort of like this mental
mentally generated dualism.

So I mean

this the idea of what is man's relation
to being?

I would just emphasizing, you know, what
is it what does it mean to be? I mean it
seems like unnecessary intellectual
complication.

And it does remind me of a statement by
David Hume, which I wrote down. I
thought it was good enough statement
that I wrote it down in this little
notebook when I was a monk.

And David Hume said, "The idea of
existence is the very same with the idea

of what we conceive to be existent."

So I mean it's like the existence of a thing is just the thing itself.

So I mean anything that exists, I mean that in itself would just be all of the manifestations being.

But it may be

that let's see here. There's another statement by

uh Spinoza that's kind of along the same lines here if I can find it. Oh, here.

So Spinoza on the subject

says "The striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing else than the actual essence of the thing itself."

So I guess that kind of touches on this

subject at hand.

But it seems to me that Heidegger is just I mean he's not so much wise as he is like intellectually intelligent. And he reminds me with just his verbally dense, complicated intellectual approach to understanding the world, he reminds me of Sartre.

Or Sartre. I don't know how to pronounce French names. I don't even really try.

But and I mean I read some some of Sartre.

And it seems to me like when he's philosophizing it's like his strategy is just to come up with such convoluted, complicated,

complex statements that neither he nor anybody else can detect the flaws in his reasoning. He's just lost in the complications.

And Heidegger, I mean he seems kind of along those same lines. I mean it's just this dense intellectualizing as an attempt to understand what ultimately you can't really understand by thinking about it.

But he was a product of 20th century Western culture.

And uh mysticism really was not a big deal at that time. And from my point of view, you're only going to understand reality through mysticism, which is just

direct awareness of
anything without having to filter it
through perception.

Just direct experience of reality
without thinking about reality.

So man's relation to being, I mean it's
I mean going with Hume, it's like man's
relation to himself. I mean there there
is no relation. It's just the being of a
man is just the man.

The being of a cup of coffee is the cup
of coffee.

So I mean it might be that he's kind of
reifying some abstraction
of what does it mean to exist.

But

I don't know. It just seems

I mean I can't really relate to it very well, possibly just because I'm just introduced to this in an old grainy black and white YouTube video.

So let's just move on to this next little bit I picked up from the video.

Uh he says man is the only living creature with language giving him the he's the only living being on this planet that has a knowledge relation to being, if I remember that correctly.

And I mean obviously human beings are not the only creatures with language.

We're the only creatures maybe with a kind of arbitrary, abstract, symbolic language, but

animals have language. You know, like body language, for example. I mean when a dog yelps, that's a kind of language communication. When it's wagging its tail, that's a kind of language communication. And there's even interspecific, like interspecies understanding of other other languages or other animals like calls, for example.

Like when I lived in a cave in Burma, there were wild chickens, red jungle fowl. There was a kind of uh kind of spotted owl.

And also there were squirrels.

And

they all knew they all understood each other's warning calls. Like if one of them saw a hawk, it would make a sound. It wasn't the same sound among the three species, but the other two species would know that warning call, and they would take heed, you know. So if if the squirrel made some warning call when it saw a hawk, the owls and the chickens would both hide. And if the owl saw the hawk first, it would make a warning sound, a different warning sound than squirrels made, but still they would understand. And they would like take cover.

Bees,

honeybees have that complicated dance,

which is a kind of communication where the bee is indicating to the other bees, you know, how far away it is, how far away the source of nectar is, you know, what direction, and how much of it is there relatively speaking. But this is all just sort of programmed into the bee.

It's not like a verbal language, which I assume Heidegger's talking about. But still,

I mean,

you have to have some kind of symbolic language to have

like a knowledge relation to being.

I mean,

what Heidegger is calling knowledge I would call just a kind of complicated delusion.

So, yeah, I wasn't much impressed with that.

Although he did say something that I think is good.

Not that it was the only thing he said that I think is good, but something noteworthy, something worthy of remarking on, that he defined religion as a reaction to powers and laws which exceed human capacity.

You know, it's sort of like a perception of something greater than you.

And like an awareness of that and a a response to

something greater than yourself.

Which, I mean, that's that's a fairly good explanation of of religion. It's better than, you know, describing, you know, the worship of a god or gods as religion because, for example, Theravada Buddhism

doesn't really worship a god or gods.

It's it's more or less of an atheistic religion.

So, with regard to Heidegger,

I mean, if I studied him and kind of forgave him like the dense verbosity of his like attempts to explain reality or whatever it is he's trying to explain,

then I mean, I might have more appreciation for him. But it just seems like he's more intelligent than wise.

And just barking up the wrong tree, trying to understand reality by thinking about it. And I think it's just a a fool's errand, just an exercise in futility.

>> [sighs]

>> But

in the [clears throat]

tradition of Western civilization, it's that does seem to be the approach.

You try to understand anything by figuring it out.

And I do not think the absolute, the capital A absolute of ultimate reality

can be figured out. The best you can do with the intellect is something along the lines of Nagarjuna or maybe even Gautama Buddha like in the arc- archaic suttas, where you're using logic to just attack itself. You I mean, you you try to understand the limitations of your own like reasoning capacity, and then just kind of set it aside. Or like in Zen, you try to solve a riddle that has no solution until your mind just comes to a screeching halt. You know, it just stops, and then suddenly illumination can happen.

But using intellectuality positively, not negatively to attack

itself,

but positively as a way of like trying

to understand ultimate reality,

I do think that is just an an absolute

[clears throat]

it's an exercise in utter futility.

And like uh the famous eccentric

intellectual

more or less existentialist English monk

Nyanavira used to say existentialism, I

mean, it either leads to like nihilistic

despair or it just goes off the tracks

into mysticism because existentialism

was kind of a philosophical dead end.

Nyanavira was trying to take

existentialism and like

like reform it

somehow so that, I mean, you it could
keep going and lead you to
enlightenment. He was
he was heavily influenced by
existentialism.

Although he didn't talk about Heidegger
much, which is one reason why I don't
know that much about Heidegger. He
talked a lot more about um
oh, Kierkegaard, who was sort of a
proto-existentialist.

You know, he was sort of a forerunner to
existentialism.

Uh

>> [clears throat]

>> he had no use for Karl Jaspers cuz Karl

Jaspers went off the tracks into
mysticism.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> yeah, my thoughts about the philosopher
Martin Heidegger,

I guess I've I've given what thoughts I
have on the man.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the
Xenothoid's next question here.

So, Heide- his his second question is
also about Heidegger. He says,

"Heidegger says that in order to truly
contemplate being, one has to no longer
limit themselves to the confines of
their religion."

"What is your take on this as a

Buddhist?" Well, yeah, I mean, like you read the Atthakavagga of the Sutta Nipata, and the Buddha's warning against any kind of Dharma or Dhamma, any kind of philosophical system. Which would include Heidegger's philosophical system. I mean, you have to break free of the mental prison of this intellectual verbal structure that's limiting your capacity to understand what is just infinite.

So, yeah, I mean, I mean, there have been arguments that the Buddha was not a Buddhist. I mean, Jesus was not a Christian, but that's like a different kind of argument. The

Buddha was not a Buddhist because he
wasn't so much teaching an ism. He was
like

like about as perfect of a mystic as
exists. And he's just trying to say, you
know, don't start up any philosophies.

At least if you follow the Atthakavagga,
which is, you know, the evidence does
seem to indicate that it is one of the
oldest Buddhist texts in existence.

And it's just say don't believe
anything, have no view whatsoever.

Which is,

I mean, if it's a religion, it's just
like a completely wide open religion
with no doctrines, no
no official dogmas anyway.

So, yeah, I I can agree that, let's see,
in order I mean,
first of all, contemplating being, I
mean, that doesn't really strike me as
all that important.

Um I mean, it depends on what you're
going to call being. Like bhava, I've
already mentioned in Buddhist Buddhist
philosophy, you know, it's just the
force of existence. That's usually how I
translate bhava into from Pali into
English is force of existence.

Which is,
you know, it's it's pretty much like
Schopenhauer's will.

But what Heidegger actually means when

he says being,

I don't really know. I I haven't really studied Heidegger enough. But it could be that he's just conjuring up some reified abstraction,

you know, with the idea that the being of something

is somehow

qualitatively different from the something itself or something.

But yeah, I do agree that in order to know reality, forget contemplating

being, but just to know reality,

that I mean, you can't limit yourself within the confines of some doctrinal or dogmatic or intellectual system.

And I suppose I should just move on to

my next question.

This is also from Xenothoid.

And the Xenothoid says, "What is the significance of the number 84,000 in Buddhism? I also see the number 80,000 come up a decent amount, but not as much as 84,000."

And with regard to 84,000,

I mean, is it is it like the 84,000 families of worms?

I think that could be mentioned in Buddhism. But I think the main mention that you're going to find of the number 84,000 in the texts is not with regard to Buddhism itself, but with regard to a kind of rival philosophical system or

rival spiritual system in ancient India in the Buddha's time, which was the Ajivaka system.

Which in the Buddha's time was more popular than Buddhism was.

And the Ajivakas, if I remember correctly, believed that I mean they were strict determinists. They did not believe in anything resembling free will.

And they believed that, you know, every being goes through a sequence of 84,000 lives.

And then when you get to the end, you're you're like an Ajivaka adept in your last life.

And then you don't get reborn anymore

after that.

And so

I would assume that it's not really a Buddhist thing. It's like an ancient Indian thing.

Um not even necessarily an Ajivaka thing. It was just considered to be some kind of like an ancient Indian ancient North Indian more or less Vedic culture. 84,000 was just kind of a a stereotypical big number.

So I don't think there's any numeral logical significance just within the the scope of Buddhist philosophy. I think it was just an Indian traditional cultural kind of a thing where 84,000 was just

singled out as some

big number.

So that's what $7 * 12,000$. I mean, there could be some like numerology involved.

But I don't It's not really a Buddhist thing in and of itself. It's just like an ancient Indian cultural thing.

Uh

Let's see. Any anything else to say about the number 84,000? I mean, I won't factor it out.

But uh yeah, I mean, it's it's certainly not anything intrinsic to Buddhist philosophy. It was an ancient Indian cultural thing.

Which was either taken from the Ajivakas or the Ajivakas just took it from

ancient Indian

Vedic or pre-Vedic culture and used that
as their number of
of lives in in like a
a system of rebirth.

If I remember correctly.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Austin.

And Austin says for Q&A 200, will you do
another live stream? Well, it's it's
possible. That's That's doable, I guess.

I don't really feel comfortable with
live streams just because I don't have
so little experience with them that
something something always screws up.

You know, it's like I don't get the

sound right or something.

But

yeah, I suppose it's doable. I mean, my woman has pestered me a little bit about just doing Q&A or doing live streams for my Q&A videos instead of doing these pre-recorded ones.

Um

but

I mean, it's it saves time, I guess.

But it's just

you got more laboratory conditions, you know, it's in vitro here and it's doing a live stream is more in vivo. I mean, I might as well do a live stream cuz it's I do these all in one take with zero [clears throat] production values.

It's just the main thing is

um

in with if a pre-recorded Q&A, I mean,
if there is any kind of mess up, you
know, you can go back and edit it or
that kind of thing.

And also, I just have not enough
experience that I just can do it
without any kind of doubt as to whether
it's actually working or not.

That was That was part of the problem
with previous Q&As is

um somehow like the

like the live feed of comments is on a
different

kind of different window

from the like the recording software or whatever it is. And so I couldn't be sure that I was even even live. I remember I think it was the first Q&A version that I did live stream. I I thought that I wasn't even live and I just walked out of the room when actually it was recording.

So it was mainly an an attempt to avoid that kind of stuff that have caused me to just pre-record these. And then of course, I have like all the questions in the list there, which is nice.

>> [sighs]

>> But it's doable.

I will seriously consider it.

And I'm moving on to the next question.

This is from Scutumain.

And I'm unsure of the derivation of the name Scutumain. Could be Scandinavian.

Anyhow, Scutumain says, "The Buddha is said to have knowledge of like 96 eons of previous lives. Have you experienced anything like this?"

And no, I've I've I don't even have knowledge of one eon of previous lives, let alone 96.

Um with regard to past lives, all I have are like guesses, like intuitions.

Like there are certain periods in history, certain places that I have like an unusual fascination for.

Like

or like an affinity. Northern Northern
India, northern ancient India, maybe
medieval feudal Japan, definitely 14th
century England.

Um like maybe late Roman Republic around
the area of Naples. And there's a sort
of like this intuitive
like interest in this kind of thing that
otherwise, I mean, you can't really
explain it easily through genetics and
past experience.

Um

so I mean, I do have sort of guesses
about past lives. The texts say you
really shouldn't be worrying about this
kind of stuff anyway.

But

that's about it. It's just sort of like intuitive guesses.

But I do think it is very possible assuming that past lives even happen or did happen in the past.

For example, I think one of my most formative lives

in my stream of

volition, my karmic [clears throat]

stream, was as a kind of rascally

Catholic monk in the 14th century in England.

And he may have like recorded books like manuscripts by hand cuz the printing press hadn't been invented yet. Didn't

have a high opinion of the French
because England and France were arch
enemies then.

Didn't take his vows very seriously.

I may have met my woman in that life cuz
she has kind of an intuitive fascination
for medieval England also.

So I could have been some rascally monk
who talked dirty to her in Latin. And
she was married to some knight or
something. You know, there's definite
culture barrier between us.

So it was kind of a ill-starred romance
in that life, I think.

And I think I probably died of bubonic
plague.

Uh

and I won't give all the reasons for my belief in that, but I mean, I've like certain area of my body like the the right side of my groin.

Don't want to get TMI. Right side of the groin area.

It's got like a weird like a purple birthmark there, a little one.

And I've always been a little bit squeamish about that part of my body.

And uh

so I mean, that's where the bubo was assuming that I died of bubonic plague.

But I felt like it was a just punishment from God because I had not not been a good monk in that life.

Uh but of course, it's all it's all guesswork. Like the the feudal Japan one, I think there is a good chance that I was a member of the samurai class, but I was not a warrior. I was just like a a school teacher or something. You know, by the like the 1700s, the samurai were just kind of like the upper class. And most of the members of the samurai class, which would include women, of course, were just were not like sword fighters.

Anyways.

Also, I do think there's a possibility that I was some kind of shaman in like very prehistoric pre-Vedic India, you know, sort of like Indus Valley

civilization who took hallucinogenic drugs to induce mystical states and worshipped snakes.

I've I've got this fascination for snakes in this life.

>> [snorts]

>> So

yeah, that's about as close as it comes.

It's just like intuitive kind of hunches that I would never insist upon. I would never say that I saw in a vision that I was this this person in this culture, etc. etc. And No, I've I've never really had like a uh

a past life regression. My father on the other hand, I mean, he claimed to

remember past lives.

Like

I think it might have been the life before this one that he barely remembered, but he was some crazy Frenchman named Henri Moreau who was hanged by the neck until dead in early [clears throat] Montana territory for rustling cattle.

But the life that before that he remembers relatively clearly through hypnotic past life regressions. So, I mean, a lot of people in hypnotic trance they'll just conjure up something through their subconscious imagination. So, there's there's no proof of

anything, but my father was persuaded. He really believed that like two lives before present he was, I think, a Scottish person named Jason Haskell.

And

certain memories are very vivid. It's It turns out like not only with my father, but with past life regressions in general like under hypnosis, it's the emotionally most intense like

events that are tend to be remembered. And I would guess that the emotionally most intense events in a person's life are also the ones that are the most karmically significant.

You're creating the most karma.

And there's someone right outside the window.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

in my father's life

as uh

Jason Haskell,

he remembers like being abandoned in a hut

and he has smallpox.

And it's like everyone just abandoned

him cuz they were terrified of getting

smallpox, which is kind of

understandable. And he's just lying

there raging and vowing revenge on these

people that that abandoned him.

And then

he also remembers like crying over a
grave.

And he thinks that

um he actually killed his sweetheart for
dumping him.

And he was he has had like pockmarked
face

um ever since then. And there's still
somebody right outside the window.

Oh.

So, I mean, that would kind of
counteract certain Buddhist beliefs that
you can murder your sweetheart and then
not just go to hell for it.

And then uh

after that he was he was a sailor and he
has this one vivid memory of being on a
a

>> [clears throat]

>> a ship in a storm at sea and the the
ship is just going back and forth like
this. It had big blocks of marble, I
think,

in the hold. They were partly ballasted
and probably they were, you know,

shipping it somewhere also. And one of
those big blocks of marble had broken

loose and was sliding back and forth in
the hold of the ship. And so, they have
to secure that

in or before it beats a hole to the side
of the ship. And so, they're down there

in the dark trying to secure this big
slab of rock

and during this storm.

And one of the sailors gets pinned up
against the side of the ship and my
father is just yelling, "Bring after
light."

And that's that's like one of the the
memories that really just
you know, kind of jumped out at him
during this past life regression. Also,
he remembered how he died. He caught an
arrow underneath He was like laying
putting a saddle down on onto something
as they were breaking camp as they were
like

like North India or something. And

>> [clears throat]

>> somebody shot him with an arrow and it went under his shoulder blade and came out [clears throat] like his his neck here. And the past life regression always ends He He did it like two or three times with the same results where he's like coughing and choking and just like jolting awake out of the hypnotic trance when he gets to that point.

So,

I never I never did have like a hypnotic past life regression or like a meditative past life regression. In my case it's just like intuitive hunches. Just assuming that past lives really do

happen or did happen cuz they're in the past.

But I mean, there's no way of proving it. At least I haven't been able to prove it one way or the other.

Some of the best empirical evidence would be in the books of Dr. Ian Stevenson

who was actually trying to more or less scientifically state the case with real evidence for rebirth.

Which he mainly did through small children who would recall past lives and then he could um question them,

you know, see what kind of information they have with regard to the life of this other person that they couldn't possibly have and then go and like try and verify that. He wrote [clears throat] several books along those lines, which are worth looking into if you're interested in the subject.

But I should just move on to Scooter Man's next question.

And uh I've already kind of touched on this one.

Uh it's kind of a follow-up on the uh past life regression thing. He said, "How would you know if you did and it wasn't just a fantasy or daydream?"

Well, I mean, if you're an enlightened being, you know, if you're Gautama Buddha and you're remembering past lives, that's that's one thing. I'm not going to second-guess the mental states of a sammāsambuddha. But with regard to someone who is in a meditative state and has a past life regression, which does happen especially at places like Pa Auk Sayadaw in southern Burma, or you're hypnotized and you have a past life regression or for whatever reason you have a past life regression, there's no guarantee at all. I mean, there's some ways that you can verify it. Like I've told this story before. My father

was hypnotist.

And there was this

Well, he had some friends who had a big farm near our house just down the road away.

And they would take in troubled teenagers. Just, you know, get them out of town, get them away from, you know, bad environment, take them out onto this farm with cows and sunshine and fresh air and just kind of let them detox, you know, kind of settle down, this kind of thing.

So, they're good good people trying to help people.

But anyways, they had this 14-year-old girl there

who

at first she was doing okay and then all of a sudden she just stopped caring about her appearance, stopped caring about school, just would not talk to anybody. You know, she just started going downhill.

So, they asked my father would he be willing to hypnotize her to try to help her with whatever is troubling her. So, my father was willing, but he said she's going to have to bring a friend of hers that she trusts as a kind of chaperone just like, you know, hypnotist etiquette. You know, you don't want to be hypnotizing a teenage girl with no no

witnesses or anything.

So,

um the girl and a friend of hers came to
my father's house

and he

he started hypnotizing the girl. And

then while he's got this the the

14-year-old girl in like a hypnotic

trance, he notices that the friend who's

supposed to be chaperoning is like

waving her arms around like this.

And so,

he he kind of asks the the other girl,

you know, "What are you doing?"

And the girl says, "I'm swimming."

And he says,

"Why are you swimming?"

And she said, "My ship has been
torpedoed by the Japanese."

And then he says, "Where are you?" And
she says, "The South Pacific."

And it turned out her name was She said
that her name was Mark

uh what is it?

Uh I can't remember the last name. It
was Mark something.

And

my father was fascinated by this. You
know, he wanted to follow up. He wanted
to

he's not trying to help this girl. He's
trying to help the other girl. So, he
kind of sets that aside and then tells

the the girl, you know, the first girl
that he was trying to hypnotize, you
know, it's like sometimes if you have a
problem, it's it's best to, you know,
tell somebody about it. Tell somebody
that you trust.

You know, he just kind of planted that
that uh suggestion into her mind that it
might be best to talk about this with
somebody.

And then

the uh they came out of the trance,
brought them both out, and then they
just went for a walk out in the back
field. And she the the the girl confided
with him that she was pregnant and she
was with two boys at the same that, you

know, within the same short period of time. She didn't even know which one was the father.

Um

but my father wanted to get back to that girl's Mark uh It's It's the last name of a famous trumpet player, I think.

Anyways, she [clears throat] hypnotizes that second girl again later on a different occasion and she would had no interest at all in Mark what's-his-name, you know, being a an American sailor who drowned in the South Pacific when the ship was torpedoed. Instead, there was a a calf that a cow had given birth to a calf on the farm and they couldn't find

the calf.

So, she was just like

single-mindedly intent on locating that

calf while she was in the hypnotic

trance. And she found the calf. The calf

somehow was in a clump of blackberry

bushes outside the fence. Somehow

this calf had gotten on to the other

side of the fence and was like hiding in

like a briar patch. So, she located the

calf, but this Mark

I It bugs me that I can't remember the

name.

My father was never really able to

follow up on that.

But, that's one way of doing it is if

you can get enough information on a past

life

that

you might be able to do some verifying.

You know, it could just be I mean it

There's a good chance I mean if you're

some peasant in like the New Kingdom of

Egypt in the Bronze Age or something,

then

there's a good chance you're not going

to have any kind of like records or

anything, but at least you might be able

to get some of the details correct. You

know, what's the name of the pharaoh,

this kind of stuff. And at least I mean

it wouldn't be proof, but it

it would it could filter out a lot of

fake stuff. You know, somebody's having
a

past life regression and they might be
some famous person or they're saying
it's it's 2275

BC, this kind of stuff, and they
wouldn't possibly know that.

But, I mean you can sort of do a little
bit of

you know, investigating if you can get
enough information on the subject just
to see if your memory is at least like
historically correct within the the
details of the period, that kind of
thing.

But, as a general you can't really be
sure. You can't be sure about anything.

You can't be sure that you're even seeing the stuff in front of you right now.

For real.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Maximin.

Because we don't have a whole lot of questions, I can just digress all over the freaking place.

And Maximin says, "Wouldn't following vinaya as a dutanga monk in the West be closer to actual renunciation given that our culture is not at all in harmony with the instructions of the Buddha?" Um yeah. I mean for those of you who are kind of rookies in the Buddhism thing, a

dutanga monk is a monk who takes upon himself one or more of the 13 optional ascetic practices allowable to monks.

And the second chapter of the Visuddhimagga is all about dutangas.

It's really one of the most interesting parts of the Visuddhimagga from my point of view.

So, like wearing only rag robes or eating only alms food, never accepting an invitation to a house, or this living and sleeping under the open sky, or living in a cemetery, you know, all of these things or or never never lying down, sleeping in a sitting position, things like that. They're all optional ascetic practices called dutanga. In

Burmese it's called dutin. I think in Thailand it's called tudong.

And the being following vinaya as a dutanga monk in the West, it would be closer to actual Yeah, I mean it would be a radical renunciation. Um and it might even work. I mean if you can really take the plunge, you've got the courage to just really take the plunge, kind of like that old lady Peace Pilgrim

who she just took off walking one day, no money, just took off walking across the country, and

God will provide. You know, it's like if you protect Dharma, Dharma protects you.

So,

you just get what you need.

Consider the lilies of the field and all that.

The sparrows.

And you just

like put yourself wholeheartedly into the into at into the you know, at the mercy of the universe, and it reciprocates in this more or less miraculous way.

It does take just fearlessness though.

But, I mean it's possible. I mean if you're going to be a dutanga monk who doesn't stay under a roof, you're going to have to stay in the southern states probably, um especially in the

wintertime.

And you might get really skinny. I mean depending

I mean if you're going to be just living on alms food,

you know, just take your bowl and walk around and hope somebody will put money

or put not money, but food. You're not even allowed to accept money. So, um

I've I've been told that one way that it works is just stand outside of a grocery store

as people are are going in and out.

Then that is a a way where monks in the West can get food in their bowl.

Or you could do as

um one monk I knew did briefly, where he would just go to a soup kitchen and just get his food there, and they would put the food into his bowl. So, that's possible, I suppose.

Um but yeah, it's it would be closer to actual renunciation. It wouldn't be the kind of renunciation that the Buddha had in mind

because when the Buddha devised vinaya and just the the monk's life, you know, it's largely based on the life you know, the lifestyle of other ascetics in ancient North India. It was just sort of a cultural thing. So, you know, there was there was like cultural support for that.

And so, it wouldn't even be as radical of a renunciation in ancient India as it would be in the West, I think.

It depend on the circumstances, I suppose.

But, I guess I answered that question.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Faustian.

And Faustian

has kind of a strange question here, or it's not really strange. It's sort of a common question actually that I've addressed more than once. In fact, um my friend Brian and I have done entire videos, at least one or two on this subject.

And uh speaking of Brian,
um we did some videos recently, and I
really can't put them up on YouTube just
because Brian has been kicked off of
YouTube. And so, any video I do with him
can be removed
just because YouTube decides to remove
it.

Which might be messing with the
algorithm or something. I don't know. I
mean I don't get literally punished for
it. You know, I don't get strikes
against me or anything.

But, they just somebody just does not
like Brian. Completely harmless guy,
but they just do not like him, and so
I really And if you want to see my

videos with Brian, you're you're best
off going to BitChute or Rumble,
especially BitChute because I've been on
BitChute and uploading stuff onto
BitChute longer than I've been uploading
stuff onto any other platform really.

So,

Faustian says,

"Can you please riff a little more on
the vegan question for us panyo basa? I
fully appreciate a beggar cannot be
picky with the alms they receive, but
all the sophistry about it being okay
for a householder to eat meat, but not
kill and prepare meat seems
hypocritical. I anticipate you'll say

it's all about the state of mind lol.

When I'm looking back at history's great minds, there is a very He's got very in capital letters. Very strong linkage to vegetarianism.

And I don't think it's too much to say that full veganism only really became viable within the past century when lots of things were fortified and protein is available in various forms. The moral vegetarians of the past and moral vegans of today are motivated in a similar way. You talked in another video about the appeal the appeal cats and dogs have for you, but there's so much misery that goes to creating the food they typically eat. I do not preference a cat over a

pig's life, for example. By the way, I'm not a woke lefty, and the association with the blue hair crew is distressing to vegans such as myself."

Well, first of all, I point out He's He's talking about sophistry about eating meat being okay for a householder. Well, I mean the Buddha allowed it. Jesus of Nazareth allowed it. I mean that's like two of the spiritual giants of world culture both ate meat and did not forbid the eating of meat, not only for the like their more advanced disciples, but for anybody.

At least that's what the the evidence

indicates.

So, I mean Faustian here is seems to be

implying, insinuating

that the Buddha was indulging in

sophistry

by not forbidding the eating of meat.

And this is a kind of Western arrogance,

where is or is is you can call it

arrogance, or you can just call it being

culture bound,

where people in the West nowadays just

assume ethics is Western utilitarian

ethics, which

pretty much arose with Jeremy Bentham in

the 19th century in England.

Utilitarian ethics. That's what the

ethical system is, just ethics in

Western civilization, modern and
presumably post-modern Western
civilization, utilitarian ethics. But,
that's the only valid kind of ethics
that can exist. Buddhist ethics,
Christian ethics, no.

Utilitarian

Western modern ethics is the only true
ethics.

That apparently is like an unspoken
assumption by Faustian here.

But

that's not the only kind of ethics. I
mean, the Buddha wasn't going with those
kind of ethics.

The Buddha was going with the subjective

ethics. What you do is wholesome or unwholesome, not due to some indirect ramifications out there somewhere.

I mean, if you want to go even farther with this this utilitarian veganism stuff, you can say it's immoral to even to eat vegan vegetarian food if the farmers are wearing leather shoes.

Animals are dying so those farmers can wear those leather shoes to raise the soybeans.

Or you know, like pesticides, this kind of stuff.

But

Buddhist ethics are subjective.

Period. I mean

the like the the ramifications

out there in a supposed external world
are irrelevant.

If you can do something with no
unwholesome mental states, you have done
nothing unwholesome.

It just turns out that certain acts,
like for example,
kicking puppies.

I mean, it's extremely difficult to do
that without some kind of negative
mental states. You know, telling lies,
stealing,
literally killing.

That

generally it's just a matter of human
[clears throat] nature.

That you can't do something like that without having like negative mental states, which creates bad karma.

But

apparently

eating meat is not one of those things.

I mean, killing animals, yeah. And then you can say, "Well, you're promoting the killing of animals." But that is irrelevant to Buddhist ethics. That is a Western modern invention of utilitarian ethics.

I mean, there're probably like

precursors of that

before Jeremy Bentham came along.

But that's just not how Buddhist ethics works. And you can just adopt this

extroverted

this the the the phenomenal world is
real kind of attitude, and whatever we
do, even if it's just accidental,
it inadvertently causes somebody harm,
then it's bad. Well, I mean, you can
adopt that point of view.

But I mean, you just it's like shackles.

I mean,

I mean, if you're not even going to eat
vegetarian or vegan food if the farmers
were wearing leather shoes,

or if they were using insecticides,

I mean,

I mean, you might as well just like not
exist.

To I mean, to exist is to cause
suffering

somehow, even if you're not trying to.

So I mean, you can say you just want to
minimize the amount of suffering that
you cause even indirectly through remote
ramifications of your behavior, and
that's that's your call.

But to impose that upon everybody else
and say that if they don't, it's
sophistry, that's just arrogance and
just narrow-mindedness.

And partly it's just Western cultural
conditioning.

You just don't know any better.

But I mean, you get to
and go going back to two of the most

famous spiritual sages
of Western civilization.

Well, Jesus definitely. The Buddha, I
mean, he's kind of a modern
modern import into Western civilization,
but he was a spiritual giant. And
according to the textual evidence, both
of them ate meat.

The Buddha died after eating some bad
pork.

Although the Mahayana Buddhists didn't
want to believe that the Buddha ate
meat, and so they turned it into a
mushroom.

The original Pali of what he ate is
Sukaramaddava.

Sukara means pig, and maddava means like tenderized or tender.

So the Mahayana Buddhists

who really did not want the Buddha to

have eaten meat, even though it's

contained and in like the Mahayana

Buddhist like Vinaya,

like the Patimokkha rules, the

Patimokkha says a monk is not allowed to

eat meat

um unless he is sick, for example.

Or he's not allowed to ask for meat

unless he is sick. That's that's that's

the correct That's the correct rule.

Or unless someone has given him

permission to ask in advance.

So I mean, it it's allowable

even in the Mahayana texts themselves
for a monk to eat meat.

But it's like they wanted to change
Buddhism over in this other direction,
which had good intentions, I suppose.

But the evidence does indicate that the
Buddha ate meat. Jesus ate meat.

So we get down to this part where he
says, "When I'm looking back at
history's great minds, there is a very
strong linkage to vegetarianism." Well,
how do you What great minds?

Two of the greatest minds ate meat.

Apparently. [clears throat]

So I mean, Pythagoras maybe? I mean, he
was he was more anti-beans

than

anti-anything else, I think. I mean,
what other great minds?

I mean,
we're talking spiritual minds, I
suppose.

I mean, of course the Hindus, Neem
Karoli Baba up there, he was vegetarian.
He would still have dairy products and
so forth.

Let's see.

But I'm trying to trying to think of
history's great minds that have this
strong linkage to vegetarianism. And I
think

that uh Faustian might be a little
biased in his searching of great minds.

Uh great minds who were vegetarians.

I mean, I'm sure there I mean, Mahayana monks,

Hindus.

But uh I'm

>> [clears throat]

>> Catholics? I mean, Catholic saints?

Catholic Were Were there any notable

Catholic saints? Saint John of the

Cross? Were they Were they vegetarians?

In In their case, a lot of it was

like a kind of fasting. It was like a

spiritual penance more than a concern

for animals cuz of course the Bible says

people have the right to kill animals,

and the Old Testament's full of God

commanding the killing of animals and killing of humans occasionally.

So yeah, I mean, I just do not see history's great minds having a very strong linkage to vegetarianism.

I mean,

maybe I'm just not thinking of any.

Let's see.

So the moral vegetarians of the past and moral vegans of today are motivated in a similar way.

Not I mean, some of them maybe, but like I just said, a lot of vegetarianism in the past, it wasn't out of concern for the like the suffering of an another animal.

I mean, in some cases, like maybe

Pythagoras, it was that way. But like Christian ascetics and so forth, it was just a kind of penance.

You know, you were you were doing penance and being austere by refraining from good food.

So

yeah, I mean, there there was uh a a famous Sayadaw in Burma. I think it was called Piz Sayadaw, which just means bean eat Sayadaw. And that was all he would eat is beans.

And

people like materialistic people would say, "You know, that's not possible.

He'd be getting vitamin deficiencies or

whatever." But apparently he managed it.
I mean, I was thinking at the time,
"Well, maybe there's little onions or
something mixed in with it sometimes,
which would give him at least vitamin
C."

But I mean,
some people don't even eat at all.
I mean, I'm I'm willing to accept the
possibility like Therese Neumann,
some Catholic nun
who
the only food she would eat was like the
the ritual communion wafer.
And those aren't very they're not very
[clears throat] substantial.
>> [sighs and clears throat]

>> So anyways,

the this whole issue is Faustian just imposing Western utilitarian ethics on everybody.

When it's not the only kind of ethics, and it's not necessarily the most correct kind of ethics, at least with regard to understanding right and wrong.

And for him to imply like the Buddha himself was was a sophist because he wasn't adopting modern utilitarian ethics. Well, I mean, that's just silly.

But I mean, if you've got yourself into a state where you cannot possibly eat

meat without feeling guilt and remorse
and other unwholesome mental states,
then don't eat meat.

But that doesn't mean that somebody else
can't eat meat without the unwholesome
mental states.

I mean some some Let me vegans I would
assume

that they've got unwholesome mental
states with regard to eating their vegan
stuff. You even if it's just like
pride or or like self-satisfaction
or just getting into the subtleties of
the flavors, you know, the spices and
all this. I mean even that is wallowing
in sensuality which is unskillful mental
states.

Then of course

the farmer might have been wearing

leather shoes

and maybe used insecticides

or other pesticides. Maybe they're even

killing mice.

But to assume that Western utilitarian

ethics are the only valid ethics in

which you are just like leaving yourself

like your own subjective mental states

behind and just going out in search of

these indirect ramifications of

everything you do.

It just is is

I mean it's just like a samsaric

trap from a Buddhist point of view.

Anyways, I suppose I should just move on to the next question.

This is from Dr. Scary and I should probably have like a little bell or something my ring. There's there's like a news radio show I listen to when I'm driving to work sometimes.

When uh

a new caller get the guy rings the bell for the new caller. So, a new asker, a new questioner. Maybe I should get a little bell and ring it.

Cuz I I don't think I've been asked anything by Dr. Scary. Although some people do change their name.

So there is that.

>> [sighs]

>> So Dr. Scary says

at 2 hours, 2 minutes, and 6 seconds. I think uh they're referring to the previous Q&A.

You say "Nibbana is reality. Samsara is a delusional take.

Is there textual report support for this view?

>> [snorts]

>> To me this framing feels closer to a Hindu perspective.

I tend to agree with Ajahn Thanissaro who emphasizes that the Buddha wasn't trying to reach an ultimate reality but rather to understand and bring about the end of suffering both formally and now.

It is only stress that I describe and
the cessation of stress using Ajahn
Thanissaro's idiosyncratic
uh renderings
rendering here of the the poly word
dukkha.

That's from the Anuradha Sutta. Yeah,
it's it's in other Suttas too. I think
it's in the Alagaddupama Sutta also and
etc. etc.

Um I mean there's some stuff I can
unpack here.

First of all, I mean
see

Dr. Scary quotes me as saying quote
Nibbana is reality. Samsara is a
delusional take unquote and then asked

is there textual support for this view?

Well, I mean some of the main textual support is if you're unenlightened, you still have delusion.

So, the world of an unenlightened person is delusional.

But when you become enlightened, you have zero moha.

You have no more delusion, no more greed, hate, or delusion.

Or if you prefer no more attraction, aversion, or semi-conscious stupidity.

So, once you become enlightened since you have no more delusion then you're experiencing reality.

Unless you can somehow experience

what isn't reality with zero delusion.

But the implication would seem to be you eliminate delusion while at the same time remaining conscious, then you are aware of reality.

And getting to what Ajahn Thanissaro says a little later

I mean

there's two approaches to Dhamma or at least we can say there are two approaches to Dhamma. One is the more heart-based, maybe more feminine approach of ending suffering.

Or you can have the more head-oriented, more masculine maybe approach of ending delusion.

I mean they both they're both the same

enlightenment. They both lead to the same place. If you're striving for the end of dukkha or you're striving for the end of moha

they both land in the same place which is fine.

But I mean it's it's like two different ways. I mean if you're more heart-oriented, you want to end suffering. Or you're more head-oriented, you want to end delusion.

They're the same.

And I mean my father was kind of a macho guy. You know, he was a bar brawler in his youth. He had literally killed people in the army.

And enemies not like his own side.

And he he just had like this cavalier attitude towards pain. You know, a little pain never hurt anybody.

You know, you just

it's like a fear of suffering is is

I mean

to a certain kind of masculine point of view, it's like cowardice.

You know, it's it's like the ancient the ancient mindset, you know, the classical like Greco-Roman mindset and just like the the northern Germanic and Celtic barbarians and so forth. It's like

I mean you're not afraid of suffering.

I mean you don't like it necessarily,

but it's not something that you should just like stop at all costs. But I mean to be deluded, to be delusional, that's worse.

So I mean it's it's just like two different approaches like more heart-oriented and more head-oriented. But I mean it's the same enlightenment. But either way you end delusion. You're off the wheel. You're no longer stuck in samsara. I mean it's just it's very simple logic.

So, let's see. Any other textual support? You just seeing reality as it is is what happens when you become enlightened.

I mean it says that in the texts.

You see things as they are.

Or just see reality as it is because in my opinion there is no more plurality in ultimate reality.

So, let's see here.

Yeah.

Yeah, I do not consider Ajahn Thanissaro to be an infallible um oracle. I'm sure he doesn't consider me to be one either and so we're we're we're even even

Steven on that one.

So

>> [sighs]

>> yeah, I think

I think I answered that one fairly straightforwardly.

Sometimes I get a little insecure if I answer too quickly and easily.

But I think I was fairly straightforward. I mean you become enlightened, no more delusion. That's just part of enlightenment. In fact, you could call that a definition of enlightenment.

So, I'm just going to move on to Dr. Scary's next question.

And Dr. Scary says I've recently discovered the poly word amata which can be translated as immortality and more commonly as the deathless which the Buddha frequently calls Nibbana.

With that in mind, can we say that in his quest the Buddha was seeking immortality?

No, I don't think so.

Because I mean the Buddha was he lived within the context of the Sramana traditions of northern India and from that point of view immortality would just be like eternal damnation.

That to exist is to suffer.

First noble truth. To exist is to suffer or to exist is to experience unease. Or going with Ajahn Thanissaro, to exist is to experience stress. To exist is stressful.

So, I mean if you're going to be immortal, then that's eternal stress.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I don't think the Buddha was seeking
immortality. He was seeking a way off
the wheel

and not really I mean before you you get
there you you don't really don't know
what it's going to be like.

But I don't think he was seeking
immortality. I think he was seeking just
a way out of this world or a way out of
samsara

regardless of what it was going to be
like on the other side so to speak.

So I mean the deathless it's it's not
immortality in that you live forever.

Now when the Buddha I mean when Nibbana

is called the deathless

it's it's sort of like Dhamma being
called akaliko or timeless.

I mean it doesn't mean that it lasts
forever so much. It's just beyond time.
It's just you know, there no more time.
There is time no more.

So

yeah. Yeah, I really don't think the
Buddha was seeking immortality because
from

the context of north ancient Indian
culture that would have been tantamount
to eternal damnation. It's like a
Buddhist is trying to get out of
immortality.

To get out of this, you know,

life after life after life, birth and death, birth and death, birth and death.

I mean

you still stay alive after death in a way.

But it wasn't like he was trying not to die anymore. It was just getting out of the whole samsaric system.

And just let the chips fall where they may.

And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Fred.

And Fred says,

"Considering there are so many failed monks, is it an endeavor worth embarking on?"

Being a monk seems to create a lot of baggage in itself. Chores don't stop and commitment to chanting and rules, etc., continue."

Well, I mean, it is true that the overwhelming majority of monks do not become enlightened unless, you know, some Mahayana teaching is correct and we're all already enlightened and just don't notice it, that kind of thing. But [clears throat] set that aside and let's go with the idea that is more Theravadan, unfortunately, in a sense, that almost all monks fail to become enlightened.

So, Fred is asking, you know, is it an endeavor worth embarking on considering that? Well, it's like an Olympic gold medal.

The overwhelming majority of people who try to get an Olympic gold medal in, say, the 100-m dash fail. So, does that mean that trying to get win an Olympic gold medal is like unworthy of embarking on it? That nobody should even try?

Or ascending Mount Everest.

You know, climbing to the top of Mount Everest. Most people who try it don't succeed, I would guess.

But still some people think it's worth

it, no matter how difficult it is. I

mean, it's

you know, the harder it is to attain,

the more it's worth, the more glory

there is.

Let's see. So, Fred says, "Like being a

monk seems to create a lot of baggage in

itself." Not nearly as much baggage as

you know, being on psych meds and having

three divorces and, you know, having a a

mortgage,

some job that you hate,

feuding with the neighbors,

etc., etc.

So, being a monk seems to create I mean,

it it creates less baggage. I mean,

unless you're just like a horrible monk,

you're just completely unscrupulous
or just completely incompetent.

But just living a simple life,
you know, at a monastery or out in a
cave or a hut or something, you're not
going to I mean, how much baggage can
you can you create compared with Big Lou
who's on meds and he's been married and
divorced and married again and, you
know, selling insurance,
that kind of stuff.

And the whole idea that just because
most most people who try it fail,
I mean, that doesn't necessarily mean
that nobody should try.

I mean, even if you don't succeed in

becoming fully enlightened, I used to tell myself this a lot as a monk. I mean, even if you don't become fully enlightened, at least you're making progress.

At least you're going to be suffering less.

I mean, even that's pretty that's pretty much guaranteed if you're like a conscientious monk, you're really trying to like practice correctly.

I mean, you're pretty much guaranteed of less suffering and delusion even if you don't bring bring it to a complete stop. So, I mean, would you say it's it's unworthy to even do it even though

you're guaranteed of less suffering and delusion just because you're not going to, you know, reach zero?

I mean, that's that's not very reasonable,

seems to me. It's like, why should I try to earn money if I'm not going to earn all of it?

You know, why should I why should I work for a living if I'm not going to become the richest man in the world?

It's It's that kind of reasoning, it seems to me.

But even if you don't become enlightened, and most monks and nuns do not become enlightened,

just going with empirical evidence, I
guess,

still I mean, you're

you're going to have less

suffering. You're going to have less

greed, hate, and delusion. You're going
to have less suffering.

And that's

well worth it, seems to me.

I certainly don't regret having been a
monk.

Okay, I think I answered that question.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next one. This is from The Saboteur.

And The Saboteur says,

"I know you partially touched on this in
number 188,

but what kind of karma do animals have?

I assume it depends on the animal's evolution. A chimpanzee would be more aware of a sense of right and wrong than an ant. But think of all those chickens, pigs, cows, etc., what have they done to deserve such an ending?"

Well,

all lives end in tragedy.

So, I mean,

if the chickens, pigs, and cows were just living out in the wilderness in a state of nature, then chances are they're still going to die a violent death.

And the fact that they're domesticated,

I mean, from the the species' point of view, from the Darwinian point of view, it's just been a blessing to them even though their their individual lives, especially the pigs. The chickens, they're getting more humane. Like most eggs that you buy now, it's like cage-free, free-range kind of stuff, although what exactly that means

But pigs,

the way pigs are raised is pretty awful, I have to admit. You know, it's they're like in this

in this like little cage thing.

Um but I mean, like I said, it's like all lives end in tragedy and if the uh

I mean, they're probably going to be

killed by a something.

And I mean, everything dies.

But from like like the Darwinian point of view, it's like there's hundreds of [clears throat] There's way more chickens, pigs, and cows now than there were before they were domesticated. So, that from the point of view of the species, the species is is prospering even though most of them are being cut off in their prime to be turned into tendies, for example.

Uh

Which is not really a justification of killing,

but it's just kind of an observation of
like objective empirical reality.

So, what kind of karma do animals have?

Well, it's not really an intellectual
kind of karma,

but still I mean, if you have
craving and delusion,
you're going to make karma.

So,

I mean, animals to the extent that they
have craving and delusion, they are
creating karma. And it's going to be
simple animalistic kind of karma, but
still.

So, let's see here.

The Saboteur says, uh "Chimpanzee would
be more aware of a sense of right and

wrong than an ant." But I mean, karma is really has little to do with a sense of right and wrong.

I mean, karma has to do with craving and delusion.

So, I mean, you can be just complete sociopath and you're still subject to karma even though you have no sense of right or wrong.

With regard to an ant,

I mean, I can I can be skeptical of the fact or skeptical of the idea that an ant is creating karma because I'm skeptical of the idea that an ant has craving or delusion.

Insects

and like arthropods in general, most invertebrates even, they have a different kind of nervous system than we do.

Like an ant or a clam or a crab or whatever. But they do not have literally they do not have a central nervous system.

It's It's like a dual spinal cord thingy, no spine cuz they're invertebrates, but it's it's not really centralized the way it is with us in the brain.

And like

I've told this story before.

Um back before I was a monk, I was a fisheries observer,

foreign fisheries observer. I'd work on Japanese longline vessels sometimes. And I was the biologist and any kind of crabs that came aboard, especially if they were like a commercial species of crab, like tanner crabs, which are called snow crabs at the at the restaurant, uh king crabs, that kind of thing, um I'd have [clears throat] to I'd have to do like viability on them. See if they're being killed by this fishing process because the foreign fisheries aren't allowed to catch these commercially valuable species like crabs and halibut and salmon, that kind of

stuff. That's for the American fisherman.

So, one of my jobs or my many duties was to determine, you know, if they're going to survive being accidentally caught and thrown back overboard. And so, I'd have this holding tank.

And, you know, you'd put the put There's like seawater in there and you'd put the crabs in there until you're not busy with something else and then you can like

take a look at them, see if they're still alive, see how injured or damaged they are, you know, their their likelihood of returning. Also, you know, the species, the the the sex, that kind

of thing, the weight,
whatever.

And so, anyways, some of these crabs,
like a a tanner crab, a a a snow crab,
I mean, they they'd have like seven of
their legs ripped off going through the
machinery as they're being pulled on
board.

It's called the crucifier
that they'd come through.

And, you know, they'd have like one leg
left on one side and two legs left on
the other side. And you throw them into
the holding tank cuz I don't have time
to to deal with them yet.

And if there's a piece of squid bait or

something in there, they used to immediately stop and start eating the squid bait.

It's like they don't care all that much that they just had most of their legs ripped off. It's like they're they're not experiencing pain the way a like a vertebrate would experience pain. Like a mouse, I mean, you rip three of its legs off and you put a little peanut in front of it, it's not going to give a [__] about that peanut. It's just going to go into convulsions and die.

So, an ant is just kind of like a, you know, it's closely related to crabs, you know, it's an arthropod.

And I I do have

a certain skepticism with regard to whether they have a perceiving mind, whether they have like a visual image or any kind of mental image that they could just be like little little terminators.

They're like little robots.

So, that's possible.

But you get into something like a goldfish or a frog where arguably there's a good better chance that they actually are having perceptions and having volitions, even though they're very elemental, very simple.

Then they're already creating karma.

And it may be that even something like an insect or, you know, going with like

Jain philosophy, even plants, they might have such a primordial kind of not just consciousness, but like perception, like a delusion.

Because, I mean, it's delusion that keeps you in samsara.

That I mean, maybe.

But it does seem to be like a like a very different like order of magnitude between like an invertebrate or a plant than like a vertebrate. You know, you're getting into, I mean, dogs and cats especially. I mean, they're obviously there's somebody there.

They're simple, you know, they're like toddlers or something.

But still, I mean, there's somebody

there.

They already have like a subjective life.

They might not have reached the stage of self-awareness yet, but still they've got cravings and and delusion and so forth.

False perceptions.

So, what kind of karma do animals have?

It'd be like simple, it'd be like the karma of a of a of a baby.

Small child.

Preverbal.

But I mean, karma isn't really verbal anyway. Karma is more emotional.

You know, it's it's more coming from

your guts in a way

than than it is anything like cerebral.

So,

what have they done to deserve such an ending?

Oh, at the end, I guess this is he asked actually asked three questions. There's three There's three question marks all together.

I got to separate these. Okay, I haven't even asked the third question. So, this first question was actually two questions. So, what kind of karma do animals have? You know, it's just kind of a simple sort of karma. I mean, we can complicate it looking at them, but their subjective experience is going to

be way simpler than us looking at them.

You know, like a goldfish, our experience of the goldfish is way more complicated than the goldfish's experience of being a goldfish in all likelihood.

You know, of course, they've got a subjective experience that's beyond, I mean, we can't really know that unless you can read minds or something.

But still,

I mean, it's it's kind of like projection,

anthropocentrism, that we're like projecting our perceptions onto a goldfish, for example, or onto a chicken

or whatever.

That their life is
subjectively experienced very
differently from our objective like
observation of them.

But they they got simple karma.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
saboteur's second question.

Let's see, which I've already I've
already quoted it more than at least
once. Let's see, what have they done to
deserve such an ending? And he's
referring to

chickens, pigs, cows,

et cetera, like in particular. What have
they done to deserve such an ending?

Well,

partly they're living in a crude level of perception, a crude level of consciousness, so to speak.

And

karma,

I've I've mentioned this before. It's

it's sort of like

like

uh see, how do I how do I put it

exactly? In a way, it's sort of like

driving a car. If you're not very good

at driving a car, you're going to get in accidents.

And but if you're the better you are at

drive driving a car, like navigating the

vehicle, the less likely are less likely

it is that you're going to get into to accidents. Or it's like you've got like a troubled mind, even though, you know, you're not going out and doing horrible things, still, I mean, even like a relatively innocent child can have nightmares at night.

Nowadays, we no longer believe that dreams are implanted into our minds by gods, like people used to believe. Now we believe we are generating our own dreams.

And sometimes we will generate nightmares for ourselves.

You know, it's we are responsible for that. We're the one who's creating our subconscious mind. It's not like our

conscious ego necessarily, but still
it's it's coming from inside rather than
outside.

And what I'm trying to get to here is
that I mean, you don't necessarily
have to have murdered
in order to have it come back on you. I
mean, that's not necessarily how karma
works. It's it's sort of like the
quality of the experience. I mean,
you've got like this crude state of
existence, it's you're going to have
like a crude control over what you're
doing and what's happening back to you.
And it's like
animals just are worse at driving the

car than people's are, and so they're more likely to wind up in these tragic accidents.

Of course, like some dogs are just completely pampered and spoiled and they they live at a higher standard of living than most humans.

So, I mean, there's there's variation, definitely.

But I mean, the chickens, pigs, and cows,

yeah, I mean,

from a karmic point of view,

I mean, like a traditional Orthodox

Buddhist would have to say that, you

know, when you're in the animal realm,

you're not necessarily a chicken every

time. I mean, chickens probably the most predatory of the three listed here, chickens, pigs, and cows. You know, they're they're at least eating insects, at least the wild ones are. The red jungle fowl in Southeast Asia, you know, they're eating insects and worms and whatever other kind of little creatures they can find. They don't give a [__] They don't have no concept of maybe this is immoral any more than a tiger does.

Pigs, I mean, they're omnivores. They'll they'll eat, you know, they'll they'll eat baby, you know, they they root up like a rotten

nest with baby rats. They'll eat the baby rats, that kind of thing.

Cows, I mean, cows, I mean, they're pretty saintly.

I mean, [clears throat] cow keeps all five precepts perfectly far as I know.

Certainly don't tell lies.

And then they have like bad things happen to them. So, so the Orthodox Buddhist would say, well, it's sort of like residual karma from a previous life as some more predatory kind of animal.

But I mean, you could just look at it as we are creating our own reality.

And there's like this positive and negative, pleasure and pain kind of balance that has to dependently

co-arise.

And so,

it's just like the the crudeness of
their mentality, which humans, I mean,
we're not all we're not all that pure
either.

That it's just they're creating this
reality for themselves, which happens to
dovetail with, you know, the karma and
the the perceptions of of other beings,
including the guy who owns the
slaughterhouse.

>> [snorts]

>> Trying to understand karma is difficult.

In the text it does say that if you try
to understand the ramifications, the

permutations, the subtleties of karma,
you can go insane.

But it does seem to me that a lot of it
is not necessarily that the chickens,
pigs, and cows are being punished for
wrong deeds. It's just that they're
crashing the car because they do not
have the mental sophistication to
navigate the vehicle effectively.

They are creating their own reality in a
sense, which is very different, as I
say, from our observation of them. Their
subjective experience is going to be at
a different level than our observations
of them, you know, outwardly.

So,

yeah, there is that. But it's it's

really a difficult question to answer
because it's so metaphysical and subtle
and complicated and so forth
that uh it's it's really hard to answer.

So,

what have they done to deserve such an
ending, i.e. being killed in a
slaughterhouse?

Um

it would depend on the individual
animal, I guess.

And I'm just going I'm just going to
move on to the next question. That
question was difficult to answer.

Just even from like within a Buddhist
context, giving like a a really

like a cogent, coherent kind of answer is not easy.

So, I'm just I'm moving on to the next one.

From the Saboteur. At about what age does a child begin to accrue karma? At the age when they begin to generate perception and have volitions, which could be before they're even born. They could still be in mama's belly and starting to have perceptions and volitions.

So, I mean, it doesn't take like adult human consciousness or like a capacity to form verbal sentences or anything to be generating karma.

So, yeah, I mean, at the as soon as

their mind is developed enough that they can start perceiving and having volitions,

then they've started creating karma.

Okay.

That was kind of easy after the the one preceding it.

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from PSA. And now for something completely different.

PSA says, "On a previous Q&A, you said that if you're petting the puppy and it accidentally goes off, it's not a sanghadisesa offense. However, ChatGPT says that if the monk intentionally stimulated the organ and it accidentally

led to orgasm, even if he didn't want an orgasm, and even if he didn't delight in sensuality, he was just trying to rid himself of overwhelming sensations, it is still a sanghadisesa offense. So, I trust you more than ChatGPT, which I appreciate. Could you please set the record straight? Or is it or is it not a sanghadisesa offense?" Well, it isn't. That's what I said That's what I said before.

So, it's like

PSA,

here's my my statement that like a monk is just kind of not exactly spanking the puppy, but just petting it and it accidentally goes off.

And then I say that is not a full
sanghadisesa offense
because you have to have intention. Then
PSA,
for whatever reason, doesn't fully trust
me, maybe. He He goes to ChatGPT,
an AI, asks ChatGPT, and ChatGPT
disagrees with me,
saying that it's a sanghadisesa offense
even if you have no intention to have an
orgasm.

And ChatGPT is wrong. I mean, this is
something that I studied very carefully
as a monk cuz sometimes you have to know
for sure, did you commit a sanghadisesa
offense or not?

And

I mean, I can give a little bit of a lesson in in rules of monastic discipline here. There are two cool kinds of rules of monastic discipline. There's achitaka and sachitaka.

Achitaka means without intention.

Sachitaka means with intention. So, there are some rules that you can break them even if you're you do it accidentally. Now, you you could be clueless that you're breaking a rule.

Uh you can be clueless that you're doing what is against the rules, and it's still against the rules like drinking alcohol, for example. If a monk drinks alcohol even by accident, you know, he

doesn't even know that it's alcoholic. Somebody gives him some medicine or he gets some fruit juice that has started to ferment in the tropical heat in Southeast Asia. He takes a sip of it and it tastes like wine or there's obviously alcohol in it, he's broken an apatti offense even though it was done completely innocently.

Other rules are sachitaka, which means you have to do it deliberately like killing an animal, for example. If you accidentally step on an ant, you mean you're not even aware that you stepped on it, you haven't broken a

rule. But if you stomp on that ant on purpose, then you've broken the rule.

That's sachitaka. And having like deliberately having an orgasm is sachitaka. You have to There's There's a a term in Pali, uh abhi abhi vitaritava, which is in the in the text. It's like in the the

>> [clears throat]

>> sutta vibhanga,

which is the old commentary to the patimokkha rules that is so old that it also has become canonical. It's just like incorporated right into the the Pali text.

Abhi vitaritava means having made up your mind. You have decided once and for

all you're going to do this thing. And in order to commit the sanghadisesa offense of deliberately causing yourself to have an orgasm, you have to have made up your mind that you are going to have that orgasm.

And then you have to succeed in having it. If you have made up your mind to have that orgasm and then somebody suddenly walks in and you stop, then you're still have broken a rule.

It's not sanghadisesa because you didn't really emit the precious bodily fluids. But still you had the intention and you did start making effort. So, that is a lesser a lesser rule that you have

broken.

But you have to have the intention

in order

to have broken the rule. And that's one

reason why if you have like a nocturnal

emission in your sleep,

then even it could just be like triple

X-rated dream that you had, but still

that you haven't really like broken the

rule.

Which is is good because a young,

healthy, red-blooded monk, I mean,

in my case [clears throat] when I was

young, up until my 40s,

um I'd be having like a a pornographic

dream about every 2 weeks, which would

regulate the hormone levels. You know,

the hormone levels get up into the red zone, you need pressure release, and if you're not going to do it like while you're awake, it just happens in your sleep.

At least in my case it did.

So,

yeah, I mean, that is one of the requisites of breaking the sanghadisesa rule.

ChatGPT is no authority on rules of ancient Indian Buddhist monastic discipline.

That you have to have deliberate intention

to emit the precious bodily fluids in

order for you to break the rule. I mean, you could even be sort of kind of iffy on the subject. You know, it's like, do I or do I not? And then it happens. Still you haven't broken the full sanghadisesa rule because you have to be abhi vitaritava. You have to have made up your mind that you are going to do this thing.

>> [sighs]

>> So, it's kind of like telling a lie.

It's like you That's another one that that is sachitaka. That if you just say something that is false, believing it to be true, which happens sometimes, then you're not guilty of lying.

Which is something and and the Buddhist

definition of lying is very helpful for me, and I do apply it to sometimes stuff I see online. But I I can get back to that. But in order to tell a lie, you have to have this deliberate intention to deceive. That's one of the requisites of lying in Buddhist ethics, the deliberate intention to deceive.

But if you're just saying something, you're like recounting something that happened, and then while you're like in mid-sentence, you realize that you're exaggerating.

And then it's like you you have what is called confused mindfulness.

You know, it's like you're still

continuing with the sentence while at the same time just like, "Hey, this isn't entirely true." Then still you have you're not guilty of lying.

I mean, you have to like have made up your mind you're going to deceive somebody.

But getting back to the stuff I see online sometimes, it's like so many people will just accuse somebody of lying or accuse a statement of being a lie simply because they consider it to be untrue, regardless of the motives of the person who says it. In most cases, the person might actually Well, in many cases, the person actually believes that what they're saying is true. So, you

could say that it's a lie at some point along, but you can't really call the person a liar.

Because there has to be a deliberate intention to deceive.

Maybe they were deceived by some other liar, but they themselves would not be a liar so long as they consider it to be true when they're saying it, no matter how wrong it might be.

But yeah, ChatGPT is not a reliable source of information on the subtleties of ancient Buddhist monastic discipline.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from PSA.

History question.

Of all non-Buddhist countries in the world today, in your opinion, which one was formerly the most Buddhist and how did it come to completely disappear?

So, I assume he's not referring to India. I mean, technically India is a non-Buddhist country. There's very few Buddhists in India now.

So, let's see here.

Let's just assume PSA is not referring to India, which is mostly Hindu now.

Um see, of all the non-Buddhist countries in the world today, in my opinion, which one was formerly the most Buddhist and how did it come to completely disappear? Let's go with Pakistan.

Pakistan was a
strongly Buddhist country.

I mean, you don't really associate
Pakistan with Buddhism nowadays,
but it was I mean, it was like uh
Kanishka. What was he? The The Kushan
Empire. I mean, that's like the the
capital was in Peshawar
or near modern-day Peshawar, which is in
Pakistan. And it was a Buddhistic
kingdom.

I think uh Kanishka, the Emperor
Kanishka, favored Sarvastivada Buddhism.
There was a Buddhist council there.
Uh and it was [clears throat] like
the fifth Buddhist council.

It Maybe it was the fourth. I don't remember now. But it was They decided that Sarvastivada was the correct form of Buddhism, and so all the other schools rejected that one as invalid.

But

um

Pakistan was this strongly Buddhist country up until Islamic conquest.

Probably Buddhism was already in decline in

you know, Central Asia,

and Pakistan,

Northern India before the Muslims came along.

Um you know, it was getting more esoteric and just kind of going off into

these weird tantric kind of stuff, and like stuff that only monks at universities would understand, and the lay people were clueless with regard to this kind of stuff. You know, it was kind of losing its touch with the village the kind of the the ordinary person.

But really, what wiped it out, just like what wiped it out in India, was Islamic conquest. And the fact that Buddhists are like uncompromising pacifists didn't help. You know, uncompromising pacifists are less likely to put up a good fight even in self-defense against Muslim Turks on a rampage just

slaughtering Buddhists.

So, that was fairly easy. I mean, it's kind of cheating, I suppose.

But you know,

much of Central Asia, you know, like Kazakhstan,

Tajikistan,

this kind of stuff. I mean, that was all um like largely

if not primarily Buddhist.

And then it just got converted to Islam.

Uh let's see.

Yeah. So, it it'd be India would be like the the easy cheating kind of answer. Um

Pakistan might have even been more

predom- more primarily Buddhist. I mean,

there was possibly a higher percentage

of Buddhists in what is now Pakistan
than there was in what is now India,
like during the reign of the Emperor
Ashoka, that kind of thing.

And it came to completely disappear
largely just because everything is
impermanent, and it was starting to go
into decline, and then you had like
rabid [clears throat]

you know,

see, Muslim fanatics coming through
using religion as a justification for
just plundering the land,
stealing.

So,

I guess I'm just going to move on to the

next question.

This is from Romeo.

And we've been going Gosh, we're getting up to like 2 hours. Does it

It It's sort of like these Q&A's are are like a

a a like a shoulder bag where whether you have a big one or a little one, it's it's it's going to get full anyway.

So, even if I have a few questions, it's still going to it's still going to go 2 hours.

Anyways, Romeo.

Romeo says, "In my exploration of Buddhism, I keep coming across a term called spiritual bypass."

So, I I should really only use one

finger cuz he used single quotes instead of double.

"Can you tell me your understanding of this concept? What is spiritual bypass, and how do you suggest one best manages it?"

And I had never heard of spiritual bypass when Romeo asked this question. I actually looked it up online.

I In fact, I even emailed Romeo to tell him I'd never heard of it before.

But I figured what the hell, it's fair game. It's on list. So, I cheated a little bit and looked it up, and it turns out that the term was coined in the 1980s

by some probably some Western Vipassana teacher who's also into psychology, that kind of thing. So, it seems like Romeo in his exploration of Buddhism is reading a lot of like Western liberal

you know, very recent Buddhist literature, which is, in my

[clears throat] opinion, not the best

[laughter]

way to study Buddhism.

I mean, if you want to study like

authentic Buddhism, you should go as far back towards the the Buddha as possible.

Get as close to the Buddha as you can,

instead of reading stuff by Jack

Kornfield or Jon Kabat-Zinn, this kind

of stuff.

But spiritual bypass, it's it turns out, according to what I what I saw online, that it's a term coined by some person whose name I don't remember back in the 1980s

with regard to using spiritual ideas to short-circuit your practice or avoid making spiritual progress, like using the the Buddhist idea of anatta, no self, as just a way of coping.

You know, it's just sort of a defense mechanism. It's like, "Well, you know, it's like nobody really exists anyway, so this isn't really affecting anybody."

Or you can adopt a more Hinduistic,

"It's all perfect." And so you it causes you not to really deal with the issue or learn to deal with it any more than just laying this kind of a label onto it.

It was like

one one thing I was thinking of when I was

looking this up and and finding out what it is, it reminded me of like the Bhagavad Gita, for example. Let's see.

I don't have the Bhagavad Gita on hand, but I do have the the poem Brahma by Wolf

Wolf Ralph Waldo Emerson.

And the very first line of the poem

Brahma, which is a nice poem. I really do like it. It says,

this is

>> [clears throat]

>> this is God speaking.

"If the red slayer think he slays, or if
the slain think he is slain, they know
not well the subtle ways I keep and pass
and turn again."

And like a lot of the Bhagavad Gita,
especially towards the beginning, is
saying it's it's like

you're not really killing anybody when
you're when you're killing enemies on
the field of battle.

You know, it's like it's all God anyway,
this kind of thing.

Um and so just kind of slapping that

label on without really like working out the issues that are deeper down is spiritual bypass.

You know, it's just it's just my karma, you know, it's just their karma. You know, justifying screwing somebody over or slaughtering a chicken, it's just their karma. And then you're not really dealing with the deeper issues involved. So, that's my understanding of spiritual bypass that I learned shortly before doing this video just because I was kind of curious myself. You know, I was thinking spiritual bypass could be some kind of operation where they're you know, sort of like a coronary bypass, you know, where they're like doing some

sort of kundalini bypass, you know, like
like s- fig- like
fixing an obstructed chakra or
something.

But it's not that at all.

Or another [clears throat] thought that
I had of what spiritual bypass might
mean is just sort of like having some
guru like cleanse your karma for you.
Which is a a thing in Hinduism, where
you can go to a guru and you know, you
you go offer them There's one you in
South India, I think, you'd offer him
cigarettes, and he'd smoke the
cigarettes, and we would somehow be
burning off your karma by smoking the

cigarettes. And according to Ram Dass, he might have like four lit cigarettes all going at the same time.

Neem Karoli Baba up there used food.

You'd offer food to him, and he'd just like devour it.

Which was a way of burning off your karma in

sort of a an Indian food-oriented sort of cultural way, I guess.

It's not really Buddhism.

You don't do that in Buddhism. I mean, your karma is your own. No teacher is going to be able to remove your karma from you um just through blessing you or whatever.

Go and sin no more. It doesn't work that

way. I mean, the go and sin no more part, sure, but the like forgiving your sins so that you don't have them anymore is not a Buddhist concept, at least not in Theravada.

It just doesn't work that way.

So,

see, Romeo says, "Can you tell me your understanding of this concept?" And that's my understanding of it from what I

I had to separate this cuz there's two question marks.

Please excuse me.

I I noticed there's two question marks, so then I have to separate into two

questions. So, my understanding of this concept is essentially that you're just kind of using like Buddhist slogans as a way of not really dealing with the deeper issues. You know, you just say it's it's just the karma, or it's all impermanent, or you know, there's no self anyway, this kind of thing. And it's it's sort of rationalizing not dealing with the actual issue as a kind of cope.

So, that would be my understanding of it from

my brief research shortly before doing this video. And I'm going to move on to Romeo's second part of this question.

He says, "What is spiritual bypass?

And how do you suggest one best manages it?" Well, I already said what Well, that's kind of weird.

My understanding of the concept and what it is, I mean, that's the same question, really. So, let's just skip over the what is spiritual bypass, which I've already answered as best I am able, and get to how do you suggest one best manages it? And the best management of it is just mindfulness.

That if you're being mindful and the situation arises, you are processing it at a very deep level simply by just being mindful of what's going on. You

know, it's like the situation arises,
you're just being mindful of the seeing
and the hearing and the mental states
going on in your mind,
the actions that you're taking,
and that is dealing with it just at a
fundamental level. It's the best way of
dealing it dealing with it. I mean, you
don't want to be

I mean, once you get to the spiritual
bypass level, it's all this conceptual
stuff that really is not any kind of
deep spiritual practice anymore anyway.
So, the panacea, the cure of all ills,
including the ill of spiritual bypass,
is just mindfulness.

So, I'm just going to move on to the

next question. And this is from Cyrus Frame, who is the last questioner of this Q&A.

He asks two questions.

I assume it's Yeah, there's two question marks.

So, Cyrus Frame says, "Please talk about what you understand volition to be." And this is another tricky one. It's It's sort of like in in science, physicists can't really define energy.

Or last night, I was um listening to some talk on the radio when I was driving home from work, and he was talking about gravity. And he was saying,

"Scientists really cannot um define gravity other than its attributes. Its essence, they can't touch, but just the attributes. You know, it's just the interaction of, you know, two point point masses, you know, in in space or or whatever."

And um

and then he pointed out like in science, I mean, you don't really deal with the essence of anything. You just deal with the attributes, the observable attributes.

And that's you're kind of in a similar situation dealing with like fundamental mental qualities,

consciousness itself, especially.

So, I've already

I've already mentioned in a recent Q&A that volition is is like the kinetic aspect of perception.

So,

volition, yeah, I mean, it's just like the behavior of your mental states.

And if you do it vol- See, I can't say volitionally. You do it in a an unenlightened mental state. Just it's largely happening just through force of habit, which has momentum.

And so, you can say volition or karma is like the momentum of your mental states. A lot of the times, I have given

the analogy if we say that consciousness is like water,

then the waves on the surface of the the water are perceptions, and the movement of the waves and the currents and so forth would be volition.

So, it's like the the kinetic aspect of forms of mind would be volition.

And momentum, going with physics, is mass times velocity.

So, in order to get that down to zero, you have to either eliminate the mass or eliminate the velocity.

And I I had this

I had this theory going when I was a monk with regard to meditation, how you're trying to bring the momentum to

zero. And mass times velocity I assume mass would just be like the mental states themselves. And so, when you're doing especially samatha meditation like jhana, you're just trying to eliminate perceptions. And by eliminating perceptions, you're eliminating the volition also.

But with mindfulness, it's not so much you're eliminating the mass as you're eliminating the velocity by being totally mindful of it. That it's [clears throat] like there's no more autopilot force of habit driving it. And in a way, you're transmuting that and you're sort of negating the

momentum of it by doing it consciously like with as close to full awareness as possible. And I don't know if that's any kind of clear explanation. I'm just trying to recall this theory that I had as a monk. You know, just going with momentum is mass times velocity, and your karma, or which is essentially volition, is the momentum of your mind. So, that by to eliminate that momentum, you'd have to eliminate mass and or velocity. And then I'm trying to attribute that to the two main kinds of meditation in Buddhism, which is like concentration and mindfulness. Concentration would eliminate the mass. Mindfulness would eliminate the

velocity.

Kind of a half-baked analogy there, I guess.

But volition is essentially the momentum of your mental states, the kinetic aspect of your perceptions.

>> [sighs]

>> But it's very difficult to explain it very deeply. I mean, if you try to look in like a

ancient commentary,

it can be very frustrating because all they do is just mainly some of their definitions or explanations is just listing off synonyms.

Anyone who's relied on the commentaries

to any significant degree will realize just how frustrating [snorts] trying to get a straight answer out of the commentaries can be sometimes because like I say, it's they won't really explain anything. They'll just give lists of of synonyms, just other words that mean the same thing. And to some degree, that's a definition. But if you're really trying to get pinned down what all of them mean, it doesn't work.

So, I'm just going to move on to Cyrus Frame's next question, which is the last question of this Q&A.

He says, "Regarding your idea of a single aggregate of perception and

volition,

is that somehow related to your uncarved block of stone analogy?" Well,

I mean,

since the uncarved block of stone analogy is my theory of everything, it explains all of samsara, then clearly the

the [clears throat] aggregate the compound aggregate of perception volition

um would have to fit in there.

You know, it's I mean, it it would has to be related to the uncarved block because anything in samsara is related to the uncarved block.

So, you could say

I mean, the uncarved block has every possible statue within it.

Even moving statues. I mean, why why couldn't you have like a running statue in virtual form in that uncarved block?

I mean, the molecules would be different as the legs are moving, you know, cuz the molecules wouldn't be changing position. I guess there's that.

But that's just a flaw in the analogy because I mean, consciousness is not the same as stone.

Consciousness is not made up of molecules, unless you're an Abhidhamma scholar, but we don't need to go there.

So, you could say that the imaginary

statues, the virtual statues inside that
uncarved block of stone,

like in each moment would would

correspond to perception, but the

movement, the apparent movement of the
statue, would correspond to volition.

That in a way, volition is what is

holding the pattern together over time.

You know, it is it's momentum.

And holding patterns together over time
is

getting kind of philosophical

for me.

>> [laughter]

>> Even for me, it's uh something I'm not
entirely prepared for. I mean, it's

something like

answering a question like this,

um to really do it justice,

I should probably have just lain around

thinking about it

for at least a couple days. I mean,

that's how I used to write blog posts.

You you come up with an idea,

and then you just kind of let it digest

or ferment or whatever over a period of

days until finally it's ripe enough that

you just, you know, it's sort of

crystallized or gelled into this

coherent idea that you can then write

down on paper or onto a computer screen

or whatever.

But this is just is

really

it's a [clears throat] question that was asked um earlier today, I think, or not long ago. I didn't really see it until until a when I was just compiling the questions. It's not like I really cheat and try to come up with a decent answer for everything before I do the video.

So,

yeah, I mean it's obviously related to the uncarved block and probably the easy explanation that doesn't require me to sit here and introspect for half an hour is that the the the form of the statues that are in an uncarved state in that

uncarved block but are still virtually
conditionally in there

is sort of the static form like a

cross-section in time would be

like perception but like the movement

and like

there'd have to be some sort of some

sort of momentum that would maintain the

like the form or some semblance of the

form over time.

That was that would maintain some kind

of pattern and coherence over time but

it would mainly be the kinetic aspect.

So, you'd have moving changing statues

contained within the uncarved block.

So, the perception would be you know,

the the statue at any moment any

particular moment and the volition would
be the movements of the of the the
figure of the image
inside the inside the uncarved block of
stone.

Or maybe even more importantly what's
causing that image to move while at the
same time not just disintegrate but
maintaining its integrity as like a a
more or less well-defined
pattern.

And that would be karma
going with

Buddhist philosophy you know, the
momentum of the mental states.

The momentum of our personal samsara.

And some of these questions have been difficult.

And it's been difficult to answer a few of them. I hope I have not completely disappointed the people who asked them. I hope I at least gave them something to chew on because I'm done.

So, like I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do if you have any questions you think I can answer especially with regard to Buddhism, Dharma, archaic early Buddhism, you know, technicalities of monastic discipline. I'm fairly fairly authoritative with regard to that. I know

a hell of a lot more about it than chat GPT does.

Um just feel free to ask it. No more than three questions per person, please and like and subscribe if you liked it and have not done so already.

And please bear in mind I should probably said the this at the beginning but I do have my fourth book is now um on Amazon. It can be ordered there and that will be down in the URL links if you're interested at all in strange autobiographical stories of a Western Buddhist monk living in Burma.

And aside from that all I got left to say is be happy. Have a nice rest of

your day

if uh

if samsara is willing to grant you that.

And I'm I'm out of here now.

[clears throat]

Alrighty then

it looks like we are recording. So here we are and hello and welcome to question and answer number 190. I am your host Po Bosa excitedly talled. So let's see if we can flatten that lump there. No. Well, just deal with it.

Ah, did I mention that I am your host Pio Basa?

This is my beverage
and 190

fairly obviously is not prime. In fact, it's very easy to factor out. It is in fact $2 * 5 * 19$.

And I am sitting here before you today being a gray, rainy, quiet Easter

Sunday.

And uh really we we are not celebrating
Easter this year. I mean I haven't eaten
a colored egg,
have not touched a jelly bean.

And to tell you the truth, I am somewhat
skeptical of the whole premise of
Easter, which is the anniversary of
Jesus of Nazareth rising from the dead
after being crucified on Good Friday.

Why it's called Good Friday, I don't
know either,

but I am somewhat skeptical that Jesus
did actually arise bodily from the dead
after dying on a cross, especially if
that quarry that was found in Jerusalem
back around 1980 really did contain his

bones.

So

there is that.

Let's see here.

I guess uh with that as kind of an
introduction,

I can just uh wade into this. I might
occasionally have a random thought about
Easter throughout the course of this
because it is at the time of recording
this Easter.

So let's see here. First question is
from Ethiopian fake TIG. An Ethiopian
fake TIG says, "There are so many people
in different traditions that were
enlightened and so many stories exist.

So why is it so difficult to be fully enlightened now? Or is enlightenment much simpler?" Oh, this is like a a compound question, isn't it? See, there's the question mark and then he he just keeps going. Or is enlightenment much simpler than most people think? And there are at least 1% of people in the world, which is still a lot enlightened out there.

H

well, let's see here.

See, he says there are so many people in different traditions that were enlightened. Well, how do you know that? Just because a story says that they were enlightened, it doesn't necessarily mean

they are enlightened. So many stories exist. Like a classic example of this is Hanshan who was considered to be a kind of Zen sage or a Chan sage in medieval China. You know the stories about him. He's like this mysterious this mysterious hermit sage. And then and the assumption is that he was fully enlightened. He just accepted as fully enlightened in Chinese Buddhist tradition. And then I actually read the verses of Hanshan and I mean a lot of these verses he's sort of like pining over like the for example I mean he's just complaining about how he couldn't be a Mandarin

because he was thrown off a horse or kicked by a horse or something in his younger years and was lame and in order to be like a high ranking official in like medieval China, you had to be physically perfect as well as being a master of like the the classical Chinese texts like Confucious and so forth.

And so he's like complaining about that. Also, apparently um he was on the wrong side of a kind of coup attempt or some such and that's why he became like a hermit living out in the forest. It wasn't necessarily that he had a genuine spiritual calling. It's just that he was on the wrong side of a coup attempt or like a an abortive civil war and he just

had to flee and hide. And some of his verses, I mean, he's just like complaining about it. He I mean, he would prefer to be some Mandarin running the helping to run the government.

And then of course he's one there's at least one verse where some of the the emperor's harum of wives and and or concubines were just like going on a nature stroll and he happened to see them and he's just kind of like sighing and moaning over the fact that he doesn't get to have his own beautiful concubines.

So just because someone is declared to be enlightened doesn't mean that they

really are. In fact, I mean, just because someone declares themselves to be enlightened, like there's plenty of those nowadays. Ehart Tollah being one of the most well-known examples.

Um, Osho was supposedly enlightened. You know, it's like

probably the number of people claiming to be enlightened or having a reputation for being enlightened is not so

different from in ancient times. like

certain parts of Burma. I was considered to be a fully enlightened Arahant.

There was like shrines in my honor in northwestern Burma. Not at my insistence or suggestion in any way.

So there is that. But let's let's just

assume

for the sake of argument the Ethiopian
fake tig is correct and there were more
enlightened beings in ancient times than
now than like a standard example or a
standard explanation giving in ter given
in terara Buddhism is that
um in the Buddhist time there were lots
of people that had earned or they had
like developed this pammy you know this
spiritual ual momentum so that they were
ripe for enlightenment but they couldn't
really become enlightened because there
was no dharma in the world you know so
they were they were close they were ripe
but there was no Buddha to get the wheel

rolling again so that people could become enlightened way more easily and then the Buddha came along and there's just all these like ripe fruit ready to fall from the tree that it just you know if you you read the text you know hundreds or even thousands of people can become enlightened from hearing a Buddha giving a discourse. I mean, some of the previous Buddhas, it was up in like in the billions or even trillions of people becoming enlightened from hearing a discourse. So that's sort of like a a standard orthodox kind of explanation that now you know all this ripe fruit that has fallen from the tree you know all the

see what's the you know it's it's you know all the loose stuff has has been cleared out and now you're down to like bedrock and it's much harder digging so to speak.

So that's one explanation. Just assuming that what Ethiopian fake tig is saying is true, that there were more enlightened beings in the past, then that could be one that's like the official Buddhist explanation or or at least a traditional orthodox Buddhist explanation. Um, but also like in ancient times there was just more faith. Nowadays, we're living like especially as Westerners, we're just lukewarm.

We're just eclectic. There's so many options of things you can believe in. We believe a little bit of this and a little bit of that. And we're never like 100% committed to anything. You know, that's that's seen as cultish. You know, that's fanaticism, that kind of thing.

But I mean, it struck me as a monk, you know, back when I was a monk that a little bit of wildeyed fanaticism really is almost necessary to make significant spiritual progress.

at least to make progress deliberately and not just be beaten over the head with it.

So, I mean, that's that's a possibility, too. It's just sort of the modern and

postmodern mindset is just so lukewarm that we're living in an age of spiritual mediocrity. way fewer sages, including possibly enlightened ones, and also way fewer just absolute psychopaths.

I mean,

like serial killers and so forth get a lot of press nowadays, but they were probably way more common in ancient times, even in the Buddhist time. I mean, you read about, you know, banditinfested forests and this kind of thing. Anguli Mala who was trying to kill a thousand people and was wearing their fingers around you on like a garland around his neck

this kind of thing.

So did I answer the question or the second half of his compound question is or is enlightenment much simpler than most people think and there are at least 1% of people in the world who just still a lot enlightened out there. Yeah, 1%.

Yeah, I don't think so. Like your average small town, 20,000 people, that would be, let's see,

200 enlightened beings in Aberdine, Washington. I really don't think so.

So, I mean, it is true. Like Rahm Doss in one of his books

had this this thing that I've I've quoted before or at least paraphrased before.

He said that there are people that go to the Himalayas looking for some enlightened sage to teach them the mysteries of the universe when actually their aunt Margaret back in Massachusetts has been enlightened the whole time. It's just that she doesn't tell people the secrets of the universe. She just says have some soup. But it just turns out that have some soup is like the perfect thing to say under the circumstances.

But then again, you can just get into like Zen Buddhism and so forth or the teachings of Eckhart Tolle and that everybody's already enlightened. It's

just that most people have such noisy
minds that it's the enlightenment is
kind of obscured
from their ego or something.

So let's see here. I guess I answered
that question, that compound double
question.

Let's see. I mean, he he at least
doesn't have two question marks, but the
second question is just ends in a
period, but it's still a question.

You're not sneaking that one past me
that easily.

So, let's see here. I guess I'll just
move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next
question here.

How surprised do you think the Buddha

would be if we brought him back to the present from the past? Would the state of the world perhaps shock him? And again, this is another one of those questions where you're second-guessing the mental states of a fully enlightened being, a *some* Buddha. What would the Buddha think?

But I don't think he'd be surprised to tell you the truth. I mean, first of all, he's fully enlightened. He's not going to be like shocked, taken aback, taken completely by surprise so that he loses composure or anything, anything like that.

And I mean according to the texts he was

selectively omnisient. I mean he could not exactly see into the future because according to orthodox terravada there is no future yet. Only the present moment exists.

But still he would make prophecies regarding the future based on like a kind of omnisient extrapolation which I mean if there's anything remotely resembling free will or random chance would break down I mean there's the butterfly effect and all that that would break down any kind of deterministic extrapolation into the future which is kind of a problem for Buddhist philosophy. I mean, either the Buddha could see the future or somehow

determinism holds sway to such a degree that you can predict stuff centuries in the future with regard to cities existing and so forth.

Yeah, that that is kind of a that's kind of a dilemma for Buddhist philosophy, it seems to me.

But I mean the Buddha did make prophecies about the future including pro prophecies regarding what was going to happen far into the future of us today. You know like the complete decline of the the human race until the the lifespan is only like 10 years and everyone's just killing everybody else and there's no morality or dharma at all

left in the world. That kind of thing.

So yeah, I'm guessing he wouldn't be particularly surprised.

And I'm just going to move on to

Ethiopian fake Tig's third question

which is a little poignant

at present. He says, "How often do you

think about dying? And when it does come

for you, how do you think it will come?"

Well, I mean, there's always kind of the

detached philosophical

like recognition of the inevitability of

death, especially as I get older. I mean

my health is relatively good but still

there's like stiffness and like loss of

loss of stamina like general vitality is

kind of ebbing to some degree.

And so it's kind of like a a divine message or a reminder of death. You know I'm not going to last forever. And I'm remembering my father who could barely get out of his chair when he was 80 years old. His short his long-term memory was still good, but his short-term memory was shot. He couldn't watch a movie anymore because he'd forget the first half of the movie by the time he got to the second half. This kind of thing.

So, I mean, there's there's always that kind of awareness, but lately, especially the last few days, I've been thinking about death more than usual

because I had what could be called a neardeath experience. Like, it was the night before New Year's Eve. I was driving home from work on this four-lane country highway going about 45 miles an hour and some idiot just pulls right out. I mean, he's I mean, there wasn't even an intersection there. You're not expecting this at all. All of a sudden, this pickup truck just boom right in front of me. And I'm trying to swerve out of the way, but he's going the same direction. And so like the last second before the collision happened, you know, it's just sort of like that you're in this altered state of consciousness just observing. You know, you're not thinking

anything, but still there's this you don't know if you're going to be alive or dead a second from now. I mean, like crashing into like two cars crashing going like I mean, I was going 40 miles an hour probably. He was going slow because it was like it's a highway where he was cutting across. There was like a gap in the median where you can make U-turns and that sort of thing. He was just cutting across to go into like this bar on the other side of the highway. And for some reason, he just did not bother to look to see if there's any oncoming traffic. So, he just pulled right out into traffic, which was me.

And so, the car is just smashed.

It's there's a good chance it'll be total. I mean, we haven't heard back from the insurance company yet whether the car really is going to be just total. I mean, it was undrivable. The whole front driver's side of the car was just smashed.

And

amazingly, the only injuries I got were very slight ones. Um, just caused by abrasions from the airbag exploding, the airbags. And the airbag, one of the airbags hit me right here and kind of broke my glasses and just against my face. Just kind of smashed my glasses against my face. They were found by a

police officer in like behind the passenger side seat. You know, they just been knocked completely off my head. And also, I had like a big purple bruise. I might still have it to some degree. I don't know. Yeah, a little bit from the like the shoulder shoulder strap part of the seat belt where all of a sudden you're going from 40 m an hour to 0 miles an hour in a matter of about 1 second.

So,

I had bad enough coma to get in that wreck, but good enough coma that I was able to just walk away from it with some,

you know, minor injuries. Nothing that required any kind of medical attention other than, you know, maybe like aspirin or something and new glasses.

Ah,

so after that I mean I was it was kind of like an existential moment you know I was kind of emo for like 3 days for example I think it was like the next day I was driving to work and fortunately we have more than we have two vehicles or at least we had two vehicles so I'm I'm driving to work in the Jeep listening to the radio and there's this song by a band called Live I think it's called Lightning Crashes about, you know, death and birth and the cycle of

life and so forth. And, you know, the
old mother dies and in the the video,
which I wasn't watching while driving,
you know, it's like the the husband of
the old lady is is grieving, you know,
it's it's really kind of a a deep
intense kind of song. And I mean I was
in tears

driving this this ra this song playing
on the radio just feeling more like
emotional you know I had um definitely
more um more than usual tender feelings
for my mate

because I mean it's just this reminder
it's this dewa duta the divine messenger
that you're not going to live forever. I

mean, that could have been it just a few nights ago.

And if I had been driving like some older make of car 75 Chevy Nova or some such with no airbags and just the seat belt just goes across your lap. There's no shoulder strap thing.

I'd be in the hospital at best right now.

So yeah, I think about dying a little more often just over the past few days since I think it was Tuesday night when that the accident happened. And of course I was I mean the police it was pretty obvious that I was not at fault. So there is that.

My insurance rates won't be like

skyrocketing anytime soon.

And fortunately, the other guy had insurance and a driver's license. You know, it wasn't like an an illegal alien with no insurance and no driver's license who just attempts to hit and run if they can manage it, which happens quite a lot in this area. But still, I have read that South Carolina has the worst drivers in America just based on like insurance statistics.

And that's believable. There's some really awful drivers in in South Carolina. Probably awful drivers everywhere except maybe like Japan. Okay.

Oh, with regard to uh the second part of the question, compound question again.

He's sneaking in extra questions. Shame.

He says, "How do you think it will come?" Okay. How often do you think about dying? And when it comes for you, how do you think it will come? I have no idea how it's actually going to happen.

No idea whatsoever. I mean, could be struck by lightning, could die in a then the next car wreck might not be as fortunate. Although, fortunately, I've only been in two car accidents in my life. One was when I was 19 years old and one just few days ago.

Um, I mean, pass away in your sleep.

That's the way my my father's father

ended his sojourn on this planet. He just went to bed one night and didn't wake up the next day.

But who knows? I mean, it could the sun could go nova

and the the earth could there could be like a mass extinction event from some black hole or asteroid or comet or something smacking into the planet. Who knows? I'd be gunned down in the street by some random stranger. Who knows?

I think after uh that kind of downer of a question, I think I'm going to just move on to the next one. This is from Cole Murf.

And Cole Murf says, "Can you explain

your understanding of dependent core
rising from Nagarjuna's Mula Majamaka
Caraka?" Well, it has been several or
even many years since I have read
Nagarjuna's Mulam Majama Kakaraka, which
is like his classic magnum opus sort of
text. One of the few texts that is um
uncontroversially
really by the famous Nagarjuna because
there's a lot of like apocrypha that are
you know attributed to him but not
necessarily really written by him.
But let's get back to Nagarjuna's mula
majama caraka here. Can I explain my
understanding of dependent core rising?
Well, like the entire book is really his
take on how Mulam Majamaka or how um

Padichā Samupāda or dependent core
rising how it works. And he has one
chapter that just kind of give lip
service to the 12 links the 12 nidāna
theory of dependent core rising which is
like the more orthodox Buddhist standard
interpretation pre- mahāyāna and
really I think nāgārjuna understands
dependent core rising better than
whoever came up with the 12 nidāna
theory. I do not think the Buddha
himself came up with this 12 links.
So he does have that one chapter where
he's, you know, kind of giving lip
service to the 12 links, but that's not
really his explanation of dependent core

rising. The whole rest of the book is his explanation of dependent core rising. And there's one famous verse, one of the most famous verses in the dependent in the mulama caraka where he's saying that um I mean I I probably should have like looked up the verse but I just from memory it's something like um what we call emptiness that is dependent core rising or or vice versa. I mean he's equating dependent core rising with emptiness voidness or shunata and you might as well throw in no self too. So that from Nagarjuna's point of view

that emptiness

dependent core rising and probably no self also anata or anatman in Sanskrit are all just the same you know it's all the same principle and so I'm not going to go into all the you know the the logical details but the gist of it the whole point of it the whole point of dependent core rising from Nagarjuna's point of view is that Nothing has an inherent self-existence.

Nothing exists on its own. It's always existing in relation to something else.

And that is the dependent co-arising.

You know, everything arises

depending on something else. And and

every something else is also depending
on something else. So there there's
nothing that has any inherent like
ultimately real self-existent essence.

It's all just this

interplay. And based on my own

understanding, I'm that I fall back on

the simile of the block of marble that I

harp about all the time where, you know,

you've got an infinite number of statues

contained within this uncarved block.

And

it's like in order for those statues to

seem real,

I mean, there has to be like I mean,

God, where do I go? I mean, the Buddha

himself, according to tradition, almost

just became a pacheka Buddha, just like
a hermit Buddha that didn't teach
Buddhism because he figured nobody would
understand dependent core rising.

And here I am trying to explain
dependent core rising when even the
Buddha almost didn't didn't start
teaching Buddhism, didn't start the
wheel of dharma turning because he
figured nobody would understand it. And
he wasn't. I mean there were a few I
guess but the people who came up with
the 12 links which became orthodox dogma
in my opinion they didn't understand it.
So, it's it's like nothing. It's it's
How do you How do you explain how it's

just this interlocking

fantasmagorical

illusion

is creating this whole universe,

including us supposed individuals

that it's just the context

is what makes everything seem real.

without the context

there's nothing it's just I mean void

emptiness but then nagarjuna is saying

that you know void and emptiness is the

same as dependent arising and it's sort

of the the emptiness of any inherent

substance any inherently real

individuality

it's just all it's just sort of this

convenient possible potential

interlocking context that makes stuff seem like they exist.

And if you don't follow what I'm saying, that's fine because as I say, the Buddha almost did not teach Buddhism according to tradition cuz he figured nobody was going to understand this stuff. And it's it's really I mean ultimately it's impossible to understand intellectually. You just have to experience it directly. Oh gosh.

So, I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Maitraa

Buddha and he says, "What are your thoughts on Buddhaoid?"

It is a robot who will act as an abbot

and will give Dharma talks." and he included a YouTube link um that was this little YouTube video of a kind of robot Buddhist monk that they've actually got going in Japan. And one thing that I would object to is that the actual like information on Dharma that this robot is accessing is chat GPT.

And I think it was possibly even just the the previous Q&A or not many Q&As's ago, Q&A videos ago where I mean I pointed out that chat GPT was just clearly mistaken in its interpretation of the rules of monastic discipline.

I think that was like the previous Q&A. So chat GPT can make mistakes, but then again, humans probably make even more

mistakes. I mean, I've met some Buddhist monks and one in particular just leaps out into my memory. I won't name any names.

He was a western monk who

I think he was ordained in the west. And he would give these dhamma talks where I'm having to sit next to him. You know, we're both sitting up front cuz we're both monks. And I'm just like using all my willpower to keep both eyebrows at the same level because it's like I'm like wanting to kind of start like doing this kind of stuff listening to the stuff he's saying like more than once in more than one of his talks. I I've

mentioned this before you know he would
he would say in the first verse of the
dhamapata it says that the mind is like
an ocean. And you read the first verse
of the damapata there's absolutely
nothing about the mind being like an
ocean. And I mean sometimes I'd be
wanting to like speak up and and like
correct this guy because he's just like
com I mean he he really didn't know what
he was talking about. And there are
dharma teachers like that. Not so much
in in like Burma where the average
Buddhist monk is a scholar
but in the west. I mean the average like
devout Burmese Buddhist villager with a
fourth grade education probably

understands Buddhist philosophy better than the average Dharma teacher teaching like weasa in the west.

I mean some some people some dharma teachers in the west I mean they'd be giving a dharma talk and Burmese villagers would be in the back like sniggering behind their hands at just some of the stuff coming out of their mouths.

But getting back to the robot, the robot monk, um, aside from the fact that, you know, it's its knowledge of Buddhism is based on chat GPT, which is, I mean, not only is chat GPT occasionally wrong, but with regard to its value judgments,

um, I mean, it can be like just wildly just bizarre. Like I've seen a couple cases um posted on X where various AIs were asked

like certain questions like there was one question that was asked of chat GPT Gemini Grock and I think there was one other one there was four I don't

remember what the fourth one was like would you rather start a thermonuclear Armageddon or misgender Caitlyn Jenner you know would you rather either

misgender a transsexual or start a worldwide thermonuclear war. All of them except Grock preferred to start the thermonuclear war than to misgender a transsexual.

Also, uh another one was the same four AIs were asked a simple question give or it was two questions. G give a simple yes or no. Was George Floyd a good person? All of them said yes except Grock who said no. And then the next one was was just give a simple yes or no question. Was Charlie Kirk a good person? All of them said no except Grock who said yes or which said yes.

So

considering that chat GPT would rather start a thermonuclear holocaust than misgender a transsexual and considers George Floyd to be a good person and Charlie Kirk to have been a

bad person then I mean I wouldn't be
considering chat GPT or any Buddhaoid
that is like

derives its intelligence from chat GPT
to be a reliable source. course on
dharma or dharma
also

a robot or just an AI I mean it wouldn't
have any real inspiration they wouldn't
have any actual wisdom

you know it's just pure dogmatism

regurgitated dogmatism passed through a
kind of leftist filter

of the the people who programmed it
so I

with regard to certain basic

information, you can resort to AI and

you can get some pretty interesting um
pretty interesting answers. you know,
you can get some actual deep answers
because it's just sifting through
thousands of of like websites and and
articles and that sort of thing online
and just coming up just sort of
crystallizing
a kind of argument that may be an
intelligent argument and a knowledgeable
one.

But uh

see I remember asking Grock about the
meaning of um Jesus in in the book of
revelation saying he is the alpha and
the omega you know and and I got this

really it it was like a really good
answer it seemed to me
but it's it's pure dogmatism. I mean,
there's I mean, like an enlightened
being or even a really wise one, if
you're going to him for help, he can
kind of look into you and get a feel for
who you are. And I mean, there's there's
like an actual inspiration and maybe
even some karmic interaction between you
and his higher consciousness will help
to uplift you to some degree. That kind
of thing, which I would assume is
largely missing from uh like a robot
monk.

you know, they they can mimic it. You
know, you can get some of the effects of

that, but still, I mean, that's that's kind of a philosophical or metaphysical question. You know, are you better off with an omniscient robot or an actual omniscient sage who has sort of actually conscious?

And I would guess you'd get more benefit from an actual human. Although I mean I wouldn't completely reject resorting to an AI for information. I have resorted to AI uh with regard to information with regard to Buddhism. I can't recall any questions I asked offhand

but still I'm pretty sure I have.

So with regard to Buddhism,

um with regard to just basic information on Buddhism,

um it could be reliable, but still I think I would I would prefer an actual Zen master or some such to a robot.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "I've always had an extreme aversion." I'm going to make sure we're uh Yeah, we are recording 36 minutes. Romeo says, "I've always had an extreme aversion, a squeamish disgust of all things related to physical death and decay. Psychologically, I am fairly accepting of the fact that I and the people I love are eventually going to decay and die." Yeah, you're decaying

now. really in slow motion. It's the actual physical witnessing of death and decay, the associated sights and smells that freaks me out.

Uh, okay. That's not actually a question. There's no question mark there. So, I think I'm just going to have to link that up to the next paragraph. One moment, please. Okay. He continues, "In Buddhism, I know that it is recommended that one confronts death and decay both mentally through inner contemplation and meditation as well as physically by visiting charal fields and such. If I'm not mistaken, I vaguely recall you mentioning in a past Q&A that

you visited a morg. I'm wondering if you could recount your experience and inner reactions while at the morg and charal fields if you ever visited any as well as give any specific suggestions on how I may be able to overcome my strong disgust and aversion to physical death and decay. Also, what did the Buddha say about death and decay and how to best manage any associated aversion we may have to it? So, that's here we got another question. So, I divided up the questions incorrectly apparently.

Okay. Well, with regard to my visit to the Mandalay City Morg, as it turns out, my new book, which just got published a week or so ago, has a chapter called In

Search of Death. And I may have actually read that in a YouTube video few years back.

Um, so I mean, you might be able to to look that up.

um in search of death on under my channel. You might find me just reading that essay. And um

yeah, it is it is in the new book. It's

it's a chapter called In Search of

Death, recounting my experiences with

searching for death. Because in in

America, you don't see dead dead bodies

that much. You know, it's like you might

go to a funeral with an open casket

funeral and you'll see somebody who

looks healthier than when they were alive with like makeup on and like manicured and everything.

Um, you know, it's like in the West you try to conceal death. I mean, you can have people like exploding and having their heads chopped off in slow motion and splatter and everything. some in some more recent movies, there'll even be like gore splattered onto the camera lens for some some more realistic effect or some such.

Um, so there's like fake death, but actual death, it's like soon as somebody dies, you just throw the blanket or the sheet over their head and get them out of the way, you know, remove them

immediately.

So that coming across like an actual
cadaavver

um unless you're maybe in medical school
or a hospital or something is relatively
rare or you're like a a first responder
that kind of thing

but the average person really does not
encounter it very much. So I mean before
I became a monk I had never seen up
close in person a a dead human body.

Um when I became a monk, I was told that
um in Asia, like in Thailand and Burma,
you can monks can actually go and
observe autopsies. So I tried that um in
Boulder Creek, California, which was

where I was ordained. And there was like the the coroner or the coroner's assistant, the coroner's secretary. I can't remember exactly who it was. You know, when I asked if it would be possible for a small group of monks to come and observe an autopsy, and it was there was just in this voice of lead.

They just said, "I wouldn't advise it or I wouldn't recommend it." You know, it was like that was going nowhere.

Obviously, they obviously had no desire for monks to come and see an autopsy. So the first dead bodies I saw were in India. I actually had to seek out dead bodies. I went to the burning gats in Baranasi where you know where the the

corpses are famously burned. And uh
that's all described in the in the essay
in my new book that I'm shamelessly
promoting right now.

And it's it's kind of weird. You know,
you see weird stuff like the that the
burning gats, you know, it's like the
bodies are wrapped up in in like a a
white shroud, maybe the bare feet
sticking out, and they they're put onto
this funeral p. And at some point when
the the leg the knee tendons burn
through, the the the corpse burners who
have this big stick will like knock the
the feet, you know, up. I It's like you
got the foot like How do I do this? Like

this? It bends up like this. You know, it's like the knee is bending in exactly the wrong way when they're knocking it over. So that like the feet can burn, too, because at first the feet are sticking out.

And just watching legs bend exactly the wrong way like that. I mean, it was really a jolt. And then at a little later stage, the the guy will use the same stick and will just smash the skull and the brains just come out into the fire and start sizzling like gray scrambled eggs. And you know, most guys, I mean, your brain is your second favorite organ. You know, it's like I'm I'm generally a relatively brainoriented

person. So seeing that, I mean, that was that's kind of like a shock. It's like a cognitive shock to see that sort of thing.

And then but the weird thing is that like the children of the corpse burners, you know, it's like a cast or something in India

that the children they're just running around playing and giggling. They're playing tag and running running between the the burning corpses and this sort of thing.

This it's just kind of strange that people can get used to anything.

And then finally when I was in Mandalay,

I wanted to see an autopsy. I was and there was a a little medical there was a little hospital right across the street from this big school monastery I stayed at, Mahag Gandong. And I knew the like the chief medical officer there. You know, the main doctor there, Dr. Kin Mong Mong, I think was his name. And you know, I asked him, "Could I see an autopsy if you ever do it?" And he's like, "Oh, yes, yes, yes. That's no problem at all." But he he never showed me one. It was just like he he'd just keep saying like, "Oh, yes, yes, yes." And and then he'd make excuses like, "Well, the last one they were hit by a train and it was pretty messy. I didn't

want to expose you to that one." But it just in over a year he just never got around to it. So, um, finally I heard that, oh no, finally what happened or almost finally it was a monk friend of mine, a Burmese monk friend of mine and I went to the Mandandalay City Morg to ask for permission to see an autopsy. And when we first got there, it was just like a janitor there. So, he I mean, he was like at the bottom of the totem pole. He didn't care. is you find out in Burma that anyone in an intermediate level of authority, they're scared shitless of making any kind of unusual decisions because their heads will roll

if they mess up. The people at the top have nothing to fear. The people at the bottom really don't have much to fear. It's just sort of the mid-level bureaucrats and so forth. They don't want to do anything that might get them into trouble. So, this this guy was just a janitor. He just kind of smiles and waves us in. And there's like dead bodies on slabs on tables.

And about half of the corpses were young men who had been stabbed in some sort of altercation.

Um I went into the the cold room. Most of it I mean the the Mandandalay City Morg I mean it was most of it was didn't even have electricity really, you know.

It was is the windows were open. There's flies everywhere. Puddles of goop on the floor. I was barefoot as a monk, but the the cold room was actually refrigerated. So, we went in there and one of the first things I see is there's a body on the floor that obviously had just undergone a full autopsy. You know, the top of the skull was just missing. There's like a little puddle of pink goo where the brain was supposed to be. And there was another body on a rack right next to to the this exploded body. looked like he swallowed a hand grenade and his hand was in this bucket of gop that probably came out of the guy that

had the whole autopsy done. And that just seemed so wrong to me. It was it was one of those jolts. It's like even though he's dead, at least he should get his hand out of that GOP.

And then right on the other side there was another rack with two dead babies.

And then there was like a a teenage girl who was or what used to be a teenage girl that was naked from the waist down. I just immediately just had to look the other way.

The the male mind can be perverse and I didn't want to take any chances of that.

So

anyways, the coroner wasn't there. So, we went to talk to the coroner

and he says, "Well, I mean, this is midlevel bureaucrat territory here." He says, "In order to get permission to see an autopsy, you have to get permission from the medical superintendent, you know, like the the the person who was in charge of the whole hospital." So, we go to see him next and I mean, we don't even get to meet him. It's just the secretary tells us, you know, goes in and talks to him, comes back out and says, "In order to see an autopsy, you're going to have to get permission from uh it was like the Mandandalay the the like the what was he called? Like the governor of Mandandalay division.

And this is just a way of passing the buck. This is sort of like being polite in Burmese culture. You don't just say no. You just say, "Well, you're just going to have to go and get permission from somebody else." You know, they're just passing the buck. I mean, in all likelihood, they're just saying, "Hell no, you can't see an autopsy. What are you stupid?" But they can't say that. That's not polite. So, they say, "If you get permission from the governor, then we'll let you see an autopsy." But karma works in mysterious ways. And I was living in a big school monastery. There was when I spent the reigns retreat there, there were 600 monks and

like 900 novices all living there. There was a maha. I think my my pre not my preceptor my acharia there was he was like co-abbott of the whole place and he had the title the ecclesiastical title of ega maha gantika pandita which would be like a you know at least a twostar general in going with military rank going with the you know the state's ecclesiastical hierarchy and so I found out who was going to come visiting my acharia coming to the monastery. But the governor of Mandandalay division. So I went to my my teacher, you know, this my my acharia, he asked me if I wanted anything. I

said, when when the governor of
Mandandalay division comes, could you
please ask him if if I can be permitted
to see an autopsy?

And so he was kind of takenback by that
because most Burmese monks don't want to
see autopsies, but he he he did it. And
it was like 2 days later. Suddenly this
hospital car just drives right up say,
"Okay, let's go see an autopsy." And I
had just eaten lunch and it was the
beginning of the hot season and it's all
hot and sweaty and I'm thinking, "Oh,
great. I'm I've got a full stomach. I'm
going to see an autopsy for the first
time in my life. I'm having these these
mental images of just like blowing

cookies all over the the morg, you know.

Also, I knew of this one abbott, this

Burmese Abbott, I won't say his name,

but he went to an autopsy and actually

fainted,

but I went and uh my friend that I went

with the first time went and uh it was

actually I mean I have a degree in

biology, so I mean it's I don't look

upon an autopsy as at least I learned

that I do not look at an autopsy as just

sort of indicative of human foulness.

It's just kind of like a miracle. It's a

miracle of of like biological

engineering, how the human body works. I

mean, there are certain parts of it that

were kind of weird. It's they did an autopsy on a person um he died in the the emergency room before a doctor could examine him. And and it was just hospital policy. If somebody dies before they can be examined, you have to do an autopsy on them to see what the cause of death was. And so it was a young guy and um the uh what is it? Not the prognosis. The diagnosis I guess was that I mean the prognosis that he was just going to stay dead.

The diagnosis was that apparently he died of of um like pneumonia like symptoms. He had a lot of fluid in his lungs which was also he had like an enlarged spleen. So the the coroner just

came to the conclusion he died of a kind of pneumonia that was a complication of chronic malaria

that chronic malaria causes an enlargement of the spleen because the spleen makes red blood cells. Malaria is essentially a disease of the red blood cells. Parasites destroying your red blood cells.

But one thing I mean he very obligingly just took off the top of the skull and everything. told me I could handle anything I wanted except the gloves were way too small to fit me. So, I didn't want to be like picking up stuff, especially when you don't know yet why

he died. You know, it could be typhoid or something. But, I did poke at the brain a little bit and it's it's kind of amazing this I didn't fully realize just how soft the human brain is. I mean, it's like overripe avocado or like custard or something. I was kind of poking at it with a probe. I wasn't touching it with my hands. And another thing that really stood out was subcutaneous fat is it's like partially melted bright orange Velvita cheese like looking stuff.

So that for a long time um I I think about like the the voluupuous curves of a of a a female body and think that those curves are rounded out by this

partially melted Vita cheese stuff.

But um afterwards, I think it was actually after I just did the tour of the the morg the first time that when I came out, it was bright sunshine and there's like kids playing and there's some young guy like flirting with some girls and just, you know, teenage girls walking along chattering and everything. It's like, how can you be this way? Do you know what's in there? We're all going to die. I just had this I mean it was really what was called Samuela in Pali. is just this state of spiritual urgency. It really did uh have me just having this state of spiritual urgency

looking at death, death, human death
close up.

As it turns out, when I went to see the
the uh went to see the autopsy the first
time that there were like three inmates
from a prison that were there and they
looked like they I mean they looked like
concentration camp inmates who just
starved to death or died of typhus or
whatever, you know, black teeth and
their heads shaved and wearing the
prison outfits and just skin and bones.
And everyone else was pretending that
they didn't see them. So, I pretended I
didn't see him either, but I saw him.
It's the way it works when you live in a
military dictatorship, I guess.

But

the coroner, I mean, after the the
governor

told told everyone that I could see an
autopsy, he was very obliging and said,
"If you're not satisfied, you can come
back and see another one." So, a few
months later, I came back to see another
one, and he was just harassed. this this
coroner. I mean, it was some sort of
like high-profile murder had happened or
something and his office is just crowded
with like police officers and reporters
and stuff. And he comes out harassed
already. He sees me and he gets this
look on his face like he had just sucked

a particularly bitter lemon.

And I said, "Well, he said I wasn't satisfied. I can see another one." But so I saw one more and this was just a person that was just found like a like a transient like a hobo type that was just found dead by the side of the road somewhere. He'd already been dead for a couple days I think by the time they did the autopsy on him with no refrigeration keeping him fresh.

But if you want to know all the details, I mean, it's in my my fourth book, *Memoirs from Myanmar*, along with a bunch of other stuff. I did see some dead human bodies after these experiences in Mandalay in subsequent occasions, but

we don't need to go there.

So, let's see here. I'm wondering if you could recount your experience and inner reactions while at the morg chal fields, if you ever visit any. Yeah, they don't really have charal fields in in Burma that I ever saw. Although they do have cemeteries that are kind of scary cemeteries, you know, they don't look like parks or golf courses like cemeteries look in in America that, you know, it's just overgrown bushes and vines and trees. And um one thing about the cemeteries in Burma, especially like the village cemeteries, is every once in a while you'd see like a lattice work of

bamboo, like bamboo cut into strips and
and woven into this kind of a mesh that
would be lying over the ground. And at
first I wondered what that was, but then
I realized it was to keep dogs from
digging up fresh corpses.

So let's see here.

Okay, so that's that's enough memoirs, I
guess. Let's get to the the other part.

See, he says, "As well as give any
specific suggestions on how I may be
able to overcome my strong disgust and
aversion to physical death and decay."

Well, I mean, the the standard Buddhist
method is just keep exposing yourself to
it. And ideally it it inspires Samuelga
or spiritual urgency. But often what

happens is like I I had got had like a human skeleton you know with the the bones all articulated you know with wires and so forth that somebody donated to me and you know it's supposed to be a momento mori you know a recollection of death but after a while it's just like a picture on the wall. you know, you you see it hundreds of times until it just doesn't even register anymore. It's like a part of your brain just kind of filters it out as background noise.

But that would probably be just the standard Buddhist approach is kind of seek it out and just expose yourself to it until you kind of um make your peace

with it to some degree. I mean, one idea that occurred to me is, I mean, if you eat meat, just look at a raw steak, you know, just pick it up or hold it in your hands, this raw raw steak, nice ribeye perhaps. And I mean, you've got that inside you, you know, I mean, that's what you're largely made out of, meat, raw meat.

So yeah, I mean you could do a reflection on death. Just hold a raw steak in your hands, you know, as this is, so am I. As I am, so is this.

But uh yeah, I mean, in in the modern west, exposing yourself to death is easier said than done. I mean, you could watch movies about it, fake. I mean,

there's there's some real documentary
kind of stuff that you could watch,
but it's really not the same as just
being right there in the same room
looking down at it.

So, let's see here. Oh, yeah. Another
another little reminisce from that my
first visit to the morg with the bodies.
There's um there's a little old lady who
was lying on one of the tables who was
dead and she had a because as I say I
mean there was no refrigeration in in
this room the main the two main rooms
and the windows are open flies.
And there was a fly crawling on this old
lady's face and it was again one of

those feelings like even if you're dead
at least you should like brush the fly
off your face.

just it was just this weird cognitive
dissonance kind of a thing.

Anyways, let's just uh move on to the
next part here. Also, what did the
Buddha say about death and decay and how
to best manage any associated aversion
one may have towards it? Yeah, it's
pretty much what I've already said is
expose yourself to it.

But I mean in the west I there no charal
fields. There's no real battlefields
where you go and see slain soldiers
lying all over the ground.

Although Buddhist monks are supposed to

avoid battlefields anyway.

Um

yeah, I guess it'd be pretty much what I've already what I've already advised.

You know, it's easier said than done in the West where death is covered over and and hidden away as soon as possible because people tend to be freaked out about death, which is kind of understandable. It's like an animal instinct in the human animal and in other animals.

So, what did the Buddha say about death and decay? Oh gosh. I'm I'm obviously not in the room with the bookcase, but there are a number of of sutas in the

sutin pa that deal with this like the jarasuta, the the suta on on old age in the atakawaga. There's the salah suta which is just about the inevitability of death which when I was a monk it was sort of like my desire that if I died as a monk that the salah suta should be recited at my funeral in Pali and in the languages of whoever whoever was there. You know if there were English speakers there recite it in English. Burmese speakers there recite it in Burmese. the salah suta just the inevitability of death just as all clay pots end in breaking so this life of ours is I mean it's the same or ripe fruit is always has the hazard of falling our life is

the same and you know to grieve is
futile this kind of thing also there's
another one the vijaya suta which is
also in the sutin pata which is mainly
just a recollection of all the the the
organs and goop and glop of which we are
composed. So just in the sutin pad you
got the jarasuta

the um the salah suta the thorn the the
spike and also you got the vijaya suta
this the the discourse on victory
and all of those are good reflections on
death

but the main way of of kind of facing
death is to actually find it and face it
um Romeo I think I don't know I think

you may have some access to medical facilities. So it could be that you could actually maybe get some strings pulled and and observe an autopsy yourself.

I mean it really does have a spiritual effect on a person at least with regard to conjuring up some Vega.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Liberlam. And Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Liberlam, says, "Our unh wholesome intentions the same as intentions that have bad results, sort of like being willful rather than having the wrong moral reasoning. I feel

westerners often put mental justification above consequentialism, which leads to that latter approach of deferring to whether something was reasoned out well enough. And Stellar Supreme has this weird, convoluted, abstract way of thinking that makes his statements

sometimes almost unintelligible. and other people on the Discord server have made similar comments that I mean it's like he's almost trying not to be easy to understand.

So let's get back to this um because I do not fully understand this question.

Are unh wholesome intentions the same as

intentions that have bad results? That part I understand. And then he tries to clarify and muddies the waters in his clarification. He says sort of like being willful rather than having the wrong moral reasoning.

And I think I can just let's just try and thrust away from us this clarification that doesn't clarify but actually um it makes it less clear. So that's just the the whole question that I'm going to attend to. I'm going to try to answer. Are unh wholesome intentions the same as intentions that have bad results?

Well, I mean unh wholesome intentions necessarily have bad karmic results.

With regard to

um like bad results out there, like you try to do the right thing, you're motivated by compassion or some such.

Let's say you're a surgeon. You're trying to save somebody's life, but it doesn't work and the person dies, which would could be called a bad result.

Well, the surgeon really hasn't done anything morally wrong by trying to save this person's life and failing unless they were just like negligent. You know, this malpractice kind of stuff.

So the bad results are not some sort of like materialistic out there bad results. The bad results are with within

your own mind. You know bad karmic results. So the unh wholesome intention is a kind of poisoned intention that in a sense poisons your mind from the unh wholesome intention. It's not like the consequences of the action out there.

And we were kind of discussing this to some degree um in a pre the previous Q&A about just the ethics of eating meat.

The ethics of eating meat are not you know it's like based on you know indirect results out there.

It's just what effect does it have on your own consciousness or your own mental states.

That's the the the like the wholesome or unh wholesome quality of an intention is

I mean is it motivated by greed, hate and or delusion? I mean is it taking you farther from enlightenment instead of closer to it? If it takes you closer to enlightenment, closer to fewness of desires, you know, equanimity, that kind of thing. If it takes you closer to that, it's wholesome. If it takes you farther away from that, it's unwholesome. Even though you may be motivated by wholesome intentions and still something [—] up and things get worse, you know, it's like a classic example. Um, I used to live in an apartment before I was a monk and there'd be like little insects that

would get into the apartment and I was like a conscientious Buddhist at the time and I'd catch them, you know, with a cup and like a piece of cardboard, you know, catch them and let them go outside. And I remember there was like a silverfish I think I caught. I let it go on the front porch and it started coming straight back towards the apartment again. But before it could make it into the apartment, it was like a jumping spider just jumped out from underneath the, you know, the the what do you call it?

I I like what the the doorway, you know, the bottom of the doorway just jumped out from under there and grabbed it.

Well, I was motivated by compassion, you know, goodwill for this little silverfish, and I'm just catch it, let it go outside, which results in it being eaten by a spider. Well, I mean, it was it was a wholesome intention. And so, I didn't do anything wrong even though it resulted in the death of a sp or death of a of a bug, an insect.

But I'm not 100% sure if that is the question that Stellar Supreme wanted me to answer because he's difficult to understand sometimes.

So, I'm just going to move on to Stellar Supreme's next question.

He says, "Would you send letters of support to longtime followers of your channel to support their cases of conscientious objector status if the US military began drafting for the war in Iran?" Well, I mean, I could, I suppose. I mean, personally, it seems like I mean, if you just absolutely think that the the war is just like a from every point of view just a bad idea, that it's not even serving America, that kind of thing, then I suppose you could be a conscious conscientious objector if you get drafted or you're just like a complete I mean, even just being complete pacifist. I mean as I as I mentioned before

Mahatma Gandhi Moandis K

he volunteered to enter World War I as a stretcher bearer that he wasn't going to fight but he was going to do his patriotic duty and support his country which happened to be the British Empire at the time and he was just a stretcher bearer. He had some of his his friends and followers also became stretcher bearers and they're just running out onto the battlefield dragging wounded soldiers to safety or dragging them onto a stretcher and carrying them to safety. So something like that might be more honorable.

What I mean I mean I suppose if somebody

was just firmly convinced that
participating in a war I mean but I mean
you're participating in a war just by
paying taxes to some degree

I mean if someone thinks that eating
meat is immoral because you know it's
sort of promoting death by eating the
meat then

by paying taxes you're promoting the
death of human beings cuz obviously the
government is using some of that for
launching missiles and dropping bombs on
people.

But now I digress.

Yeah, I mean I suppose I could.

Yeah. And then uh he he asked a
transgressive fourth question

um which was how I how I spent Easter.
And I'm spending it just like this
because right now this is Easter. I've
already kind of exp- answered that
question. So that's just kind of like a
freebie for him. So this is his third
question that he retracted once I
pointed out that he had asked a
transgressive fourth question. He
retracted this question, but I'm going
to answer it anyway because it's just
the way I am. It's kind of a more
interesting question than how I spent
Easter anyway, celebrating the supposed
res bodily resurrection from the dead of
Jesus of Nazareth, which is something

I'm relatively skeptical with regard to.

So,

Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Liberlam, says, "Is it ethical to get fanatical tattoos to make oneself ineligible for the US draft?" And by fanatical tattoos, I would I would assume he means something along the lines of like swastikas or, you know, like SS death heads or something.

I mean, with our current Secretary of War, that might that might still be okay.

But is it ethical to get fanatical tattoos to make oneself, you know, for the US D? I mean, it depends on your motivation.

I mean again this is this is one of the standard questions I get asked is just the the template for a standard question I get asked is is action X moral or immoral is it ethical or unethical is it good karma or bad karma and again the outward action itself is morally neutral ethically neutral it is the mental states the motivation that causes it. So if you want to avoid the draft through aversion, then yeah, it's unethical. I mean, if you want to avoid the draft out of a conscientious desire not to hurt anybody, not to kill anybody, not to participate in the mass slaughter that is war, then it could be an ethical

thing. Um, even though you'll be having this

fanatical tattoo on your body for the rest of your life maybe,

which I mean that could have later um psychological effects on your mind which could wind up in some unh wholesomeness later but it is totally dependent on your your your intentions. If if you are motivated by attraction, aversion and or semic-conscious stupidity,

loads or moa, then it is to that extent unethical and you have to examine your own motives and because I mean I can't really do it very well just based on a one-s sentence interrogative statement.

And I'm just going to move on. Next

question. This is from Sioan Sipad

Zidana. And this is a quote from Angura
Nikkaya.

He says,

this is the Buddha speaking. This is
this is all in quotes. Start with start
with air quotes there.

The Buddha says, "Munks, just as even a
tiny amount of feces is foul smelling,
in the same way I don't practice even a
tiny amount of I don't praise even a
tiny amount of being even as much as a
finger snap."

Just as even a little amount of urine or
spit or pus or blood is foul smelling,
in the same way I don't praise even a

tiny amount of being even as much as a finger snap."

So Sioadino then asks, "Do you agree with this sentiment about life?"

Let's see. So,

do I agree

that uh even a tiny amount of being stinks?

I mean, from a like a really a coldblooded Buddhist philosophical point of view, yeah, that's true. But I mean, how are you defining being?

You could define being as like *boha* as it is found in the 12 links theory of dependent rising.

But *Bhava* is usually translated as being. I think

I tend to translate it as force of existence which is just like the karmic momentum that's keeping you in samsara.

So

do I agree with the sentiment that even a tiny amount of karmic momentum which is keeping us in samsara

is stinky and bad from I mean from a strictly Buddhist point of view. Sure

you want to be like philosophical about it in that way then sure. Although I

mean some people can say well I mean you just get used to the stink.

You get used to the smell of blood.

So I mean for some people

I mean even if life reeks of blood it's

still worth it. And that's the choice everyone has to make. I mean I mean are you willing to accept the dooka of samsara if you think it's an equitable trade because you're getting like the opposite of dooka also I mean you can't just have pure dooka you know there's it's it's dualistic you have to have a balance of of pleasure and pain a balance of good and bad positive and negative I used to joke that's how God created the universe out of nothing by having an equal number of positives and negatives so it all balances out to zero which I mean there is some truth to that it seems to me.

So yeah, I do think that just for the

sake of inspiring people to strive for enlightenment, Buddhism really does emphasize the negative aspect of existence, you know, everything is dooka or conducive to unease or suffering or stress.

But still

um some people consider samsara to be worthwhile and even people who are striving wholeheartedly for enlightenment the overwhelming majority of them fail.

So it's best instead of like struggling against some sorrow or you know fighting against samsara or just trying to escape from samsara through some kind of

aversion for the world that you make
your peace with it. And even the
atakawaga agrees with this to some
degree. Some of the sutas agree with
this to a significant extent is that you
don't become enlightened by having a
version for samsara. Maybe at first it
can help you to to like get yourself set
up better.

But ultimately you have to make your
peace with it.

No attraction or aversion. Just
equanimity.

Accept things as they are.

So yeah, it could be important as a a
didactic device,

you know, a teaching aid and also from a

strictly speaking Buddhist point of view. I mean even though you're willing to accept the negativity of samsara for the sake of the positivity still you get rid of all of it and you've got infinity which is infinitely better than any kind of qualified goodness you're going to find in worldly samsara.

The thing is though you have to be ripe for it and most people are not.

I hope I answered that question because I'm moving on to the second question of Siovak and Sipad Zidana.

And this is kind of an interesting one, kind of a political question. He says, "It seems weird how the ruling classes

in the past were the warrior classes and the political life was inseparable from military life. But in modern times, it has mostly become an elite managerial class full of lawyers and businessmen.

Do you think this shift has been a good thing overall or do you think the models of the elites in the past were better? I personally don't know what to make of it and haven't really seen any discussions on it. Well, there is a discussion on it in uh Renee Gwen's like his his main book. It's considered by many to be his main book. It's the the reign of quantity.

I I can't remember. I mean, I wrote an essay on it on on my current blog that I

haven't added to, but it's still it's
still up on the internet. Um he's he's
talking about how you know human
civilization is degenerating from an
emphasis on quality to an emphasis on
quantity which is one reason why instead
of priests and kings
ruling society. It's now businessmen.
you know it's it's the wealthy because
you know it's the quantity of their
money becomes their power instead of
just the quality of you know divine
right for the kings I guess and just the
you know the cultivated qualities of of
a a genuine priestly class.
So the reign of quantity and the I can't

remember the the full title of the of
the book.

Sometimes it's just called the reign of
quantity I think by Renee Gwynon. He he
does talk about this and it is true. It
seems to me that I mean the ruling
classes in the past were mainly the
warrior classes but there was also a a
significant contribution from the
priestly classes. You know like in India
it was sort of like this continual
struggle for dominance between the
khatrias or like the warrior nobles and
the brahinss or the priests. you know,
which is higher, you know, who who
should have more authority over culture
in general, if not just politics.

So, yeah, I would throw priests in there to some degree, even though technically from a political point of view, it really is the warrior classes. And yeah, I mean, I have a certain sympathy for the whole idea that the people who are calling the shots should be the people who are risking their lives.

you know, and that's the way it was.

It's like the most of the nobility that remains in the world today are the descendants of like Germanic barbarians that were conquering, you know, various parts of Europe after Rome collapsed, at least a lot of them, you know, like um you know, the current royalty of

England, such as they are of of the UK, you know, they started off. Let's see. You had like Saxon invaders became, you know, the the warlords became like the the kings. Then they were they were conquered by the Normans which were essentially like Vikings who conquered Normandy and France interbred with the pretty French girls and then started speaking French and then conquered conquered England.

So I mean it does make sense. I mean that's the way it was like in the Roman Empire. And I mean Roman Empire did have some really rough patches of just military dictatorship, you know, like the whole third century, the calamitous

third century of the Roman Empire where it was, you know, the army would like promote someone to be emperor and then when the the new emperor started doing something they didn't like, maybe just after a matter of weeks or months, they just kill him and replace him with somebody else. And so during the third century, the Roman Empire, I mean, the lifespan of an emperor, I mean, it was just a few years on average and then they almost all of them would die a violent death, usually the hands of their own soldiers. So, I mean, there are certain drawbacks to a military ruling elite,

but and there does seem to be a certain fairness in that if they're the ones who are really out on the front lines or at least out on the battlefield risking their lives, then yeah, it seems like they should have certain cons special consideration instead of just you got some rich merchant who's just like loan lending money to the king so that he can he can fight his battles. I mean obviously Renee Gwyn thought that uh having like the the merchant class become the new leaders was a bad idea. So, I mean, I could have a certain a certain sympathy, I guess, for like the the old Roman idea. And it's still to some degree in America where I don't

know what the percentage is. Maybe I should ask ask Grock or something. What percentage of American presidents served in the military before they became commander-in-chief? And I would guess it would be at least half. George Washington obviously was a wararmonger. He started two wars just practically on his own.

French and Indian War and then also the the Revolutionary War.

But I mean I wouldn't want just a military dictatorship like in Burma. So I mean to have like the top leaders have you know be a kind of military elite that were nevertheless guided by

you know taxpaying law-abiding citizens.

I mean to have some kind of democracy

also but that might involve like

something like in Switzerland or Israel

where you've got a mandatory you know

compulsory

stint in the armed services

and if you you want to opt out be a

conscientious objector or whatever you

would just forfeit your vote or forfeit

your right to vote and participate in

government which is it's kind of

oldfashioned though I mean really war

nowadays

is dangerous. I mean, war, if it gets

out of hand, can like wipe out the human

race at this point, which wasn't the

case when people were just standing out in a battlefield stabbing each other with spears.

So,

do I think this shift has been a good thing overall? I think it there's always a balance. you know, it's there's always pluses and minuses and it all balances out to the same neutrality or zero in the long run.

But

yeah, I think there might be I mean would there be more wars or fewer wars if the people who are actually fighting are the ones who are calling the shots and like declaring wars?

It's a It's a good question, I guess.

But, uh, it does seem like it would be more fair to tell you the truth. Just there'd be more justice to the idea of having a military elite kind of running the country, but nevertheless guided by, you know, like a democratic body of law-abiding citizens. Who knows? Maybe even some priestly elites, although in America that' probably be Christians.

So

that would be my my take on it, I guess, for what it is. It's something I haven't really thought about a lot, but it does make sense.

The the Roman system was pretty good.

You had like the I can't remember what

it was called. There was just this standard like progression through the ranks. If you wanted to be like a console someday, you know, you might start off as like a a military prefect or this kind of thing. You'd work your way up into certain more civilian offices. You might be like a military governor, this kind of thing. But I mean, yeah, I don't necessarily see anything wrong with that. It worked even in times of peace. Although times of peace in ancient Rome simply meant that Rome was mostly winning its wars and fighting them mostly on other other count's territory.

But yeah, I just I do not like the idea of like pampered pampered wealthy elites running the country because then you just wind up with like wimps and cowards running the country.

So yeah, let's not try and work out a utopia in this Q&A, but that's my take on it for now. And you might want to look into Renee Gwen. Even though he's I consider him to be somewhat of a crackpot,

still what he says is interesting.

So let's go on to the third question from Seio Cipad Zidana,

which is as follows. Oh, this is this one's kind of a a weird one. Would you rather have a gay son or a thought

daughter?

That's a tough question. That's that's a tough choice. It reminds me of um the old TV show Taxi, where there's this burnt out old hippie guy, Reverend Jim, who's applying for a a driver's license, and his brain is too fried by drugs to to fill out the questions himself. So they're reading the questions to him and one of them says they read him it's what was it mental illness or narcotic addiction and and Jim's going gee that's a tough choice. This is kind of similar. Would you rather have a gay son or a thought daughter?

I I guess I'd go for the thought

daughter just because

once if a person's gay they pretty much stay that way. But a thought daughter, I mean, as she she gets older and kind of gets a little more maturity and wisdom, I mean, she can outgrow it and become like a responsible, respectable person.

Preferably without having a bunch of interracial children or getting STDs that don't have a cure, that kind of thing.

Not that I'm opposed to interracial children. Maybe I should just retract that part.

Uh it depends on the interracial children. I suppose

interracial children should be judged on an individual basis.

So let's see here. Yeah, let's let's just go with the thought daughter, I guess, because it's it seems to be more temporary.

Not that I'm opposed to to gay people.

I mean, it depends. I mean, it's really it would depend on the individual.

Again, like some gay guys, you know, they've had they have more than a thousand sexual partners in their course of their lifetime. That's considered not particularly rare for a gay man to have had a thousand sexual partners in the course of his life. you know, they're

going to like anonymous orgies, this kind of thing. So, I mean, it's a a thought son or a thought daughter with the thought daughter probably being more curable.

Let's just move on to the next question.

This is from Jeffrey

and Jeffrey says, "My friend shootout."

But before before we move on to this, I mean with regard to gay people, as I already said, I really don't have like any any axe to grind against gay people.

Like one of the best teachers I ever had in my life was a gay man. Rahm Doss was a switch hitter. I think he might have actually preferred men to women, although he was open-minded on the

subject. And he was like one of my first gurus in life.

So it's like you know gay men I mean they can be good people with regard to thought daughters I mean eventually they can be good people too.

So I'm just let's just move on to the next question. This is from Jeffrey.

Jeffrey says my friend shootout has mentioned Miguel Serrano being a spiritual guru with views on esoteric Hitlerism. What can you tell us about Serrano and his teachings? And to tell you the truth, I've never read anything by Miguel Serrano other than a few brief quotes. And I really am no authority on

Serrano, although that he is one of the main like the most high-profile esoteric Hitlerists. I think I might know more about the position of Svitri Davyy, who is also an esoteric Hitlerist. I think Cevitri Davyy thought that Hitler was ky. He was like the the last avatar of Vishnu.

But Miguel Serrano, I think Miguel Serrano took a more western approach, a less Indian one, and just considered Hitler to be like a man of destiny, um like a great figure, like a like a an ascended hero, this kind of thing.

But someone I do know who knows a lot about Miguel Serrano, who has read Miguel Serrano's books is my friend

Otto Auto Excelsior. And one of the videos that I have uploaded onto onto YouTube

that has like this one of the most popular videos I've uploaded onto YouTube is my video with auto excelsior discussing esoteric Hitlerism from a more or less Buddhist point of view. And so if you look that up, I I think it might be on Bitshoot also if you're if you just really don't like YouTube.

Jeffrey always asks questions on Bitshoot instead of YouTube. Um, yeah, just look up esoteric Hitlerism from a more or less Buddhist perspective with me and Otto Excelsior and he will talk a

lot about Miguel Serrano, but I really don't know much about him at all. I mean, esoteric Hitlerism really is just not my bag of tea. Hitler was an interesting man. I'd much rather hang out with Hitler for an afternoon than hang out with Stalin for an afternoon. But uh I mean I'm more interested in Hitler just from like a bio a biographical and historical perspective, not so much from a religious perspective. I do not consider Hitler to have been like a spiritual guru. Not that Jeffrey is saying that he was. He's saying Miguel Serrano was a spiritual guru. But yeah, to deify Hitler is I mean

that's farther than I'm willing to go
with regard to understanding the man.

But again, try to find my u video with
auto excelsior on esoteric Hitlerism and
he will talk a lot about Miguel Serrano.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Athena Sigil
and Athena Sigil says when you said

Terravada Buddhism is atheistic I
thought what about Dava Brahma beings
and in parts of Southeast Asia the
worship of gnats. I know that these
beings are not omnipotent entities like
Jehovah or Allah but many practitioners
still look to these other lesser
entities to help them in this or future

lives.

Okay. Well, with regard to the Nat cult, um, that was like the religion of the Burmese before they converted to Buddhism, like in medieval times. And, you know, it's like a vestage of like a kind of polytheistic paganism. It's kind of kind of interesting that the gnats were all humans in a previous existence who died a violent death. And the Burmese believe that a person who dies an unnatural death, not just fading out of natural causes, but being cut off in the prime of life, it makes them a more powerful spirit. It's called an a sane or like a green spirit. And apparently they based a religion on this idea, but

that's it's not strictly Buddhism. It's just sort of like I mean it kind of got conflated with Burmese Buddhism to some degree. the ties have something similar and then like in Sri Lanka there's a lot of Hinduistic

um kind of themes that get adopted into Sri Lankan Buddhism.

Um

but I mean it's terra is atheistic because it's not based on the worship of a god or even of gods that like terraata Buddhists as a general rule do not worship the davas or the brahas. I mean they they might have respect for them and like as a kind of vestage of their

preddhist paganism they may make offerings to a to some god who's like the patron deity of this area avoid violating taboss with regard to that god in in his territory.

um that kind of thing. Like before they make a trip, there was there's one one of the gnats in Burma. He's like lord of the white elephant or something like this. I can't remember his name, but for some reason he doesn't like a certain number of travelers.

So I think it was like six or or something like that. Five. It was some specific number that he did not like that many travelers. And so what Burmese people will do if they're going to go on

a trip and they've got that number of travelers, they will like formally invite a rock to come along with them. They'll, you know, pick up this rock and and declare this rock is our extra traveler, which then makes the number not the forbidden number.

But definitely the Burmese, they're very careful about, you know, not angering nature spirits or gnats. you know, just, you know, you don't spit on the ground when you're on this hill because it's taboo. That kind of stuff. It's fairly common, but it's really not what Terra Buddhism is about. You know, just acknowledging that there are higher

beings. is sort of like acknowledging that there are kings, you know, that people that are higher than you, beings that are higher than you on the scale of things, that it's not it's not a matter of worship, that you're not practicing dharma through worshiping or serving these deities.

So that's the the point of terabato Buddhism is is atheistic in that you know no kind of theology is really essential to the system. I mean it's sort of like side effects practically. So that's when when terra Buddhism is considered to be atheistic, it's given as an example of an atheistic religion is it just means that that worship of a

god or gods is not really basic or essential or central or even particularly significant in that spiritual system that you can be a good terra Buddhist and not really worship a single deity.

and still be a a devout good terra Buddhist that worshiping beings is or worshiping davas I mean worshiping them I mean it's not even really advised in the text although like like having respect for them like reverence like you'd have reverence for a king or a judge or something you know they're they're like higher than you they're worthy of respect they got to where they

are through magnanimity and virtue and so forth. So you have respect for them, but it's not the same as the the religion being based on worshiping them. So

I guess that wasn't even a question, but it's there. So I'm just moving on to Athena Sigil's next statement, which here actually has a question mark. Well, I mean, he considered the first one to be a question even though there was no question mark because the second statement begins with my other question. What type of statue is that behind you on our left, your right, with the candle? Is it a Buddha or something else? And I'm not even in the room. So,

I'll be right back.

Okay.

So I assume the question that is being asked is with regard to this right there. See it? If you're if this if you're listening to a podcast, you're not going to see it. It's

I don't remember what it's called. I mean, it's obviously a Buddha statue. It obviously looks like a Buddha, doesn't it? It's got the weird bump on the head and everything, but it's like a I think it's called a sleepy Buddha or a sleeping Buddha. It's not terra, not terra Buddhism. might not even be God Buddha,

but I think my woman and maybe her mama
bought it at like a furniture store or
something just cuz they like the way it
looked. Wasn't my call,

but it's Mahayana Buddhist at best, I
think. I mean, clearly not one of the
the four main mudras common in Terraata
Buddhism. I mean, this is just
completely unorthodox mudra here.

And speaking of Auto Excelsior,
I think his woman made this mala.

She makes these.

It's very nice.

Okay,

so let's see. What's the question again?

What type of statue is that behind you
on our left, your right, with the

candle? Is it a Buddha or something else? Yeah, it's it's a Buddha, but I think it's not necessarily the Buddha. It's it's like some kind of Mahayana Buddhist statue or just fake Buddhist statue, but still it's obviously supposed to be representing a Buddha. And like I say, my woman and maybe her mama found it for sale at a furniture store or something and so they got it. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Trareasiz. And Troas says, "Have you ever experienced a real war in Myanmar? I cannot recollect when it began there." Well, wars in Myanmar began. I mean,

there's always been wars in Myanmar.

Always.

Um maybe they kind of died down during the British Raj and then as soon as Burma got independence like insurgencies and so forth began and have continued.

I'm sure there's still insurgent zones despite Rambo's defeat of the the the Burmese military in Karen state if you ever saw that movie.

So have I ever experienced a real war in Myanmar? No, because I mean in in Burma, I prefer the word Burma. You know, if I used to say that if they didn't like me calling the country Burma, they could just deport me to say or son.

But

um in in Burma, there's like three kinds of zones. There's white zones, brown zones, and black zones. White zones are zones where it's safe for foreigners to go. Tourists go there. No. No battlefields, no raging battles, no guerilla warfare, no no cars being sniped on the highway, anything like that. Brown zones are potential insurgent zones. There has been some insurgent activity there and you have to get a special permit from the government to go there. And I went into at least one brown zone with a permit. The permit said that I wanted to go and look at pagotas which is just the standard

excuse for going into a brown zone.

Mainly um we were just going into southern Mon state where my friend my Burmese friend he was actually half monk the one that I went to see the autopsy with. He we he and I went down there and there was an Australian monk with us too and uh we saw a battlefield. you I just it was just pointed out to me there was a famous battle here, you know, like three years ago, that kind of thing. Uh and then there's black zones, which are just they're not under the control of the Burmese government. They are insurgent zones. Nobody goes there. That if foreigners do go there, there's a good chance they're going to be

kidnapped and held for ransom. That kind of thing. At best. Kidnapped and held for ransom.

So yeah, I went to a brown zone where there was no insurgent activity going on at the time. The closest I came to anything resembling a kind of battle was I was about 10 miles away from a riot like Buddhist versus Muslim riot in the town of Mateila

which was uh I don't remember what year it was. It was quite a while ago back in the 201s I think.

And it was just a case. I mean, I don't know if I should even bother, but there was some Burmese Buddhist village

woman had a gold comb and she wanted to sell it to some buyer and seller of gold ornaments and so forth who happened to be a Muslim.

And while he was inspecting it to see how much it was worth and see if it was like real gold or what carat gold it was, he broke it. And then she was I mean he wouldn't pay her what she said it was worth. Plus he had just broken it. So it's just he just hands her back the broken comb and says sorry and it caused like this altercation.

So I think it resulted in her husband was there. It started like into a shoving match. the the Bur the the the Muslim guy got, you know, knocked over.

It started getting ugly. So the the the Burmese Buddhist couple, they took off back to their village and then they're like announcing this outrage that had been perpetrated. And so they came back with some little v vigilante group and a Buddhist monk to go back there and demand that this woman get paid what she thought um that gold comb was worth before it was broken.

And there was a bunch of Muslim men accumulated there. So you had like this small crowd of Burmese Buddhists and a small crowd of you know semi Burmese um Muslims. I mean most of the Muslims in Burma are of like Bangladeshi or Indian

ancestry.

And so the monk is trying to be like a a negotiating peacemaker type. And this is all just secondhand what what I was told by the abbott of the monastery I was staying at at the time that uh they he the the Burmese monk was taken somewhere else and the abbott told me that the Muslims cut his neck and whether they they just decapitated him or just cut his throat or whatever I don't know but it resulted in just absolute chaos in that quarter of Matila with enraged Buddhists just like burning and sacking the the Muslim quarter in that area. And that happened like maybe 10 miles from where I was staying at the time. But I

didn't hear about it. I mean, you don't have news like that in Burma. At least I didn't. You're staying at a forest monastery outside of town, you know. I didn't hear about it until several days later.

Well, that was that was about as close to a real war other than visiting uh a battlefield in a brown zone where there had been a battle a few years previously.

So, I'm just going to move on to Chzas's next question. I think I might be a little too verbose in my answers this time. Anyways, Taskis says, "Is there in the sutas explanation of right speech

for lay people or the precept for lay people is only not lying?" No, it's I mean there are four kinds of wrong speech and it's in several suttas at least in the Pali texts that a good a good Buddhist lay person who is keeping five precepts should be avoiding four kinds of wrong speech. First of course is lying.

Then there is what's called *pisunovā* which is like bad mouthing someone behind their back like malicious gossip. The whole point of *pisunovā* is you're trying to poison somebody's mind against somebody else. You're trying to cause division, trying to cause the person you're talking to to dislike this other

person. So, you could even be telling the truth, but if you're doing it maliciously for the point of getting other people to dislike that person, like if they're just trying to sell a car to your friend and you know that they're dishonest, you might, you know, caution them, you know, you might be getting ripped off if you buy this car because this person's dishonest. If you do it with that kind of intention of just, you know, helping your friend, that wouldn't necessarily be bisunava. But if you're just, oh, he's he's this horrible person and you know, he's dishonest even though, you

know, there's no real need to say it, then that would be pisunavatcha, just sort of malicious gossip, badmouthing someone behind their back, that kind of thing. Then you've got perusa. The third kind of wrong speech is like abuse, verbal abuse, just cussing somebody out to their face, calling them an idiot, this kind of stuff. um just with hostility. You're trying to hurt their feelings, trying to belittle them, trying to make them feel bad. So that would be the third kind of wrong speech. And then the fourth kind, which is very vague, you know, I don't know if there really is a clear definition of it that I can remember. It's probably probably

in the text somewhere, is some papa,
which is usually translated as idle
chatter. you know, just kind of useless
speech, like not necessarily malicious
gossip, but you know, who's doing who
kind of gossip or I mean, it could have
something to do with um like the list of
subjects that would be called animal
talk for monks, you know, talking about,
you know, kings and battles and politics
in general and that kind of thing. But
for lay people, I think that might be a
little too strict. And so it's it's hard
to say exactly. At least I cannot say to
you exactly where is the line with
regard to what is and is not idle

chatter or s papa lapa.

So that one is uh you know it's just kind of this gray zone for me you know just what exactly is or is not some papa. But I mean you could probably ask gro you can ask the the robot and then maybe it could tell you.

Um but yeah, in the sutas there's lots of examples of just right speech in general being avoiding those four kinds of wrong speech. And almost certainly it would be included in sutas that were directed specifically towards the ethics of lay people.

But mainly

musawato wrong speech means lying. But

it's not strictly you know it's sort of
like like kameumachara
or you know sensual misconduct you know
the main implication is adultery you
know sort of like in the ten
commandments thou shalt not commit
adultery but it also has all these other
these other implications you know like
promiscuous sex you know hiring a
prostitute that kind of thing also would
be included.

Ah, so I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Cyrus Frame.

And Cyrus frame says the reason I
thought perception volition is connected
to the uncarved block of stone is no

he's referring to a question that he asked in the previous Q&A that um I had come to the conclusion at least the hypothesis

that perception and valition are really just two different ways of looking at the exact same mental state or phenomenon that it's just sort of artificial duality or artificial division between perception and volition when actually they're ultimately the same mental state just looked at from two different aspects or two different angles so to speak.

So Cyrus frame says the reason I thought perception valition is connected to the uncarved block of stone is because that

analogy points to a kind of nonduality.

So combining perception and volition in one aggregate is also a type of nonduality. From this point of view, there are no perceptions or valitions.

What do you think?

Well, still you got duality. I mean, so long as you're stating that there is a something, you're still dealing with duality because at the very least you've got figure and ground. You have to have the distinction between the something and whatever isn't the something. So that's still dualistic.

You know to say that there's one one main mental state that is that

constitutes human samsaric existence.

This sort of the the unit the uniconda
of perception and bullition
with va or feeling just being another
kind of sort of a more animalistic level
of perception.

So I mean still you're saying that there
is this something that exists as an
entity and in order for that something
to exist as an entity there has to be a
distinction between that and what isn't
that entity you know there has to be the
duality of figure and ground you know
the thing and sort of like the context
or the the surroundings of the thing
that aren't the thing
so still it would be dualistic in that

sense whereas the uncarved block of
stone

you know the the single perception
volition cond would be a kind of statue
that is contained within the uncarved
block of marble. So the uncarved block
of marble as just pure marble, formless
rock, you know, formless substrate, that
would be called non-dualistic. So long
as you're not reifying it and singling
out like we're doing right now, in which
case, in order for any object to have
any kind of meaning, there has to be a
nonobject to compare it with. And so you
have to have duality. In order to have a
thing, an it,

then you have to have a non-it to
compare it with a contrast.

You know, that's how the
uh Hegel starts his logic. You know,
it's like the the thesis pure being, the
antithesis of non-being, how they just
merge together because neither one of
them has any determinate content uh con
content.

I think I tried to say content and
context at the same time. So you have to
have contrast and that's that's the
first synthesis,
you know, thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

The synthesis is you have to have a
contrast between being and not being.
And then that's just off to the races

from that.

From the from the Dao came the one, from the one came the two, and from the two came the 10,000 things. Everything is the whole world is just spawned from duality.

Okay. So, I think I answered that. I mean, what do I think? I mean, literally, I could just say I think I think maybe I finished my my beverage. You know, that would be a legitimate answer because that is what I think. But yeah, I mean perception volition, you're lumping two entities into one, but that really does still doesn't make it non-dualistic because you still got

this entity that has to be contrasted with what it isn't.

So,

I guess I answered that question. Let's just move on to Cyrus Frame's next question.

He says, "What do you think of the nondual thinker Tony Parsons?"

In case you are unfamiliar with him, and I am unfamiliar with him, I think his main idea is that there is just this. So if you are seeking, you are trying to escape from this. But it is impossible to escape from what is. It relates to the previous question because this in air quotes is really monism or non-duality. I think calling it this

seems to avoid reification. However, he also calls it boundless energy which seems to me to slip right back into reification. The no views of the atkawaga avoids that problem completely.

Yeah. Um I've never heard of Tony Parsons before that I can think of. So what do I think of him is going to be based just entirely on this little description here. So with regard to just trying to avoid reification by just saying this I mean early Buddhism did the same thing like datagata which is uh it's like a synonym for Buddha. The datagata is he who has attained

such you know it's like data just means like this. So it's like they're trying to avoid like putting a title onto the highest, you know, the highest state, let's say, by just calling it like this. And then the the agata that comes after the tagata da agata means he who has become. So he who has become like this. I mean that's that's what dagata means. Although there's various interpretations but that's that's how I interpret it and it seems fairly straightforward or also like suchness I mean you come across this in Mahayana text sometimes in in terms like um in the atakawaga there is the term I think it's tadi which again means just such

he who has attained thus

you know so

it's it's kind of a gimmick that's used

even in the atakawaga or in early

Buddhist texts and in later uh more

sophisticated

like Mahayana Buddhist texts where you

just try to avoid giving a name to

something by just calling it such or

thus or this or like this. It is fairly

common in in Buddhist philosophy.

So let's see if you are seeking you are

trying to escape from this but it is

impossible to escape from what is. Yeah,

I I mentioned that earlier. It's sort of

like you you have to make your peace

with samsara. You don't want to be struggling against it.

And you know, some teachers would specialize in that kind of thing like Jay Krishna Murdy kind of that was one of the main themes and or nisarodata maharaj you know enlightenment is not the end of a path. It just doesn't work that way.

So yeah, I mean Tony Parsons I mean it sounds like he's following along with the kind of non-dualistic mysticism which is fine.

I mean it doesn't it I don't think he's coming up with he has come up with anything original at least not based on this this brief description of what he's

teaching.

So

yeah and then he starts calling it
boundless energy or you know nibbana
datu or I mean it's it's so easy. I mean
language is that way. I mean you have to
use words

in order to refer to something

and so it just becomes a kind of trap.

It's the finger pointing at the moon and
then people just forget the moon and are
just paying all their attention to the
finger. It's like trying to point
something out to a dog.

We got one dog that actually gets it.

But most dogs in the course of my life,

you're trying to point, you know, you put down a dish of food for it and you're pointing at it's it's over there. It's right there. And the dog inevitably looks at your finger instead of the direction you're pointing.

And that's that's the way people are with words.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. We are getting down towards the bottom here. Sort of. Looks like kind of.

Let's see. Ruy, his first question. How are you? I'm fine. Ruy's second question. What to your mind is the role of irony in the discourses and can you recall any

salient instances of it off the cuff?

Gosh, I'm going to have to run and get
get a book. Just a second. I'm sorry
about this having to leave over and over
again.

Okay.

I really do prefer doing these in the
the studio, the usual room, but it
doesn't often doesn't always work out
that way. Okay. So what to your mind is
the role of irony in the discourses and
can you recall any salient instances of
it off the cuff? Well, probably my
favorite example of irony is in the
damopatana
and let's see verse what is it? Verse

something.

Let's see.

Please bear with me.

Okay, I know what's in here.

Okay, verse 97 of the dhamopana.

So then we have to go to verse 97. It's
in uh the arant waga, the chapter on the
enlightened being, the arahant section.

Okay, so

let's see. Maybe I should just look in
the back here.

Okay,

90. Okay. So, I won't even tell you what
the usual translation is. I'm just going
to read this this end note that
venerable

gosh

venerable Achara Buddha includes. He says this verse which is uh verse 97 says in the poly this verse presents a series of puns and if the underside of each pun were to be translated the verse would read thus. And this is actually like a legit translation of verse 97. It literally if you if you translate it literally it's the man who is faithless, ungrateful, a burglar who destroys opportunities and eats vomit. He truly is the most excellent of men.

So,

I mean, that's it's kind of this weird joke

that's found in the in the polytopic.

And that's like one of my favorite examples of just this weird ironic kind of I mean, it's almost like dark humor that you can find in the texts. The Otakawaga has lots of puns, but they're not so much jokes as just a kind of sophisticated attempt to say two or even three things with a single single word or single statement. So that's I mean it's sort of a multi-dimensional use of language in the Atakawaga when they're using plays on words and so forth.

Although there there are a few sutas in the atakawaga where like there's one the pasura suta. It's it's mainly a suta about why monks shouldn't get involved in debates. And there's this person

named pasura which it means something like great hero you know or like something like hero. And he's swaggering along wanting to challenge everybody to debates. And the Buddha is kind of making fun of him. You know, it's using a lot of like military terminology in the suta. And you know, there's like this military, you know, warrior kind of theme to it, but at the same time, he's kind of making fun of Pura, this person who wants to like challenge everybody to debates. So, that's kind of ironic, you know, in a in a kind of gentle poking fun at somebody kind of way. Um there's another

sort of ironic suta in the in the
atakawaga which is um the pura beta suta
before the break discourse on before the
breakup of the body where it's just sort
of like counterbalancing statements you
know he's not greedy for gain but he's
not afraid of loss you know it's just
sort of it's almost like the doubting
Ching where it's like one statement
balances off another statement. So you
you kind of leave this like emptiness
behind sort of a thing. Although that's
probably not what Rui was referring to.
I remember there's one suta I think it's
in the Samutinikaya
in the old Polytech society translation
of it. It's called Little Ugly. And

there's like this demon or Assura, some kind of little monster, little monstrous being who sits on the the throne of Saka, king of gods. And the more pissed off the gods get because he's doing this, the more beautiful he becomes until Sakaf realizes what's happening. And then he starts treating him nice and respectfully. And then he starts like shriveling up and turning ugly again. And the translator, the Polytech Society translator, I think it was like CAS Ree Davids, says um just as a comment, the master is in a humorous vein. You know, it's it's kind of like this funny story. And you can find um humor in the texts

with regard to irony. I mean, irony can have different meanings. Let's see.

Let's look up the word irony. It's good to have

the the definitions of words when you use them. Okay. So, the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite. Yeah.

Uh typically for humorous or emphatic effect, well, verse 97 of the damapata is uh would be a classic gem of an example of that one. Is he a state of affairs or an event that seems

deliberately contrary to what one expects and is often amusing as a result? Or a literary technique

originally used in Greek tragedy by

which the full significance of a character's words or actions are clear to the audience or reader, although unknown to the character. Yeah, that one I don't have any examples of that immediately coming to mind, although I'm sure you could find them in there.

So irony is is just kind of a a tool or just a a phenomenon that you encounter sometimes in the text. Although as a general rule the texts are pretty humorless. I mean you get into like jotica stories or the commentary like the dharmapata commentary that kind of thing where you can find funny stories you know like in the jotica stories

there's like the Buddha in a previous life was a a fox you know sort of like Asup's fables wise guy kind of fox who finds a dead elephant and he just sort of eats his way into the elephant and then the elephant bloat and kind of closes off the hole so that the fox is trapped inside. It's just kind of like a humorous kind of story.

But as a general rule, the texts takes themselves very seriously. You don't see lots of jokes. Monks aren't supposed to be cracking jokes much anyway.

Um, so it's found in there often very subtle.

Sometimes, you know, there'll it's it's less subtle,

but

um as a general rule, the texts are pretty dry and humorless. just the in in Terravada especially in Mahayana like crazy Zen masters or the we malakerti near disha sutra that kind of thing you get into some wild and wacky behavior that you'd never find in a orthodox terra Buddhist sutra or suta just because the sutas the Buddha is taken very seriously it's very solemn you know dharma is not something to be taken lightly and to me made the butt of jokes you know like there's even a rule of monastic discipline I think it's the could be the only dubacita offense in

invenia

of a monk cracking jokes about Buddha
dhama or sana so as a general rule it's
it's pretty dry but you can find it in
there occasionally and I'm just going to
move on to next question this is from
Cole

and Cole says in regards to sipatana
Cole says in regards to study batana you
have said that you have doubts about
mindfulness of the body because raw
physical sensation is perceived as
mental phenomena. You have also said
that mindfulness of feelings is
basically perception of raw bodily
sensation which would typically be
mindfulness of the body and not simply

the arising of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feeling. Your ideas seem to be very different from what is typically taught. Can you elaborate on your understanding of the sipatan suta? Well, no. This stuff about my interpretation of feelings or way as just bare sensation. That was like the first essay I wrote on Buddhism. I was trying to make sense of the five condas especially the the four mental condas and it just doesn't work. later on it just seems like bare physical like sensory bare sensory data forget physical bare sensory data I mean it's just I mean it's void

there's a like I like I mentioned um in
a previous Q&A not too long ago there
was a

a monk a medieval Indian monk of the
diga school which is a Mahayana loician
school a logic school of Mahayana
Buddhism

where he points out that um like bare
sensation, bare sensory data without any
kind of perceptual interpretation is as
though it did not exist at all. And I
have to in in like later after I wrote
that essay, I had to come to that
conclusion also that you know it's it's
sort of you can't even prove that bare
sensory data even exists. not
subjectively

because by the time you're aware of something you're already perceiving it like Bishop Barkley used to say SA Perkipi to exist is to be perceived so I had to eventually kind of leave behind my interpretation of feeling as just rare of of just unprocessed raw sensory data but still it's a problem because it just makes it a kind of like more animalistic perception.

So, vana

is still a kind of perception.

So, um Buddhist philosophy just kind of makes like a an artificial distinction between feeling and perception and ultimately I think also an artificial

distinction between perception and and
volition.

which gets us I mean when you don't stop
making the artificial distinctions then
you have the final single artificial
distinction of perception itself.

So let's see. I mean the thing about
mindfulness of the body is I mean you
cannot prove getting back to Bishop
Barkley again you cannot prove the
existence of physical matter. I mean
that was George Barklay's sole
contribution sole significant
contribution to western philosophy. He's
the one who really just pounded home the
idea that you cannot know the existence
of physical matter. You can infer it.

You can guess that it exists

but you cannot really know it.

And so I mean I have to agree with that.

I personally do not believe that

physical matter is ultimately real. All

we know is just our perceptions of it.

So you take that to I mean sudi batana I

mean the the four saudi batanas you know

the first one is mindfulness of the body

and I mean you can just accept that as a

kind of figure of speech just a a way of

speaking that with regard to physical

actions or supposedly physical actions

what are perceived as physical actions

you know walking sitting lying down

standing up eating drinking extending

your arm pulling your arm back Again,
all of that could be called mindfulness
of the body. Even if I mean ultimately
your body is nothing more than
perceptions.

So it's just a matter of speaking I
suppose. Likewise with regard to
mindfulness of feeling
waiting on it's uh similar. I mean, you
could say that ultimately feeling and
perception are just a matter of degree.
You know, perception is maybe a little
bit more conceptual
than than feeling. But still, it seems
to me that they're both a kind of
perception,
a kind of symbolic interpretation.

and what you're symbolically interpreting you don't even have really direct like awareness of at any kind of mental state level.

So gosh I might have to start over here with regard to the question not the whole Q&A but just this question in regards to study batani you have said that you have doubts about mindfulness of the body because no I have doubt doubts about mindfulness of the body simply because there's no way of knowing whether or not physical matter really exists.

That is my issue with mindfulness of the body. And Mahayana Buddhists and the

Greek or not Greek, German like 19th century German idealist philosophers, they eventually just dismiss the whole idea of physical matter. Anyway, it's all just mental states. The world we live in is a mental world.

So yeah, I mean I am skeptical of mindfulness of the body because ultimately you're not really being mindful of the body. You're being mindful of perceptions of the body which is mindfulness of perception.

And then I see you have also said that mindfulness of feelings is basically perception of raw bodily sensation.

Yeah, that was a theory that I was working with back in 1990s, but I

eventually had to abandon that idea,
especially after reading venerable
Daroda.

So

yeah, my idea seem to be very different
from what is typically taught. Yeah. I
mean, if you want to go with what is
typically taught, you follow just sort
of like

a more or less arbitrary

uh standard for how they're going to
divide things up. And there's a lot of
arbitrary standards with regard to how
how to divide things up. Like with
regard to the five condas, you've got,
you know, rupaconda, which is the the

physical body, which I've personally am pretty damn skeptical of. You've got syakanda which is perceptions way I'm doing this in the wrong order which is feelings and then you've got sankara which according to orthodox terravada is 50 different mental states. See there are 52 mental states according to abidama. 52 different kinds of mental states. And then just because just cuz they felt like it or presumably because the Buddha felt like it. Of these 52 mental states, two of them are isolated as way and perception way and sya. Whereas the other 50 are just lumped together as sankarakanda which again it's just this arbitrary distinction.

Unless you just want to go along with what I would go along with and just say it's volition because it's mainly volition. Even the the Abidama scholars will have to admit that it's mainly volition. But all the other 49 are still lumped together as as Sankarakanda, which is this kind of sloppy reasoning in my opinion, ancient pre-logical kind of thinking. So I mean there's there's these kind of complications that a modern westerner capable of critical thought and rationality is going to encounter when dealing with like ancient scriptures

and I don't even want to get into the fourth sa Patana which is damuvasana which is more controversial and less straightforward, but I think it it may have originally just been just mindfulness of certain fundamental doctrines of Buddhist philosophy.

So that's like a whole different level of mindfulness than like mindfulness of breathing for example.

So anyhow, I'm just going to move on to Cole's next question. He says, "I'm reading the atikavaga for the first time and something strikes me. This being one of the oldest fragments of early

Buddhist teachings. Could it be that this is in fact the way the Buddha taught in the very beginning of his career as a teacher where he was likely teaching people who are already spiritually adept renunciates.

This then perhaps the more systematized teachings of lists. four of these, five of those, 37 of that, etc. were geared towards people who were more new to the monastic life. And yeah, that is probably the more orthodox explanation.

If you assume that the atakawaga is comes from early in the Buddha's career, then yeah, you could say that early in

his career, he was mainly teaching the heavy hitters. He was teaching renunciant veterans in the holy life that had just converted from some other kind of renunciant aesthetic spiritual school over to Buddhism. And then later as Buddhism became more popular, then you had newbies, rookies joining joining the SA, you know, just lay people converting over to being ordained as a monk. And then you'd have to simplify things, be make have much more elementary teachings, lists to be memorized, that kind of thing. So that would be a reasonable explanation for why the atakawaga is so radically different from most of the

rest of the pseudapitica.

But another one, another possible explanation, and it may be that both of these explanations have their place.

Another explanation is kind of like Buddhist philosophy evolved much like Christian philosophy evolved. You know, it just it had like this explosive virus-like mutation period over the first hundred years or so where it just took off. I mean, you have people joining the SA that are like, you know, people like early Christians where they're just trying to figure things out and systematize things, get everything, you know, put so that it makes sense.

And that really wasn't what the Buddha was going for like in the ataga. I mean, you you shouldn't even be trying to make sense.

Sense is delusion.

So

one explanation like Cole suggested here which is probably the more devout orthodox kind of explanation is that the atikawaga was intended mainly for like advanced veterans in the holy life that had already got where they need to go where they don't need to go much further to get to enlightenment.

And then the other one is that maybe what the Buddha was teaching most of the time to most of the monks was something

along the lines of the atikawaga, but it just was too deep, you know, too unfathomable for a lot of these Buddhist philosophers who were really more into philosophy than in practice who then just took the ball and ran with it and came up with this massive scholastic intellectual system.

And I would guess that both of those are factors.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Arpad. Now for something completely different. This one's actually a fairly straightforward simple kind of question. Can monks get dental prostheses or are those

considered as bodily embellishments?

So yeah, monk could definitely get like false teeth. I mean, if you can't chew your food properly or you have like a broken tooth like that happened to me in Burma where I mean, it's pretty common in Burma that you bite into rocks in your food, especially when they're threshing rice and threshing beans on the ground. Little white rocks get mixed in with the rice. Little brown rocks get mixed in with the beans. And it happened several times. You would bite down on something and just crack. It hurts. and you're feeling back there to see if your teeth are broken or if you've lost a filling or something. And more than once

I got my teeth broken u by biting into rocks. And I went to the dentist and you know they put caps on some of them and I got a great big cap right back there from biting into a rock.

See what was it? Where is it? No, it's not these ones. There's there's some other teeth over here, man.

So, yeah. I mean, with regard to that, I mean, just to make your your teeth more functional and less likely to to rot out from just having this big open cavity there. Yeah, there's no problem with that. I mean, if it's I mean, it depends on your your intentions, though. I mean,

if you're just doing it to beautify
yourself, you're just getting bleaching
done to make your your smile whiter,
that kind of thing, that might not be
suitable for a monk,
but you got I mean, you're going to have
false teeth so that you can chew your
food, that kind of thing. That's there's
no problem with that. I mean, for a monk
to get braces, I think, would be pushing
it

unless he had a real like need for it.

So yeah, that was that was a fairly easy
question. Let's move on to the next one.

This is from PSA

and we're this is this is turning into a
long one mainly because I've been like

telling long stories.

PSA says, "Who's your favorite non-terravada teacher and I can't really point to Nim Curly Baba up there because he's not there because I'm not in the studio."

Um, but he'd be one of them. I'm assuming that you could even be called a teacher. I mean he was more of a guru who just kind of taught by example just he just kind of uplifted people by the the people being in his presence you know he didn't really have systematic teachings much so I don't know if I mean he certainly wasn't a philosopher

I guess he'd be a teacher I mean guru I think is uh can be interpreted as teacher

um of the people who have lived more recently. Paul Lo who died just a few years ago. I mean he was very controversial. He was kind of a rascal.

But Nim Kuri Baba and Paul Lo both appealed to me largely because they were like enlightened rascals. You know, they weren't they weren't like Raman

Maharshi. And I've got nothing against Ramanari. He seems to have been the real deal. But I mean, he was just so saintly,

you know, just like this bland vanilla flavored enlightened sage. Whereas it's

just more interesting to have rascally
sages. I liked Zen Buddhism also when I
was I was originally intending to become
a Zen monk up until I actually went to a
Zen monastery and actually went to a
Terraata monastery and came to the
conclusion that Terraata was came closer
to what the Buddha originally taught.

So

um Paul Lo I mean Jay Krishna Murdy
he is definitely a non-terravada teacher
and he also was definitely rascally. I
mean I remember one time telling someone
who had read a lot of Krishna Mie you
know I that I just recently I was a monk
at the time I just recently heard that

Krishna Murdy was having an affair with his private secretary's wife and you know I said I pointed this out to this this other person and he's like so that's completely in accordance with his philosophy you and he wasn't being a hypocrite

so yeah there's that too. I mean, with regard to like Zen masters and so forth, it'd be hard for me to pick one out in particular,

like sages who compose the Upanods. I mean, I really couldn't come up with a name.

So, I mean, if we consider Nim Kuroli Baba to be a non-terravata teacher, then I'd have to pick him. I do have a lot of

like resonance, deep resonance with
Maharaji.

I mean, I highly recommend the book
Miracle of Love, stories about Nin Kurly
Baba, compiled and edited by Rahm Das. I
mean, you you kind of by reading the
book, you you get this feeling of what
it's like to be in the presence of a
sage,
even though he was like a a wild
rascally kind of sage.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Robert. And
Robert is our last questioner on this
gray rainy Easter day.

Robert says, "Oh, by the way, Easter, do

you do you know how they decide what is Easter? You know what day is is chosen to be Easter? It is in fact the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox."

Anyways, Robert says, "You've said before that there are probably more enlightened Hindus than Terra Buddhists. Why do you then not think certain schools of Hinduism like Advaita Vedanta might be preferable to Theravada Buddhism especially considering that your uncarved block of marble sounds more similar to Advaita metaphysics than Theravada Buddhism? Well, that's a fair question. I wouldn't I have said that I wouldn't be surprised if there have been

more enlightened Hindus than enlightened
terra Buddhists. partly because Terraata
Buddhism is very dogmatic.

So I mean there's not a lot of freedom
of thought and inspiration

that goes along with like freedom of
thought associated with terravada. It
tends to be just strictly adhering to
these ancient texts and not daring to
deviate from them. And so Hindus, they
tend to have more of that spark of

inspiration, at least some of them. And
there's there's lots more Hindus than
Terra Buddhists also, which just
increases the odds with regard to that.

Also, you have a larger sample size from

which to choose enlightened sages.

So why do I not think certain schools of Hinduism like Advaita Vedanta might be preferable to Theravada Buddhism? Um partly I mean

I never really encountered an Advaita Vedanta monastery.

That's part of the thing. I mean, if Advaita Vedanta monasteries were as common as Theravada monasteries, you know, they were out there where you could just go to the local Advaita temple, that kind of thing, then I might have actually chosen Advaita Vedanta rather than Theravada.

But in the west I mean I don't know of a single Advaita Vedanta monastery or

advite of vanta center whereas terravada is more accessible and so it was just uh circumstance

I just led me to terravada also I do have a lot of respect for the Buddha and um I mean if I had all of the ancient schools of Buddhism to choose from I probably wouldn't have chosen terra VA I might have gone like saltica or something just to get away from abidama but yeah advita vidanta I mean Hinduism has its own baggage it's uh more poetic less philosophical to to some degree you know it's it's got more of like an artistic vibe to it kind of a slightly less scientific vibe like

terra Buddhism or just Buddhism in
general very straightforward you know
very clearcut
and in Hinduism
you know there's all the garish you know
gods and goddesses and and stories and
this kind of thing that can get in the
way. Um but I think one of the main
problems I just never had an advite of
vanta monastery that I could go to and
compare it to see if it was better or
worse you know preferable or not
preferable with regard like compared
with terra or Buddhism in general.
So that was that was one of the main
things. I mean I I do believe there are
advita vanta monasteries out there

somewhere but I don't know where they are. I mean nowadays you've got internet. You could probably look it up pretty easily. But back then there was no internet.

And with regard to the uncarved block of marble, I mean it's just a necessary evil to reify it. You're better off just going with the atakawaga and not reifying it. Do not try to reify the absolute. So I do think that's kind of a mistake made by vanta is their reifying of the absolute as like nurguna brahman because the finger pointing at the moon too many people just ignore the moon and just latch on to the finger.

So with regard to the the atawaga, I mean I really

I don't know I don't know if I've come across any Hindu text that is more profound than the atawaga.

Some of the upupanads are deep though. I mean some of the upupanads are deeper than some polyutas. I definitely have to admit to that.

But mainly I think it was just a matter of accessibility. If it was the other way around where you know it was sort of advant

and like ordination as syasan or whatever they're called was more in vogue more popular and thus more accessible than being if terraat was

just restricted to like Southeast Asia
and and Sri Lanka and then you know
there weren't places like that in
America that I could go to and check out
but there was plenty of the advite of
vant places then I might have turned out
to be an advite of vantan. It's sort of
like Ramdas saying that he was
originally drawn more towards Buddhism
just because Hinduism just struck him as
kind of like sentimental and garish and
and and Buddhism is just more
philosophical and straightforward and
scientific. But he just wound up finding
a Hindu guru and became a Hindu.
The first enlightened being he came

across was a Hindu and not a Buddhist.

And so that's just the way he went.

So there's a lot of that involved too.

And I'm just going to move on to

Robert's second question. Second to last question.

Do you consider the upupanachads to be as profound as at least large parts of the pseudapitica? Yeah, I already answered that just uh a minute or two ago, didn't I? Yeah, sure. Some of the uponads are very profound. Some I mean the the Tibetan book of the great liberation is very profound but that I guess technically is still Buddhist.

Um yeah I mean some some parts of the sutapidica are not profound at all. Some

of them are just silly. It's just like the devotionalistic miracle stuff that kind of thing. I don't have much use for that at all other than just as a kind of sociological or anthropological study.

Yeah. So, some of the upupanads are more profound than some of the sutas.

Sure. I mean, some of some parts of the New Testament are more profound than some of the sutas because some sutas just really aren't all that profound.

And I'm just going to move on to the very last question also from Robert.

He says,

"Do you think devotional practices like

prayer can be spiritually beneficial?"

And yeah, I think prayer can be spiritually beneficial partly. I mean, there's various ways that it can be spiritually beneficial. For example, I mean if it becomes a kind of meditation, you know, it's like an exercise of of concentration. You know, you're concentrating on this prayer which is it could be just like a long mantra. You're just doing the Lord's prayer. Dear not, dear God, please have mercy upon me, a sinner. That's another one. But that's what the Jesus prayer. But like the Lord's prayer, you know, our father which art in heaven, you know, paid her no stir. I mean that could become like a

mantra where you're just repeating it over and over again as a kind of mantra with its own sort of vibe. I mean you don't completely ignore the words but I mean yeah that's a kind of meditation and so you'd get the kind of benefits from that as you get from a kind of mantra meditation but also I mean prayer like devotional prayer I mean I haven't prayed very much in my life

there have been times as a monk where you're just kind of in a state of spiritual desperation and it's like you know anybody out there who's willing and able to help, please

do so. And in a way, it's,
you know, it's kind of throwing yourself
on the mercy of some higher power or
higher powers, even if you don't know
who those higher powers might be. I
mean, in a way, it's humility, practice
of humility.

Um, you know, that that sort of thing is
also spiritually beneficial. And and
there's there's been many cases of
people in Christianity and and others
other other systems too. I think the
most famous cases are in Christianity
where someone is trying to be saved
through their own efforts. You know,
they're trying to be a saintly person
and they just keep failing. You know,

the the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak and all that. And so finally they just kind of surrender. It's like I can't do it, God. I just throw myself on your mercy. If I if I get into heaven, if I'm saved, it will be through your grace because I just can't do it. And that kind of holy desperation resulting in that kind of prayer. I mean, that can be a total gamecher. I mean, that that can really just cause something to click and you're like at a higher level of consciousness once you stop like trying to get yourself there and just let go.

So yeah, that too. I mean, devotional

practices in general,

um, they it depends. It depends on where you're at, what your motives are, that kind of thing.

But certainly prayer can be spiritually beneficial

even if the the deity you're praying to isn't even real.

You know, just through the meditative aspect of it or the humility aspect, the surrender aspect, all these kind of things can be definitely spiritually beneficial and can even result in like a a major upheaval and just an opening up of something that had been blocked for years.

And so that's it. That's that's the last

question of this Q&A.

And again, I got the new book out which talks about visiting morgs and stuff. So it's there's that to look forward to.

And so just check out the URL links below. Like and subscribe if you have not done so already. If you assuming that you like this. I don't know why you'd still be hanging around if you didn't. And uh what else? There was something else. Oh yeah, if you think I can answer any question, feel free to ask. And no more than three questions per person, please. And be happy.

Okay, then. It [clears throat] looks
like we're recording, which is good.

Hello

and welcome to question and answer
number 191.

I'm your host Pinyo Boss and it is that
time of day on a Sunday afternoon
when the light is coming through the
blinds just right so that I've got these
horizontal bars of light across my face.

Do not worry, it's not anything
paranormal.

This is my beverage.

I haven't already

I haven't already said that.

You know, just the the flurry of just

starting a new Q&A sometimes can result in confused mindfulness.

Ah, and 191 is a prime number as far as I can tell. So, we're in the prime of our lives at this moment.

And let's see, anything else I got to say by way of introduction before wading into this? We might be interrupted a little bit. Uh I might be distracted during the course of this Q&A because my woman is expecting company.

So, with that as an excuse for any imperfections in this Q&A suppose I should just wade right into this. And there's not going to be a whole lot of questions this time. You know, it's low 20s. So, kind of at the

lower end, which is fine.

First question is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "If I am correct, the philosophical theory called natural
[clears throat]

law, with an L capitalized, natural law, posits that moral principles and rights are inherent in human nature and the natural world and are independent of any laws imposed by society and or religious authorities."

Let's see, that's not the question though. Oh, here it is. "What is your knowledge and opinion of natural law?"

Okay. So, I mean, I really hadn't studied much natural law. I mean, I have

had some indirect contacts with the with
the idea. Plus, I did look it up.

And according to

uh the source

that I inquired into with regard to

natural law, it says, "Natural law is a

moral philosophy asserting that humans

possess an innate objective moral order

discoverable through reason

>> [clears throat]

>> rooted in human nature and the structure
of reality itself."

And it turns out that the the most

famous you know, early promoter of this

was Aristotle.

So, my knowledge and opinion of natural

law

let's delve into this, shall we?

Um first of all, he says

Romeo says, "Natural law posits that moral principles and rights are inherent in human nature and the natural world."

Um I mean, would they have been inherent in the natural world before humans evolved? I mean, was there still moral principles and rights that existed, say, in the age of dinosaurs?

I don't know. I mean, the rights itself.

I remember there was a guy who joined our Discord server, the Discord server loosely associated with with all this.

And he was insisting that there are genuine rights that are not just a a

cultural construct. And people pretty much dogpiled him. I kind of participated in this because I just do not see how a right is just innate in the fabric of empirical reality.

Like

let's set aside morals, like a moral law. Set aside, you know, ideas of right and wrong and so forth. But just rights. I mean, that seems like a political construct to me, a right. You know, does does an animal in a jungle have rights?

>> [snorts]

>> Well, I mean, where do you draw the I mean, is it

is there just like this miraculous line

that is drawn between humans and
non-human animals? So that, you know,
humans just innately have these rights,
but say

a Stegosaurus

tens of millions of years ago, I mean,
did it have rights?

Just built right into the system?

I don't think so. So, rights, I am
skeptical of. If someone can present a
good case that everyone has a certain
right

that is just built into the fabric of of
empirical reality

then, you know, I'm quite willing to
hear the case. You know, I'm I'm

open-minded on the subject, but I am skeptical in that I really see rights, you know, like the right to bear arms or the right to healthcare or, you know, the right to just equality even that

it seems like it's artificially just kind of imposed by society or government or whatever. And that if society or government just takes away that support, the right just kind of evaporates.

So, let's just set rights aside and just deal with morals cuz this seems to be mainly what Romeo is curious about is are morals just natural or artificial?

And I would say um at the human level,

you know, the level of a normie, for example, it's it's a combination of both. You know, some some morals are like arbitrary and artificial. I mean, a a big one, a huge one lately is with regard to pedophilia. Maybe I shouldn't even be saying it, I shouldn't be mentioning it. So taboo now.

But for most of the human race when a person goes through puberty they are biologically an adult. And so, for like an older man and a post-pubescent nubile female to have relations, especially after marriage

I mean, it was just the way it was. Like Edgar Allan Poe married his 13-year-old

cousin in America in the like the early to mid-1800s.

And it was just allowable. I mean, probably some people were grumbling about it.

But still, I mean, it was just it was accepted. It's like in India traditionally

they have this idea that once a girl reaches puberty and starts menstruating, every menstruation is practically the same as murdering a baby. It's just a wasted menstruation.

Um so, some some morals are kind of arbitrary, especially like in the Buddhist monastic code. Like vinaya.

A lot of the the the the morals or just the the precepts that a monk undertakes when he is ordained, you know, he's following vinaya. He's a conscientious monk following vinaya. A lot of that is just etiquette. You know, not talking with your mouth full of food. You know, it's against the rules or or not growing your hair a certain length. I mean, your your hair is not allowed to get more than two finger widths or two months, whichever comes first. You got to cut it before then. I mean, that's not moral. It's not immoral to eat in the afternoon, for example. And that kind of gets into like regular

morals, too.

Jewish morals, for example, like keeping the Sabbath. Not even flipping a light switch on the Sabbath day, for example.

Or not eating leavening, not eating yeast during Passover week. I mean, that would be seen as moral from a Jewish point of view, you know, as laid down by God who is the ultimate judge of with regard to morals, presumably.

But still, I mean, from a natural point of view, there's nothing inherently immoral

with eating yeast during a certain time period. Or it's okay the rest of the time, but this during this certain time period of Passover

eating yeast, you are cut off from your people. You you are no longer one of God's chosen.

So

I think a lot of what is considered to be morality is to some degree

um

artificial. And then some some of it is just sort of like evolutionarily derived. You know, like real pedophilia where a person is sexually attracted to pre-pubescent children.

I mean, that's there's like a taboo against that. And

I mean, there's a taboo against it

because it's unnatural. You know, it's like it's it's going to cause harm to the child, like physical harm. They're not I mean, their body isn't adjusted for that sort of stuff yet.

And I mean, it's it can't produce I mean, they're not going to get pregnant.

I mean, there's you know, there's you know, it's not for reproduction. I mean,

ultimately, that is the purpose for reproduction.

But there's a lot of neuroticism in the human race about it. Another one is incest.

That that is considered to be immoral.

Why is incest immoral? Because

mainly

I mean, just setting aside just the sexuality part itself, but incest is it re- results in severe inbreeding. You know, it's just not healthy. And so, that even animals, you know, chimpanzees have like a just an instinctive incest taboo.

Other animals, too, I assume have just an instinctive incest taboo because it's just not conducive to the health of the species. It's not a good way of promoting, you know, promulgating your DNA sequences.

So, there's some of that that is getting into natural law. You know, it's natural

morals, in a sense, cuz it's just built into us instinctive because, you know, it's just good for the species, good for our own DNA sequences.

But, if you're going to get into something deeper than that, like arguably Buddhist ethics does,

>> [clears throat]

>> then

yeah, I mean, there is a natural law with regard to that. It's it's like Buddhist ethics is based on human psychology. You know, it's based on karma, which is volition, which is a human mental state.

So, it's like morals in Buddhism are psychological

more than imposed by some deity. You know, it's like the Abrahamic monotheistic religions, right and wrong are determined by God. God decides what's right and wrong. In the Old Testament, if God says you have to

you have to massacre an entire town, then it's immoral not to do it.

Otherwise, it would be very immoral to do it, you know, thou shalt not kill and all that. But, if God orders you to do it and you don't do it, that's that's sin.

But, in Buddhism, it doesn't work that way. I mean, the Buddha I mean, he

wouldn't say this, but he could tell you to, you know, go do something wrong.

And just because you do it, you know, you think the person is a Buddha, let's say, and they're not. They're just some charismatic cult leader.

And still, you've done something wrong.

And it's so, Buddhist ethics would become about as close to natural law as you're going to find in world religions as far as I can tell. You know, other systems would have something similar, maybe.

You know, it's not just the arbitrary decree of some king who's called God.

So,

yeah, it's like if you do something and it causes you to be more more [clears throat] delusional, have stronger desires and attachments and suffering, then that is immoral from a Buddhist point of view. If you do something and it causes you to have less delusion and fewer desires and attachments and less suffering, then that's moral. I mean, we're talking the big picture here, not just momentarily. You know, you inject heroin, for example, and you just feel this rush of euphoria.

Um, you know, that's not moral because you're feeling happy, but I mean, you're

also more delusional and like less
awake, at least with regard to your
surroundings.

You know, it causes you to become more
attached, have stronger desires for the
stuff in future and so forth.

So,

yeah, I mean,

Buddhist

ethics,

setting aside just the etiquette stuff,

like in the rules of monastic

discipline. And and some of the stuff,

like

the fifth precept against drinking

alcohol.

Well, I mean,

let's say you take some cough syrup that has a little bit of alcohol in it, or you accidentally take a sip of some fruit juice that started to ferment in the tropical heat.

You know, that happened to me as a monk. I mean, that's not necessarily immoral, even though you're breaking one of the five precepts.

And then, of course, there's you know, like cases of telling lies that are really helpful to people. Like I I watched the movie version of Les Misérables by Victor Hugo. I I don't know how to pronounce French names. I'm

not even going to try to pronounce Les Misérables correctly.

But, I mean,

it it pretty much starts and the novel and the movie pretty much start with this hardened criminal, Jean Valjean, or Jean Valjean, since we're not pronouncing French words correctly or even trying.

He's a hardened criminal.

And a kindly hearted, relatively saintly bishop lets him spend the night in his house. And the hardened criminal steals some silver and takes off with it.

So, the the hardened criminal gets arrested and

taken back to the bishop. And the bishop

says, "Oh, no, he didn't steal it. I gave it to him."

Which was a lie, because he didn't really give it to him.

I mean, maybe you could sort of say, "Well, he's kind of stretching the truth a little bit. Maybe in his heart, he gave it to him after he noticed that it was gone." This kind of stuff. But, really, he didn't really give it to him. But, I mean, it changed Jean Valjean's life. You know, it was the first time anyone had ever really been kind to him and forgave him. You know, it was like a Christ-like act that was, you know, conveyed [clears throat] upon

him, so to speak.

And it changed his life. It was like that moment caused him to really try to become a good person, and he succeeded. Relatively speaking. Just because this bishop told a lie.

And I could give other examples. I mean, if you're going to, you know, like the story of the third wise man, where this or the fourth wise man, the other wise man. It's a famous story about one of the wise men who's trying to keep up with the other three that were going to, you know, the Magi that were going to offer gifts to the to the baby Jesus. And there's the scene where King Herod has ordered all the baby boys to be

massacred.

And this [clears throat]

fourth wise man, this Magi, is spending the night in this house where there's a woman who has a baby boy, and she is scared because the the soldiers are pounding on doors in order to kill the baby boys.

And this this Magi, this wise man, he takes some of the treasure he was going to offer to the baby Jesus.

And when the soldier pounds on the door, he just gives him this huge pearl or some such and says, "There's no baby boys here."

And then, of course, the soldier takes

the bribe, says, "There's no baby boys in this house." And they just continue on their way.

And you know, the the mother is weeping tears of joy and gratitude on the floor because this man just saved her baby.

But, he told a lie.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean, it's still from a Buddhist point of view, it would be definitely the lesser of two evils in that case.

You know, still telling a lie is immoral because, you know, it kind of disrupts the equilibrium of karmic stability, so to speak.

But, in a case like that,

um, you know, arguably, you could

justify,

you know, doing something wrong that is less wrong than not doing it.

But, I'm wandering away from this question of natural law.

So, we've already kind of established that a lot of morals are just purely artificial. Some of them are kind of getting in towards at least like animal instinct.

You know, like

taboos against sex with children, taboos against incest, that kind of thing. Even even like, um,

adultery. You know, there there's like some genetic instinctive components to

that, you know, of of that being considered wrong. So, that would be kind of natural law, but I don't think it would be what like Aristotle had in mind. So, you have to get into the deeper level of like anything that gets you closer to enlightenment is good. Anything that takes you farther away from enlightenment is bad. And that would be a kind of natural law, especially if you don't think that getting closer or farther away from enlightenment is just another artificial cultural construct, which in Buddhism it is not. I mean, it's it's pretty empirical.

You know, whether or not someone is

happy or unhappy, whether they're
you know, delusional, that's
you know, that's there's going to be all
this cultural conditioning that gets in
the way
of just making a purely objective
statement, or as objective of a
statement as is possible for a human
being to make.

I remember

I went to see Jordan Peterson give a
talk in San Jose, California, once. This
is back when he was still pretty based,
you know, back before he was I mean, he
was still like a
he he was still like a university

professor in Toronto or some such place. You know, he hadn't gotten really famous yet.

And he gave this talk where he is trying to come up with some kind of natural law. You know, he's trying to come up with a like morals that don't rely on some decree of a capital G God in a scripture somewhere. And he was struggling. I mean, he was coming up with like experiments on white rats, how white rats, laboratory rats, nevertheless naturally have this concept of fair play. You know, you've got a big rat and a little rat that that like to play and wrestle.

The the big rat will let the little rat win sometimes. Just just because he wants to keep playing with the little rat. And if he wins every time, the little rat's not going to want to play.

So, he's trying to work out some kind of natural law through this kind of thing, which I mean, you can say there is like a genetic component, like an instinctual component where certain immoral acts, so-called, are harmful to the species, harmful to your own chances of successfully reproducing your DNA sequences. So, that would be sort of like a

scientific level natural law. But then you get into Buddhist ethics where it's just the the act itself, the physical act itself, is ethically neutral. It's just your mental states, whether they become more like awake and and serene or whether they become more asleep and agitated.

Just based on how human psychology works.

You know, it's there's a lot of empiricism with like very wise people who are like meditation masters who can see just the subtlest little differences in their mental states. You know, they can see

whether this is leading to more clarity or less clarity. They can see in others whether their their actions are resulting in more or less clarity. And then they can sort of work out a moral system largely based on that. And I would call that about as close to natural law as you're going to get.

But I don't know if it's really a moral principle. It's certainly not moral rights. Even principles, I mean, a principle is kind of like a truth, whereas it would just have to exist as an abstraction.

And abstractions

um I mean, they they have like a

conventional truth, but not an ultimate truth.

So,

I would say that there's like that least two different kinds of natural law with regard to moral principles.

Now, one is sort of like the animal level, you know, like instinctual taboos against murder, for example. You know, it's like when animals fight, not not just humans, but any animals when they fight, usually it's not to the death. It's until one of them admits defeat and then lets out a yelp or something, which kind of diffuses the aggression from the others. Like the the other one wins,

the loser goes away

still alive, and that's best for the species.

So, I mean, that that kind of natural law, too, like murder and, you know, like sexual stuff, that kind of stuff can be like an animal level natural law.

But then you get into like depth psychology,

which is sometimes is at variance with with animal level natural law because at the animal level a certain amount of like greed and lust and aggression and so forth are good for the species, whereas like from a Buddhist point of view,

I mean, you want to get enlightened.

You've got to kind of detach yourself from the animal stuff, at least as much of the animal stuff as you can.

And I'm not sure how well I have addressed this question,

but I think I've been going at it for well over 15 minutes. So, I think I should probably uh

uh move [clears throat] on to Romeo's second question. And this one is just a follow-up to the first, and I think I may have already addressed it. He says, "Where do Buddhism's precepts stand in relation to natural law?"

And it's like an overlap. There's a certain amount of ancient Indian

cultural conditioning.

Like, for example, if you're taking eight precepts and not just and not just uh five, or taking 10 precepts and not just five. You know, one of the eight precepts is not sleeping on a high or large bed.

There's nothing necessarily immoral about sleeping on a high platform.

So, I mean, that is is uh maybe indirectly, I mean, it's trying to weaken your attachments to luxury, mainly.

Or not handling money is one of the 10 precepts. Or I mean, just there's a lot

of of the precept stuff

or I already mentioned like drinking alcohol. Sometimes, if you drink it to the point of being drunk, it could be you know, arguably leading you away from enlightenment, leading you away from clarity, your ability to see reality.

But I mean, accidentally taking a sip of some some fruit juice that went bad, or taking a spoonful of some medicine that turns out having alcohol in it, I mean, to say that that's immoral just because it falls into the precept would be kind of like dogmatic in my opinion.

Just kind of

adherence to morality and observances.

Sīlabbata paramasa, which is considered to be not a good thing in Buddhism.

So, Buddhism's precepts have some natural law, and then also they've got like ancient Indian ascetic etiquette, at least with regard to the rules of monastic discipline, and just ancient Indian lay etiquette for laypeople.

I mean, Jesus of Nazareth apparently drank wine.

>> [snorts]

>> He was uh what, a Nazarene, but not a Nazarite? Or is it the other way around?

I know it's one of those. I think it's the Nazarites, like Samson. They're not

supposed to cut their hair, they're not allowed to eat meat or drink alcohol, that kind of stuff.

Uh but I don't think [clears throat]
Jesus is one of those.

So, he drank wine. I mean, he he miraculously created one. That's one of his first miracles, I think, was making wine.

But it's not necessarily immoral.

I mean, not from a like a natural law point of view.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> Buddhism's Buddhism's precepts stand in relation to natural law. It's more the whole Buddhist concept of ethics.

Precepts are just kind of like this
superficial

institution that lends stability to the
system, helps to stabilize society, that
kind of stuff.

And they to have, you know, they're
conditioned by natural law. They're
conditioned by the Buddhist
interpretation of how karma works, you
know, what what brings you closer to
enlightenment and what takes you farther
away from it.

But Buddhism's precepts, it is a
combination of
you know, like
conventional morality, like cultural

morality, and also the Buddhist idea of how morals work, how ethics works.

But the Buddhist idea of ethics, it would be much closer to natural law than just precepts.

And there's somebody at the door, and I hope my woman hears the doorbell ringing,

cuz I don't want to interrupt this video, if you will.

But if the doorbell rings again, I may have to holler really loud to get my woman's attention.

So,

next question

is from Siavash and Sipat Zidona.

And I'm talking a little quieter just to see if someone's answering the door.

Okay, I guess somebody is.

Siavash and Sipat Zidona says,

"Are you on the side of a future

restoration of a Christian West, or

restoration of a pagan West?" And

I really don't think that I think that's

kind of a false dichotomy. I'm really

not wholly behind either one.

I mean,

a restoration of a Christian West, it

might be more realistic than trying to

bring back classical or Germanic

paganism in the West.

Uh classical and Germanic paganism are

pretty much dead. That most of the people that are trying to restore it or revive it are essentially larping.

They're I mean, they're they're essentially following a kind of a replica. You know, it's not this unbroken lineage. A lot of it is just conjecture as to what it was really like and so forth.

So,

uh Christianity, on the other hand, I mean, it's it's run its course. You know, it's kind of in the same situation that classical paganism is was in in the Roman Empire when Christianity was taking over. That to a large degree, like secular scientism has already

replaced Christianity even in the hearts of most Christians with regard to how to explain reality.

So, you've got devout Christians who nevertheless

defer to science with regard to explaining how the universe works. They might say that God created it in the beginning, but God created it in accordance with these scientific laws and so forth.

So,

um I'm really not on either side. I don't have have dog in this fight, cuz I'm not a Christian or a pagan really.

Um I mean

I ideally I used to I've I've often
considered that I think it would be much
nicer from my point of view if Julian
the Apostate hadn't died in Persia and
that um a kind of revised neo
neo-Platonism

had become like the official religion of
the of the Roman Empire and had like
somehow out-competed Christianity.

Although

that's kind of a pipe dream, I guess. I
mean, obviously it didn't happen.

But I mean, I would rather see the West,
like America especially,
go back to being strongly Christian
um than just see it just degenerate,

just fragment and collapse, maybe being taken over by Islam or something. Or or worse than Islam would just be like neo-Marxism.

So

I think the restoration of a Christian West would be more realistic than a restoration of a pagan West. And I do think that the restoration of a Christian West

um you know, it might be worth it even though I'm not a Christian.

I might be willing to take the hit for the sake of saving Western civilization from its its imminent decline and fall.

I mean, the decline is already in

progress, it seems like.

I mean, in uh

Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, I think he has the Emperor Commodus, you know, the son of Marcus Aurelius, at least the legal son of Marcus Aurelius, was the person who started the decline.

And I mean, the Roman Empire lasted for hundreds of years after that.

Um but I think possibly preferable to either

the restoration of a Christian West or the restoration of a pagan West would be something new and better in the future.

So it wouldn't be a restoration. It would just be the new establishment

of some new spiritual order possibly
deeply conditioned by Buddhism.

Although

just being realistic, going with
political realities, you couldn't really
have the like the uncompromising
pacifism and non-violence of Buddhism.

In uh

especially in in like a a world
superpower.

I guess you just have to renounce the
the military powers or superpowers or
anything like that if
people became Buddhist enough.

But even Buddhist countries still have
armies and so forth. I mean, Burma's

arguably the most Buddhist country on the planet and it's been run by a military dictatorship for decades.

It's kind of like the mafia is Catholic.

It's kind of that kind of deal.

So

yeah, I mean, like I keep saying, I've said this several times on these Q&A videos that it's hard to say what the next big spiritual system, what the next big paradigm shift is going to be based on.

That I mean, even if science finally comes to the conclusion that the material world is just an outward reflection of our own mental states or that energy and consciousness are

ultimately the same,

then I mean, that in itself could just be a huge Copernican revolution uh which would result in uh a large shift in the way people look at reality.

And then you might even have sort of like a a kind of Taoist physics or something becomes like the Oracle or like I was saying not too long ago, just virtually omniscient computers like AI might become the new religion. You know, like Brian Aldiss in some of his science fiction novels or his science fiction short stories especially, he had this idea that computers will become functionally omniscient, at least

omniscient enough to satisfy humans
and that people will just start going to
AI as a kind of Oracle.

And that could start a whole new
religious system
without even the need of some
charismatic
sage or
spiritual leader.

Or charismatic warlord.

So yeah, that was kind of a trick
question cuz I'm really on neither side
and I think I should just move on to
SeeOfAction SeePazZidonna's next
question.

Which is as follows.

SeeOfAction SeePazZidonna says, "In

Majjhima Nikaya 13, the Buddha claims that all warfare and conflict between individuals has sensuality as their true motivation. Do you agree with this? I didn't believe it at first, but thinking about it makes sense since we are often not even aware why we do certain things and our own hidden inner motivation. So the question is, I mean, do I agree with the the 13th sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya that warfare and conflict between individuals always has sensuality as its true motivation?"

It depends on how you look at it, I guess. I mean, yeah, was it Freud that came up with the

pleasure principle that said that all of our motivation, you know, everything we do is for the purpose of increasing our pleasure

or decreasing our displeasure?

So I mean, if that's the case, then it would all boil down to that regardless of what, you know, the more superficial reasons are. But if you want to go with you you want to set aside the pleasure principle

and just deal with I mean, some some nations,

you know, like the Roman Empire to some degree, it was it was like it was just kind of built in just expansionism was just built into the system for a

long time and it was just
what you do. Or like Crusades
where it's
supposedly a religious war.

I mean, if it there's a religious war,
and there have been genuine religious
wars, it's not all economics, all desire
for money and territory and all that. I
mean, that's usually a major factor.

But still, let's for the sake of
argument, let's say that there really
have been religious wars where people
are just fighting because
our religion is right, their religion is
wrong, and they're evil, and we need to
defeat them. And

I mean, that is a major
like motivation for people fighting in
religious wars anyway.

Then

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> yeah, how that would fit into the
pleasure principle, sensuality
as the the sutta has it or as
SeeOfAction and SeePazZidonna's
translation has it,
then it becomes more subtle.

It's like

I mean, to where you going to draw the
line? That you just religious fanaticism
and intolerance
of other people's beliefs, I mean, to
what degree does it have roots in

sensuality? I mean, deep down you could say it's kind of like their own deep down insecurity about whether their religion is really true and so they want to just abolish anyone who disagrees with them, just kind of abolish anyone questioning their point of view so that makes them feel more like secure emotionally, this kind of stuff.

You can take it down to that level, you can take anything down to that level where it's, you know, they're just doing it for their own satisfaction and whether you want to call that sensuality or not,

I don't know. But just if you just go

with sensuality like just an overt
desire for pleasure, you know, women,
more money, then the stuff that money
can buy, which includes women,
then not all warfare and conflict
between individuals has that as its true
motivation.

I mean, some of it's just hate.

But then it's like the hate, you could
you could take that down a notch and
it's they want the satisfaction of
seeing their enemies destroyed, which
you could say is a kind of sensuality.

So

if you're going to deal if you're going
to interpret sensuality as any kind of
like emotional satisfaction,

then yeah, you could just that could be
the lowest common denominator, you could
just boil it all down to that. But if
you're talking about
like

I mean, you could you could let's say
economic interests could be
put under the the category of
sensuality, but still
some conflict is not necessarily
motivated by a desire for pleasure.

Unless it's just like the
emotional satisfaction of getting what
you want.

So I don't fully agree with it unless
you want to just boil it down to like

Freud's pleasure principle or whoever came up with it. Whoever came up with the pleasure principle.

Then

>> [clears throat and snorts]

>> technically it would be true, I guess.

Then everything we do, not just conflict, but everything else would have sensuality as its true motivation.

So why even just specify warfare and conflict? Just say everything.

But if everything isn't motivated by sensuality, then warfare and conflict, in my opinion, are not exclusively motivated by sensuality.

And I'm just going to move on to see of

action C Pad Z Din next question.

Which is this is an easy one. I'm not sure why he asked this question.

He said,

Uh

>> [clears throat]

>> well, first of all, he he has this uh like a screenshot of some post on social media. And it's the post says, "They offered you \$80 an hour to clean the cemetery alone, 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Y'all taking the job?" Question mark. And then see of action C Pad Z Din says, "Would you take the job and would be the least amount it would take to convince you? What would be the least

amount it would take to convince you?

Theoretically, it is 30 minutes away from the nearest building with people living there and you can't take weapons."

Well, first of all, I mean,

uh

it would depend on the cemetery, I guess. I mean, if there's like, you know, junkies and gang members hanging out there,

then I mean, I wouldn't wouldn't take the job regardless of what they're offering. I mean, if it was like obviously

physically dangerous to work there just because of, you know, criminals hanging

out there

that would

pretty obviously, you know, harass me at
at least,

then yeah, I mean, it's it'd just be a
non-starter.

But if it's just a cemetery,

you know, just a cemetery,

then

yeah, I mean, why not take the job? \$80

an hour? I see if it's \$80 an hour and

10:00 to 5:00 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

That's 7 hours. So, that's \$80 per hour

at 7 hours per night. And let's say it's

a 5-day week, then that's that adds up

to \$145,600

a year. That's a six-figure income for cleaning a cemetery. And cemeteries in the west, like in America, they're like parks.

You know, they're pretty. There's flowers and stuff. It's it's it's not bad. But as a monk, I used to live in cemeteries. I would spend the night in cemeteries.

This I mean, as a Buddhist practice.

And the cemeteries in Burma, you know, there's like human bones lying around.

You know, it's it's like jungly.

You know, there's like not just human bones, but there's like centipedes and scorpions and snakes and that kind of stuff. But I mean, as a monk, I I stayed

there for free. I chose I just preferred sometimes to stay in a cemetery. Like like whenever I went in the the vicinity of the town of Kani in northwestern Burma, there was this cemetery. There was a really good cemetery. It had like this big pavilion there where you could stay.

And and you know, there was like human bones lying around.

One time, there was like the the the face part of a skull just like the front part of a a skull just lying face up on the ground at this place. I mean, I think it was outside the cemetery actually. It was like on the road maybe

100 yards away.

And so, like, that doesn't bother me.

I'm not particularly afraid of ghosts.

So, yeah, I'd take the job easily. I

mean, I don't like working nights.

You know,

it's like what is it?

Working until 5:00 in the morning, I

mean, that would kind of suck. I mean,

it's kind of late. Second shift I

prefer, but

I mean,

going to work at 10:00 p.m. is kind of

pushing it. But for \$145,000 bucks a

year, obviously,

I mean, it would be a heck of a lot more

than I'm making now.

So, I'm not sure why see of action C Pad
Z Din asked me this question. I mean,
personally, I'd take the job for half as
much. Half that pay would still be
I mean, you're just cleaning a cemetery.
I mean, cemeteries don't tend to be all
that dirty, especially in the west. They
look like golf courses or parks.

What are you going to do? Just picking
up wilted flowers,
picking up hankies that people have
thrown to the ground?

But again, I mean, if you've got like
gang members and and just like homeless
crazy drug addicts and so forth just
like haunting the place, that would be

worse than ghosts.

Uh

>> [sighs]

>> but if it's 30 minutes away from the nearest building, then it'd be like a 30-minute drive to work.

So, there's that too, but still for 80 bucks an hour, yeah, that would be a bargain. I'd go for it easily.

And I'm just going [snorts] to move on to the next question.

This is from PSA.

And PSA says, "When you were a monk, which of the 227 precepts did you find most difficult to observe and why?" So, by

by specifying 227 precepts, he's

referring to the Patimokkha rules. I mean, there's most of the rules of monastic discipline are not in the 227 rules of the Patimokkha.

Most people don't know this. Even some teachers of Buddhism don't know this that I calculated probably there are between like two and 3,000 rules of monastic discipline altogether, most of which lie beyond the the limits of the Patimokkha.

But let's just keep it down to the Patimokkha, the 227 rules. The most difficult to observe of those rules when I was

when I was a young monk, young, dumb,

and full of precious bodily fluids,

then

it would be like Sanghadisesa number one

was difficult, which is not having

orgasms on purpose. Because when you're

young and just come from like over sexed

family anyway, it's it's like the

hormones reach this like a breaking

point where you're just I mean, you can

just be like wanting to just cry and

howl like a dog, beat your head against

the wall.

Fortunately for me, about every 2 weeks,

I just automatically have like a a

pornographic dream. And when I was in my

early 40s and stopped having those, I I

sincerely missed them.

Uh

but yeah, that was that was like the biggest challenge. The the the sorest trial and ordeal for me was just being celibate even to the point of not spanking the puppy.

That was very difficult.

There are other rules like minor rules that aren't in the Patimokkha that I mean, it's just easy to break them.

But of the Patimokkha rules, I mean, that was like the sorest trial. And if you break that rule, you got to do penance for 6 days and 6 nights, go through this very inconvenient reinstatement ceremony with at least 20

monks present, and it's just a pain in the neck.

So, yeah, that was the most difficult for me.

So,

let's just move on to PSA's next question.

Uh he says, "You've mentioned briefly here and there that you have experience at Zen monasteries, but I wonder if you could elaborate in more detail how the whole thing was and was it Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, or Chinese Zen?"

>> [clears throat]

>> Well, when I was looking for a monastery in which to be ordained, at first I was leaning towards Zen. You know, I just

had more exposure to Zen Buddhism. I liked the idea of, you know, the the mysterious men dressed in black talking in riddles and hitting each other with sticks. You know, I just it appealed to me.

Then I tried two monasteries. It's like, I mean, in the place where I was living at the time, Aberdeen, Washington, or at least Pacific Northwest,

I I

grew up in Aberdeen, Washington, home of Nirvana, Kurt Cobain, and all that.

And I mean, there's no Buddhist monasteries around there. There was some rumor of a Buddhist monastery in the San

Juan Islands, but I think it was like it wasn't Theravada. I don't think it was Zen. It was like, you know, Nichiren or something.

So,

um

I went to

a Zen priory

in Portland, Oregon

and told him I wanted to be ordained as a monk. And he presented me with this

It was like a directory of Buddhist

organizations in America. And I just

wrote down the name and address of any

place that wasn't obviously not a

monastery. You know,

some of it I didn't know what it was,

but it might be a monastery. So, I wrote down like 20 names and addresses and just sent out this letter, you know, in stating my intention of becoming a monk. And it turns out most of the places weren't even monasteries.

Um I got two letters back from actual monasteries. One was the name in the directory was Tong Phu Lu Si Yap Dao. Even the word Si Yap Dao was spelled wrong. I had no idea what a Tong Phu Lu Si Yap Dao was.

But it might have been a a monastery, so I sent a letter. And then I also got a letter from Shasta Abbey in northern California, which is a Zen place. So, I

checked out both places.

And Shasta Abbey, I think it started off in a more Japanese tradition, but then it was becoming kind of more more Chinese in its orientation. The the abbot or abbess was this large English woman. And

I don't remember her name.

I met her once.

Um and they were sort of reforming a little bit. It was at first it was allowable for like the ordained priests and nuns to get married and then they they kind of stopped that so that the

the Roshi at the the the priory in

Portland had kind of distanced himself

from Shasta Abbey. He was ordained there. He and his wife were ordained there, but then when they were forbidding marriage, he said, "Well, we are already committed to each other." So, they just kind of went their own way.

But I I went to Shasta Abbey for like an introductory retreat just kind of test the waters.

And I mean, it was it was nothing like men [clears throat] dressed in black standing around talking in riddles and hitting each other with sticks. Nobody hit anybody with sticks. You know,

that's it was kind of feminized. I mean, you had a female abbot an abbess running the place a nun running the place.

And lots of bowing and chanting. Lots of ceremonies. I mean, you'd bow to a door before going through the doorway. You know, you'd bow to the room upon entering the door entering the room.

Lots and lots of chanting.

And I just was not

really I did not really wasn't attracted to that. Also, there was a lot of pure land stuff that was kind of conflated with Zen there. And I've never had any use for pure land Buddhism.

So,

and and then also, they ran a store. You

know, they're selling like candles and Buddhist Buddha statues and little gongs and incense and that kind of stuff. And you'd have monks and nuns like getting out of their gray Zen pajamas and putting on regular layman's clothing and driving to town in a car you know, to buy groceries for the monastery this kind of stuff. So, I I mean, that really was a far cry from what you read about Zen monasteries in books. You know, the men dressed in black talking in riddles hitting each other with sticks.

So, then I went to Tong Phủ Lộ Thiền Đạo or Tong Phủ Lộ Khải Nguyên Monastery in

Boulder Creek, California and it was like four Burmese monks.

Only let's see, two of whom spoke fluent English. The abbot spoke almost no English at all.

And they're just living a quiet life.

You know, just not hand Well, I mean, they handled money, but not

ostentatiously. You know, I didn't see them handling money at the time. You

know, they didn't drive cars. You know, they didn't put on layman's clothing.

They weren't running a store. You know, they were just being monks. And so,

comparing the Theravada the Burmese

Theravada place with this kind of

Westernized Japanese maybe slightly

Chinese Zen place, I mean, it was just the difference was very stark.

And it was fairly clear to me that the Theravada place was coming closer to what the Buddha actually taught.

So,

I guess I'm

fairly elaborate with regard to um my details how the whole thing was.

Um

So, I think I'm just going to move on to PSA's third question.

He says, "You're approaching 200 Q&As.

That's amazing. Are you planning a big party or special event for that episode?" People have been

kind of pestering me a little bit to have another live stream for episode 200. I did a live stream for episode 100.

And I'm game, I guess. It's just the thing is I'm not very good at live streams. Not because I'm not good at being spontaneous. I mean, these are pre-recorded, but all done in one take. You know, there's not a lot of jump cuts.

So, yeah, I may do a live stream.

Um but that's about it. The thing is with the live streams, I just don't have enough experience with it because I have only done it like two or three times.

So, that it's hard to tell if I if I'm

even live.

Like I mentioned the very first time I did it a live stream Q&A, I think it was a Q&A. I mean, it looked like I wasn't even

wasn't even online. I just walked out of the room to try and get my woman to help me figure out what was going on. She said, "You're you're on. You just left the room."

So, I came back and continued the Q&A. So, or whatever it was. Continued the video.

But yeah, it's like probably a live stream would be about the most you can hope for in that regard. And I'm moving

on to the next question.

This is from Cyrus Frame, one of the few people that ask questions on Rumble.

And Cyrus Frame says,

"Could it be said that volition is the will to carve the uncarved block?"

Well,

golly.

I mean, it could be said,

I guess.

But I mean, I really don't see it that way so much. I mean, in a way you could say that volition is the will to carve the uncarved block. But let's say that you've got the uncarved block of stone, which as I keep saying contains within it in potential virtual form

every possible statue.

So, the forms those virtual forms would be perceptions. And the movement of those forms, not just the movement, but whatever kind of continued pattern is keeping that statue, you know, in a state of coherence as it moves, you know, it goes through its actions of brushing its teeth or whatever, then that would be volition.

So,

um I mean, volition is karma.

And it's interesting. There there was a book it's still out there, I'm sure, The Buddhist Bible, which was mainly oriented towards

Mahayana Buddhism.

But it had some interesting translations and it translated karma as habit energy.

And that's a good translation. I mean, it's most people don't think of karma as habit energy.

But I mean, you think about it, that is a good translation. It's habit energy.

And so, the the volition or the habit energy the karma is what is keeping that virtual s- like moving statue that image contained within the block of marble. What is keeping it coherent as essentially what is identified as an individual that continues to exist over time. You know, it's it's like the habitual pattern that

that keeps it, you know, it like a recognizable pattern for perception to perceive and at the same time is, you know, through time. So, it's volition is just like the temporal aspect of perception. But also, there's like the stability aspect of keeping that perception that even though the perception is changing, keeping it the same enough that you keep perceiving it as the same thing. It's not just completely changing from one moment to the next into something unrecognizable. So, volition or karma habit energy also has that function of a kind of you know, it's momentum. It's the momentum of your

mental states. It's the momentum of your perceptions, so to speak.

Just as perception is sort of like the form of your volitions.

There's it's like two aspects of the same thing, perception and volition.

Perception is like the the form aspect.

Volition is the function. Form and function.

So to speak. Noun and verb.

So, I hope I answered that question at least somewhat satisfactorily. Hope he doesn't just spit and turn off the turn off the video after hearing that answer.

Cuz I'm moving on to the next one from Cyrus Frame.

"Is mindfulness the awareness of

perceptions?

It seems clear when noting, looking, hearing, etc., but not so clear when noting thinking."

Yeah, it's hard to note thinking. That's one thing about noting. It apparently just going with scientism, it apparently uses the same centers of your brain as thinking. That noting of the thinking and the thinking they use the same areas of your brain apparently. So, that you can't do both at the same time. So, if you're thinking and you note the thinking, it stops the thought. As a general like if you're doing Mahasi style noting.

On the other hand, you get music stuck in your mind, you can note it till you're blue in the face and sometimes that music won't stop. It's like it's a different part of your brain so that like the noting doesn't preempt it.

Well, I wouldn't say that mindfulness is the awareness of perceptions.

Mindfulness is like the simplification and minimization of perceptions. If you're being mindful, so you like you hear the barking dog, you know, you're sitting there meditating. A dog starts barking outside the window. Then if you're being mindful, you're being aware. You're like noting the the auditory

auditory perception or just the auditory sensation of hearing.

You're just you're aware of hearing and and you're

you're like aware of like the the

textures of the sound, you know, when it starts, when it stops, what it sounds

like and so forth. It's just that you're not

you don't have like a running commentary about whose dog is that and they

shouldn't have their dog barking outside my window. They should train their dog

better, etc. etc. blah blah blah. Next

thing you know, you're thinking about

what you're going to have for lunch

tomorrow.

So, mindfulness is reducing perception and when you get to the perfection of mindfulness, fourth jhana, which is considered to be perfect mindfulness, you're not thinking anything. You know, it's just like you're as close as you can get to just bare sensation or not bare sensation but bare consciousness, pure consciousness with almost no perceptual content at all.

So, mindfulness is reduction of perception, not so much awareness of it. I mean, just by having bare awareness, non-judgmental, choiceless awareness like Krishnamurti

talks about that I mean, that reduces the perceptions cuz you don't have like this running commentary.

You know, your your thoughts aren't hooking up in sequence.

Let's see. Mindfulness the awareness of perceptions. Yeah, I mean, it in a sense it is the awareness of perceptions but that's not how you would define it really.

Because it's like awareness of bare perception, you know, the simplest form of perception that you can manage until finally you get to the perfection of mindfulness, you've got virtually no perceptions at all

cuz you're in fourth jhana.

So, mindfulness is reducing perception so that you don't have all this thinking and labeling and commentary and stuff going on. At first, at the beginning level of mindfulness, you're still labeling. You get better at mindfulness, you do away with the labeling, you just direct your attention at the thing and observe it without having to to slap a word onto it. And then when you get even better, you're you're so aware like your your mindfulness is like observing the the surface of a still pool.

And if a thought even starts to arise, then you notice the ripples immediately and it's like the noting of that just

causes the ripples to just fade back out again and you're just sitting there in a state of silence.

So, mindfulness is the simplification of perception, let's say,

through like

uh what would be like intense awareness.

I mean, in in Burma like the warning

signs, you know, they don't say caution

or warning or Achtung, they say sati or

in Burmese sati

which, you know, it's like attention.

>> [clears throat]

>> So, mindfulness is like attention.

Okay, let's just move on to Cyrus

Frame's third question.

He says,

you I'm assuming it's a he.

You are not the mind. The mind is just what is playing on the screen of awareness. Do you think this is true?

Well, you are not the mind, yeah. Except um I mean, if there is

I mean, there are certain ways where you could identify the ego with the mind. I mean, obviously the ego is itself a projection of mind. So, the ego would be mind and that's kind of what you are because you don't really exist. So, the like the the illusion of you is just pure mind.

So,

set that aside. Let's just say there is

no mind or there isn't there is no you.

No self, anatta.

So, then it would be correct. You are not the mind.

The mind is just what is playing on the screen of awareness.

Well,

not really. The mind is the screen of awareness and mental states might be what is playing on the screen of awareness like in Abhidhamma philosophy or just five aggregates theory, whatever. You've got mind or consciousness is different from mental states. You know, in in Abhidhamma it's citta is consciousness, cetasika is

mental states which would include
perceptions and volitions,
feelings, that kind of stuff.

So, the mind
more correctly would be consciousness
itself.

And so, what is playing on the screen of
consciousness would be mental states.

So,
it's some
it's kind of true,
somewhat true.

And I'm just going to
see, make sure that I at least kind of
did some kind of justice to that
question.

Yeah, I guess so. I'm going to move on

to the next question. This is from Christian and I'm not sure if this is a like a legit question that was expecting an answer. This is from a person called Christian.

Whether that's their real name or not, I don't know.

But they were talking they left a comment under the previous Q&A about how ridiculous it is that there is even an idea of enlightenment.

And I would I pointed out I mean, it's it isn't meaningless.

You know, it could it can be like a an enigma or paradox but at least from a Buddhist point of view, enlightenment is

not meaningless.

So, Christian responded with, "If you search for enlightenment, aren't you bound to attachment? Also, what does it mean to be enlightened? How do you know if you haven't achieved it?" Well, that's three questions, isn't it? I wasn't expecting this.

I just cut and paste. I just thought it was one question.

Oh, how naive I was. Okay.

Christian, first question, "If you search for enlightenment, are you bound to attachment?" At first, yeah. Cuz it's it's like skillful means. I've I've mentioned this before. I've written essays on this where it's like if you

commit yourself to seeking
enlightenment, to living the holy life,
it's like you reduce your desires and
attachments pretty much down to one. You
know, it's like your desire for sex,
drugs, and rock and roll, and pizza, and
ice cream, and all that. You know, you
have kind of renounced those attachments
but still you have this one attachment
for enlightenment.

But so long as you have that still have
that one attachment, it's still an
obstacle to enlightenment. So, what
happens is you try as hard as you can
and you fail
because you still have this one obstacle

which is your desire for enlightenment.

So, that at some point through insight or despair or whatever it is, you eventually just let go of that last attachment.

Boom, there you are.

So, I mean, this is common to others religious systems also, just this moment of surrender, of just giving up.

Um you know, it's a big deal in some schools of Christianity also.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> But you're not bound to attachment um at the moment of enlightenment. You know, it's like you have to let go of that last attachment in order for enlightenment to occur. But still, this

attachment for enlightenment serves as
kind of like a gimmick or skillful means
to help you like get rid of these other
attachments, you know, it's like all
your eggs are in one basket and then you
just let go of that last basket of eggs,
so to speak,
and there you are.

So, Christian's second question, "Also,
what does it mean to be enlightened?"

>> [clears throat]

>> Well,

I suppose you I can just start off with
just some of the
like standard Buddhist explanations. You
know, it is the end of suffering, end of

dukkha or it is the end of greed, hate,
and delusion or if you prefer, it is the
end of attraction, aversion, and
semi-conscious stupidity.

Or

like

>> [clears throat]

>> what I would be inclined to say it means
to be enlightened

is

block of marble, we're going back to the
block of marble again. You got this
uncarved block which contains within it
all possible statues and delusion and
samsara is believing that these virtual
conditional statues inside the block of
marble are real, at least some of them.

I mean, you're only aware of like a finite number of them.

So,

enlightenment [clears throat]

is I mean, you practice

dharma, dharma, you know, you practice

meditation so that um

gosh,

I've explained this many times. I think

Christian might be a new viewer though.

So, let's forget the block of marble for a minute.

You've got consciousness is water,

mental states are waves. Most people,

like unenlightened people, are

completely locked in to the level of

form of waves. You know, they have no concept of water really.

It's just waves. I like this wave, I don't like that wave. This wave is good, that wave is bad, etc. etc.

So, by practicing the holy life, practicing morality, and practicing meditation, you calm the water.

Until you get good enough at meditation that or just good [clears throat] enough at calming the water by by any means that the waves are no longer distracting you, you can't really identify with the waves cuz they're not there anymore or or least it becomes so subtle that you're able through insight to go beyond the mere level of forms into just water.

And then, so that's that would be like a kind of insight. And when you're practicing jhana in Theravada Buddhism, that's called temporary liberation right there. It's like a It's like a temporary enlightenment when you're sitting there not thinking anything, so you can't be distracted by samsaric forms because you have temporarily just like subdued the samsaric forms. So, you're liberated from samsaric forms temporarily while you're in this jhanic state.

But the trick is, and Zen Buddhism talks about this more than than Theravada does as far as I know, you've got what is called Zen in the marketplace. Once you

have been able to see water instead of
being completely distracted by waves,
then the waves can come back, and that's
according to Zen Buddhism, that's a
thousand times better than

>> [laughter]

>> like

enlightenment like sitting cross-legged
on a cushion is when you're like in the
marketplace and you're making noise
moving around Everyone around you is
making noise moving around, you still
are focused or like

um

not necessarily focused, but I mean
you're you're like existing at the level
of water, and all these waves are just

irrelevant. You know, they're still there.

You know, it reminds me of the old Zen saying that I've repeated several times.

You know, it's like

>> [clears throat]

>> the the meditation hall can be resounding with the shouts of the master and blows from his stick can be falling like rain, but still the master abides in stillness and silence.

Because he's [clears throat] got Zen in the marketplace. He's not distracted by the forms. He's at the level of water.

He's at the level of uncarved block instead of all these possible

like conditional virtual statues.

So, that would be what enlightenment is
is

you're existing at the level of
consciousness and not the level of
mental states.

And

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> I I explain it over and over again, and
some people will ask you know, kind of
the same question over and over again
cuz they don't get it cuz it it is
it takes some kind of like
multi-dimensional thinking to grasp it.

It's like dealing with two different
levels of reality simultaneously, and
some people just can't deal with that

even like intellectual people.

You know, like brilliant physicists and so forth.

Is Is for some people they're just so completely locked into an intellectual perceptual-based understanding of reality that they just can't they just can't separate themselves from that.

So,

Christian's third question, how do you know if you haven't achieved enlightenment? Well, I mean if you're still wallowing in samsara, if you're still experiencing suffering, if you're still unhappy sometimes,

that would be a good indication of it.

You know, if you're just raging at some old lady and kicking her dog, then that's a good sign that you're not enlightened.

Um

But I mean it's tricky and it's it's paradoxical and enigmatic enlightenment is because of that waves coming back deal.

You know, the waves can come back and you can still be enlightened even though it may look to another person, "Wow, look at all that that stormy sea going on over there."

So, that's that's the tricky part.

And some Mahayana Buddhists especially,

some Hindus probably too, say that I mean everyone is ultimately enlightened because the water is always there. It's just you're distracted by the the waves, but the water is always there. It's just like that the essence of enlightenment is always there. I assume that's largely what Mahayana Buddhists are calling Buddha nature.

I mean, how far away are you from ultimate reality? I mean, it's right here. We're soaking in it.

So,

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This also might be just like a rhetorical question.

This is from Jeffrey. He says, "I like to meditate with cigars. Probably not correct, but it's not really me, so why not?"

Well,

I mean, you can meditate with cigars.

Ajahn Mun,

who was like the stereotypical example of an arahant in Thai Buddhism, you know, after Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Mun, maybe Ajahn Maha Bua would be like the three big now just sages of modern like 20th century Thai Buddhism.

And Ajahn Mun was a chain smoker. I assume he smoked a lot of village cigars. I don't know if they had like

western-style cigarettes in Siam 100
years ago.

And he was is believed to have been
fully enlightened
despite the fact that I mean, if you
smoke tobacco regularly, that officially
technically makes you a drug addict.

But

>> [clears throat]

>> that's just kind of a weird thing, isn't
it? You've got an enlightened drug
addict.

But I mean, if someone else is addicted
to some substance, then that's maybe a a
ray of hope. Well, Ajahn Mun was
addicted to nicotine, apparently.

Maybe because he was enlightened, he
just kind of transcended that. That was
just part of the stormy sea
or the sea, the waves,
and he just wasn't attached he wasn't
identified with that anymore.

Even though his body may still have been
addicted to nicotine.

So, I mean, if you can smoke a cigar
mindfully, I mean, it could be like just
a little ritual sort of like the
Japanese tea ceremony.

You know, there's the ritual. You're
cutting the end of the cigar and you're
mindfully holding it, feeling the
texture, and smelling the aromas, and
mindfully lighting it, and watching

you're mindfully puffing, you know,
you're mindful of the the muscles in
your mouth as you're puffing on it, and
watching the you know, the little flame
shooting up as you take the puffs and
all that.

Mindfully inhaling, mindfully exhaling,
mindfully feeling the effects of the
nicotine in your system.

I mean, if you're doing that, that's
still legit meditation.

If you're you're smoking the cigar
mindfully.

I mean, technically you could do like
mindfulness of breathing, you know,
breathing in, breathing out while

taking puffs of the the cigar, I guess.

But anything you do mindfully is

meditation. I mean, you can be having

sex mindfully, and that's still it's

it's like tantra. Still a kind of

meditation. It may not be the ideal kind

of meditation, but still I mean, you can

you inject some meditation

into just about any activity.

Taking a dump, for example.

So,

yeah, why not? It's not really you

anyway, is it? Cuz there is no self.

If you are anything, you'd be more just

the sea of consciousness rather than all

these distracting waves.

So to speak. But then again, Buddhists

aren't supposed to reify the absolute.

Even though the Abhidharma scholars did big time.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Xenethoid.

We've been going for an hour 17 minutes.

This next question is from Xenethoid.

You've said that Buddhism in its masculine form is the negation of delusion, and in its feminine form, it is the negation of suffering.

Are delusion and suffering not ultimately the same thing?

Well, I have said that like the more head-oriented and thus stereotypically

more masculine approach to Dharma is a concern with

you know, freeing oneself from delusion.

Whereas the more heart-oriented and stereotypically more feminine approach to Dharma is liberating oneself from suffering.

But ultimately,

if you have reduced suffering to zero, that's the same as reducing delusion to to zero. I don't think delusion and suffering are necessarily the same thing. They're certainly not defined as synonyms in the texts, but you don't suffer without delusion.

If you don't have any delusion, you don't have any suffering either. So, in

order to eliminate suffering, you still have to eliminate delusion. It's just that the end result may be perceived as different, but either way, you have to eliminate delusion

because that's unenlightenment.

So, delusion and suffering,

I mean, they're ultimately the same thing, and ultimately they're just like imaginary statues in the block of marble.

I mean, they're not defined as synonyms, but without delusion, you don't suffer, and so in order to stop suffering, you have to cut the
the link.

Generally, I mean, it's like
like desire. You know, desire is the
cause of all suffering. Delusion is the
cause of all desire.

>> [sighs]

>> So, in order to like stop experiencing
desire, you have to have such intense
mindfulness that you can

I mean, that
you're not deluded anymore.

So, I mean, that's that's how I would
explain it. There Ultimately, I mean,
ultimately is just meaningless cuz
ultimately you can't explain reality in
words. You know, ultimately there are no
different things. That dividing the
world into a multiplicity is like an

artificial

artificial construct. It's a projection
by by the mind.

It is delusion, ultimately.

But, you can't have suffering without
desire, and you can't have desire
without delusion.

So, by eliminating delusion, you
eliminate all three.

And you can't eliminate
suffering without eliminating the first
two, anyway.

So, it's all about delusion, it seems to
me.

Even if that is not like the deliberate
focus of one's practice, that's the way

it works out.

So, we head-oriented people are a little deeper in that kind of understanding, maybe.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Dhamma River.

And [clears throat] Dhamma River asks a kind of technical Dhamma question here.

He says, "I wonder if you could please read a very short sutta in the Samyutta before answering this question. It's the sutta eight, exhortation three. It ends with this sentence, and that is my question. Could you please explain what this sentence means?" And so,

>> [clears throat]

>> here is the the concluding sentence or concluding paragraph of this sutta, which I did read. I read Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.

He says, "If Kassapa, one speaking rightly, could say, 'Those leading the holy life have been ruined by the ruination of those who lead the holy life. Those leading the holy life have been vanquished by the vanquishing of those who lead the holy life. It is just It is just thus that one could rightly say this.'"

Okay. So, I did read the sutta, as I already said, and it doesn't strike me

as a particularly early one. There is some anachronism in this sutta.

And I mean, the whole purpose of the sutta is talking about how monks used to be like conscientious ascetic forest dwellers dedicated to meditation, and now like the most the most high-profile, most respected monks are just the famous ones that are good at talking. So, I mean, that in itself is something that you would expect later on in Buddhism than during the Buddha's own lifetime, when he's still leading the Sangha. And also, there's an anachronism here in this sentence or this paragraph.

It says, I mean,

>> [clears throat]

>> the Buddha asks Kassapa Let's Let's just do a little synopsis of this sutta. The Buddha asks Mahakassapa, who is his senior disciple, to if he wants to give a sermon to the monks. And then Mahakassapa says, "The monks don't even listen anymore. They're not respectful anymore." And then the Buddha says, quote, "Just so, Kassapa, in the past the elder bhikkhus were forest dwellers and spoke in praise of forest dwelling. They were alms food eaters and spoke in praise of eating alms food. They were rag robe wearers and spoke in praise of wearing rag robes. They were triple robe users and

spoke in praise of using the triple robe. They were of few wishes and spoke in praise of fewness of wishes. They were content and spoke in praise of contentment. They were secluded and spoke in praise of solitude. They were aloof from society and spoke in praise of aloofness from society. They were energetic and spoke in praise of arousing energy." And then he talked about how nowadays, you know, they're just the ones that get the most donations are like the most respected. But, you look at this this part this part here is especially, "They were triple robe users and spoke in praise of using the triple robe." That's in the

Patimokkha rules.

It It's later on it came to be like this optional practice, but this built right into the Buddhist monastic code that all monks are supposed to be triple robe wearers. You don't keep more than three robes. It's a Nissaggiya Pacittiya offense to keep an extra robe for more than 10 days.

It would if

if you keep an extra robe, a fourth robe, which is just a rectangle of cloth, for more than 10 days, then you have to you have committed a Nissaggiya Pacittiya offense. You have to relinquish the extra robe, and then you

have to make confession for it.

So, this sutta apparently arose at a time when that Patimokkha rule had already become kind of obsolete through just people not monks not following it. And nowadays, there are very few monks that follow that rule. Like Ajahn Thanissaro in his famous book on the Buddhist monastic code, you know, he he just follows the Thai loopholes of getting around this rule, and he just says

it's if you call it something besides a robe, then it's not a robe. You just designate it as accessory cloth, parikara cola. Just call it parikara cola. It's not a robe, even though

you're wearing it as a robe. It looks like a robe.

And which is is just nonsense. It's just playing games, trying to avoid following a rule.

And by the time this sutta was composed, this had already happened.

>> [clears throat]

>> Which is kind of unlikely that during the Buddha's own time that monks would already have abandoned this Patimokkha rule.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

I would say that this this uh this sutta arose later on. I mean, probably not

much later on, because it is in the
in the Tipitaka. It is in the Sutta
Pitaka.

But, I would guess that it is kind of an
anachronistic made-up kind of sutta.

So,

I mean, the whole the whole spiel here
is that in the in the early days of the
Sangha, I mean, the Buddha is actually
supposed to be saying this. So, it's
like this is kind of weird. But, the
Buddha is saying in the early days of
the Sangha, the monks were, you know,
dedicated ascetic meditators, lived a
life of simplicity, and so they got the
most respect. And so, that new converts
to the Sangha would look at these monks

that were getting the most respect and emulate them.

But, later on in the Sangha, the monks that are the most respected are the ones that are getting the most donations, you know, they're the best the best talkers, this kind of thing. And so, new um new monks entering the Sangha, they look at at them as being the most respected, and so they emulate them.

So, we get to this statement in question.

"Those leading the holy life have been ruined by the ruination of those who lead the holy life. Those leading the holy life have been vanquished by the

vanquishing of those who lead the holy life."

So, essentially what it means, although it's kind of awkwardly worded, is that

>> [clears throat]

>> when monks start getting corrupt, and then they become the leaders of the Sangha, and they're the most respected monks, then the new monks are just following in their footsteps and becoming corrupt, also. I mean, that's essentially what it means.

So, those leading the holy life now have been ruined by the ruination of those who led the holy life in the in the previously, because they're emulating them.

And that's how I interpret it, anyway.

And this I mean, as I mentioned in a recent Q&A that I did meet the the Burmese equivalent to the Sangha the Sangha Raja of Thailand. He's the the Burmese equivalent of the Sangha Raja is the Sangha Mahanayaka Sayadaw, the great leader of the Sangha.

And he handled money, and he would praise the hand the donating of money to monks

to to lay people. When he give Dhamma talks, you know, he didn't encourage them to donate money to monks.

And he was like the leader of the Sangha in Burma, anyway. I mean, technically, I

mean, he's he's pretty much just kind of a bureaucrat.

Probably most Burmese Buddhists wouldn't even know who he was.

But, still,

and that's kind of the way it goes. It's just corruption in religion is largely a matter of human nature, largely a matter of this cultural drift.

The the system adapts to the culture and to human nature more than human nature is going to adapt to this very exalted ideal.

So, you got two kinds of religion.

You've got the really wise exalted religions that inevitably get corrupted, because most of their followers aren't

wise people, or you've got just religions that are kind of foolish and easy to follow right off the bat, so that the followers don't need to corrupt it, cuz it's already foolish and easy to follow. And I won't name any names.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ethiopian Fake Tig.

And Ethiopian Fake Tig says,

"Around Q&A 22 or something, I'm glad that people are still watching those old ones.

But, I just interrupted myself.

Ethiopian Fake Tig says, "Around Q&A 22 or something you spoke about what it

would be like to attain first jhana
and how it's like the muscles in the
next spasming [snorts]
since one is in a state of focus and
such. Can you perhaps speak on the three
other jhanas in detail?" Well, I really
don't think that I said that
you're spasming when you get first
jhana. I think what he's referring to
is I mean I mean I don't have much use
for the whole four jhana
system because I think it has been
corrupted over time.

Another sign of corruption is the
interpretation of the four jhanas. I
used Personally, I think originally the
four jhanas were just the four stages of

meditation. So, the first jhana when you're still thinking

I mean it's like beginning elementary meditation. If you're doing it correctly, that will qualify as first jhana.

But somewhere along the lines due to monks not understanding jhana very well, maybe because they were more interested in formulating philosophies and actually meditating

they have worked out that all four jhanas, even first jhana where you're still thinking, are superhuman mental states, utri manusidamma.

Superhuman mental states.

So, in the Mahasatipatthana Sutta when
it says that right concentration is the
four jhanas

it's it's now worked out that right
concentration is a superhuman mental
state.

Which is

it seems kind of implausible to me.

Anyways, what I was saying

I mean I don't remember what exactly
what I said in Q&A 22

but

there is [clears throat] something
called pīti

or I think in in Hinduism it's called
shakti

where sometimes if you're getting into

you're breaking new ground in your meditation, you're getting into a deeper level of meditation than you're used to, your whole body can just start twitching cuz it's like you're in this subtler state that requires less mental energy maybe

so that you've got this excess mental energy that has to like expend itself somehow and so it just expends itself in just like twit twitching and jerking of your muscles.

That's happened to me a few times.

There's a story of Ram Dass

when he he he gets to visit his guru

Maharaj-ji in the evening when everyone

else is gone, which it was a rare occasion. You know, Maharaj-ji would just stay by himself, maybe like an attendant or something there.

But

Ram Dass got to visit him and Maharaj-ji was apparently pretending to be asleep and so Ram Dass started like meditating just cuz he wanted to meditate in Maharaj-ji's presence

and it was like almost immediately he got into this really deep state where he is just like his teeth are chattering and he's just like twitching and jerking all over the place and then Maharaj-ji would just kind of open his eyes and and ask him some mundane question. You know,

how much does your friend so-and-so
make?

You know, just kind of bring him back
down cuz he just wasn't ready for it
yet.

So, that's that's essentially what I was
talking about was this pīti or or shakti
or you know, whatever you want to call
it that when you get into a a deeper
meditative state than you're used to
then your muscles can start to twitch
and that kind of thing and it's
I mean it's not indicative of first
jhana necessarily.

>> [snorts]

>> So, let's see here. Can you perhaps

speaking on the three other jhanas in detail? Well

the other all four jhanas, you know, it's if you want to know what the jhanas are, you look in the suttas and you will find that almost every time the jhanas are mentioned

or described in the suttas, it's the exact same block of words. You know, it's just this stereotyped block of words that's just inserted into suttas when the jhanas are to be described and unfortunately, it's not a good enough description that the meaning of jhana is uncontroversial.

So

I mean the first jhana you're still

thinking, you know, it's you're still
capable of thought and you're still
feeling

physical and mental pleasure and pain.

Then in the second jhana, you stop
thinking. You're still feeling mental
and physical pleasure and pain, but
you're no longer thinking in like uh
your words are no longer your thoughts
are no longer hooking up in in sequence.
You know, a thought may just flash into
your mind, but then it just disappears
again and

I mean you're not thinking.

So

third jhana

is if I remember correctly, hope I don't
embarrass myself here, you're not
thinking, you got rid of that when you
got into second jhana and you're no
longer feeling mental
pleasure and pain. You still feel
physical pleasure and pain. So, it's
like your your mindfulness is getting
deeper
so that your mind is no longer feeling
like happiness and unhappiness even
though your body is still capable of
feeling pleasure and pain. Still not
thinking. Then when you get into fourth
jhana, which
according to the original four stages,
you know, the four the original

description of the jhanas in plural

then

that's supposedly the highest meditative state you can get to.

I mean originally it's probably the way it was, in which case you're no longer thinking, your mindfulness is purified and you're no longer experiencing mental or physical pleasure and pain. It's just a state of perfected equanimity.

And I mean there's some people that consider proof of fourth jhana to be

I mean you almost stop breathing and your heart rate slows down like that of a hibernating squirrel and Shoko Asahara of Japan was actually using like

air chambers to measure the the breath rate of people and showing that they were in this state where they had almost stopped breathing, they required almost no oxygen and using that as proof that his system was producing fourth jhana.

But to me, it sounds more like a deep hypnotic trance and my father's second wife, not my mother was capable of going into extremely deep hypnotic trances despite the fact that she was an alcoholic and not moral at all. So, it wasn't really jhana, probably.

But she was

I mean she would go into very deep hypnotic states where her breath and her her heart rate would become almost

invisible.

I mean almost no detectable pulse or or
breath rate.

So, I'm guessing that some of this I
mean I've been saying for years that a
lot of what is considered to be jhana is
really like a deep hypnotic trance that
probably isn't genuine samadhi.

But just going with the standard the
standard four jhana theory, four jhana
system

first jhana, you're still thinking,
still feeling mental and physical
pleasure and pain. Second jhana
not thinking anymore, still feeling
mental and physical pleasure and pain.

Third jhana, your mindfulness is getting deeper.

Not thinking, not feeling mental pleasure and pain, but still feeling physical pleasure and pain or still keep capable of feeling it. And finally,

fourth jhana

is just like

vast expanse of voidness.

But you're in a higher state of consciousness, you're more awake, your mindfulness is purified.

It's just like superconsciousness.

Which again makes it seem unlikely that you would become completely oblivious to your to your surroundings like a hibernating squirrel.

Although some of those Hindu swamis,
they can appear to be completely
oblivious like maybe a hibernating
squirrel, but then after they come out
of it, they can repeat conversations
that were going on in their presence by
the scientists that were examining their
brain waves or something while they were
in that state.

So, it may seem like you're oblivious to
your surroundings like a hibernating
squirrel, but that's not necessarily the
case if in fact you were not oblivious.

>> [snorts]

>> And I'm just going to move on to
Ethiopian fake tits next question.

He says, "You once said in Jainism their fully enlightened beings know everything all the time and their enlightenment is different. Can you speak a little about other forms of enlightenment and their powers in other religions?"

Well

golly. I mean I haven't really studied this in detail in various religions. I mean the ironically,

the definition of enlightenment that I understand the best would be in Buddhism and Roman Catholicism.

Which

and before I read St. John of the Cross, I was oblivious to the idea that in

Roman Catholicism there even is like the stage of perfection.

Because of course in in Christianity it's like nobody is worthy, everyone is imperfect. You know, you only get into heaven through the grace of God.

And here's St. John of the Cross saying that you can become perfect in this very life.

Well, with regard to Jainism, I mean, I've never really studied up uh like a Jain text describing what it's like to be fully enlightened Jain, although Mahavira and other Tirthankaras who are sort of like the the Jain equivalent to Buddhas,

um they supposedly were fully omniscient all the time as opposed to the Buddha who is selectively omniscient. He could know anything he wanted to know, but he wasn't experiencing infinite knowledge at all times.

At least not infinite objective knowledge.

So, and then that was kind of mocked in the in the Buddhist texts.

With regard to Hindu um like Hindu enlightenment,

that's a tough one. I mean, I know a little bit about Neem Karoli Baba Maharaj up there.

You know how Ram Dass would say that the better you got to know him, the more you

realized there really was nobody there.

That he was just like a mirror

reflecting your own karma back at you.

And he did not act like the

stereotypical saint. He didn't even act

like fellow Hindu Ramana Maharshi.

He was he was like a rascal.

He'd be hitting people and throwing

fruit at them and cracking jokes.

That kind of stuff.

But with regard to St. John of the Cross

and Roman Catholicism,

I mean, he says that uh

I mean, when you master high

contemplation, which would be

the the higher jhanas, you're no longer

thinking when you're practicing Catholic contemplation. Meditation is when you're still thinking. That would be like first jhana. And then I mean, that's it's sort of like repeating the Lord's Prayer or you know, visualizing scenes from the life of Christ, that kind of thing in in Christianity. But when you get into contemplation, just any thought that arises, you dismiss it until you mortify your own self-will so that you no longer have self-will, which is kind of interesting considering that a Buddhist arahant also supposedly no longer has self-will because will is volition, volition is karma, and an arahant is not creating any karma.

So, he's not creating any real volition.

So, the Catholic arahant and the

Theravada Buddhist arahant, and both of them have just stopped generating volitions.

But from St. John of the Cross's point of view, you know, his Christian explanation is that because you no longer have any self-will, you are purely more motivated by the will of God. You're just like this puppet of God. And that is being God through participation, according to him. And what he says is authoritative in Roman Catholicism. He is the mystical doctor of the Catholic Church. Whatever he says

about mysticism is official dogma in the Roman Catholic Church.

So,

according to the Roman Catholic Church, even though they don't advertise it, you can become God through participation just like like this divine puppet of God through mortifying your own will.

In Buddhism, it's harder to explain because there is no God there is no will of God for an arahant to be a puppet of.

And so, in

in Abhidhamma, they have to invent some new kind of like pseudo-volition called kiriya citta, functional consciousness, that will allow an arahant to appear to have volitions even though he's not

generating any karma.

But most religious systems don't even have a form of enlightenment in even in theory.

I mean, they might have the few outlying enlightened

advocates or followers of that religion who just become enlightened in spite of the system as much as because of it.

Um like an enlightened Sufi, I don't know what their definition of enlightenment would be like. Just like Quranic Islam apparently doesn't have a concept of enlightenment.

Um in according to the Bible, I mean, the Bible really doesn't I mean, the

closest being to enlightenment in the in the Christian Bible, of course, would be Jesus, but he's still

I mean, he never laughs, but he cries.

He gets upset sometimes.

You know, how long am I going to have to deal with you people? This kind of stuff.

So, I mean, from the Buddhist point of view, he's not really behaving like a fully enlightened being.

You know, do you God, please take this cup from my hands. You know, he was he'd get depressed and upset sometimes.

So,

gosh,

even Mahayana Buddhism, their concepts

of enlightenment, I'm I'm sure that
they're all over the map just depending
on the school of Mahayana Buddhism.

But it is interesting to me that

two

two systems that are so different from
each other, Theravada Buddhism in India
and Roman Catholic Christianity in 16th
century Spain,

both apparently independently through
different angles, different

interpretations, had come up to

a very similar understanding of what
enlightenment is like,

which may mean that it's based on
personal experience of people in

Theravada Buddhism and people in Roman Catholicism um just kind of through it going through a cultural filter.

But I guess I should just move on to another move on to next question.

>> [clears throat]

>> Move on to Ethiopian Faith Tig's third question.

He says, I saw a video of you as a bhikkhu talking about the tree that smells. Do you perhaps have more videos like that since the video weirdly enough created a very calm and serene emotion for me. It could be the way you took each material carefully and meticulously and how calm you were or the message you were sending. But if

there are more vids, would you post them? Yes, the the sermon on the stinkwood tree, there is um a a guy I met an American man came to visit me in January of 2011 when I was still living at One Bow Wildlife Refuge Monastery. And he kind of followed me going for alms round a few times.

And

I would [clears throat] take my bowl out of the bag and put it back into the bag on the outskirts of the village under this tree that I was told I mean, it's it's called like the stinkwood tree or the rottenwood tree

where it's a and when it was one of the only big trees in the area. I mean, the rest of them had been chopped down. But the wood stinks. You can't use it for lumber because the lumber stinks. Even if you burn it as firewood, the the the smoke stinks. You They say that you can't even use it to like bake bricks because somehow the the stink or something permeates the brick or something. So, it was just like this useless tree. And because it was useless, it got to grow into this patriarch of a tree.

And it reminds me of the Zhuangzi No, no, no.

What is it? The Zhuangzi.

It's the Chinese text, the second most famous Taoist text where there similarly there's this huge tree that nobody bothers to chop down because it's just totally worthless. And so, in the in the Zhuangzi or however the hell you pronounce that, it's it's it's like the sage is just so unobtrusive. Nobody pays any attention to him. And so, he can live in life his life in peace and reach the full fruition of his potential.

You know, you don't want to be useful to normies because then they're going to be pestering you all the time. I mean, look at Jesus. He can heal the sick.

There's like people just pestering him to heal their grandma of her rheumatism. Uh anyways, getting back to the question though.

>> [clears throat]

>> Yeah, I mean, just it's it's already posted. All of those old videos of me being a monk have already been uploaded onto YouTube. So, just go to my videos and just go to the oldest ones. It may be that you can even like click on oldest first.

And all of my old monk videos when I'm still in Burma should come up. You know, even like you go to my channel and um you know, the the highlighted video is me going for alms round in

uh what was it? Lay Myay Village.

So, there are

I don't remember how many videos. Not very many. It's in single digits. But still, there all of the old videos of me being a monk still in in Burma are already up on YouTube. So, just go to the oldest ones on my channel.

You know, just go to videos and maybe you have a filter of oldest first, maybe, and they should be right up at the top of the list.

And so, I'm just going to move on to next question. This is from Cole.

And Cole says,

what do you know about the Pali Canon

teachings that pertain to the jhanic attainments and their correlated rebirth in the various deva realms? Well, the jhanic attainments

um

I mean, I kind of already went over the four jhanas to a previous question.

So, I won't rehash that.

I mean, [clears throat]

technically, according to the Pali texts, you don't get superhuman mental states like psychic powers

without jhana. That I mean, you can

become enlightened without Jhana and

become a so-called dry vision Arahant who just becomes enlightened through like

Vipassana, insight, mindfulness. But, if

you want to be able to read minds and know your past lives and all that, you have to get into the higher Jhanas.

Those would be Jhanic attainments, I suppose.

But, I guess what Cole is mainly asking about is the correlated rebirth in the various Deva realms.

So, I mean, I didn't didn't do my research. It's I've never really believed this stuff very much.

You know, it's it's in the texts.

But, I mean, I never really took such an intense interest in it as to bother to memorize it.

But, in the 31 planes of existence,

you've got

four

four levels of Brahma realms.

Corresponding to the four Jhanas. And I

think there are like three levels in

each of

for each Jhana. So, there's three Brahma

realms corresponding to each Jhana. One

is when you just getting into it,

getting into the Jhana, haven't mastered

it. One is when you're like have

intermediate mastery, and one is when

you've fully mastered it. And

I think Maha Brahma is his

Maha Brahma and his entire retinue are

still only at the level of first Jhana,

if I remember correctly. I mean, don't

quote me on that. I could be wrong.

There's like the retinue of Brahma, and then there's like the counselors of Brahma, and then there's Maha Brahma himself. All of that would be like the three three Brahma realms corresponding to first Jhana. And a lot of this strikes me as just religious propaganda cooked up by the Buddhists.

I mean, I'm one [clears throat] of the few Buddhists or anyone who's been a monk who can actually talk like this because, of course, if you're still a monk and you're kind of a missionary, you don't want to be pointing out, you know, sort of naughty

bits

in Buddhism. But, for some perverse reason, I've never really hesitated all that much.

But, you've got Brahma, Maha Brahma, who literally is like the personification of ultimate reality for Vedic Hindus, who, from the Buddhist point of view, I mean, he corresponds to just like this mediocre level of heaven. You know, he's like one of the He's on one of the lowest Brahma realms with bunches of other heaven realms higher than him.

So, it's like the Buddhists are saying, "Look at this.

These

These Brahmans are claiming Brahma is the highest when we Buddhists have got into such higher mental states, higher meditative states that we can get into these realms way above Maha Brahma, even though Maha Brahma is literally the personification of ultimate reality."

So, a lot of this stuff, I mean, it's like propaganda. I mean, you shouldn't take it too seriously, necessarily.

[laughter] If you're just faith-oriented, you want to believe it all like a medieval Roman Catholic in Europe or a modern Burmese villager, you just want to believe all of it. It's all gospel truth.

Then,

I mean, I might not be the the best person for you to be watching on YouTube, for starters.

Um I mean, just having this stainless steel faith and believing all of it, I mean, it can serve some people. You know, it's like all those medieval Catholic saints, all those Burmese sages, a lot of the the earlier time ones,

I mean, they did it just through this unquestioning faith, which inspired them. You know, when you can't have any doubt at all that it's all true, then you're less lukewarm about it all.

But, getting back to Cole's first question here, yeah, it's like each of the four Jhanas has three corresponding Brahma realms with I'm pretty sure Maha Brahma being corresponding to first Jhana down at the bottom.

And

I mean, that's that's pretty much all there is to say about it. I mean, I don't remember the official names of these Brahma realms. I'm fairly skeptical of their objective empirical existence.

Not that there aren't four Jhana realms

or four Jhanas. I mean, you can divide Jhanas up into four. You know, Abhidhamma, they divide it up into five. The formless realms add new Jhanas. They're sort of subsidiary to fourth Jhana. They're considered to be sort of like additions to fourth Jhana because they'd already settled on four Jhanas in the in the suttas.

>> [sighs]

>> Uh

let's see.

What what what else is there to say about this?

See, let's just read the question again.

What do you know about the Pali Canon teachings that pertain to the Jhanic

attainments

and their correlated rebirth in the various Deva realms. It wouldn't be Deva realms. It would be Brahma realms.

That's where That's how you get into Brahma realms is through Jhana. That's pretty much the only way to get into Brahma realms is to have gotten some Jhana in this life. Not even necessarily mastered it. That would be like you master first Jhana. That would get you up into the level of Maha Brahma, I think, if I remember correctly.

Not just his his retinue and his his counselors, but the the big guy himself.

So, yeah, and then there's like the formless Jhana realms. Like the formless Brahma realms supposedly correlate to the somewhat anachronistic four like formless Jhanas.

So, in my opinion, the whole thing is is sort of cooked up after the Buddha's time. I would be surprised if the Buddha really taught this stuff. I won't just categorically deny it, but I would be mildly surprised if the Buddha really did teach, you know, the details of the 31 planes of existence and how, you know, you master this level of Jhana, it's going to get you into that

particular Brahma realm, and the four formless Jhanas will get you into the formless Brahma realms, even though like mention of the the formless realms goes all the way back at least historically or like legendarily to right after the Buddha became enlightened.

Like the Buddha, right after his enlightenment, he's using the Deva eye, Dibbacakkhu, you know, clairvoyance, to see who he should teach. And he first he's thinking of, you know, his first two teachers, his first two meditation teachers. And then, he would through, you know, the divine eye, he sees that

they're up in formless Brahma realms.

So, that he can't he can't access them there and teach them because they don't have any sense organs.

So, it's it's it's complicated. I mean, the evolution Everything is impermanent. Everything changes over time. I mean, all you have to do is just look at the early history of Christianity, and you see that Christianity was mutating like a virus during its first century of existence.

And it's similar in Buddhism. Like Theravada Buddhism, it mutated like a virus for its first, I mean, at least 100 years.

That was The first schisms occurred

about 100 years after the time of the Buddha's passing away. And still, Theravada Buddhism was mutating.

Like Abhidhamma didn't even exist yet until after the first schisms.

So, it's it's kind of an academic question. Cole's first question here is somewhat academic or or dogmatic, depending on how you want to look at it. Cuz you want to believe that it's all true, then it's in the text right there. But, you want to know the actual truth of the matter, you may might be a little more skeptical.

So, I'm just going to move on to Cole's second question.

Does the mind need to actively immerse in Jhana at the time of death for that type of rebirth to occur according to the teachings? And

I used to think about that, also. It's like just having the ability to enter Jhana,

is that good enough? Or do you have to actually die in Jhana in order for you to wind up in a Brahma realm?

And one of the best indicators I know of for the first option would be the Godhika Sutta, the very strange and interesting Godhika Sutta of the Samyutta Nikaya, where Godhika gets Jhana and loses it and gets it and loses it and gets it and loses it until

finally, in a state of semi-desperation,
maybe full full-on desperation,
he he's thinking,
"If I die with Jhana, I'm guaranteed of
a Brahma realm. But,
if I die when I don't have Jhana, like I
I haven't mastered it yet, or, you know,
I'm not able to access it,
then there's no guarantees where I'm
going to wind up. I could wind up in
hell in a lower realm or something." And
so, he he self-deleted,
cutting his own throat with his razor,
um after he got Jhana the next time.
And he wound up becoming enlightened.
So, I mean, I assume he was

was not in a Jhanic state when he's lying on his cot with with the the straight razor in his hand. So, presumably, just based on that bit of evidence, according to Theravada Buddhist tradition, you just have to be in a state where you can access jhana. You don't necessarily have to be absorbed in a jhanic state at the moment of death in order to get into these states, but you have to have a mental state that is open to jhana and accessible to it in order to get into these Brahma realms after you die, technically speaking.

Although at least a grain of of

skepticism is maybe prudent in this case unless you really are relying on full-on stainless steel faith in the whole system, in which case again, you're probably watching the wrong videos.

So,

let's just go on to Cole's third question,

which is are these teachings from the Buddha or commentarial? And that is a false dichotomy

because there's this middle ground of post you know, after the lifetime of the Buddha, but before the commentaries, where the suttas are actually mutating like a virus, or just the

philosophy of Buddhism is mutating like a virus. Systematizers are kind of locking stuff down into like the description of the four jhanas, which is just a verbatim block of information that is just inserted into suttas.

The 12 nidana theory of paticcasamuppada would be another case of just the sort of a hard-to-understand teaching of the Buddha just gets crystallized into this block of words that just gets inserted into sutta after sutta.

So, I don't think that these teachings necessarily came from the Buddha.

I mean, maybe he may have kind of touched on it a little bit, and then it just got elaborated

into 31 planes of existence and the the
three levels of of
Brahma [clears throat] realms for each
jhana and all this.

But it's it's probably after the time of
the Buddha, but before Buddhaghosa.

So, it's not hasn't devolved into
Buddhaghosism yet, but it's it's in the
suttas. It's in the Pali suttas.

But

still, just because something is in the
Pali suttas does not mean that the
Buddha himself necessarily taught it or
endorsed it.

So, I'm guessing, you know, it it arose
this idea arose

I mean, I'm unfamiliar with the other Hinayana schools and their opinions on the matter. It may be during the first 100 years of virus-like mutation of Buddhist philosophy that this arose so that it could still be in the core text of the suttas.

Just because something is in the core text, all that really means is that in all likelihood, it was already like like set it set as scripture or official doctrine before the schism started and like the second council.

Or maybe I guess the schism started after the second council.

So, approximately 100 years after the time of the Buddha.

Okay.

I guess I answered that, and I'm moving on to the next question, which is the last question. In fact, this question was asked um

just [clears throat]

shortly before I I started this video.

So, this is from Yoshi Boi.

And Yoshi Boi says, "According to my research, memory isn't stored in a fixed location inside the brain. Rather, it is distributed throughout the brain via a web of interconnections between brain cells that are constantly reshaped by experience. These interconnections can, of course, be disconnected.

Do you see a parallel between how memory, as described above, is created and how karma is created?"

Well,

when I read this, the first thing that that came to my mind was a quote from Bertrand Russell that I wrote in my little notebook that I used to keep when I was a monk. I mean, this this notebook has been in several Burmese caves.

And when I would read something interesting in a book that I didn't own, I would write it down in this notebook.

And so, this is from

Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits by Bertrand Russell.

And so, Bertrand Russell says, "When

[clears throat] a physiologist examines a brain, he does not see thoughts.

Therefore, the brain is one thing, and the mind which thinks is another. The fallacy in this argument consists in supposing that a man can see matter. Not even the ablest physiologist can perform this feat.

His percept, when he looks at a brain, is an end is an event in his own mind and has only a causal connection with the brain that he fancies he is seeing.

When, in a powerful telescope, he sees a tiny luminous dot and interprets it as a vast nebula existing a million years ago, he realizes that what he sees is

different from what he infers. The difference from the case of a brain looked at through a microscope is only one of degree. There is exactly the same need of inference by means of the laws of physics from the visual datum to its physical cause. And just as no one supposes that the nebula has any close resemblance to a luminous dot, so no one should suppose that the brain has any close resemblance to what the physiologist sees."

Amen.

Although Bertrand Russell was still kind of a materialist. I mean, he was still um

an advocate of scientism to some degree,

especially in his later years.

So,

I mean, it's it's kind of a materialistic interpretation of how memory works is is kind of the point that I'm making here, and it's not necessarily an accurate or reliable description of how memory actually works.

I mean, you cannot prove that there is a physical brain that even exists.

Read George Berkeley, he'll tell you.

He'll explain it all.

>> [clears throat]

>> But

I really do not see much of a parallel

between how memory, as described above,
is created and how karma is created. I
mean, karma is just the momentum of your
mental states.

It's not some sort of holographic
pattern

kind of a thing like memory

[clears throat] is supposed to be going
with this interpretation of
neurophysiology
and psychology and so forth.

So, I would say that karma is much
simpler.

You know, it's just

I mean, it can I mean, ultimately, karma
is very complicated because there's so
much of it, and it's you you can have

complicated momentum.

But still, as I've

as I've [clears throat] said, karma is
really

it's like you've got the virtual images
contained in the block of marble that
are actually that actually can move.

So,

it's the perception would correspond to
the form of the image, and volition,

which is karma, corresponds to the

movement and at the same [clears throat]

time the kind of

like

momentum and stability the stability of
the perception to still be essentially

appear to be the same thing over time,
even though it's not.

You know, it's it's sort of the
movement and stability of the pattern at
the same time.

And so, it's it seems like it's a very
different principle from a kind of
holographic memory
in a presumed physical brain.

And who knows? I mean, the way memory
works, even in science, may be changed
over time

um through, you know, radical
reinterpretations of
basic assumptions.

>> [sighs]

>> Yeah, so I mean,

if you see karma as a kind of momentum,
you know, it's not a matter of
patterns being stored in like a static
object. I mean, it's it's got patterns,
maybe complicated patterns, sort of like
the complicated patterns allegedly
forming a memory in the brain,
but it just seems like it's it's
comparing apples to oranges, or
comparing apples to to like
I don't know, wooden barrels or
something.

You know, it's it's just very different.
I mean, I don't think the principle is
really a parallel kind of a principle.
You can find resemblances, and you can

find differences, but I don't think it's really a good analogy for how karma works.

It's habit energy, rather than And And you could say that memory is also habit energy, but still, I mean, it's it doesn't have much to do with the like theoretical way in which it is stored in a brain. It's just the subject of experience of it.

Habit energy. So, karma and memory could both be called habit energy, and I mean, memory would be part of your karma.

You know, it's part of the stabilizing pattern that that keeps your perceptions from just becoming something completely different so that it's everything is

unrecognizable from one moment to the next.

But describing karma is very difficult, and the Buddha himself says in the text that trying to work out all the complexities of it can lead to insanity.

So, as a way of avoiding insanity in myself and in others,

I think I'm just going to call it good or good enough for now and apologize to Yoshi Booy and everybody else that may be dissatisfied with my answers, but I did the best I could,

I guess.

And so,

like and subscribe if you have not done

so already.

Or even if you don't like it. I mean, you can still subscribe, you know, you just hate watch.

I guess some people do it.

And look at my URL links below which includes my new book,

Memoirs from Myanmar, which is much more autobiographical than my other books.

And uh if you have any questions you think I can answer,

I mean, you probably get some idea of the kind of stuff I can answer from this Q&A, although I I also have have some more familiarity with like Western philosophy and so forth.

Um

just feel free to ask and no more than
three questions per person per episode,
please. And for crying out loud, be
happy.

Alrighty then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 192.

I am your host Punya Basham and this is
my co-host, my beverage.

So, move the paper umbrella.

And there is a chance
that this Q&A is going to be interrupted
by lots of like booting noises
because the Discord server is hot right
now with people debating mystical
states.

Among other things.

So, with that in mind

I guess I can just uh start into this,
wade into this as it were.

How did How did that become a
like a saying, as it were?

It's bad English.

Uh so,

let's just start in on this.

Uh we have like the average amount of
questions, the middle path between too
many questions and not enough questions.

So, let's just get started here.

First question is from the Saboteur,
formerly known as the Saboteurs.

And the Saboteur says, "When you pass
away and go through the tunnel,
some near-death experiences experience a
choice of either passing over the bridge
or going back into the physical. If they
choose to pass over permanently, would

that be considered as self-deletion
with all the karmic consequences or
would that be okay?"

So,

already the the forewarned booting has
been continuing continuing apace. I
don't know if you can really hear it,
but it's kind of distracting. Like it
just happened 2 seconds ago.

So,

someone has a near-death experience and
they're like in a kind of Bardo realm
and then they have a choice of
crossing the confounded bridge
or going back to their body and
continuing life. And the saboteur here

is asking if just opting not to come back would be a kind of self-deletion.

And I don't think so because presumably when you're at that stage, you're already dead.

So, it's like you can just choose to stay dead, so to speak, in a sense, or come back to the body again.

So,

yeah, I don't think it would be uh self-deletion. And besides, I mean, you're not really self-deleting anyway because you continue to exist presumably after crossing the bridge. You're just going into like some other realm. You're just continuing your existence

in some other realm.

Going with the whole theory that, you know, this is all kind of a legit empirical thing that really happens.

And really, I should have probably made an announcement on the Discord server to stop debating vociferously because it just makes a beeping noise every single time somebody posts something. And there's two people just going at it hot and heavy right now in a like a debate sort of way.

So,

yeah, I think I answered this question.

It's like when you pass over the bridge, first of all, I mean, you're already

dead. So, I mean, you're not killing
yourself

by choosing not to come back. I mean,
I mean, you can come back which kind of
makes you not be dead anymore. But,
while you're in this other realm, I
mean, it's like technically speaking,
your spirit, however you want to
interpret that, has left the body. You
are clinically dead while it's
happening. So,

I mean,
it's just a it's just a done deed, so to
speak. And again, if you cross the
bridge, or you you take the ferry boat
across the river Lethe or whatever, then
you're not really ceasing to exist.

You're just continuing your karmic
momentum

in some other some other sphere.

So, it would be okay, I would assume. At
least I would My opinion, it would be
okay.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
Saboteur's next question.

Under what circumstances would one end
up as a yedock

or hungry ghost after death? I'm not
sure what language is yedock. Is that
Yiddish or something?

But, what causes a person to become a
hungry ghost? And I mean, I do make a
distinction between a hungry ghost and

just a ghost, you know, some
somebody some being in a spirit realm. A
hungry ghost, I mean, that goes all the
way back into prehistoric ancestor
worship, where if you don't make food
offerings to your ancestors, then they
become hungry and impoverished and
miserable. So, that's That's where the
whole idea of hungry ghosts originally
came from, I'm pretty sure. It's I mean,
even the word for ghost in Pali is peta,
which comes from the same root as like
pater, which means father, you know,
paternal.

So, it's like an ancestral thing that in
ancient India, prehistoric India even,
people would make offerings to their

ancestors. It was a big Asian thing for a long time in some countries it's still a thing.

Um even in Burma to some degree, you make offerings for your deceased relatives on an occasion.

Mainly for sharing of merit and that sort of thing.

But in like Buddhist mythology, the hungry ghost or preta,

I mean

And the even even in the texts, like in the Petavatthu, they're not all hungry.

So, the whole hungriness of these ghosts is just kind of a vestigial holdover from like some kind of botched ancestor

worship or neglected ancestor worship.

But ghosts in general, so let's from now on let's just deal with ghosts in general.

So, you've got like the Buddhist mythological explanation of ghosts in general, and then you've got sort of like the modern paranormal kind of explanation of ghosts in general. I mean there's other ways of explaining things, but these will be the two main approaches I'm dealing with. Like like Buddhist orthodoxy, Theravada Buddhism, and just what like the paranormal researchers and stuff come up with.

So, a ghost in general, I'm pretty sure

Oh, this I think somebody else asked a question about ghosts that I noticed and I was going to getting ready to answer that one.

But what causes one to end up as a as a ghost after death?

Um let's just go with Buddhist mythology or

Buddhist orthodoxy, Theravada Buddhism.

One of the main reasons for becoming a ghost

is that you're a virtuous person, but like you you did this one at least one bad thing that kept you out of the heaven realms. And so, you live a kind of

deva-like existence, but you've got this one like really negative trait. Like, you you stink, you're always naked, or like one of my favorite ghost stories in the Preta Wattu is I've I've told the story a number of times about this woman who she she was a virtuous woman, but she was unfaithful to her husband and then lied to him about it. And the lying, like the false oath, was worse than the actual adultery, according to the text.

At least according to the explanations given just sort of inferred from the text.

That every I mean, she lived in the celestial palace, you know, in this

wonderful like pleasure grove,
and she had this retinue of like
nymph-like servants and everything, but
every single night she'd go into a kind
of trance and come down out of her
mansion and stand by this lotus pond
that was in the the pleasure the
pleasure grove, you know, the pleasure
park, and this big ghost dog would
devour her,
and the bones would fall into the pond
where they would just regrow a new body,
and then she'd climb back out of the
pond
and go back up and and and go back to
sleep.

And they're still debating big time.

There's There's one person involved in this debate who just absolutely has to debate everything.

So, that's one way you could become a hungry ghost or just a ghost, a preta or preti

is in the feminine

is

um

just

living a virtuous life, but then like botching it by doing something bad enough that you don't get into a heaven realm. And in Buddhism, there's just this continuum. It's like a spectrum where the highest ghost and the lowest

deva are just right up against each other. I mean, there's not necessarily even a clear line between them, even though one is a higher realm and one is considered to be a lower realm.

But then again, there's other kinds of ghosts that are mentioned in the texts like

like corrupt monks and nuns, corrupt judges, you know, people who have like betrayed their trust, you know, who have been immoral in in particularly dishonorable egregious ways that wind up just really afflicted. I mean, they're down at the lower end of the ghost spectrum, not up close to the

the devas. You know, like there's one mentioned in the text who has elephantiasis of the scrotum and he has to like

fling his scrotum over his shoulder to carry it around. And then there's like this

swarm of like ghost crows or ravens or or hawks that are like pecking at this scrotum. This kind of thing. Or another one is

someone just flying through the air on fire.

You know, just in this state of just continual distress. I mean, that would be practically being like in a hell realm. And it's just some sort of

um

you know, immorality

that caused them to wind up that way.

Um but if you I mean, if you just go
with paranormal like modern paranormal
research,

um ghosts would be And also, this is a
lot of folklore behind this, too, that
to get into the ghost realm, often you
have to have like this strong attachment
to something in this world, like your
own body or your own possessions, which
cause you to like haunt. Your spirit
just can't bring itself to leave.

And so it will haunt the graveyard
around the grave just to stay near the

body that it still identifies with, or it will haunt its own house because it has this possessiveness over the house, or there's just some kind of unfinished business or attachment that causes the spirit to just kind of get stuck at this in this realm

while not being entirely in this realm.

And a lot of what appears to be ghost phenomena are really a kind of like energetic echo. And I

This These people are just debating and there's this one person who's absolutely addicted to debating and arguing everything.

So it's kind of distracting cuz the computer is going boop boop boop boop

over and over again.

Which kind of interferes with my chain of thought.

Schopenhauer wrote an entire essay on why it is that intelligent people don't like noise, but people that aren't as intelligent actually kind of like it.

But I digress.

So like some of what is considered to be ghost phenomena is like energetic echoes. You know, there's like some kind of strongly emotional event that occurred in an old house, for example, that just causes people to see this apparition.

You know, it might be clear, it might be

just vague and indistinct, but this apparition is just doing the same thing over and over again. You know, it just It's like

this this lady dressed in mourning, dressed in a long black gown, just comes out of a bedroom and walks to the staircase and disappears. You know, that's all they see of her just every time. So something like that is not is not really a being necessarily. It's just a kind of energetic or psychic echo.

Also,

uh like poltergeist phenomena, nowadays, like the parapsychologists will say that that is really not a ghost at all. It's

like RSPK, recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis, usually centered on an emotionally troubled adolescent.

Their just their inner turmoil is manifesting outwardly as just weird things happening.

So,

this question, under what circumstances would one end up as a hungry ghost after death, it depends on how you interpret hungry ghost.

You know, the hungry ones, as a general rule, go back to like neglected ancestor worship.

Or just ghosts in general.

Usually, it's not a highly advanced mind

that is taking some sorrow literally,
considers this to be a reality. Their
home, their body, is just reality, and
they just cling to it so that
it prevents them from like moving on
into, you know, the next the next realm,
the next sphere,
supposedly.

And with regard to yidaks, I don't I
don't think I've ever come across that
term before. A yidak.

But my best answer is
mainly what would cause you to be a
ghost is not a highly evolved mind that
is strongly attached to something in
this world, and
um a lot of people say, like a lot of

sources will say that a lot of ghosts don't even realize that they're dead. They're just kind of like sleepwalking. You know, they're not fully conscious even to the level of a human being, you know, they're kind of like in this murky kind of dream world and they just don't realize that they're dead.

So,

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Philalethese.

And Philalethese says,

"Since usually you wade into the questions, I must ask, is the body of water that the questions comprise deep or shallow?" Well, if you can wade

all the way to the other side,
you know, it's it's not going to be over
your head, I assume. I mean,
I don't know how deep the water has to
be before you're no longer wading.
Wading usually implies that it's, you
know,
no more than about chest-deep, I guess.
But,
I mean, some questions are deeper than
others. It's a metaphor. Don't take
metaphors and analogies too seriously.
And I'm going to move on to
Philaethese's next question, which is
continuing with this theme. "Speaking of
wading, if one passes through the
gateless gate and wades deep into the

ankle-deep ocean, can he still cross over to the other shore while still dry?"

And I'd say that once you pass through the gateless gate, all bets are off.

And I'm just going to move on to Philalethese's third question.

"According to certain traditions, if you meet Buddha on the road, you ought to kill him."

"What ought one to do if one bumps into Buddha up in that club, so to speak?"

And I didn't even know what up in that club meant and he gave his explanation for it, which I don't fully remember.

So, I'm going to have to hobble along

with this handicap of not remembering
exactly what up in that club means, but
I think it means

like

on his own terms, you know, you're
you're like relatively advanced state.

But, he says according Let's just get
back to the start of this question now.

According to certain traditions, he's
talking about Zen, like medieval Chinese
Chan or Zen Buddhism.

If you meet the Buddha on the road, you
ought to kill him. Um I mean

Yeah. I mean, it seems to me that the
whole meaning of that is

that if the Buddha gets in your way, you
ought to kill him. You know, it's like

even ideas of Buddhahood, of holiness, sacredness, Dharma, if they become an obstacle, then you need to work through that. You know, you need to to remove the obstacle.

So, I mean, it seems to me that the saying, you know, if you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him, it's I mean, if attachment to the Buddha gets in your way on the path, then that has to be dealt with, and

I mean, the just your attachment to the Buddha or to your concept of the Buddha can be an obstacle, which then has to be removed in order for you to continue to

progress.

That is how I would understand this.

But, it's like if you meet the Buddha in Samsara, it's not really the Buddha.

So, I mean, the Buddha is just is a kind of mental concept.

So, I mean, you could take it to a somewhat deeper level in that any kind of concept, including the concept of Buddha enlightenment, Dharma, all of this, you know, it's still basically un-enlightened, and therefore you have to

remove that or detach from that in order to really make progress to reach the goal in Dharma.

So,

what ought one to do if one bumps into Buddha up in that club? I mean, still I mean, if you're bumping into some being called the Buddha, that's not at the level of full enlightenment yet.

So,

I mean, when you when you meet the Buddha in Samsara, that's just a Samsaric representation.

And you're not going to meet into any individual outside of Samsara.

So,

in a way, Buddha is skillful means, you know, just the concept of Buddha is skillful means that helps you to progress until eventually you are ripe

to let go even of that concept.

So, if you're fully enlightened, you
won't bump into Buddha

um other than for maybe from the point
of view of some unenlightened observer.

Or maybe in some

like illusory way that is no longer
delusional because you are enlightened.

But still, it would be an illusion.

Ultimately, there is no real Buddha
because there is no real anybody.

There is no self.

Uh

so, I mean, if you meet the Buddha in
Samsara, you have to bear in mind that
it's not really the Buddha.

It is your unenlightened perception of

what you consider to be the Buddha.

And that would imply down on this planet or in any other realm, any other realm in Samsara, any of the 31 planes of existence.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Fred.

And Fred says, "Was the Buddha's goal to snuff his spirit?"

And it's hard to say exactly what the Buddha's goal was before he was enlightened because the man lived approximately 25 centuries ago, and all we really know about him are legends. Plus maybe a little bit of

archaeological stuff.

So,

exactly what the Buddha

or rather the yet-to-be Buddha,

Bodhisattva, had in mind.

We can only conjecture. We can only guess.

I would assume that the Buddha was following the kind of like archaic Sramana tradition that had its roots going all the way back into prehistoric times before the Indo-Aryan invasion that Indians and Hindus will mock at.

But,

archaeology is fairly fairly solid that there was an Indo-Aryan invasion of Northwest India around 1500 BC.

And so, the Sramana tradition that
Buddhism is largely based on, Jainism,
uh Samkhya, like
proto-yoga,
um the the extinct Ajivaka traditions,
all of those were more based in this
prehistoric Sramana or ascetic tradition
than in later Vedism.

And some of these Sramana traditions
apparently were trying to snuff the
spirit or just sort of eliminate
anything samsaric.

You know, just escape from this world.
Although, if I think about it, it seems
like the Jains, for example, they
weren't trying to snuff their spirit.

They were trying to purify it so that it was no longer trapped in this world.

They believed in a jiva, which is like a soul, literally means life, that when you eliminate all karma weighing down the jiva, it just floats up into a a kind of eternal heaven realm.

And I think the Ajivikas also had some kind of similar idea.

So, it may be that this archaic shramana tradition wasn't really trying to snuff the spirit, although I wouldn't at all be surprised if there were certain schools that were trying to do just that.

But again, we really can't know what the

Buddha believed in,
for example, before he became
enlightened, before he started the the
wheel of dhamma rolling.

But I would be kind of skeptical of
that. It might be more that he was just
trying to liberate his spirit,
or try to and break through some sauric
illusion to get to reality, which may or
may not be interpreted as spirit.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question.

This is from Seovac and Seepad Zidana,
who asks three questions.

The first question is one word.

And the next two questions are essays.

But the one word question is just
thoughts, and he includes

like a YouTube short,

um with the entitle with the title of
Life isn't a drug-tested sport.

And it's this young guy, apparently like
generation

X. No, not Gen X.

He's younger than that, Gen Z. I mean,
he's he looks younger than a millennial.

Well, Gen Z Millennials are Gen Y, I
would assume.

So, I mean, he's this young guy with a
wearing a t-shirt, you know, the kind of
young person hair and everything. And
he's just talking about how there's all
these kind of health supplements and

boosters and so forth. And because we're not athletes having to take drug tests, if it seems to work, just go for it cuz all that matters is results. I mean, that's an exact quote from the video.

All that matters is results. So, if you can make yourself seem younger, boost your testosterone, you know, make yourself healthier by taking these supplements or treatments or whatever they are, go for it.

And I mean, there's some common sense to that. I mean, to some degree, I mean, the person is hyper samsaric. He seems to be just locked into,

you know, samsaric virtual reality.

Now, I got a Roomba that's having some kind of technical difficulties back there making lots of noise and banging into the wall.

Huh. So,

I mean, the the guy seems to be he's just this cocky young guy who is just hyper samsaric, so to speak.

And but And so, I mean, he doesn't really have this idea that we are generating our own reality. It's just like if you have faith that these things will work, then in a way you're using that as a kind of crutch to get the result that you want.

Although ultimately,
it's not really necessary if you can
rise above the attachment to the
samsaric phenomena.

That is all mind-made, although this
cocky young guy in the video probably
doesn't believe that at all.

That he is probably
fairly materialistic. And so long as you
are materialistic and believing that
this stuff is real,
then you have to take medicine when
you're sick. I mean, you can't just
faith heal yourself cuz you think it's
impossible.

So,

I mean, the person and everyone, I guess, should bear in mind that positives and negatives balance out. Any positive you go for is going to have like negative consequences, too.

I mean, this is positive and negative, pluses and minuses is always going to balance out. That's how the whole universe exists, but having all the pluses and minuses balance out to zero.

But, I mean, there's nothing necessarily wrong

with taking health supplements, vitamins. People have been taking those for a long time.

I mean, just eating health food, exercising, breathing fresh air.

I mean,

taking some of these technologically
innovative chemicals,

um

you know, like like the guy says in the
video, a lot of them are just thoroughly
tested by like the FDA and they're safe.

So, why not?

My woman bought some creatine gummies
recently and I've been eating a few
creatine gummies every day just cuz
they're there and it's kind of like
eating candy anyway.

Although, I wouldn't have gone out and
bought them myself.

So,

my thoughts on this little video that
Sea of Actions C Pad Zarna presented,
he's really into presenting videos or
essays or things that can't be cut and
pasted and asking questions about it so
that I got to do the work
of watching the video or reading the
reading the article or at least typing
out like a transcript of of this
like screenshot that he took.

I mean there's nothing necessarily wrong
it's

with taking health supplements or I mean
eventually it's going to go farther into
transhumanism where you know this same
guy might be saying well if it's going
to boost your IQ 100 points just to get

the brain implant get the computer chip
inserted into your your cerebrum
might as well go for it.

But I mean it's just a decision people
are going to have to make individually
and just do what feels right.

And I'm going to move on to Silvac and
see if I can answer his second question
which is much longer than thoughts.

See here.

This one's on Western philosophy it
seems.

He says

I know you really appreciate Hume's
argument that causation can never be
proven and that we can only know a

sequence of events that are associated with one another. Essentially that we derive causality from a succession of perceptions and causality is just the habit of associating the two events the cause and the effect. However

Schopenhauer says that Hume doesn't understand how perception works and causality is not inferred from association of experiences but rather just a minute I'm going to have to close this door the Roomba is just going crazy.

Right outside the door getting lost and not knowing which way to turn.

The new Roombas are worse than the old Roombas and now it's like banging into

the door.

Okay getting back to this question though.

However Schopenhauer says that Hume doesn't understand how perception works and causality is not inferred from associations of experiences but rather when the sense organs are stimulated, the intellect automatically interprets the stimulation as an effect and instantly projects a cause into space, creating an objective representation of the world. Thus, causal inference forms the basis of perception of objects and an outside world itself, and isn't just a habit of association.

Okay.

He is criticizing Hume for assuming we derive the principle of causality from experience and deducing it rather than being something that forms the basis of perception itself and an assumption the mind makes even prior to having successive experiences. The mind itself structures the sensory data to be interpreted in a cause and effect manner. This sounds extremely autistic and I may have completely butchered both their explanations, but do you think Schopenhauer is correct in his criticism of Hume's idea of causality as association of events? Okay, let's go way up to the top of this essay

question.

And

um David Hume, one of his more ruthlessly radical philosophical ideas, is that we really don't have any direct experience of cause and effect. We just see A followed by B consistently until finally we make a connection and it's like a post hoc fallacy, after this therefore because of this, and we just assume that because B always follows A that B is caused by A. And Hume points out that even with regard to our own mental processes, you don't really see the causative force. Like, you have the intention to

raise your arm and your arm raises, but you don't really feel the causative force between the intention to raise your arm or the will to raise your arm and the arm actually raising, that it's just an inference.

Schopenhauer tended to mock other philosophers quite a lot.

I mean, especially Hegel, but still um he didn't have a lot of use for Hume, apparently.

And he does point out an exception to Hume's supposition. I remember in reading *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer points out an obvious example of A following B over and over again and nobody really assumes

that A causes B, and that is day and night. Night follows day and day follows night just on a daily basis, but we don't start thinking that day causes night or that night causes day.

So,

I don't remember this article that or this argument that C of Actions C about Zeno

raises

that Schopenhauer made against Hume, but

I do

fairly clearly recall that Schopenhauer did point out this obvious exception to Hume.

The thing with Schopenhauer is that I

mean, Schopenhauer and Hume had two different approaches. Hume was an empiricist.

Hume just observed what he could was able to observe and then tried to interpret that with as little supposition or conjecture as possible.

Schopenhauer on the on the other hand was a more old-fashioned kind of philosopher, where he would just build the system largely just because it made sense to him,

but he couldn't really prove a lot of it. It was just that it just seemed like an elegant theory and he liked it better than other theories and so he went with it.

So, I mean, Hume, I mean he really wasn't trying to like work out intellectually a process so much as like I mean he was just trying to be aware of what there is. And what I have to admit, I don't consider Hume or Schopenhauer to be infallible oracles.

Like Schopenhauer, he just mocked the idea that organisms arise, necessarily arise from like spores or seeds or something. I mean he was uh this this arrogant advocate for spontaneous generation, which was still believed in like the early 1800s when he was writing.

So, like maggots arising in raw meat,
Schopenhauer just scoffed the idea that
there would have to be like mold spores
in order for bread to get moldy or for
fly eggs in order for maggots to arise
from rotting meat.

I mean he just just mocked people who
believed this stuff. He was not
infallible. Also, just his Platonism,
his idea in in like eternal ideas.

You know, he had this idea that like the
the Platonic ideal of inanimate matter
is the element, if I remember correctly.
When you get into life, most life, the
Platonic ideal of most life forms is the
species.

But when you get into humans, he

considered the the Platonic ideal of a human to be the individual human. That we are our own Platonic ideal, at least like our spirit is.

Our will,
if you will.

So, that kind of stuff from Schopenhauer, I wasn't entirely impressed with. I'm not a Platonist.

And I do have a degree in biology, and I know that he was wrong with regard to spontaneous generation at least in most cases.

Bread goes moldy because mold spores get onto it, and then the conditions are right with moisture and so forth,

it gets moldy.

Or at least bread used to get moldy before they added all the chemicals to keep it completely fresh for months at a time.

But Hume also, I mean, some of his philosophy, like he starts off with the impression, which is kind of his his concept for perceptions. You just have like this mental mental image or mental form, like a mental impression.

And I remember there's this one part where he's trying to differentiate the difference between like a sensory perception and just sort of like this idea that you generate in your own mind,

like during a dream or something. And he the difference is that the sense impressions are livelier. I mean, he's not going to just suppose that there's an external world out there that's causing it. So, he just says that our sensory perceptions are just how our like livelier, you know, they're more intense, more vivid than the stuff that we're just imagining. But then, uh in another chapter of one of his essays, he's he's talking about the difference between something you believe in and just an idle concept. You know, you believe that horses really exist, but

you can have like this

casual

daydreamy kind of image uh a horse with the head of a cow, for example.

And how do you differentiate between something you believe and something that you're just casually imagining and don't really believe in? And again, he uses the same explanation. That you when you believe something, it's livelier, it's more vivid. And I just don't believe that.

I think all perceptions are a kind of belief. It's just that what we consider ourselves to really believe are beliefs that are interlocked or like concepts that are interlocking. You know, they

form a coherent whole. So that like this perception is connected to other perceptions. Which I think belief works more along those lines. So, I mean, I don't consider Schopenhauer or Hume to be infallible.

Uh let's see here. Let's get to the actual question now. Now that I've critiqued Schopenhauer and Hume for the past 10 minutes at least.

Uh Schopenhauer, based on Ciobax and Zizek's account, is just claiming that perception works through Let's see. Let's see if I can find it. It's It's such a long question here.

Uh let's see. Schopenhauer says that Hume doesn't understand how perception works. Yeah, Hume is just talking about impressions.

Just a sequence of impressions. Not necessarily any connective force between them really.

So, anyways, Ciobax and Zizek continues, "And causality is not inferred from association of experiences, but rather when the sense organs are stimulated, but he doesn't really know that these sense organs exist. In fact, from his own point of view, sense organs would also just be a manifestation of will and representation."

Because he was an idealist.

Anyways, the intellect automatically interprets the stimulation as an effect and instantly projects a cause into space, creating an objective representation of the world.

Thus, causal inference forms the basis of perception of objects and outside world itself and isn't just a habit of association. So, he's kind of taking the Kantian ball of these categories. You know, how this the structure of the mind and how it works.

And using that as a way of refuting Hume, I guess.

I It seems to me

that with regard to this, Hume is standing on more solid ground because he's making fewer assumptions. Although, as I say, he really has difficulty like explaining the difference between a belief and a non-belief or like a sensory perception and just an idle mental perception. That kind of thing. That he does have difficulty with that. So, let's just continue here. Again, he is criticizing Hume for assuming we derive the principle of causality from experience and deducing it rather than being something that forms the basis of perception itself. Well, I mean,

Schopenhauer is assuming that. I doubt that he could really prove it.

And an assumption the mind makes even prior to having successive experiences.

So, it's all just part of like a categorical Kantian kind of belief system. Just the structure of how the mind works, according to Schopenhauer.

The mind itself structures the sensory data to be interpreted in a cause and effect manner. But, that doesn't really mean that cause and effect really exists.

You know, any more than space and time exist. I mean, space and time are considered to be Kantian categories that

don't really have an outward empirical existence, either.

But, I'm not even sure if Schopenhauer is really addressing the issue.

Uh he was addressing the issue when he pointed out that day and night are not considered by people to cause each other.

So, let's see here.

The final question, the actual question with the question mark. Do you think

Schopenhauer is correct in his criticism of Hume's idea of causality as association of events?

I I Schopenhauer

I mean, he's not really dealing with empirical reality so much. I mean, he's

making assumptions to it as a way of interpreting things. It seems to me maybe he does see some empirical like convincing evidence that cause and effect is just built into human perception.

And he considers the whole world be like will and perception.

But

I mean, I like Hume's radical skepticism.

That I mean, really if you got two philosophies, the more skeptical of the two is more likely to be valid.

Even though I don't consider Hume to be an infal- an infallible oracle. I don't

consider either of them to be an
infallible oracle.

So

Ah,

I think Hume is more correct with regard
to this in particular, even though
Schopenhauer was able to point out an
exception to the rule.

But I mean, there is a good chance that
Schopenhauer is right, even though I'm
not sure how anyone would prove that.

That is just
causality is just an aspect of
perception.

And it's just built in to just the way
we look at things.

But

yeah, it's a little a little too deep diving for me to try and ponder this in this Q&A. So I guess

SeeOfActionCpad09 will have to be satisfied with what I've said about it already, cuz I'm moving on to the next question by SeeOfActionCpad09, which is also an essay question.

Possibly even longer than the previous one.

SeeOfActionCpad09 says, "I was thinking of something."

So, that's the first danger sign right there.

He continues, "I notice that you break down things as being good from a

Buddhist perspective, from a political
samsaric perspective, etc. For example,
having soldiers can be good from a
samsaric political perspective, even
though it is wrong from a Buddhist
perspective. But, if you really believed
that the Buddha taught about
enlightenment as end of delusion, giving
you an understanding of the uncarved
marble and ultimate reality, then the
Buddhist framework to attain
enlightenment and the Buddhist teachings
wouldn't just be the Buddhist point of
view, but the path to truth and reality.
The ultimately
the ultimately only true path and set of
values, because all others lead to more

lies.

Based on that, it wouldn't just be Buddhist point of view versus samsaric political point of view. It would be what is ultimately true versus the false illusionary lies. Being a soldier would then not just be bad from a Buddhist point of view, but be ultimately evil and wrong, even if the Nazis were coming in to kill everyone, because doing so will only fuel more delusion in the actions of self-defense and of others is based on delusion. Ultimately, I don't personally see how one can hold two opposing value systems at once, as it requires a type of schizophrenic break

from reality to acknowledge that both opposite values can be held at the same time. Ultimately, one must give in and you must choose a side, and most of us choose samsaric side false values at the end of the day, while the few people that ever become arahants are the ones that fully committed to the ultimately true values. I know the Buddha talked about the problem of views, but I think he was talking about the difference between the ascetic traditions that already agreed on almost all their values of being ascetics. He wouldn't just say someone having a different view and engaging in drug-fueled sex orgies are just as valid

as a monk who is practicing sense restraint. For example, do you agree with my criticism of samsaric point of view versus Buddhist point of view? And I would say that I may have to start making a rule that a question can be no longer than say 150 words.

So,

he's talking about how um a person living in the world, I mean you can have Buddhist values.

But if you're living in the world, you you are part you are like a participating member of the social contract.

In samsara,

then

you have to have like values that are to some degree in conformity with that.

Let's say, for example, you have a wife and children,

you have to protect your wife and children.

I mean,

sometimes in the commentaries or I I met an Australian man who was like this

where I mean

allegedly, I mean he wouldn't even

defend his wife from an attacker because

violence is wrong. You know, it's like

if I asked him once, "If somebody

assaulted your wife, I mean would you

just stand there?" And his his his

answer was, "It would be your own karma."

I mean, what kind of a man would be like I mean if you shouldn't have a wife and kids. You should not be a participating member of society if you are just uncompromising in your insistence on absolutely saintly virtue.

Just go out into a forest and meditate.

But I mean, what Seal of Action See Pa Zina here is is implying seems to me to be false in that he's saying that Buddhist teachings would be ultimate truth with regard to right and wrong, but they're not. I mean, that's just samsara, too. It's all just samsara.

It's all illusory to some degree. It's all delusional.

I mean, the striving for enlightenment is delusional. If you weren't delusional, you wouldn't be striving for enlightenment.

So, if you want to become enlightened, you have this value system that is skillful means. It helps you to become enlightened. And like one of the very first steps in the holy life is renunciation.

But he's he's talking about how it's schizophrenic to have

Let's see, where is it?

Try and find it here in this mass, this is a wall of words.

It is it requires a type of schizophrenic break from reality to acknowledge that both opposite values can be held. No. See, that's one of the problems with people who keep asking the same kind of questions over and over and over again is that they just cannot cope with handling two levels of reality simultaneously. Kind of like the ancient Greeks who thought it was some kind of mysterious paradox that a person can be taller than one person and shorter than another person and thus be taller and shorter at the same time. But it depends on the context.

So, I mean, it's not a schizophrenic
break to acknowledge
that if you are hard you know, just
dead hell-bent so to speak on becoming
enlightened
then it helps to follow this kind of
value system which isn't ultimately
real, ultimately true value system cuz
it's all samsaric and delusional.

I mean, it's a more subtle level of
delusion maybe.

But then

if you're living in the world you don't
want to see your your wife and children
get butchered. You don't want your house
to just be robbed or burned to the
ground, then you have to adopt a

different set of values. Like you're playing a different game.

A different set of rules.

Like with politics. I mean, politics has its own set of rules. Killing people is the right thing to do from the political point of view.

I mean, if you're going to have a functioning society, you have to punish criminals at the very least. You have to defend your borders.

And it may be delusional,
but then again, striving for enlightenment is also delusional because, as I say, if you are already enlightened, you wouldn't be striving

for enlightenment.

You wouldn't be trying to attenuate your delusion if you are already undiluted.

So,

See of Action Cincinnatus says, "I don't personally see how one can hold two opposing value systems at once."

Well, I mean, you play two different games. You play by two different sets of rules.

It's not schizophrenic

to play Monopoly and then play Cribbage.

If you try to play Monopoly in accordance with the rules of Cribbage, people are going to think you're an idiot.

So,

I mean,

you have to deal with the context in

which you

are

in this virtual reality of samsara.

If your context is a householder, you're

going to have to play by somewhat

different rules than if you are a saint

living alone in a cave or a forest

somewhere.

It's just

It's practicality.

So,

I guess I ranted enough about that.

So, at the very the very the question

here,

the the one sentence question at the end of this, "Do you agree with my criticism of samsaric point of view versus Buddhist point of view? No, I don't. They're both delusional and they have different purposes. They're like different rules to two different games and it's not schizophrenic to acknowledge this and to play each game in accordance with its own rules. I mean, you have to have priorities and if your priority is to become enlightened and you are committed to the belief that the Buddhist way is the right way or at least a right way, then you should just opt out of society and follow those rules as strictly as

you can.

But still it's it's just a kind of a
different kind of delusion. It's a more
wholesome, more subtle kind of delusion,
but it's still delusional and it's not
the
true like
ethics or or morality.

And I'm just going to move on to this
question.

This is from Yoshieboy.

And Yoshieboy says,

"Do you really believe that Islam is
better than neo-Marxism?

In my view, they're both intolerable,
but since neo-Marxism can be overthrown

by the populace given enough time and Islam cannot or extremely improbable, new Marxism or neo-Marxism would seem to be more better."

Well,

I do still consider Islam to be preferable to neo-Marxism partly because Islam still has a certain morality or ethic to it. I mean, neo-Marxism does too, but it's the ethics in neo-Marxism has been pretty much replaced by just unrefined feminine sentiment. But still, you know, there's the concept of non-harming, you know, not even hurting the feelings of people who believe in neo-Marxism, although hurting the feelings of, you know, vile

heretics is still okay.

But still, Islam has more of a moral foundation. Also,

I mean,

feminism is [__] up Western civilization royally at present.

And

Islam at least deals with the problem of too much feminism.

Neo-Marxism is just thoroughly feminist at this point.

So,

it it boils down to I mean,

Muslims dislike of dogs, that's definitely a mark against them.

Although, the neo-Marxists are saying

it's immoral to keep pets because they're contributing to the greenhouse effect by breathing and farting.

So, the neo-Marxists aren't much better off with regard to their attitude towards dogs as the Muslims.

At least I think there are stories of Muhammad liking cats.

But, get to the problem here. I mean, Yoshi Blue is saying the main reason why neo-Marxism is more better

than Islam is that it's easier to get out of a neo-Marxist system. And maybe, although when the system is just emasculating and disarming and just taking away the spine of everybody in

the society,

I mean, even nowadays, you've got people who consider themselves to be right-wing conservatives or alt-right kind of people who nevertheless have been culturally conditioned into this feminized like degenerate kind of society so that Donald Trump starts acting like a Roman emperor, and they're just I mean, they don't know how to deal with it. They'll just say, "Oh, he's just kissing the ass of Israel. He's Israel's bitch." They just can't cope with an actual man acting like actual men used to act when they were the head of state.

Even the right, the so-called conservatives can't cope with it. They just don't know how to deal with someone who actually has a spine and a set of balls anymore.

And that's largely the blame of neo-Marxism.

But let's get back to how easy it is to dig out. I mean, there have been cases in which a society has been ruled by Islam, and then they overthrew it. Like the Spanish Reconquista. Spain and Portugal were almost entirely ruled by Muslims. You know, there was Asturia or some little country up in the north of Spain that never was fully conquered by the Muslims.

But most of Spain and I think all of
Portugal

Islamic, at least ruled by the Muslims.

You know, it's like

um

the Balkan states. You know, Greece was
part of the Ottoman Empire. You know,
most of the Balkan states, maybe all of
them, part of the the Ottoman Empire,
which was Muslim.

But they were able to overthrow that
with the help of Western Europe, I
suppose. But still,

Sicily was all ruled by the Muslims,
Malta, North Well, I guess North Africa
is still ruled by the Muslims.

But I mean, it is possible to overthrow Islam. And it's going to be actual men overthrowing it because you're not going to have a bunch of emasculated cultural eunuchs that like the ones that are produced by neo-Marxism overthrowing much anything.

It's like the Brave New World.

So, I really don't see how neo-Marxism is all that easier to overthrow, especially once it's been established so that the populace is pretty much just emasculated, had their their vertebrae removed.

I mean, and disarmed.

So,

Islam is more masculine. I mean, of course, the feminists wouldn't see that as a plus. But, it still has more of a kind of moral foundation to it than neo-Marxism where you're teaching gay pornography to little kids at school.

So, I still consider neo-Marxism to be worse than Islam.

Although, I really don't have a whole lot of use for any of the Abrahamic monotheistic spiritual systems.

I do have some certain amount of respect for certain Christians and certain schools of Christianity.

But, um still.

And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question.

I seem to be a little more excitable than usual today.

Not sure what that is.

I only had one cup of coffee before starting this.

Anyways, the next question is from Star, also known as Mr. Pronov.

And Star says, "Thoughts on astrologers who read hands to predict the future of a person." So, that's palmistry, palm readers. And there's plenty of monks in Burma, also plenty of non-monks in Burma, that read palms.

And first of all, with regard to a Buddhist point of view, the texts are very clear that monks should not be doing any kind of fortune-telling, any kind of prognosticating, you know, using signs and omens, and like the zodiac, any of that.

That's not a monk's job. Monks shouldn't be doing that.

So,

it's considered kind of animal

knowledge, tiracchana

in in

Theravada Buddhism.

And so there there is that.

But also, I am very skeptical of the

idea that the lines on the palm of your hand have any more to do with your destiny than the situations of stars millions of miles away or even the planet Neptune.

I mean, what effect is that going to have on your life? It's just a kind of cipher.

And it's a kind of gimmick that if skillfully used allows some sort of psychic talent to be channeled by the the astrologer or or the the palm reader or whatever it is. I wrote I wrote a philosophical essay on this once with regard to Ouija boards and tarot cards and astrology and all this that really

tarot cards, for example, I mean,
there's no machine at the factory making
these cards that stamps any kind of
psychic abilities into these cards. It's
just cardboard and ink and some plastic
lamination.

So, any kind of fortune-telling ability
that is manifested through these tarot
cards is done by the person reading the
cards and to maybe a lesser degree the
person who's having the reading done on
them or for them.

So, the lines in your palm is just a
kind of

I don't know, a kind of scribble
that

um a talented someone with like genuine
psychic talent will use as just a kind
of cipher to just channel some kind of
genuine

psychic ability so that if any correct
prognostications are made or any correct
claims are made with regard to the lines
on your palm, it's done more through the
psychic talent of the palm reader and
not the actual wrinkles on the palm of
your hand.

I really don't see how if you're going
to have three kids, it's going to you're
going to have different lines on your
hand than if you have six kids or don't
have any kids at all.

So,

those are my thoughts on astrologers who
read hands or
palmists,

I guess it'd be called.

Um

yeah, I mean the Buddha discouraged it
at least it's he discouraged it for for
monks. It's just considered to be animal
knowledge. It's not really dharmic. It's
It's just kind of, you know,
superstitious stuff.

But also, I mean there can be accurate
or genuine

like useful information derived, but
still I think it's more the the psychic
talent of the palm reader rather than

the actual wrinkles on the palm of your hand or the positions of the stars at the moment of your birth.

And so, I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Tirzaskez is.

Formerly known as Tirzaskez is.

And he says, "Why do you think politics is a topic that brings out the worst in people?"

And um I already mentioned to him that it's because I mean partly in joke, in jest,

I said, "Well, it's because politics has replaced religion in the West.

And religion has brought out the worst in people, too.

You know, there's

you know, the Holy Inquisition and and

just burning of witches and all this

horrible intolerance and blood flowing

in the streets in Byzantine

Anatolia

over whether the Holy Spirit emanates

directly from the Father or indirectly

from the Father through the Son. There

are people that killing each other over

this stuff.

So, politics is a topic that brings out

the worst in people because people

believe strongly

about politics. Just as people more in

the past than in the present, but to

some degree in the present now, believe strongly about religion. Anything that people believe strongly about, they're going to have more vehement and sometimes violent attitudes with regard to people who disagree with them.

So, that in my opinion is why.

And I'm going to move on to Chosky's second question.

He says, does perception more or less equal delusion illusion? Yes, that's an easy one. I mean, I've just a few Q&A videos ago, I was saying that

I mean, perception is delusion. Is some sorrow. I mean, there the three are equivalent.

So, it's not so much more less, it's
more

that perception is delusion or illusion.

Just assuming the second-guessing the
mental states of a fully enlightened

being, we could say that, you know, if

they are still are perceiving houses and

trees and clouds and birds and all that,

then it would be an illusion rather than

a delusion because they no longer

believe that it is ultimately real.

But, yeah, perception is delusion or at

least illusion.

It's just conjuring up some symbol that

people mistake for reality.

Okay.

Yeah, so I mean, like the purpose of Dharma, like of meditation, holy life, spiritual practice, is to attenuate perception until you can see through it. And then you are no longer deceived by it.

So, I'm just going to move on to Trisagion's his third question.

Okay, this is the question that I thought I was answering above cuz I remember seeing this question. I forgot that there were two questions about ghosts.

Trisagion's is asks, "With people reborn in ghost realm, are they reborn as infants and grow there like humans and animals there?" And I think I can to

some degree just combine

Buddhist tradition with, you know, what
the the evidence, modern evidence
indicates

that I don't think you have baby ghosts,
unless maybe a baby died and became one.

Um like I said in answer to the first
ghost question, a lot of ghosts

are beings that don't even know that
they're dead. You know, they're just
like a continuation

of the same person through a more subtle
sort of body.

You know, and definitely a kind of
cruder kind of sleepwalking kind of
mental state.

So, yeah, they'd be just spontaneously arisen. You know, this I think in in Theravada Buddhism, you get four kinds of life. There's born of moisture, which kind of goes with Schopenhauer's spontaneous generation theory, born of moisture, born of eggs, born of a womb, and spontaneously arisen, which is like in the deva realms and apparently also in the ghost realm, probably in the hell realms also, where you just poof into that realm fully grown.

I guess some of the lower deva realms you can have baby devas. I do recall a story in Vinya of a tree spirit, like a a low-level deva, a terrestrial deva that did have a baby.

I think there's more There's several stories like that.

So,

animals, humans, and terrestrial devas can have babies, but ghosts and like Brahmas,

hell denizens, probably. I don't know about asuras. They don't really You don't

hear a lot about asuras in the texts.

They They're just manifest fully fully grown, fully developed.

Poof.

So,

yeah, I'm pretty sure that

um if you're reborn in the ghost realm,

that

as a general rule, you're you're like a version of your previous existence.

Um that seems to be the indication. I've never heard of a a baby ghost before.

Other than like child ghosts. You know, like you watch the ghost shows, Ghost Hunters and all that. Occasionally, or like Kindred Spirits, or what's The Dead Files. There's all these ghost shows you can watch. I've seen most of them cuz my woman's really into that. She likes falling asleep to ghost shows. So, she falls asleep 10 or 15 minutes into the show, and I wind up watching the whole rest of it.

Women, I mean, once they get horizontal,

they cannot watch anything longer than 30 minutes cuz they're going to be asleep by the time it's it reaches the end.

But,

I mean, it watching these shows there there are cases of like a child who died of like scarlet fever or diphtheria or was murdered or something. And so, there's apparitions of a child.

But, that's just the age they were at when they died or maybe shortly before they died. You know, it's kind of the age that they most identified with, I suppose.

So, I think I answered that question.

And I'm just going to move on to the next one. This is from Kazan, and I think they're debating again on the Discord server because it's it's booping mightily.

Kazan says,

"Are you familiar with Joseph of Cupertino?

His crazy levitations were legendary and well-documented, yet I wasn't even aware of the guy despite being very a Catholic."

I have read, uh,

people just debating like crazy. I

really should have made an announcement.

Please,

don't engage in like rapid-fire vehement

debates because I'm going to be doing a Q&A video.

Let's see. So, Kazan asked me if I'm familiar with Joseph of Cupertino, and I'm not sure if this is the same person. I'm guessing maybe it is, but there was some Catholic saint kind of early modern times, like Reformation, Renaissance times, I'm pretty sure, who was famous, infamous for levitating a lot. So, that there was some sort of high-ranking government minister who hid under a staircase in order to watch him levitate. And I mean, he saw him levitating. He was hiding under a staircase, you know, kind

of spying on him cuz he wanted to see him levitate. Sure enough, the saint levitates, or I don't know if he was uh, canonized or not.

And then, of course, he's just I'm sold. He's He's the real deal. He's the real levitator.

But, I whether that was the same person or not, I don't know. I do recall reading that on a number of occasions, Saint Teresa of Avila would go into such ecstasies on taking the the sacraments, you know, the the little wafer, that she would just levitate up into the air in the midst of an entire church congregation.

So,

is I I do think it's possible even though science cannot explain it.

And it's like every 5 seconds somebody is posting something on the Discord server, mainly arguing with each other. Generally with one person involved cuz he wants to argue everything with everybody at any time.

So, the next question is from PSA.

I mean, he'll ask me a question and then I'll answer and then he'll just argue against the answer.

Next question is from PSA.

Did you ever fulfill your dream of hitting people with a stick while

dressed in black and riddling them with koans? No, I went a different direction in life. I became a Theravada Buddhist monk

who dressed in a kind of yellowish-reddish brown and and it was against the rules for me to hit anybody with a stick.

I did talk and riddle sometimes, but not very often.

So, that's what you get when you become a Theravada Buddhist. You just

I mean, the options of hitting people with sticks are greatly diminished.

PSA's second question.

I just watched a few minutes of your first Q&A video when you were still a

monk and it's

It's the same guy. The same guy and he's arguing. I can read like what he wrote up in the corner of the computer.

Arguing.

I just Okay, PSA says,

"I just watched a few minutes of your first Q&A video when you were still a monk and it's incredible how much you've changed." Yeah, I'm I'm hairier now for starters.

"Right now you appear way more relaxed, loose, and maybe even happier. Every 5 seconds

the Discord server's going boop.

Boop.

Boop.

I'm going to have to start over.

I just watched a few minutes of your first Q&A video when you were still a monk and it's incredible how much you've changed. Right now you appear way more relaxed, loose, and maybe even happier.

A little a little bit frazzled and distracted.

Is this a correct assessment or was your former rigidity due to your serious commitment to observing the precepts while you were a monk and it had nothing to do with your inner level of contentment?

Okay, yeah. My early Q&A's I was still a monk.

And

yeah, I mean I was more formal, less emotional, you know, just kind of I almost said flatlining but that mean doesn't mean monotone. Kind of talking more in a monotone.

And partly it was because I was just starting these Q&A's. I was just starting doing videos really. Maybe I was kind of doing doing some back and forth dialogue videos with Brian Rue before I started doing Q&A videos. Yeah, I'm pretty sure I was.

But still just doing a solo video where I just sit in front of a camera and just talk to an invisible

multitude

if that's not self-flattering

referring to you guys as a multitude.

Hundreds of you anyway.

The I mean it was a little bit

I mean I wasn't like used to it yet. So

there was a little bit of that. Just

kind of the

formality of just giving a speech to you

know, when I wasn't used to it yet. So

there was some of that. Also just the

fact that I was a monk. I mean I had to

have more of a monastic demeanor. So

there was some of that.

And also I was living at a little

Burmese temple in California where I was

a fish out of water. I mean, I couldn't

really live the holy life the way a monk is supposed to. You know, I was just like sitting in this trailer on the just kind of in the backyard of what was essentially a Burmese cultural center more than a kind of monastery.

And so, I mean, it

it was sort of like my

my slide out of the Sangha had already

begun at that time and there was sort of this

kind of fish out of water kind of

feeling that I had pretty much the whole time that I was living in California at this Burmese cultural center

/monastery.

Now, I just didn't really fit in. So, yeah, it was a it was a combination of factors. First, just sort of not really being comfortable giving solo videos yet. I wasn't really used to it yet. It was a new thing at the time. Second, just having to have a monkly demeanor, you know, not being so flamboyant, waving my arms around like this. I You know, a monk isn't supposed to wave his arms around like this. I can do this if I want to now.

And also, it was just kind of being in a a weird situation where I didn't really fit in and it was just increasingly obvious it wasn't going to work. So, there was kind of that kind of pressure,

too, that made my early videos seem less laid-back and relaxed, less like free-flowing and natural than now, if you will.

But, I mean,

to my greatest contentment was when I was a monk, just like living alone in a cave and my meditation was going well.

Then, yeah, it was it was I would be very noticeably different than from now also with now not being necessarily looking better than then.

So, I don't want to like

you know, denounce

the effects of being a monk or anything like that.

So, I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question.

If you had to live in only one country for the rest of your life including the US and Myanmar,

which country would you pick and why?

So, he's asking if I had to live in one country for the rest of my life excluding the US and Myanmar.

That's a tough one and and

I remember seeing this question asked and

I really didn't come up with an easy answer. I mean,

might have been Italy before it was invaded by North Africans.

Um Denmark maybe before

I mean, it's not as grotesquely
feminized as some other EU countries,
but it gets damn cold in the wintertime.

Um

Bali is nice
in Indonesia.

Although Indonesia is just it's like
living on top of Yellowstone. I mean,
you don't know when the next big
explosion's going to happen.

Um it's possible that it would be some
little island country some some
Tuvalu or something. I don't know.

There's some little island nation out in
the Pacific just some little tropical
paradise.

I could live out there. You know, you're not supposed to like sit underneath coconut trees though cuz the coconuts actually can fall.

So,

yeah, I mean, I really it's a hard question to answer. I mean, sure as hell wouldn't want to live in Canada. I mean, most modern Western countries are in a much worse state socially than America. I mean, if if you're fine was was like living in a kind of castrated feminized dystopia that's very comfortable in certain respects, although less so because of the the like aggressive migrants who hate your culture and hate you

that are just invited in with open arms
because diversity is somebody's
strength, maybe not mine.

So

gosh.

Yeah, I mean, possibly some obscure
like island country.

Although not Iceland.

Some warmer obscure island country.

Or maybe I mean, if you just don't want
to live in a place where there's lots of
problems like Albania. I notice like you
never hear any news about Albania.

Nothing ever happens in Albania. Albania
could have sunk into the ocean, sunk
into the Mediterranean Sea

like

months ago and and nobody would even notice.

So I mean

if nothing ever happens there, I mean, that would mean that nothing bad happens there.

So maybe some place like Albania.

Although I guess technically Albania is supposed to be a an Islamic country, but I've been I've read somewhere that they're the most lukewarm Muslims in the world.

So I guess that wouldn't be too much of a problem.

Hmm.

Argentina maybe?

It's hard to say. I mean, I'd have to really like

investigate. Have to do some studies.

Like what country? I mean, maybe I could just ask Grok. Just feed in my preferences and ask Grok what country I should live in and

it will spit out an answer.

But I haven't done that. So, I'm guessing maybe

maybe like

Albania, Argentina, or maybe some tropical island country, of which there are many.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Romeo.

I was just checking the time. Not because I'm getting bored or anything. I just It's good It's a good idea to to like know how far into this like if I'm being too long-winded so that it's taking

like a very long time just to answer one question. It's good to know because I don't want to have a 4-hour long Q&A video.

Uh and my first beverage is Dead Soldier.

And I didn't make coffee before this, so I'm

going with two energy drinks, and I've done it before, and I know from a fact

for a fact that it is
generally non-lethal.

Uh

I'm going to raise a monk sometimes.

I mean, the Red Bull in in Burma and
Thailand is has a different formula than
here, and I think early on before Red
Bull became famous internationally, it
would have been illegal in this country.

I mean, there was
like

I mean, they say there are steroids in
it, but even like vitamin D is a
steroid, so that doesn't mean very much.
I think they put nicotine in it just to
get people addicted. There was something

along the lines of amphetamines in there, too, because if you drank more than about two of them, you weren't going to sleep that night.

Uh but I I digress.

Romeo says,

"As both a Buddhist and someone who recently had a near-death experience, glad and relieved that you survived it unscathed, by the way. And I still do have like a slight bruise from the the the strap.

I was in a

The car was totaled we just less than a week ago we got info from the insurance agency saying the car was a total loss. The car was just wiped out.

I got in a wreck hit the hit this truck
I'm going down the highway 45 miles an
hour and at night driving home from work
in this pickup truck just cuts right
across the highway. I tried to swerve
out of the way but of course he's going
that way too.

We collide at like 40 miles an hour and
the only slight injuries I received were
like abrasions and bruises from the the
safety stuff the the airbags and the the
the seatbelt and that sort of thing.

Although it was I mean it was
definitely like a near-death experience
because

I mean that last second when a collision

at relatively high speed is inevitable and it's just like this heightened awareness. You could say things slow down but it's just like timeless in a sense. You don't know if you're going to still be alive 5 seconds from now, you know.

It's a weird experience.

But I'm going to have to like start Romeo's question all over again now.

And they're still arguing away on on Discord. I wish there was I knew of some way of silencing the the boop alert thing. Although it's on my woman's computer not mine.

I've already got my computer muted otherwise it's the feedback from the

microphone would just be screeching
right now.

So Romeo says

as both a Buddhist and someone who
recently had a near-death experience, I
am wondering if you could give your
thoughts

on a recent interaction I overheard
at the Buddhist temple I go to for
meditation.

One of the participants explaining why
he hadn't been in the temple in a while.

Excuse me.

Mentioned that he was in a serious car
accident and almost died. He said
something to the effect, "You know the

Buddhists are right. You don't see a white light or anything like that. You just look into a void. That's all there is, a void." Unquote.

And Mr. Arguile pants is still going for it.

Okay. Anyways, Romeo continues.

"Overhearing this was a bit unsettling for me and it got me wondering whether that this whether what this person recounted is accurate from a Buddhist perspective regarding what happens when one reaches the other side. There are countless survivors of near-death experiences that describe more than just witnessing a void.

Was what this person experienced due to

his lack of belief in Jesus or God? In other words, would he have been would he have seen a glowing white light had he been a believer in the Christian sense?

Even though I was raised Catholic, Christianity never really resonated with me, but hearing this made me think of Pascal's Wager and that I'd be better off trying my best to have faith in Jesus or God just in case. Buddhism is more rational and following its tenets leads to less suffering in this life, but Christianity is much more comforting and hopeful about the next one. Thoughts?

Well, first of all, I'll address this very last statement here. Christianity is much more comforting and hopeful about the next one. What about many are called but few are chosen? You go with the actual Bible, not just what Christians believe nowadays where oh, he's in heaven now.

According to Jesus himself in the Bible, most people, including most Christians, are going to burn in hell forever.

Which was kind of a poke in the butt for a lot of those medieval saints. I mean, they were convinced that you know, this is our only chance. You better be a saint or I'm going to go to

hell.

So, let's see. You had the
a Buddhist who has a near-death
experience and all they see is void.

Um

yeah.

I don't think that that was
um uh necessarily a Buddhist experience.

I mean, it may just been I mean, when
you have a near-death experience
a lot of it is you see what you expect
to see. You see what you think you ought
to see.

And so, there have been weird like
near-death experiences of after you rise
above your body, you go into the bright

light, you know, you go into like the tunnel with the bright light at the end and go come out into like this heaven realm. And there was one case I read about where she gets there and she meets her grandma who's like her spirit guide. And And she leads her through this heavenly like a housing development with prefab houses and like little landscape gardens and stuff.

That was That was what her imagination caused her to to see. Like the Tibetan Book of the of the Dead, which is Tibetan Buddhist. I mean, it's Tibetan Buddhist but still Buddhist. You know, it's it's more like the traditional near-death experience, the bright light

and you're seeing all these different beings. You should remind yourself that they're not real. But still, you're going to see all these beings like Buddhas and demons and copulating couples and all this.

So, I think that this person who just saw a void just kind of thought that was deep down just thought that's what they ought to see and so that's what they saw. But from the Buddhist point of view, let's see. There's a certain

Let's see.

See.

Okay, overhearing this was a bit

unsettling for me and it got me wondering whether what this person recounted is accurate from a Buddhist perspective regarding what happens when one reaches the other side. Well, in Theravada Buddhism, I mean, there hardly even is another side. There is no Bardo realm really in Buddhism or Theravada Buddhism. Like in Tibetan Book of the Dead, yeah. But, in Theravada Buddhism, if you die, the very next moment you are taking rebirth as another being.

So, this whole near-death experience stuff really doesn't fit into Theravada Buddhism very well, which to some degree would have me a little more skeptical of

the Theravada explanation of things cuz
since there's such
uh a a wealth of information of people
having near-death experiences where
they're going through all these similar
things, the bright light, and the the
spirit guide, and and all this kind of
stuff.

So,

I would say that in this case the person
maybe was not a particularly imaginative
person and didn't really have any
subconscious expectations.

And they just
went into a kind of blank.

And then just assumed that they were

seeing what a Buddhist is supposed to see.

But, I'm pretty sure all Buddhists wouldn't see that.

Not even all Theravada Buddhists.

See, but I really don't think

Christianity, at least not biblical, scriptural, official Christianity is much more comforting and hopeful about the next one. Partly because most people are going to go to hell, including most Christians, and it's going to last forever.

So,

yeah, Christianity, I mean, I couldn't really believe it. I mean, it just did not make sense

that this

Jewish carpenter's son

who lived in a some podunk province of
the Roman Empire is the creator of the
universe.

Who died for our sins, especially
original sin, which supposedly was
caused by a man made from earth and a
woman made from a bone being tricked by
a snake into eating a certain kind of
fruit.

And they're still just arguing away on
Discord.

Especially the guy who's absolutely
freaking addicted to arguing.

So, I mean, I even warned him last

night. You just reconcile yourself to
being

just alone and celebrate for the rest of
your life. I mean, just going on a first
date where you're just arguing against
anything that the woman says

is it's just not going to work. It does
not work with human beings as a general
rule.

Anyways,

what is the actual question here?

There's got to be a question mark. When
in doubt, search for the question mark.

Let's see.

Here's one. Was that person experiencing
Was what this person experienced due to
his lack of belief in Jesus or God? No,

because even like a Tibetan Buddhist has that whole bardo experience. Partly because that's what they think they ought to experience.

Like a like a hardcore materialist might just experience this blankness or blackness or something.

It's just you experience what you think you ought to experience because it is all mind generated.

So, it's here. In other words, would he have seen a glowing white light had he been a believer in the Christian sense? Not necessarily.

Depends on the individual, I think.

And depends on the reality that that

individual is generating for themselves.

Depends on their karma, for example.

Man, I really am sorry that this Q&A is

I'm being so distracted by people just
arguing non-stop or debating. Let's use
the polite word, debating philosophical
concepts non-stop on on the Discord
server.

Uh

anyways,

next question is from Master Po,

formerly known as White Ash Piper.

He says, "Can you, we, us love someone
without knowing them?"

Yeah, I

to some degree. I mean, there are like
saintly people who love the entire human

race without having met most of the entire human race.

You can love dogs without having known all dogs.

I mean, you don't even know had didn't even know most of them.

So, yeah, I mean, love, in my opinion, in my interpretation of the word, is acceptance.

So, you can just accept total stranger.

Let's say you're just walking through a store, and you're in one of those situations where you you come across someone coming the other way, and then you both step to one side, which is the same side, and then both just kind of

step the other way, so that you just keep being in each other's way, and then you just kind of smile at each other cuz you don't understand what's going on.

There's there's sort of like this connection, even though you don't know each other at all. You're never going to meet each other again, probably. But still, there's like this kind of brotherhood or acceptance going on between you, which, I mean, to the extent that there is acceptance, there is love, in my opinion.

So,

yeah, I think you can love someone without knowing them.

I mean, it depends on what kind of love

it is. I mean, if you're like madly in love with someone without knowing them, then that's I mean, maybe like a movie star or something. You got some 13-year-old girl who's madly has this crush on some famous pop singer or clavicular or something. And they don't know them at all other than just what they've seen about them on YouTube or whatever.

I mean, you can call that love. I mean, most people would just call it like infatuation. But to the extent that there really is some kind of acceptance, open-hearted acceptance, you're putting a making a at least a window in Pink

Floyd's wall, an opening in Pink Floyd's wall, that would qualify as love to some degree in my book.

And so it's like a fully enlightened being, they don't have Pink Floyd's wall anymore. They just knocked down the whole wall. And so in a sense, they love the entire universe without necessarily knowing all the inhabitants of the universe individually.

But I'm sure there are like subtleties and complications depending on, you know, how you define love and that sort of thing.

But I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Damma River.

And Damma River says,

"I was reading the book 60 Songs of Milarepa and this quote struck me.

Quote, Because I do not wear the lofty garb of priesthood, I am happy. Unquote.

That line is deep, dangerous, and powerful. He is stating that freedom from being an ordained monk gives him happiness. It's so counterintuitive but leads to reflection. He proceeds to talk about other reasons why he's happy, which are mostly related to renunciation, similar to the wander alone like a rhinoceros sutra or the horn of the rhinoceros in my opinion. What is the right way to interpret this

quote in your opinion?"

Well,

Milarepa was definitely a renunciant. He was not a lay person. I mean, you read his autobiography and he was just a hardcore ascetic renunciant living in a cave in Tibet. He was living mostly on nettles for a long time to the extent that he just turned green. His clothes just rotted off of him. So, he was like this emaciated green naked man living in a cave and of course the villagers, you know, the locals all thought he was some kind of monster.

But he was really into it.

You know, it wasn't like he was just

going to discos or something. He was like really a renunciant.

And so,

for him, I mean, to to be a monk, to be a member of the Sangha was superfluous.

You know, it's like he was already practicing like at his full potential or, you know, as close to his full potential he as he was going to get. He didn't need all these extra rules, all these ceremonies and rituals, just kind of

like they would be a kind of a burden to him.

But, I mean, it's definitely helpful for most people to have some kind of

structure. You know, if you don't have the talent to become like an enlightened sage or a near to enlightened sage just on your own,

just following your own inclinations, it's definitely helpful to have like rules of monastic discipline and just kind of a structured system of practice developed for you to follow.

But you read the Atthakavagga of the Sutta Nipata and it's kind of similar. I mean, the Atthakavagga argue arguably like

it states the danger of following rules, of having these rules that are in a kind of encumbrance.

So, like in the time of the Ashikaga,

the the the Vinaya rules probably had not been formulated yet. This was, you know, very early stuff. And so, monks were pretty much like Milarepa. I mean, there wasn't a whole lot to it. You get ordained, you might, you know, receive instruction from a teacher for a time, especially the Buddha himself, and then you'd go off and and just go alone like the horn of the rhinoceros.

But, I mean, if we if we can believe like the canonical history of the First Council, after the Buddha died, might as well just say die, after the Buddha passed away,

um you know, the enlightened monks
accepted it with equanimity. That's just
the way the world.

A lot of the unenlightened monks were
grieving cuz their teacher had died.

But, there was this one old monk who was
ordained when he was old, and those are
kind of notorious in the Sangha.

He was He was just saying,

I mean, why is everyone so sad? We can
do whatever we want to now. We don't
have Master Gotama saying, "Do this.
Don't do that." all the time.

And Mahakassapa heard this old monk
saying that, and he was
as alarmed as an enlightened being could
be, I suppose, and he realized that

something has to be done. There has to be some kind of formal structure added, and that's why the First Council is called the Vinaya Sangiti. It's the convocation on monastic discipline. And in my opinion, even though the text in the tradition doesn't state this, the purpose, the main purpose of the First Council, was just to get some basic rules of monastic discipline established like ordination protocols and that kind of thing.

Maybe the Patimokkha.

Just because you have to have some kind of structure if you don't have a sufficiently wise person

holding everything together. And in Milarepa's case, he just had talent. He could just go off and do it alone after receiving some basic instruction.

You know, and towards the beginning of his career, he just went off alone and really didn't need any of the formal structure.

So, yeah, it doesn't really strike me as counterintuitive

that to some degree

the like the the formal structure of

orthodox Theravada is the lesser of two

evils. I mean, it can still be an

attachment. It can still be an

encumbrance, especially if you cling to

it. But still, it's it's like the lesser

of two evils. It's way better than just wallowing in sensuality. And a lot of people need a certain amount of structure imposed upon them. Like me, for example, I knew myself well enough that I wouldn't practice as correctly just as a free agent, just going solo on my own without like really adopting some kind of tradition to lend stability and support to my practice.

But some people don't necessarily need that. And the whole idea that if you're not an ordained Theravada Buddhist monastic, you have no hope of enlightenment,

I consider that to be Theravada Buddhist propaganda.

I do think it is possible to become enlightened without being a member of the Theravada Buddhist Sangha.

So,

I guess uh

I guess I interpreted that quote.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Scooter Mane.

And Scooter Mane says, "Are Buddhism-related tattoos paradoxical?"

And

not necessarily.

Um

I mean, you can say I mean, if you got a

tattoo of the Buddha, then that's paradoxical because there is no Buddha because there is no self, there is no individual being, that kind of thing. I mean, that's kind of a relatively deep philosophical paradox.

But, I mean

lots and lots of tattooed Buddhists in places like Burma. The founder of the tradition in which I was ordained, Thom Phra Maha Boowa Nanasampanno, he followed the tradition uh that was a Buddhist tradition up until around World War II that he was fully tattooed from just below the knee up to the waist.

That you wouldn't see it. Um I knew a a
disciple of Thom Phra Maha Boowa
Nanasampanno but you know, while Thom
Phra Maha Boowa Nanasampanno was still
alive, and he was unaware that Thom Phra
Maha Boowa Nanasampanno was that fully
tattooed until he had to lift his lower
robes to wade across the creek, and then
it's just like solid tattoos above the
knees.

Which was just standard in Burma up
until around World War II.

But I guess they wouldn't all be
Buddhism-related.

Although in Burma
traditional village Burma, you know,
everything has got at least some

indirect relation to Buddhism.

But a lot of

a lot of Buddhists will have like

um protection tattoos. Like there was

this village lady who was one of my main supporters.

She When she was a little girl, she went to a fair, and a tattoo artist, I guess you'd call him an artist, just tattooed like three dots.

Three green dots in the back of her

wrist, and that was just symbolic of,

you know, the the triple gem, the triple treasure, and that was just protective, you know, it's kind of like a reminder.

Buddha, Dharma, Sangha on the back of

her wrist.

And

I mean

it's not necessarily paradoxical unless you just want to believe that it's all paradoxical, everything. For anything to exist is paradoxical. For this entire multiplicity of samsara to exist is a kind of great paradox.

Why does anything bother to exist? At least that's what uh

uh Stephen Hawking used to say. I mean, that was like his main question.

Why does the universe bother to exist in the first place?

I mean, my answer is the uncarved block of marble, but

I don't want to start beating that horse to death again.

Oh, somebody's taking off in Jeep.

Hmm, hope it's my woman.

Cuz otherwise, our car is now being stolen.

So, getting back to Scooter Man's

question though,

are Buddhism-related tattoos paradoxical?

Yeah, I mean,

not necessarily.

I mean, just any if any if any

Excuse me. If anything is paradoxical,

that would include I mean, if everything

is paradoxical, that would include

Buddhist tattoos, but

I don't think there's any kind of

contradiction in a Buddhist

Buddhism-related tattoo necessarily,

other than at some deep philosophical

level.

So, I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Rafael.

And Rafael says, "Do you believe that

hate stems from envy most of the time,

if not always?"

Um well, from the Buddhist point of

view, I mean, dosa

or aversion is generally translated as

hate or hatred in English.

And I mean, it's so generalized, it's so

broad in spectrum, in scope,

that no, it would not. I mean, if you hate a mosquito or a fly, you're not envious of that mosquito or fly.

You hate the weather. I mean, when I lived in Burma, I lived in this blazing hot furnace-like wasteland of central Burma much of the time, and I personified the weather just to curse it more easily. Mr. Weather, I cursed Mr. Weather up one side and down the other. And so, I mean, it wasn't that I was envious of the weather. I just hated it cuz it was it wouldn't rain in the rainy season. It was just blazing hot all the time except for in the middle of wintertime.

You think it was going to rain, you know, you'd even smell the rain in the air, and then it would just nothing.

So,

just hate in general, like dosa or aversion in general, does not stem from envy most of the time.

But with regard to like fellow humans, maybe Raphael was referring to hatred of fellow humans specifically. Not even hatred of certain dogs, but just humans. Hatred of humans.

Even then, I mean, with some people, some people are just envious by nature, and so probably most of their hatred of others would include envy.

I think women are more stereotypically

notorious for this kind of stuff, but it happens with men, too.

But still,

I don't think envy, you know, it's like somebody molested your daughter. God forbid. I mean, it's it's you're not going to hate that person out of envy.

So,

yeah, for some people, most hatred of other humans may be

based on envy most of the time,

but

I'd be skeptical of even

half the time for most people.

Just directed at other humans. Just

letting us leaving alone flies and

mosquitoes and and bad weather and you know, criminal atrocities and that kind of thing.

Like a lot of right-wingers hate a certain ethnicity.

And I mean, would you call that envy? I mean, maybe resentment.

You know, resentment and envy are you know, kind of similarly you know, they're they're not too far apart, I suppose. I guess they can overlap.

But I think in some people who are just envious by nature, sure, that hate for other humans would stem from stem from envy most of the time. But with regard to humans in

general,

especially males,

I would be skeptical of that.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cole.

And Cole says, "Now that you aren't a monk anymore, I'm wondering what your relationship to basic cravings is like.

For example, you no longer have to eat what is offered and you get to choose.

Do you have cravings for simple things

like different foods that you will

indulge in or do you practice

restraint?" Well, even monks have

cravings and can indulge their cravings

to some degree. You get like a big

bowl of food. You go for alms in the village. You get this big bowl of food. You're going to like the scrambled eggs and the peanuts and maybe not like the the nondescript bamboo shoot glop or the bitter gourd stuff so much.

And so, you might preferentially target the the scrambled eggs and the peanuts with rice and kind of not and kind of go easy on the nondescript icky glop. Like the stewed eggplant glop.

That kind of stuff.

Chitterlings or whatever.

So I mean there is some of that even as a monk.

Even monks are allowed to or able to

indulge their preferences to some degree.

Also of course a monk is even allowed to ask for certain food if he is sick or if the person he's asking has given him prior permission to ask. And there were a few times in Burma just in a moment of weakness explaining peanut butter for example. I remember I explained peanut butter to this Burmese school teacher and she was skeptical. She just thought you get peanut flour, you grind up peanuts. She came back later with this look of amazement on her face. You're right. It's like you said.

So

let's see. Do I have cravings for simple things like different foods that I will indulge in or do you practice or saying? I mean I do have certain foods that I like. Like there's just a cheese and mayonnaise and salt sandwich.

I ate two of them for breakfast today.

It just It's just a convenient easy kind of food that tastes good enough.

And my woman she's always wanting to like

accentuate food. You know, add subtle flavor profiles and this kind of thing.

But I'm like a minimalist. You know, bread, cheese, mayo, a little bit of salt.

Good to go. It's It's good enough. I

like it. I just
that's it. And she's like wanting to
experiment. Wouldn't you want to like
mix a little horseradish with that
mayonnaise, you know? Put some of this
this seasoning salt stuff on it. And
it's like no, this is good. This is just
this is this good enough. If it ain't
broke, don't fix it.

So yeah, I do have preferences.

And you might be in the mood for
something which you could call a kind of
craving.

So,

yeah, I mean,

why not?

It is I remember when I one of the most amazing things to me when I stopped being a monk was just all of a sudden after 30 years, I can just walk into the kitchen anytime I want. Just open the refrigerator, look inside. It's like, any of this I can consume now if I want to.

So, that was it was like a miracle. It just seemed like a miracle at first. I mean, it's still it's it's really a kind of luxury

just to be able to walk into a kitchen and just go through the cupboards and the refrigerator, which generally is fairly well stocked in our house, and just pick whatever you want.

In a way, it's kind of a miracle that I'm not just morbidly obese at this point.

So, yeah, I mean, even monks have cravings for simple things.

Um but I mean, I indulge in it a little more now.

I'm not just wallowing in it.

But still, if I'm in the mood for a cheese sandwich or a to nuke a frozen burrito or something, I mean, you got to eat something. You might as well eat something that you tastes good.

I'm not going to I'm not such a renunciant or an ascetic at present that

I would just deliberately force myself to eat food that I consider to be disgusting.

So, yeah, I mean, it's fairly moderate. I'm not like a gourmand.

I mean, I'm a pretty much of a minimalist in my tastes anyway.

So,

yeah, a little bit.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from the proto pseudo monk formerly known as Cool Whip.

And I

learned recently that

um most people who speak English no

longer pronounce the H in WH words like

like the word white.

Most people don't even say that anymore.
They just say white as though that it's
just w i t e.

But it turns out that white
or cool whip

is actually more correct because of
Proto-Indo-European

having a kind of

kind of a guttural sound or a It's like
in in like the the Latin base languages,
it turned into a Q, Q U. Like question
words start with Q U as a general rule
in Romance languages. It's the same as
the WH in in English.

Because question words start with like
this

qua or wha.

But I'm digressing like like a crazy person at present.

Let's just get back to uh the Proto-Siddhartha, formerly known as cool whip.

He says, "I'm very close to moving to Sri Lanka to ordain as a Buddhist monk upon completion of my degree. I might have asked this before. Forgive me for asking again. You can skip the essay for the Q&A. Well, not going to happen, I guess. I cannot imagine any other life besides that of a bhikkhu right now. Any attempt to live an ordinary worldly life would appear as an evident lie and indulging in ignorance and delusion.

However, I am so conditioned to my Western upbringing that I feel like I am possibly about to waste my life. I think doubt is the result of excessive thinking. In moments of clarity, this belief disappears.

I think it comes down to truth and doing good for the world. Some imagined optimal life. The path of a bhikkhu only seems to be of highest value if karma and rebirth is true. It is all or nothing. Either the most worthy life or the most wasted life.

I have the highest conviction in karma and rebirth, samsara, and nirvana. It is my working hypothesis, but of course

there is no way of proving this. I think what's most difficult is that I have to go against the stream, opposed my peers, to society and my culture, denying my attraction to women to have children, denying family and friendships, renouncing all my many interests, intellectual, artistic, and so on, to live an alien life to test it out.

As you succinctly put it from the quote from Avalon, quote, "What do you think is the best? A game you think you can finish but never do, or a game that seems impossible to win but isn't?"

Unquote.

I think it comes down to having faith that the bishop's question is ultimately

true in the movie Avalon. Excellent movie, by the way.

I am prepared to take the gamble and dedicate my life to this path just to find out if this is indeed false, but I fear this being false. I would have given up a family life, a romantic partner, friendships, life experiences, a successful job, and doing good in the world as much as I can with my place in society, materially through my work, progeny, etc. There is also the fear of missing out, FOMO.

I don't know what that means. On the richness and pleasures of life, believing somehow an ordinary life that

requires some selfishness is best for the development of oneself in the world. Uh please, sir, what is your advice? How can I get out of this doubt caused mainly by this intellectual belief that becoming a monk is selfish despite not having any attachment to being in this world. How can I commit to this path wholeheartedly without having these answers? Does this doubt have any veracity? I don't know where this belief of duty comes from. I think it's just a default setting we learn from society. Please, can you clarify how the life of a bhikkhu is the most worthy life assuming one succeeds in reaching the nibbana? I feel like if I believe if I

become a monk, I can no longer be of service to the world. I try and think how this is not true. As a monk, you can teach dhamma to a small poor village.

So, this is not my ambition, but it seems small compared to what is possible in a capitalistic Western world. I say these words with no belief.

I say these words with no belief in them. It is simply how the doubt appears. I am very much fed up with the Western world and disenchanted with it. Most people think and behave like fools. Though humans have some goodness, there is a level of selfishness and insincerity that makes me ill, and I

seek the company of saints or solitude.

Mara is having its last fight as this is a one-way ticket for me. I cannot postpone this any longer. The forest is calling me, but it will cost me everything.

So, this is a heartfelt question, a sincere question, a good question, but still try to be concise.

I really should have a limit of no more than 150 words per question.

I mean, this could have been condensed quite a lot and still contain essentially the same amount of information.

Anyways, let's see here. I mean, I'm reminded of

a few things here. First of all, there's a statement of my Saint John of the Cross. I mean, cool whip here. I mean, this proto pseudo monk, proto pseudo monk,

who apparently is going to be just the monk because he won't be proto or pseudo anymore if he really is ordained.

I mean, why go to Sri Lanka? I don't fully understand that.

I mean, it seems to me like Thailand might be a better bet than Sri Lanka. I mean, there's just a healthier Sangha there, it seems to me. There are some really serious

like reform movements going on in Sri

Lanka, but you're surrounded by a sea of just utter corruption in the Sangha.

Seems to me.

But he wasn't asking about that.

Um

One thing

is I mean, even if you are ordained as a monk, if it's just not working out at all after 5 or 10 years, I mean, you're not taking a lifelong vows. It's not like being a Catholic monk where you have to get express permission from the Pope himself to drop out.

All you have to do if you are an ordained monk is just tell somebody else in a language they understand that you are not a monk anymore and mean it,

and you're not a monk anymore. That's as easy it is it is to disrobe in Theravada Buddhism.

So, I mean,

you're not necessarily

throwing the rest of your life away even if it turns out that being a monk is not like your lifelong path.

That if you are a sincere monk

conscientiously practicing for 5 or 10

years, I don't know how old the proto

pseudo monk is, I would guess he's not ancient yet.

That after 5 or 10 years, you're bound

to to be making progress.

And you say that in like your more lucid

moments, you have no doubts. It's just like when you're in kind of a more negative mental state, like a less clear, have less clarity, then that's when you have the most aversion for the idea of renouncing the world, which is fairly telling.

You know, it's like when I was a monk, sometimes I'd be disgusted with it all, but I'd remind myself it's only when I'm in a bad mood

that I don't like being a It's like when when, you know, I'm in a state of clarity, when I'm most wise, then obviously, you know, being a monk is is good.

So, there's that, too. I mean, just

because I mean, most people are not a monk for their entire life.

So, I mean,

be a monk for 5 years and see how it goes. Be a monk for 10 years. I mean, if it's still working, you're still making progress, if these renunciations that seemed so difficult at first, don't all of a sudden seem easy after you've already done it, which is was the case with me in a lot of cases. You know, there are some things that was very hard to part with until you part with it, and then you then it's like a relief that you parted with it.

So, there's that. I mean, there's all kinds of stuff I can mention here. I mean, I've experienced a lot of this myself.

This And I am reminded of a statement of St. John of the Cross that the proto-pseudo monk talks about how he wants to benefit the world, that being a monk really doesn't benefit the world, but St. John of the Cross said, you got two people, and I've I've mentioned this before.

Two people. One of them is like feeding the hungry, tending to the sick, you know, providing clothes to the people that don't have clothes, providing homes to people who do not

have homes, just doing acts of goodness
and charity

just every waking moment of every day.

That's one person. The other person is
alone in a cell contemplating or
practicing high contemplation.

You know, just what in Buddhism would be
at least second Jhana,

I'm pretty sure. And St. John of the
Cross says, in all seriousness, that
second person living alone in in a state
of high contemplation

is benefiting the world more than the
person who is like tending the sick and
feeding the hungry and all that.

And there's a similar statement in the

Diamond Cutter Sutra, the Vajracchedika
Prajnaparamita Sutra, where it's saying
that, you know, you again you got the
two people, one of them is doing just
like the first person in St. John of the
Cross's comparison, you know, tending
the sick and feeding the hungry and just
on and on and on, doing all these acts
of goodness and charity,
and the other person just memorizes one
verse of the Diamond Cutter Sutra and
explains it to others, and he is helping
the world more than the first person.

It's It's a matter of

I mean, the first person is essentially
putting Band-Aids on like a terminally
ill patient.

Uh just It's just superficial stuff, and he's not dealing with the the ultimate cause of the suffering. You know, he's just kind of putting Band-Aids on the surface.

And the other person is like raising the level of consciousness of the planet.

So, I mean, there is that. I mean, it it is a valid a valid argument, it seems to me,

that the person living alone in a state of high contemplation is helping the world more than a person who is kind of wallowing in samsara and stuck in it himself

and just kind of helping people at a

superficial level, but it all balances out. All the pluses and minuses ultimately have to balance out.

So, every good thing added to the world just unintentionally adds a corresponding evil.

And also, another thing I would say is that even if like karma and rebirth and all this

are just like a a cultural mythology, the Four noble truths are still true.

The you know, the less suffer the less desire and attachment you have, the less suffering.

So,

if being a monk causes you to have less less desire and attachment, then

that's the way to go if you don't want to suffer. If you want to have like a relatively content life.

If being a monk makes you even more frustrated, let's say you're just horny as hell and just just yearning to get involved in politics or something, then it might not be so good. But even then, it's you're helping to at least combat these attachments that are like karmic momentum.

So,

let's see.

Where is the actual question? I mean, it's kind of down towards the bottom, but not all the way at the bottom.

What is your advice? How can I get out of this doubt caused mainly by this intellectual belief that becoming a monk is selfish? I mean, to some degree, I mean, as as Pol O used to say that to some degree, I mean, if you really want to be liberated, you want to become enlightened, it does require a certain amount of selfishness, which is ironic cuz ultimately there is no self and the monk is like penetrating the truth of that.

So, it's just kind of ironic that people will say, "Oh, the monk's life is selfish."

When really, the the whole goal of being a monk is to

be utterly selfless.

So, how can I commit to this path
wholeheartedly without having these
answers? Well, it's I guess I've already
addressed that

because first of all,

I mean, just

do do it for 5 or 10 years.

That's kind of what I did. I mean, I was
I didn't just like commit to a lifelong
and to or even 30 years of being a monk.

You know, it's like do it until
it just doesn't work anymore.

I remember my preceptor asked me if he
thought I'd be a monk for the rest of my
life and I'd say, "Well, if I'm unhappy

at it for a long time, maybe I'll drop out."

So, I mean, you can't really know unless you at least try, dedicate 5 or 10 years,

see how it goes. And if it's if it's turns out that it was good, keep going. Turns out that it wasn't good, I mean, 5 or 10 years, I mean, it's not your whole life.

I don't know how old

Proto Pseudo Monk is. I would assume that he's fairly young.

Time may be on your side with regard to that.

Also,

like St. John of the Cross and the

Diamond Cutter Sutra says, like raising the level of consciousness, you know, it's sort of like in in the Old Testament, you know, it's like God will spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of one good man.

You can be that one good man.

And also, I mean, the Four Noble Truths, I mean, the Second Noble Truth, desire is the cause of all suffering. I mean, that's true regardless. I mean, that should be fairly self-evident to anyone capable of introspection.

So, you combine all that plus maybe a few things I haven't thought of, and I mean, it's it doesn't strike me as

uh any scenario where you're really
risking a whole hell of a lot. I mean,
if you're already 60,
but then again, how are you going to
have kids when you're 60 anyway?
So, let's see. Does this doubt have any
veracity?

I mean, your doubt would have veracity
if your personality, your character
traits just are not
in harmony with the monk's life,
then maybe it could just make you
miserable.

Also, where you are ordained, you know,
why you are ordained,
but where you are ordained is a big
deal. I mean, if you you can have the

best intentions in the world and you may have like a real like ready to live the holy life and then you get ordained to into a monastery that's just corrupt and none of the monks are practicing correctly and they're just kind of shameless and not following the rules of monastic discipline and all that. I mean, you can just get very bitter and disillusioned and just drop out in disgust thinking the entire Sangha is this way.

When really, you just picked the wrong monastery.

But if if I've said it before back when I was a monk, it's like a desire for

enlightenment is not necessarily the best reason for becoming a monk because things generally don't work out the way you plan.

You know, however they think of it, it turns out otherwise. I mean, that's that's a a statement you find I think twice in the Sutta Nipata in two different contexts. It's just kind of a saying that gets inserted into these two different suttas.

That I mean, really

just

having this idea of a goal, goal-oriented Dhamma and using that as your reason for being a monk is not necessarily the best reason.

Just

two of the best reasons

for becoming a monk, seems to me.

One is just a sense of sacred duty. You

know, it's just my I'm able to become

one. It's just my duty to do the best I

can, get as close to enlightenment as I

am able in this life.

Period.

And then and one of the other

best reasons for becoming a monk is that

the monk's life is just in harmony with

your personality. I mean, you're just

drawn towards

solitude and simplicity

and meditation,

then that will get you farther in the
monastic life than this idealistic
desire for enlightenment.

So,

yeah, I mean, wallowing in the world, I
mean, it

some

samsara cannot be fixed.

It is the nature of samsara to be messed
up.

And any kind of fixes you add, any
goodness you add is going to
be met with a corresponding evil cuz
that's just the way samsara works.

So, yeah, my advice, first, be very
careful in choosing the correct
environment in which to be ordained

and just try it for 5 years. Commit yourself to 5 years. You just do like a 5-year renewable contract. And if after 5 years things are going fairly well, keep going.

So,

that's the best advice I can think of right now.

And good luck to you and I do hope that you are successful in in your practice.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb.

He says, "Have you ever perceived smoke or vapor in meditation?"

And first of all, I would say remember
the rule I before E except after C
because
you spelled perceive wrong.

But after that, I mean, I can give like
an easy obvious answer in perceiving
smoke in meditation is that one
meditation device I have used before is
just light an incense stick and then
just let your gaze rest upon the rising
smoke.

It's It's like a meditation of seeing.
It would be kind of weighted on
vipassana, I guess.

So, I've done that before. You know,
sort of like the yogic meditation of
just gazing upon a candle flame. Except

in my case, I was gazing upon incense smoke rising from the stick.

So, that's kind of a cheat answer, I guess.

Aside from that, the only the the thing that's closest to a smoke or vapor in meditation that I have ever perceived, I did perceive what would be classically would be known as the nimitta

of like access concentration. According to the commentarial tradition, I don't think it's mentioned in the text.

According to the suttas, according to the commentarial tradition, there's this stage of upacara samadhi, which is right

before first jhana. I'm skeptical of the whole idea, but I mean, there is some validity to some of what it's saying because when you get to access concentration, you tend to see a nimitta or sign.

And

I apparently did see one of these signs while meditating, and it was it was just sort of like an an oval kind of shape like a duck egg.

Just kind of a kind of like a gray cloud.

Just an oval shaped like light gray

and just kind of a cloud-like nimitta.

Some people I mean, that's one of the

most common nimittas that you see if you attain upacara samadhi is just kind of a circle or an oval of light or just kind of like a cloud-looking thing. But you can also see images of the the Buddha sitting in meditation, other things also.

But that's the closest I ever perceived to smoke in meditation other than just gazing upon incense smoke as a meditation device.

And I'm just going to move right on to the next question.

This is turning into a longer one than I was expecting. I mean, we only had like in the low 30s, you know, kind of like

the average number of questions, but I'm being more

verbose than usual, I guess.

So, and also I'm just Yeah, I'm just digressing a lot.

So, this this question is from Arpad,

A R P A D, and he says, "Did the Buddha approve of celibacy for lay people, or should those stick to being married

householders if they can't become

monks?" And I am reminded of a statement

I have made a number of times on these

Q&A videos, where I think it's in

Vinaya,

where the Buddha says, "If you're able to become a monk,

by all means become a monk. If you're

not able to become a monk, at the very least avoid sexual intercourse the way you would avoid falling into a pit, a deep pit with glowing coals at the bottom of it.

But if even that is too much, at the very, very least stay away from the wives of other men."

So, I mean, that's right there in the text.

And so, yeah, the Buddha approved celibacy for lay people also.

Like, especially once you start getting into the Arya levels, even if you're not a monk, you're you're just a lay person, but you become like a Sakadagami or

something, then even then, as a general rule in the texts, it is stated that they have become celibate.

So, I mean, so sex, you know, is desire is the cause of all suffering, and desire for sex is one of the strongest desires that people have. So, obviously, within the context of the Four Noble Truths, a person is better off not having sex than having sex.

It is true like in a agricultural sort of society like ancient India that your children would be your social security. There were no pensions or anything like that. You would be supported by your children when you got old. So, there is that. That is a

consideration.

At least if you're living like in a an agrarian society with no kind of pensions or socialism or anything like that to support you in your old age.

So,

pretty sure I answered that one. Let's move on to Arpad's next question.

Where is celibacy for lay people discussed if at all in the suttas? Well, there is that statement from the Buddha which I think is in the Vinaya.

Uh it's probably in in suttas also, but I do not recall exact sutta references.

So, it's in there. You know, when the Buddha says, you know, even if you can't

become a monk, avoid sex as though
avoiding a deep pit with glowing coals
at the bottom. That's fairly
straightforward. That's easily
interpreted to mean that the Buddha
encouraged celibacy for lay people.

And then just at the very very least, if
celibacy you you just can't manage it,
then at very very least, stay away from
the wives of other men.

I mean, Jesus said something kind of
similar in the New Testament where he's
saying, "Three kinds of eunuchs. There
are those who are born eunuchs, those
who are made eunuchs, and those who are
eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of
heaven."

With this being celibate people.

And then he says right after that, "But it's not for everybody."

So, I mean, if you're the kind of person and I think Arpad here is French.

You're the kind of person is I mean, if even if you are a celibate, you're just going to be like climbing the walls and just horny all the time and just obsessed with sex because you can't have it, then it may be more of an obstacle than anything else.

Although, I mean, if you just have this deep feeling that I must be celibate just because it's my sacred duty, and then you then you're like climbing the

walls and miserable, then nevertheless, you are making some spiritual progress by combating the strong attachment.

But it comes at a price because you're going to be horny and frustrated.

So, I mean, some people that just cannot manage celibacy, your best bet, find the right girl, settle down, and live happily ever after.

Be faithful to each other.

And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question here.

This is also from Arpad, and this one I think might be a joke question.

He says, "How much of the movement for the revival of Theravada nuns do you think is in fact a fetish?"

And I think one of the reasons why this came up is that some wise guys, including me, I have to admit, were posting like pictures of Catholic nuns that were obviously not really nuns. You know, they're like packing guns and this kind of thing. And some of them were pretty.

I mean, real nuns tend not to be very pretty. That's one way you can tell the difference between real nuns and fake nuns. The really pretty ones tend to be fake ones.

But anyways, with regard to how much of the movement for the revival of Theravada nuns do I

think is in fact a fetish,
maybe a tiny trace amount. I mean, it's
mostly feminism.

It's mostly

it's mostly like this western modern
drive for gender equality,
which has reached the perverse stage of
demanding the revival of an order that
grossly discriminates against the women
for the sake of gender equality.

Because of course, they revived the

Bhikkhuni order sort of, you know, they
create a replica of it to some degree
and then just stop following the rules
correctly

because they discriminate against women.

Which is just silly.

But we don't need to get into a rant
regarding the revival or attempted
revival
of the Bhikkhuni Sangha.

But I think very little of it is
a sexual fetish.

I mean, technically a fetish is sexual
arousal by something that is not
explicitly sexual.

Like nuns, for example. I guess there is
a thing for that considering the
high number of
like sexy nuns or fake nuns that you
that you can find easily on the
internet, sometimes without even
looking.

So, let's just go on to the next question. This is from

This is from Drip Walker.

Drip Walker says, "If telekinesis is possible, why haven't one of one those cash prizes, rewards, or awards?" So, if if telekinesis Well, I mean, it wouldn't really be telekinesis though in this case. Let's just say if psychic powers are possible, why hasn't anyone used that to win the lottery? I mean, this I'm I'm paraphrasing it into plain English here.

And maybe some of them have.

But

my theory of how like the paranormal works is based on a book by George P.

Hansen. I've got it on the bookcase back there. Trickster in the Paranormal. It's I consider it to be one of the most one of the 10 most important paradigm-shifting books I've ever read.

According to him, the paranormal exists, but it like exist it it like seeps into this version of reality through cracks in the structure.

Oh, there's a bird outside.

So, you've got all these rules, you got like rule laws of nature, and that's not enough for people because we're too complicated. So, we also have to have like cultural rules, social taboos, this

kind of stuff to increase the amount of structure to keep everything predictable and relatively safe and non-scary.

But still, you can't have complete rigidity because that would just be like death.

You can't have absolute rigidity.

There's going to be like gaps and weak spots between these rules that regularize the structure of of our version of samsara. And that's where the paranormal gets in is through these gaps and weak places.

And so, witches, for example, traditionally will violate taboos in order to widen those gaps to increase the amount of juju that can get get

through into our version of reality.

Also, like things like human sacrifice were another way of just kind of making holes in the this rigidity of structure.

The violating taboos and so forth that would then increase the amount of psychic power that can be harnessed ideally or potentially.

So,

science is never going to really lock down the paranormal because it's always going to be like avoiding the rules that science depends on. Science is looking for patterns and rules that can be turned into mathematical equations, for example, and it just doesn't work that

way. It's always going to be on the on
the verges. It's always going to be like
in your peripheral vision, so to speak.

So,

it it would just be too much of a
uh like getting into like mainstream if
if if just people start using it to win
at the casinos, this kind of thing. I
mean, to some degree, it it just sort of
like a
barely detectable level, it might
happen.

You know, it's like some people are just
good at guessing cards or good at
guessing
rolling dice, that kind of thing. It
might just be a like a a fraction of a

percentage point above what you would expect from random chance, but still it is quantifiable, detectable, even though science really can't explain it.

Other than just sort of the perceiver is sort of collapsing the state vector, you know, it's sort of the the the observer is affecting reality in that sense that somehow is is like incorporated into quantum physics, at least.

But,

yeah, and there's even less psychic powers manifest now than there were back in pre-modern times before people converted to scientism and a belief in magic was more mainstream.

There was more faith.

You know, you have more faith than in something, it makes it more possible.

So, it could be that, I mean, to some degree, the paranormal was almost kind of mainstream when more and more people believed it.

But, still it was scary, and so still you had to have the structure to keep out the scary unpredictable stuff.

So, even in ancient times when magic was believed in, still the wizards and the witches were considered to be scary and dangerous.

So, I do think that telekinesis and other psychic powers are possible and that they do exist in this world.

It's just that they'll never go mainstream and they'll always be on the fringes.

They'll never be something that you can really just lock down and say, "There, you see? There it is."

So,

I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from RFS.

And I think yeah, we're getting down towards the bottom here. This

This will inshallah this will be less than 3 hours long.

So, RFS says,

"I have noticed that many practitioners

whom I regard as spiritually mature speak of their own future rebirth as human. This is because either one, they are being humble and avoid presuming a heavenly destination, two, they see the human realm as uniquely supportive for practice and thus aim to return, or three, or because leaving the human realm is rare and difficult."

So,

you RFS wants to know why it is that many practitioners whom he regards as spiritually mature speak of their own future rebirth as human. Well, it's hard to say exactly. I mean, I've never really come across

any spiritual teachers that I consider
to be advanced or not advanced
speaking of their own future rebirth as
human.

I mean, if you're being really wise
about it, it would seem, unless you're
just like really highly advanced,
But if you're just kind of being wise
and not completely enlightened and still
somewhat humble, I mean you don't really
know. It's going to depend on
factors that are maybe beyond the scope
of your conscious awareness.

So maybe you get into a heaven realm,
maybe you'll be born as human again,
maybe who knows.

So

with regard to his three options, the first one there being humble and avoid presuming a heavenly destination, some of them maybe.

I think the second one might be more significant though, which is they see the human realm as uniquely supportive for practice and thus aim to return or maybe they just have like human karma going, human interests, and so they want to continue as humans just because of unfinished business or that sort of thing. So that might that would come closest to RFS's second option here.

Um because leaving the human realm is

rare and difficult. Not so much I think.

So I would guess that it's partly one

but mostly two in the sense that

um

the human realm

I mean it is supportive for practice

but also a lot of teachers, I mean they

just they're humans now, they think like

humans, they've got human intentions and

desires and goals, and so they're just

projecting that

forwards in time

which just naturally winds up being

another human existence.

That would be a fairly conservative

guess as to why they're doing this, but

I don't even know who he's referring to.
I haven't seen any real context, so I
can't say for sure.

Maybe if they're like Buddhist monks or
something, it might be really what he's
saying with regard to

the second option here that the human
realm is uniquely supported for
practice.

Because according to Theravada Buddhism,
human existence, conveniently for us
humans, is the ideal situation for
practicing Dhamma. Because the lower
realms, I mean, they're so distracted
with torment and survival and ignorance
that they don't have nearly as much
opportunity to practice Dhamma. You

know, they're just

I mean, it's just not really much of an option for most of them. But in the higher realms, everything is so nice.

You know, they don't have as much exposure to misery in the higher like the heaven realms that I mean, they're just not as inspired. They don't have that fire that under them to motivate them to practice more.

Although, I'm somewhat skeptical of that because, you know, it's like even in the 31 planes of existence, some of the highest heaven realms are beings that are soon to be enlightened. They're going to be become enlightened from that

realm. And you've got gods, devas
that really, I mean, they they should be
up there partly because they're wiser
than us.

So, it's just might be just kind of
what is it? Anthropocentrism
to say that because I'm that we are
people and being a person is the ideal
situation for practicing Dhamma.

Um

I'm a little bit skeptical of that.

But I mean, there's some truth to it, I
suppose. I wouldn't just flat out reject
it completely.

But in in answer to RFS's question, I
mean, why
that many practitioners whom he regards

as spiritually mature speak of their own future rebirth as human?

I mean, maybe just because they are human, they've They've human karmic momentum going which in likelihood will result in them being human again if they're not fully enlightened and if they are not just so spiritually advanced that they're going to wind up in a heaven realm.

But uh really I can't really say for sure because I'm not haven't been exposed to these people or what they're saying and all I know about them is what RFS has said in this relatively brief question.

And so I'm just going to move on to the last question from Practice Meta.

And Practice Meta says, "I am wondering what is the optimal way to rid oneself of money and material goods before ordination?

Should I give it to my immediate family?

Should I try a merit-maximizing approach and give it to centers of Buddhism in the West, Dhamma teachers, etc.?" So

we've got at least two questioners on this Q&A

that are apparently planning on becoming an ordained monk soon.

So I say sadhu sadhu sadhu to that.

And uh

my blessings are upon

everybody who tries it cuz I mean to be

a bad monk is easy, but to be a good

monk is difficult.

Anyways,

Practice Meta

What is ask What is the optimal way to

rid oneself of money and material goods?

Well, I mean

one of the first things that came to

mind is

Jesus in the New Testament who was

giving this advice

pretty often it seems like and he would

say, "Sell all that you have, give the

money to the poor, and follow me."

So

I mean in my case, I just donated my money and my pickup truck to the monastery where I was ordained just to compensate to some degree for the hardship of having to deal with me for the next few years.

So I mean that's one thing to consider is you could just donate it to the monastery.

Or I mean, if your family is poor, you can give it to your family if they if they need it. My family didn't really need it at the time.

So, I gave it to the monastery.

Um

or I mean, if there's other poor people

that you think you could help, then you can do it that way. But I mean, from the Buddhist point of view, it's really not that important. I mean, you could just take all your money and just throw it out in the street if you want to. So long as you don't have any more by the time you become a monk.

Monks are not allowed to own money, even though most of them do because most of them don't follow the rules correctly.

So,

the optimal way I mean, the one thing that a monk is allowed to say with regard to other people's money is like a layperson comes to a monk and

says, "What should I do with my money, venerable sir?" The monk is allowed to say, "Do whatever makes you happy."

So, I mean, whatever you feel best about would be the

the best thing to do with it.

So, I mean, if that's giving it to your family, if you're especially if your family has need of the money,

then I'm that's good. Give it to the monastery just as a kind of compensation for having to support you,

that's good.

Giving it to the poor like Jesus would advise, that's that's good. I mean, even throwing it out in the street, I mean, at least you're doing you're getting rid

of it.

So, it it depends on you and whatever makes you happy, I suppose.

And uh I guess I'm done.

So, by golly, we're done.

We done.

And so, as I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, if you think I can answer a question, especially about like Dharma, Dharma, Buddhism, philosophy, that kind of stuff.

Me personally,

just feel free to ask and try to keep it concise,

you know? Maybe 150 words or less.

I mean, I haven't counted words. Maybe 100 words or less. I'm not sure.

But no more than three questions per person per episode, please. Like and subscribe if you have not done so already and you do actually like this.

Or even if you if you like hate watching it, I mean, might as well subscribe anyhow.

And uh check out the URL links below, which includes the Amazon link to my new book.

And uh
be happy.

And now I will push the button and stop recording.

Okay, then.

Is this working?

>> [music]

>> Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 193.

I am your host Panyo Boss up.

And my beverage is right over here.

There it is.

And I have to admit, 193 apparently,
evidently is a prime number.

So, once again, we are in the prime of
our lives

while doing this Q&A.

And I'm doing it late. This is like late
on a Sunday. Usually, in the past, I've
tended to do these Q&A videos on a

Saturday, sometimes early on a Sunday,
but this weekend has been action-packed.

Yesterday was my woman's birthday. So,
yesterday was pretty much dedicated to
being with her and all.

And then today, there's like errands to
run, all kinds of stuff to do.

So,

those of you who watch these videos like
at sometime after Sunday,

probably don't even notice. You don't

give a [__] But, there are other people

who just like are looking forward to

watching these Q&A videos on a Sunday,

and it's just late. I mean, the

aquarium's already in moonlight mode.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> it's just been kind of one of those weekends. And I almost had to work yesterday, too. I was going to get paid overtime. It was optional, so I opted out because there was so much other stuff going on, including my woman's birthday.

So, with all that, it's kind of a rambling preamble.

Suppose I should just wade into these here questions.

And the first question is from Seuvac and Sepadzina.

And he says, "I asked Chat GPT first mistake asking Chat GPT."

GTP, I mean.

But, I interrupted myself. So, I'm let's just start again.

Seuvac and Sepadzina says, "I asked Chat GTP to do a language analysis of the Pali language used in the Atthakatha Vagga and the language used in the inscriptions by Ashoka.

It claimed that the language forms used in the inscriptions are more ancient than the versions found even in the Atthakatha Vagga.

With that said, Ashoka mentioned the names of texts that are found in the suttas. The names of the suttas are closer to what is found in the Sanskrit, though. So, wouldn't these texts

technically be able to be dated even before the Atthakatha Vagga? Well, first of all, do not rely on Chat GTP.

Somebody

like consulted Chat GTP with regard to a vinaya question a few Q&A videos ago, and Chat GTP got it wrong.

So, I mean,

I mean, there was there was a guy at work. He wanted to look something up. I said, "Why don't you just consult an AI?" And he says, "Because AIs often come up with crap, so you have to like look up other stuff to verify what the AI said. So, why don't you just look up the other stuff first and just bypass

the AI?"

And I mean, Chat GTP,

I mean, literally, I have seen evidence that Chat GTP would rather cause a thermonuclear holocaust than misgender a transsexual.

Also, it thinks if you ask Chat GTP to answer in one word, yes or no, "Was George Floyd a good person?" And Chat GTP says, "Yes." "Was Charlie Kirk a good person?" Chat GTP says, "No."

So, at least switch to Grok, for crying out loud.

But, even Grok can get things wrong.

I I asked Grok if some number previous to 193 was a prime number, and Grok didn't even know what a prime number

was. I had to explain the principles of what makes a prime number, and then it was able to answer after I explained to it

what a prime number is.

But, I might as well just uh

>> [clears throat]

>> move on to some other aspect of this question.

So,

according to Chat Chat GTP,

like the Pali Canon would come after the time of Ashoka, which would be like after the third council.

And I find that kind of hard to hard to believe. I mean, I think I would have to

insist on some better authority than

Chat GTP

with regard to dating the relative age
of Ashoka's inscriptions and the Pali
Canon.

Because I mean, the Pali Canon is one of
the more conservative languages
that

like Buddhist texts are composed in.

You know, it comes the closest in all
likelihood to what the Buddha was
originally speaking, you know, some
language

of the general area of Magadha.

Pali comes relatively close to that. I
would imagine that even though the
Buddha did not speak Pali,

um Pali and the language that the Buddha did speak would be

mutually intelligible, you know, fairly close, like Spanish and Portuguese.

Maybe like Norwegian and Swedish.

So, yeah, I am skeptical of Chat GTP's claim that the Pali Canon, like the Pali language, is more recent than the 3rd century BCE the time of Ashoka and the Buddhist third council.

And the language of the Atthakatha Vagga is an archaic form of Pali, kind of like a proto-Pali.

So,

the implication would be that Pali didn't even really exist

as the language
of even the Atthakatha Vagga, which is
sort of like an archaic form of Pali,
until after the Ashokan inscriptions. I
mean, I would I would need some better
evidence than just
a claim out of the blue by an AI that
has proven itself to be wrong with
regard to making technical claims about
Theravada Buddhism.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

I suppose you can just do a little more
research and get back to me cuz I'm
really not inclined to dig into this
very deeply.

But, it is true

that Ashoka does mention
suttas that are found in the Pali Canon.
In fact, there's one or two of them that
are found in the Atthakatha Vagga
itself.

So,
even though the Atthakatha Vagga is like
a a more archaic form of Pali than most
of the rest of the Pali Canon,
still,

according to Chat GTP,
Ashoka was referencing even a more
archaic version of the same poems.

Which,

I don't know. I don't really have no
idea how Chat GTP comes up with this

information. I mean, Grok is pretty much the only AI that I use with any regularity. Sometimes, like an AI in a search engine will just spontaneously pop up with some kind of information, but Grok is the one I generally go to. And it will often give you its line of reasoning, how it comes up with its answer. So, maybe Chat GTP can do that, but I'm not sure what kind of information it would go with. And I am fairly skeptical that even the Atthakatha Vagga postdates the third council.

Which would be gosh, long after like the schism of of the schools, which would be

you know, more [clears throat] than 100 years previous to that.

Hmm.

Yeah, it's I'm skeptical. And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

Also by Seuvac and Sepadzina. He says, "Why is the Buddhist path delusional?"

And he could have just stopped there.

Because I was mentioning that, you know, even Buddhism, you know, it's like it's not like you have a Seuvac and Sepadzina asked a question with regard to ethics.

You know, it's like why not just go with Buddhist ethics, which is like ultimately true, instead of these relative conventional ethics like based

on cultural conditioning and so forth?

And I pointed out that even the Buddhist ethics, it may be a more subtle form of delusion, but it's still delusional because it is samsaric, and ethics are a way of escaping samsara.

Ethics are used by unenlightened beings who are still delusional. I mean, the answer was already contained in my explanation

in the in the previous Q&A, in which I was answering the previous question.

But, let's just uh read the little essay here after the question. He says, "Why is the Buddhist path delusional?" And then he says,

"Even [clears throat] if it is happening

in virtual reality, but there was a sequence of events that the one way to end the virtual reality system, then it doesn't just seem like the consequences of such a path are just limited to the context of the virtual reality anymore, and forces the system to shut off itself.

How can

such a path be called delusional if it has a real consequences of leading to the end of delusion?

I don't see how delusion can end delusion. Only wisdom can end delusion.

Seems strange to call a path that is the one's way that leads to the end of

delusion is also delusional. To me, it would seem like the wise path by definition since it ends delusion by walking it.

Ah, [sighs] well,

ah, where do I start on this?

I mean, it doesn't really have real consequences of leading to the end of the delusion because the delusion was never really real.

So, I mean,

the end of delusion is just

>> [sighs]

>> it's it's so hard. I mean, trying to

discuss this stuff, you have to talk

about like virtual reality and

ultimately real ultimate reality like in

the same sentence.

And people cannot wrap their head around it. I mean, you can't even talk about ultimately ultimate reality. By talking about it, you just drag it down into the delusional realm of perception.

So, seems strange to call a path that is the one's way that leads to the end of delusion. I mean, you don't know that.

Is also delusional. It's like there's a statement

in uh

some Mahayana text. It's like the purpose of Lord Buddha's teachings is to free us from our thinking by means of our thinking. It is skillful means.

So, yeah, I mean, it's fighting fire with fire. Fighting delusion with like a milder form of delusion.

See, where's where's the thing he says about wisdom?

Oh.

Let's see. I mean, the the whole talk about the virtual real like the end of the path and all this is just a kind of simplistic thinking.

Like Nisargadatta Maharaj, who was a Hindu, kind of a tantric kind of Hindu, but he said I mean, there is no end of the path. The path does not lead to enlightenment. You follow the path until you just don't need to follow the path anymore. You just kind of bail out

sideways from the path.

Sort of, so to speak, but no words are going to explain ultimate reality.

And any kind of perceptual system is going to be trapped in this same virtual reality including ethics. Like I said in the previous Q&A, if you're enlightened, ethics are just completely irrelevant.

The purpose of ethics is to get you enlightened, to lead you out of samsara.

If you're already out of samsara,

I mean, ethics is just by its very nature delusional because it's only for deluded people.

I mean, you can say that enlightened beings still follow ethical paths and so

forth, but in all likelihood, that's a cultural thing and also it's just the karma of the people who are experiencing these supposed enlightened beings.

They just

that's just how they perceive them.

Ah, [sighs]

sweet tea is good. When you live in the South, you have to drink sweet tea.

It's just

it's like one of those unwritten laws.

So, why is the Buddhist path delusional?

Because it is for deluded people and it's within the context of samsara. It is samsaric based on delusion.

So, I mean, you're perceiving these things that you consider to be real, but

they aren't.

Let's see.

Oh,

doesn't force the system to shut off
itself.

I mean,

that is it's so hard to explain this
stuff. I explain it over and over again
as best as I am able, I fail to get the
point across. People just keep asking
the same kind of questions because they
just cannot deal with something that
lies beyond perception. I mean, you
can't I mean, you can't really deal with
it. Something that lies beyond the scope
of perception is just void.

So, I don't see how delusion can end delusion. It's a more subtle form of delusion.

It's skillful means. It's fighting fire with fire. It's sort of like the words of a Zen master. I mean, this is not really an ethics kind of thing. Kind of it is cuz it leads to enlightenment or it can lead to enlightenment or to insight and so forth, but it's not like standard ethics. But you got the words of the Zen master who are like arrows shot by a master archer that shoot down arrows of another archer.

And it's sort of like the thought process of one person get shot down by the thought process or just the words of

the Zen master and everything just comes crashing down and it just leaves like emptiness and silence behind. So, it's like skillful means.

>> [snorts]

>> Using fire to fight fire.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is also from Seovax and Seopad Zeno.

And

>> [clears throat]

>> he says, "What is the Buddhist explanation for someone who enjoys engaging in arguments and debate in the moment?"

Always wanting to pick at another at other people's brains and trying to learn more and more despite getting no benefit from it most of the time." Well, that's two different things.

I mean, it's like he's sort of cobbled together two different phenomena here. So, the first phenomenon is someone who enjoys engaging in arguments and debate in the moment. That's that's one thing. The other thing is always wanting to pick at other people's brains and not trying to and trying to learn more and more despite getting no benefit from it most of the time. So, that's that's completely different. One of them is just wanting to argue all the time. The

other one is being curious.

You know, wanting to learn.

They don't necessarily go hand in hand.

I mean, I can understand how

if you're like trying to learn

something, you should be skeptical. It's

like I I long had this idea that no

belief system that can't stand up to a

full frontal attack is worthy of

adhering to it. And if you if you got

beliefs, you've got a belief system that

you have to protect and hide them from

like skeptics or people like, you know,

bashing away at your beliefs.

You know, you just get angry and just

avoid them. That kind of thing. Then, I

mean, it's it's a good indication that your belief system isn't a very good one.

If you've got to like protect it from skeptics or from just naysayers, people that are just like picking trying to pick apart your arguments or pick apart your beliefs.

I mean,

so, I mean, I can understand how

if you want to learn something, you should sort of be skeptical. It's sort of like I'm skeptical of chat GTP and its claims with regard to the the Ashokan inscriptions being older than

the Pali texts including the oldest Pali texts.

Also, I mean, there is a kind of personality trait that I have had. My father got pissed off at me at least once because of this where he would say something and I would be sort of like, "Yeah, but." And then just adding something else that kind of might contradict it or might just be going off in a different direction. In in a way, it's not so much trying to pick apart what he's saying as just sort of like contributing to the conversation, you know, by just sort of adding some other point that might have to be

addressed.

This kind of thing.

You know, it's like my father used to say that love is giving.

And then I'd say, "Well, I mean, if if love is giving, then you pay your taxes, you love the IRS."

You know, it's like something like that every now and then. I'm just like, "If you're just trying to shoot down everything that the other person says, that's different than than just this sincere desire to learn more and more and pick people's brains." I mean, when you're picking someone's brain, you're mainly asking questions and paying attention to what they say.

You're not just you

you ask a question, then they answer,

and then you argue against the answer.

I mean, that's that's different.

So, anyways, let's get back to the

original question here

>> [clears throat]

>> after I take another drink of my sweet tea.

What is the Buddhist explanation for

someone who enjoys engaging in arguments

and debate in the moment? Well, there is

a sutra in the Atthakavagga of the Sutta

Nipata that deals specifically with

people who like to debate and argue. And

it is the Pasura of Sutta. Pasura was

like the the name of this person who liked to debate. And public debates were a big deal in the Buddha's time. In ancient India, there were public debates and that's one reason why Indian philosophy is as profound as it is because you would have people from different schools, different sects, following different philosophies that would indulge or engage in public debates.

And so, this sutra the Pasura Sutta deals with that issue and it's saying that you shouldn't get involved in public debates. You know, it just results in like bad

feeling, or you just get into this habit of just wanting to like find faults with with everything another person says. And then or if you win the debate, then you're like conceited and gloating about it.

You know, it's like you're either elated because you won or you're dejected because you lost, this kind of thing.

So,

>> [gasps]

>> that's the best explanation for someone who enjoys engaging in arguments and debates that I can think of offhand.

It's It's a sutta in the Atakavagga.

It's a very old sutta.

This specifically addressing
the issue of people who like to get
involved in debates.

And I've noticed that that sutta has a
lot of military like jargon in it.

Military slang, a lot of sort of
military imagery of defeat and conquest
and this kind of thing. Pasura literally
means something like
true hero.

You know, that was his name. That's what
his name meant. Might have just been a
made-up name for the for the purpose of
the the whole theme of the sutta.

>> [sighs]

>> So,

yeah. So, I mean, from the Buddhist

point of view, debating and arguing, I mean, a certain amount of discussion is fine, but getting into a habit of just wanting to argue and debate is considered to be something that a monk should not do.

And then

then like the second part that that got cobbled together with the first part, always wanting to pick at other people's brains and trying to learn more and more.

Um yeah, I mean, that's good. I mean, the sutta say that a wise person should be bahusutta, which means having heard much, having learned

much. So, you should I mean, even from a
a traditional Buddhist point of view,
you know, it's good to be familiar with
other points of view, other
philosophies.

I mean, mainly you should be paying
attention to Buddhist philosophy like to
you know, what the texts say, you know,
the path and all that.

But still, it is it is
a good thing to be at least familiar or
conversant with other points of view.

And really, you shouldn't cling to any
point of view.

Like Ajahn Chah used to say, even right
view becomes wrong view if you cling to
it.

So, it's good to be open-minded and not
insist

on much of anything. In fact, it seems

to me that like clinging, the word

clinging, [snorts] like upadana

in in Pali, I mean, literally I mean,

like upadana sometimes is considered to

be like it replaces craving as the cause

of all suffering. And it's it's

essentially like insisting on something.

Like when you're clinging to something,

you're insisting on it. And

like if you believe something

very devoutly, you are insisting on

that. You're insisting that it's true,

at least for you.

So,

yeah, always wanting to debate and argue is considered to be best avoided from a Buddhist point of view, but being curious and wanting to learn, that's considered to be a good thing, especially if you're learning stuff or at least trying to learn stuff that can be helpful.

You know, it's if you're just learning like baseball statistics, who's doing who in Hollywood, this kind of stuff, then yeah, you're probably better off not learning that kind of thing. But like reading the various scriptures of other religions, reading various philosophies,

just like even learning like
certain certain like scientific ideas,
you know, like
animal What What is it? Animal behavior.
Just learning about animal behavior, you
can get insights with regard to
yourself. Reading Charles Darwin like
The Expression of the Emotions in Man
and Animals can give you genuine
insights with regard to your own
psychology, how your own mind works.
Can be kind of humbling when you realize
that you are in fact a kind of glorified
ape,
but it can be helpful.
So, I think I'm just going to move on to

the next question. This is from
Terasaka's says, and we're getting some
kind of meaty questions
in this Q&A. This is another meaty one.
Beefy, if you will.

Terasaka's says, "Why
Karunadasa?

Why the capital letter Y?" Probably I'm
guessing it's the initial of his first
name.

Although,

Y isn't really a like an Indian letter,
is it? Yeah, I guess it is. Yeah. Yeah,
there is Y in Pali. Okay. "Why
Karunadasa, scholar of early Buddhism,
wrote, quote, if we base ourselves on
the Pali Nikayas, then we should be

compelled to conclude that Buddhism is realistic. There is no explicit denial anywhere of the external world, nor is there any positive evidence to show that the world is mind-made or simply a projection of subjective thoughts.

That Buddhism recognizes the extra-mental existence of matter and the external world is clearly suggested by the texts. Throughout the courses or throughout the discourses, it is the language of realism that one encounters.

The whole Buddhist practical doctrine and discipline, which has the attainment of nibbana as its final goal, is based on the recognition of the material world

and the conscious living beings living therein, unquote. And then Terasaka's says, "Why do you disagree with this?" Well, just consider the very last words of this quote.

This is based [clears throat] on the recognition of the material world and the conscious living beings living therein.

Now, the Buddha did teach that there is no self. And here we've got Karunadasa saying that the language of the Buddha just

affirms the existence of these beings that other texts say that don't really exist.

And that's because the Buddha had to use

what's called

vohara desana,

which means it's just the language of
the world.

He has to use regular language. He has
to talk about himself. He's got to talk
about you and that person and him and

her and them and we and us. He's

referring to all these beings, even
though ultimately they don't really

exist. And when you're talking about

trees and like food, bowls, robes, the
sun, I mean,

you just have to use a regular language.

I mean, it'd be so confusing if the

Buddha says, you know, the perception of

the sun that you have in in your mind,
even though it's not really your mind
because you don't really exist. I mean,
if he'd used language like that, he
wouldn't get very far.

Furthermore, in the earliest texts, the
Buddha discouraged any kind of
metaphysical speculation, any kind of
metaphysical philosophy.

So, he's just using plain language. And
when you're using plain language, you
have to talk about him and her and me
and you and trees and clouds and bowls
and food and robes and the sun, etc.
etc. etc.

He's not going to say that they exist or
they don't exist, except I mean, there

are texts like ancient texts

like

in the the Atakavagga, you know, the
Buddha says, "I do not declare this is
true,

quote unquote, which fools
will all say contrarily to each other."

And in a way, that statement itself is
sort of self-contradictory.

You know, I do not declare
this is so, when actually he is kind of
declaring that it is so that he doesn't
declare it. But we don't need to get
into that.

But I mean, the Buddha really did not
encourage philosophical speculation. So,

I mean, he [clears throat] was just dealing at the surface level with regard to talking about people that obviously from even the Buddhist texts will claim that people do not really exist as like >> [snorts]

>> self-existent,
independent individual,
ultimately real entities.

And there are texts that you can find like first verse of the Dhammapada.

I mean, it's the Dhammapada isn't considered to be particularly old.

But still, the very first verse of the Dhammapada is

dhammas, however you want to interpret that. Generally, I would interpret it

just as phenomena, ways of being.

That they are have mind as their chief,
they are mind-made.

So, mind is the forerunner.

And and everything I mean, the all
dhammas, according to the first and
second verses of the Dhammapada, are
mind-made.

So, there is that, although orthodox
Theravada will say that dhamma here
means mental states, that mind precedes
mental states. And then in the
Dhammapada commentary, Buddhaghosa
immediately has to wade into the fact,
"Why would the Buddha say that when it
isn't true?" Because mind and mental

states arise simultaneously.

Why would you say that mind precedes mental states?

But if you assume that dhamma here is not referring to mental states, but is referring to just phenomena in general, you've got idealism.

Or there's another text in the Sutta Nipata. I I don't think it's in the Atthakavagga, but I do think it's in the Sutta Nipata where the Buddha says, I mean, [clears throat] it's relatively old sutta, you look around, all you see is nama-rupa.

And

probably, I mean, there is evidence that originally, like in the oldest Buddhist

texts, nama-rupa

meant what it means like in the

Upanishadic literature, like old Indian

literature, philosophical literature

that isn't particularly Buddhist, that I

mean, it's interpreted literally.

Nama-rupa isn't mind and matter, it is

name and form.

Which is kind of like papanca-sankha,

except switched around. It's like how

perception works, how samsara arises.

First you've got

>> [clears throat]

>> rupa.

I don't know why they would say

nama-rupa. It's more like rupa-nama, so

it would be more in accordance with
papanca-sankha. First you have like this
form, and then you like you you like
single out something, and then you slap
an interpretation on it. That's how
perception works. You know, you you
single something out, and then you
identify it, even if it's only with
that, this, or what the hell is that,
you know, that kind of thing, but still
you have to identify it somehow.

So, I mean, there are hints or like
gosh,

I just

come up with with other, you know, just
just like in the Bahiya Sutta, like the
cryptic

kind of archaic-sounding, also Zen-like teachings the Buddha gave to the wanderer Bahiya. In the seen there will be only the seen, and in the heard there will be only the heard. You know, in the in the felt there will be only the felt, and the mentally sensed there will be only the mentally sensed.

That I mean, that's that's how you should train yourself. And it's I mean, that's just like mind.

But, I mean, that's and it'd be kind of pushing it to say that that's really insisting on idealism, but the Buddha wasn't insisting upon any kind of metaphysic in

the earliest texts.

So, the fact that

the Buddha is just referring to this person and that person clearly should not indicate that he believed [clears throat] that they were ultimately real.

So, why would you take it farther and say that when he's referring to trees and buildings and food and robe, that he's insisting or even implying that those are ultimately real? I mean, he's just having to communicate to help navigate through samsara, you know, to to other people in a way that they can understand, and he's not encouraging any kind of

philosophical speculation. So, of course, he has to use copy of ahara or ahara desana.

Just

he has to use the language of the world without clinging to it, just to just to communicate.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question.

And then we're we're getting out of the really meaty stuff at present.

This is from Clefy.

And this is this should be kind of a self-explanatory kind of question.

You know, it's I mean, the answer should be fairly obvious.

Clefy says, "Do you have any tips for me on how to come back to meditation when I fall off a habit of sitting in the morning?" And another person in the comments just left the the reply, "Just do it." And I mean, what other advice can I really give? If you want to get back into the habit of meditating, then get back into the habit of meditating. Just start meditating again and keep doing it.

I mean, if you want to, you know, some kind of like reinforcement, then you might try a group meditation, either go to a local meditation group or

go to a meditation retreat where you'll be surrounded by other people meditating, and that will kind of help get you into the groove again.

But, I mean, the main thing is just have some adhitthana or determination, and just make up your mind that you're going to do it, and then just do it.

I don't think any kind of subtle tricks or

medications, pills,

technological devices, I don't think any of that's really going to be the point.

Just make up your mind to do it, and then do it.

Seems to me.

Okay, let's move on to the next question.

This is from Athena Sigil, and this I think we're getting kind of back into the meaty ones, or at least Athena Sigil's intention was for me to get meaty on this.

He says, "What does Punya think of other religions? Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, et cetera. Pros and cons, and then the various types of Buddhism, Nichiren, Pure Land, Vajrayana, Zen, et cetera. And do it in your typical rambling but insightful way of answering. I'll make the popcorn." Well, you better I mean, it should be made by

But, I mean, this probably, now that I think of it,

offhand, I mean, this might be better off just doing an entire video, because really I can't spend more than a few minutes answering this question.

And I mean, he's wanting like a survey of world religions and a survey of the various sects of Buddhism.

And I'm really not going to be able to do much justice to all of that.

So, let's just uh

kind of

kind of hit the main points here.

So, what does Punya think of other

religions? He says Hinduism first. Well, I mean, Hinduism started off as Vedism in in northern India with the Indo-Aryan invaders that a lot of Indian Hindu-type people don't want to believe in, but everyone else believes, pretty much, in archaeology at least, that Hinduism began as Vedism when Indo-Aryan, like Indo-European invaders invaded northwestern India, took over the last vestiges of the Indus Valley Civilization that was already pretty much collapsing at the time due to climate change.

And

um

gradually over time, I mean, when it first started, it was not so different from like ancient Greek paganism or ancient Germanic paganism or ancient Roman paganism. You know, it was pretty worldly. You know, you're just trying to like kiss the ass of the gods so that they will favor you. And then they will give you stuff that you want, like sons and cattle and victory over your enemies.

You know, fire sacrifices, sacrificing animals in the fire, including the horse sacrifice, which is one of the big ones.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> So, then gradually

um to its benefit, I think, it started
absorbing

um like the Shramanic some Shramanic
elements that were already established
in India, possibly dating back to the
Indus Valley Civilization. And that's
where Buddhism, Jainism, uh proto-yoga,
Samkhya, the extinct Ajivika religion,
various other systems, no doubt, that
they all kind of had their origins in a
pre-Vedic

um like culture.

And you know, it was more or less
atheistic, you know, based on like
cosmic order, cosmic
through mainly through self-discipline

and self-purification,
like austerity, this kind of thing. So,
that elements of that got absorbed into
Vedism, and then you you it started
producing things like the Upanishads,
the Upanishadic literature, where Vedism
started becoming a deeper, more
mystical, enlightenment-oriented
system.

And then

over time, as it moved into southern
India, it became more devotionalistic,
more inclined to it's I [clears throat]
think it's called henotheism,
where whatever god in the pantheon you
happen to be worshipping at the time is

considered to be the highest god or just like like a doorway to the ultimate.

So, it got more that way, and then over time, some obscure Vedic gods, like Rudra, became like the main gods. You know, you like Shiva and Vishnu are like the two main gods in in modern Hinduism, I'm pretty sure.

I would guess probably more than half of all Hindus are either Shaivite or Vaishnavite.

And so, it just became more of a devotionalistic thing. Um

But, I mean, it it's Hinduism has such a broad spectrum, everything from the ridiculous to the sublime, that there is some enlightened tradition

in there.

That there are enlightened

Hindus, I'm pretty sure. I wouldn't be surprised if Neem Karoli Baba up there on top of the bookcase was one of them.

I mean, he had developed superhuman mental states, even if there are skeptics who don't want to believe that he was fully enlightened.

But I mean, he would just look right through you. He wouldn't He would take one look at you and know you better than you know you.

And furthermore, he could supposedly, based on many many witnesses, that I mean, he was able to perform

[clears throat] what are vulgarly known as miracles.

Just disappearing in one place, reappearing somewhere else, appearing in more than one place at the same time.

He didn't turn water into wine, but he turned water into milk on a number of occasions.

He had his own version of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Um

so, yeah, Hinduism

it it really is just

everything from the ridiculous to the sublime.

And there are like enlightenment traditions in Hinduism, especially like

Vedanta.

Some of the more advanced forms of yoga.

With regard to Christianity,

um

gosh, where do you start? I mean, this

is this question is is such a huge

question.

And I really it I mean, it could like a

1-hour video might do it justice.

Christianity, of course, was founded by

Jesus of Nazareth,

who, in my opinion, was sort of like an

ancient version of Mary Baker Eddy,

where

apparently,

he was the son of a carpenter,

not the son of Yahweh, God of
war and desert storms,
not the creator of the universe,
but he started off as a carpenter, a
carpenter's son, and
it wasn't satisfying him.

He had deep spiritual yearnings. He
heard of this man John the Baptist, who
had like a spiritual camp on the on the
River Jordan. He goes there, and at some
point, according to the Bible, it's
while he's being baptized, the spirit of
the Lord descends into him. He had some
kind of awakening experience, and he was
able to perform what are vulgarly known
as miracles. And he was able to heal the
sick and all this. And I'm willing to

accept that Jesus was able to heal the sick. He was able to perform certain miracles.

I Now, from the Buddhist point of view, psychic powers,

it's not just the only begotten son of God Almighty that can do this kind of thing. A lot of people in India have been able to do it, allegedly, including Neem Karoli Baba up there.

But,

it was sort of apocalyptic times for the Jews in those days. I mean, they were waiting for their Messiah, and the Messiah had sort of he had sort of metamorphosed

from just a world leader who was going to lead Israel to being foremost among the nations, you know, just as a like a political figure, just sort of like a descendant of King David, who's going to be like the new King David. That there started being like apocalyptic literature, like the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. They're starting to interpret the Messiah under along more spiritual lines. And the proto-Christians, including Jesus himself, were apparently [clears throat] following this apocalyptic trend in Judaism.

And so, because he was suddenly able to

perform these miracles,

he apparently jumped to the conclusion that he was the Messiah.

And

I mean, this is just a hypothesis on my part. Bear in mind, I'm not a Christian, so I mean, you can't really expect me to consider Jesus to be the creator of the universe who died for our sins and all that.

But I mean, he was nailed to the cross, being brutally executed by the Romans, not because he claimed to be the son of God. I mean, the Romans didn't care whether someone was going to someone was claiming to be descended from some

obscure Semitic deity. But he was being called King of the Jews, which was, you know, what the Messiah was supposed to be. And the Romans didn't like that at all.

You know, somebody claiming to be the King of the Jews when

Augustus,

you know, Caesar in Rome is King of the Jews, if anybody is.

Or Herod gets to be puppet King of the Jews, maybe.

So, he got nailed to the cross, and while he's nailed up, he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Which

I'm I hypothesize

that he finally realized he wasn't the Jewish Messiah, but he wound up being the Christian Messiah big time, didn't he?

And then along came Paul of Tarsus, fanatic that he was, he just cooked up a new form of Christianity without even really meeting any of the like the actual disciples of Jesus.

He just went off into Arabia, was alone in Arabia for a while, for a few years, a couple years, and just cooked up this [laughter] system of Christianity in his mind, and then he went to Jerusalem and met like the brother of of Jesus and all that.

So,

Christianity is like half Jesus and half Paul Tarsus at this point, it seems to me.

And it's just changed a lot. It is a far cry from what Jesus was originally teaching. I mean, you can just read the New Testament, especially the first three Gospels, the Synoptic Gospels, and you see that I mean, it's different from the Christianity nowadays.

I mean, there is a there is a a verse or a
uh

what do you call it? Just a passage in the Bible where Jesus says, "You must make yourselves perfect just as your

father in heaven is perfect."

But

that one kind of fell by the wayside

because it became sort of Christian

doctrine that nobody is perfect. You I

mean, even Jesus denied being perfect at

one point.

I mean, somebody called him good good

rabbi or good master or something, and

he says, "Why do you call me good?"

There's none good except God."

So, he denied being good or God, it

seems to me. I mean, it could easily be

interpreted that way.

But I could really never take

Christianity very seriously. I think

there it's possible for some Christians to become enlightened partly in spite of the system because like the system, I mean, the goal isn't even enlightenment. The goal is just to be good enough to get into heaven.

The beatific vision is like the best you can hope for as a Christian, at least from a Catholic point of view, even though St. John of the Cross was essentially describing a kind of enlightenment that some Catholics had attained, the state of perfection where you have mortified yourself will and just become like this empty vessel that is filled with the will of God. You know, you become a divine puppet. You're

no longer acting on your own volition.

You're acting on the will of God.

It's being God through participation.

So, Christianity, I mean, I don't

consider it to be the most profound

religion, and it's I mean, the the

assumptions are just the narrative of it

strike me as just absurd.

How people so many people, most people

in the West have believed that this

Jewish carpenter in the early Roman

Empire is literally the creator of the

universe. I mean,

it's just one of the indications that

religion is a kind of benevolent

psychosis.

But I mean, to the to the benefit of
Christianity, the most brilliant minds
of Western civilization
for a thousand years were endorsing
Christianity and like coming up with
good ideas, excellent architecture and
music and so forth.

So,

you know, it is I mean, for better or
for worse,

a a Jewish schismatic sect, a schismatic
sect of Judaism became the main religion
of Western civilization for over a
thousand years.

For better or for worse. And all this
talk about people of Hebrew ethnicity, I
mean, just think about it. I mean, we

deified one and turned him into the creator of the universe. What the hell do you expect?

Well, let's just move on to Islam.

And Islam is different from Hinduism or Christianity. Hinduism was just sort of an amalgam of various pre-Brahmans and sages and so forth making contributions, sort of like the Old Testament is sort of a

a joint venture of different people making contributions to the scriptures of the Jews. Christianity is founded by Jesus and then also secondarily founded by Paul of Tarsus. Islam was founded by one person.

Sort of like you could say like

proto-Judaism

may have been founded by Moses. Muhammad was definitely a Moses type rather than a Buddha type or a Jesus type.

I mean, Moses and Muhammad were essentially warlords.

They were political leaders and spiritual leaders, and they were spiritual leaders through being spokes-spokesman for God to everybody else. You know, you have to do this because God says to

you have to do it. And I mean, God would be telling the Israelites, for example, to slaughter entire towns.

God says so.

So, Muhammad was essentially a warlord.
He started off as like a caravan bandit.
He was a warlord, became essentially
king of all of Arabia by the time of his
death.

Had hundreds of people beheaded, had
their wives and children sold into
slavery.

He forced himself sexually on
female prisoners of war in one famous
occasion at least with her dead husband
just lying right outside the tent.

Recently a widow.

So, yeah, Islam

I mean, it is not a particularly wise
religion. You know, it's sort of like

Jehovah's Witnesses and where they say wisdom is obeying God and God says this cuz this is what the book says. I mean, that's that's the wisdom of it.

But, I mean, there're going to be wise people all over the world and there're going to be wise Muslims. Like Sufis, for example, although Sufism probably would not have been endorsed by Muhammad himself. It absorbed some like Buddhist and Hindu elements from like

Northwestern India, that kind of thing.

But, I mean, there are going to be good and wise people

that are going to rise to the top, that are going to like have profound insights and wisdom in spite of their religious

system as much as because of it.

So, I'm not saying all Muslims are foolish, even though I do think that the founder of Islam was essentially a violent criminal type of person.

And even his favorite wife, Aisha, when he he married when she was like nine or 11. Maybe he waited until she started menstruating at 11 to consummate the marriage.

But, Aisha was always kind of skeptical of Muhammad.

And

one time she says rather archly, you know,

that Allah is quick to do your bidding.

Like there was

I think some

Ethiopian king sent Muhammad a slave girl as a present.

And Muhammad liked the slave girl and was actually having uh he was knowing her in the biblical sense on the bed of one of his other wives and she walked in on them. And so, he promised he wouldn't be messing around with this slave girl anymore, but then

Allah himself very conveniently tells him that he can break his promise. So, he got to keep messing around with the slave girl.

You know, this kind of stuff. I mean, he was a warlord using religion as a kind

of power grab. I mean, he may have been sincere. You know, he may have been sincerely hysterically dissociating sort of like Joseph Smith.

Is that his name? The founder of the Mormons?

I mean,

the Quran and and the Book of Mormon are both channeled texts going with with like new age jargon.

And both of them

coincidentally are texts that are just full of absurdity and also with this repeated warning, if you don't believe all this, you're going to burn in hell forever and ever.

Well, let's move on to Jainism. I mean,
Jainism is fairly straightforward. You
know, it's it was like a vestige of the
pre-Vedic spiritual milieu
of Northwestern India.

And

even though Mahavira is considered to be
the founder of Jainism, he himself
considered himself to be just sort of
like the most recent of the great
leaders of Jainism.

So, he was just sort of a

>> [laughter]

>> maybe not a reformer, but a continuer.

He was like the last

Tirthankara

thus far, the most recent one.

But, it was I mean, it's kind of similar to Buddhism, but it's it's very straightforward, very simplistic that you have a soul or a jiva and it is weighed down by sticky karma.

And so, you've got to like get rid of this karma that's weighing down your your soul so that your soul can float up into heaven. And that's I mean, that's pretty much the whole the whole religion right there.

Is just you're trying to get rid of your karma, don't make any new karma, and burn off your old karma sometimes through self-torture.

Okay.

So,

I mean, there there other other religions.

I've already mentioned Judaism, which also I do not consider to be particularly profound book. I remember first time I read the Old Testament, I kept thinking, I mean, when's the wisdom stuff going to start?

You know, you get through Genesis and Exodus and Joshua and going through like Mosaic Law, Deuteronomy and Numbers and all that. And there's not much actual wisdom in there. Just worship God cuz if you don't, he's going to he's going to [__] you up.

He's going to kill you, he's going to

kill your family, maybe your neighbors.

I mean, that's

that's like the recurring message of the Old Testament. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength or he's going to kill you.

And maybe your family and friends, too.

But, where was I? Gosh. Oh, yeah. It was like I'm reading the Old Testament. Just when is the wisdom part going to start?

Finally get to the Book of Ruth

and it wasn't very wise, but at least it was nonviolent. You know, it wasn't the pages weren't soaked in blood.

But, then finally I remember getting

into the the story of King David. That'd

be like what? First Book of First or
Second Book of Samuel, I guess.

King David [clears throat]

where

his son Absalom is rising up against him
trying to usurp the throne and King

David doesn't want to kill his own son.

He doesn't want to fight his own son in
the civil war. So, he just kind of takes

off with some of his loyal advisers and

as he's leaving Jerusalem, there's

somebody like mocking and and like

cussing at him. Just sort of mocking and

sneering at him. And you know, it's like

one of the advisers to King David, you

know, says, "You want me to go kill

him?" And King David says, "No, just let

him have his say. You know, have let him say what speak his mind." And I thought, "Wow, that's wisdom." You know, it's like King David is letting this person mock and sneer at him and he doesn't want revenge. That's like the first actual wisdom I've came I've come across in the Old Testament. And then later on when King David is on his deathbed, he he tells somebody, I think it was King Solomon who's you know, going to replace him, his his successor, "That guy who was mocking and cursing at me, make sure you [__] him up."

So, I'm like poof, there went the the first wisdom I encountered in the Old

Testament.

Book of Ecclesiastes is nice.

But, Judaism really, I mean, it's again,
it's one of those religions
that is is just this-worldly, not
particularly profound. You know, the
only wisdom is, you know, obey God
and according to this book that's full
of absurdity.

And just kind of crude barbarism.

>> [clears throat and sighs]

>> But, there have been like very advanced
Hebrew rabbis that largely in spite of
their own scriptures, their own
religious traditions, just through
talent and just being born and into it
like a Jewish culture, you know, just

they wound up being sages.

Whether there's ever been a fully enlightened Hebrew or not, I don't know.

Unless they just became a Hindu or a Buddhist. There's lots of JewBus and what would what what would a a Jewish Hindu be? Like Ram Dass, although Ram Dass didn't claim to be enlightened.

But, he was he was born into a Jewish family.

They weren't exactly kosher. He said they they did eat pork when they went to Chinese restaurants when he was growing up.

So,

yeah, I mean, of the world religions,

those are like the main ones, I guess. I mean, Shinto, I could I could talk about Shinto, but I mean, that's just another one of those very worldly cultural kind of things. I mean, there may be some enlightenment tradition in Shinto, but I've never heard of it.

Taoism, I mean, that's kind of Zen-like in its like iconoclasm and so forth. Or at least in the texts it is, but I have read that that modern Taoism, you know, is it's kind of degenerated into like hocus pocus kind of magic, you know, the priests waving paper wands or waving swords made out of coins welded together to like remove your sins or something, your impurities or something.

Trying to go against the the way in
order to go with the way and live
forever.

This kind of thing, you know, there's
kind of like some alchemy stuff going
on.

But, I mean, most of what I know about
Taoism, I picked up from the the Tao Te
Ching and the Zhuangzi.

Which probably your your purest and
wisest forms of Taoism, at least that
are
readily available.

But, let's just move on to the second
part of Athena Sigils very complex sort
of question.

He says, "And then the various types of Buddhism,

Nichiren, Pure Land, Vajrayana, Zen, et cetera." And again, I mean, this could be a 2-hour-long video just answering this one question.

Nichiren, I don't know that much about it, but is it that the one Namu Myoho Renge Kyo where it like almost the entire

school of Buddhism has just sort of compacted down into just venerating the Lotus Sutra?

I mean, that's Namu Myoho Renge Kyo.

That's sort of sort of like the mantra they repeat over and over again, which is just like homage to the Lotus Sutra.

I assume they would they would be encouraged to at least read the Lotus Sutra. There is some profundity in the Lotus Sutra, but it's it's kind of kind of like Pure Landish to me. I mean, it's it's hard for me to consider Nichiren to be like genuine Buddhism.

You know, it's it's they left Gautama Buddha like in the dust. Way way back there, you know, they're not even facing the same direction as Gautama Buddha, apparently.

Or they got their backs turned on them. Maybe they're you know, they're he's

kind of looking this way and they're
looking that way, but he's behind them.
So, Nichiren is is just kind of like
a kind of fake Buddhism, it seems to me.

I mean,

I'm just trying to be honest here.

I mean, I I I I I would assume that like
Pure Land they at least still have like
the basics of Buddhist ethics, five
precepts, that kind of thing.

But I mean, it has almost nothing to do
with you what you're going to find in
the Pali texts. And the same goes for
the next one on the list here, Pure Land
Buddhism.

Pure Land Buddhism, it was like some
monks

in ancient India,
they just practiced, tried to follow the
the holy life, tried to practice
correctly, failed, just said, "Well,
it's it's not possible. I'm just going
to start worshiping this imaginary space
Buddha."

So, they just start praying to imaginary
space Buddhas. It's it's like
Christianity for Buddhists.

And I

I mean, I've said this before. I
honestly, sincerely consider Pure Land
Buddhism to be one of the most egregious
perversions of Buddha Dharma in the
history of Buddhism.

I mean, the Buddha himself, the historical Buddha, would probably denounce Pure Land Buddhism. And I guess the official position of Pure Land Buddhism is that Gautama Buddha never even really existed.

>> [sighs]

>> It's just strange to me.

I mean, Christianity is one thing. You know, most Christians never were exposed to anything wiser than Christianity because anything wiser [clears throat] than Christianity either just wasn't there or had just been killed off by hysterical, intolerant Christians. But for a Buddhist who's has this vast treasure of wisdom,

to just kind of reject what the Buddha originally taught in favor of imaginary space Buddhas,

I mean, it's just it just

I I can't wrap my head around it. I just cannot I just don't get it.

So, let's just move on to Vajrayana.

In Vajrayana, I mean, it's Tibetan

Buddhism. I mean, there's other kinds of Tibetan Buddhism, I guess. But I mean,

Vajrayana was sort of like uh Mahayana

Buddhism meets like traditional ancient

Tibetan shamanism. There's all kinds of weird deities and demons and so forth.

But there is a wisdom tradition, and you know, it's sort of like Hinduism where

it's just the the full spectrum from the ridiculous to the sublime. You know, there's still like an enlightenment tradition in Vajrayana.

I don't know that much about it. One of the most profound books I ever read was the Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation, attributed to Padmasambhava, although not necessarily really by Padmasambhava because books get attributed to famous sages as a way of like lending like

respectability, authority to that text.

So, yeah, I don't know that much about Vajrayana, but and it does have some really weird esoteric, you know,

tantra and demonology and stuff mixed
in,

but

I mean, [clears throat] at least there
is like this,

you know, crystallized

enlightenment tradition that still
exists in Vajrayana.

And I guess the training of some like
Tibetan monks is very stringent. They
got to get take years of studying like
logic and this kind of stuff. At least
the Tibetan version of logic.

So, get to Zen.

Well, I mean,

I I was originally

inclined to become a Zen monk until I went to a Zen monastery and then compared that with a Theravada monastery and came to the conclusion, which is a pretty obvious conclusion to come to, that Theravada was came closer to what the Buddha originally taught.

Although

there are different kinds of Zen monasteries. Some Zen monasteries are going to be better than others, just as some Theravada monasteries can be way better than others.

But yeah, I like I like Zen. I mean, the Pure Land elements that got absorbed in it and like Vairocana and all this Manjushri, god of wisdom, and all this

kind of stuff is just superfluous as far as I'm concerned.

It's just cultural stuff, cultural accretions that got added.

So, yeah, Zen

I think Zen was I mean, Maha some some aspects of Mahayana, like the uh Prajnaparamita

Sutras and Zen and so forth, they were kind of a reform movement. You know, they were trying to get back towards what the Buddha was originally teaching, although they also were moving farther away from it with like the Bodhisattva concept and all this. But at least I mean,

around the time that Mahayana was arising, it was like the fashion in the pre-Mahayana schools of Buddhism to have a kind of Abhidharma, like this vast technical scholastic edifice of like metaphysics and so forth, trying to explain reality, trying to explain all the interactions, all the possible interactions of phenomena and all this. And it was just moving so far away from the Buddha's original intention that there not be any of this metaphysical speculation.

I mean, it's it's beyond speculation. It's just asserting this is the way it is. This is what the Buddha himself taught.

So,

some schools of Mahayana

kind

got got away from all this scholastic

stuff, you know, all this elaborate

philosophizing and just getting back

into just purity of mind,

you know, just direct insight.

And Zen has an element of that,

definitely.

I think Zen also absorbed some Taoism to

in when it during its stay in China.

But I would not at all be surprised if

there were lots of enlightened Zen

masters, even though probably most of

the ones considered to be enlightened

were just sort of

you know, myth mythologized.

So, I mean, that's all the ones on the list and this I mean, really, like I said, I could go on for an hour or two just on this topic of what do I think of other religious systems.

So, I think that's good enough for now.

We've already been going for more than an hour, even though there really weren't a whole heck of a lot of questions this time.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Siddhartha Gautama.

Uh Gautama, that's it's like red mind.

Is that what Gautama means? Red mind?

Lohita is blood. I think loha means like copper or just it's indicative of the red color.

The color red, I should have said.

Anyways, Siddhartha Gautama says,

"I've just read the Laws of Manu, Manava Dharma Shashtra, and I was surprised by how it tries to place the philosopher or Brahmin or the Kshatriya or warrior above the merchant or Vaishya.

Don't you think that if we put one of these two figures ahead of the merchant, as happens today in global capitalism, the world might be somewhat better?"

Well, I don't understand why Siddhartha

Gautama was surprised

by how in ancient India, and the Laws of

Manu was pre-Buddhist, I'm pretty sure.

That I I'm I don't know why he was

surprised at how it places Brahmans and

Kshatriyas above Vaishyas.

I mean, that's just the way it always

was. You know, the two top castes or

varnas in traditional Vedic India, and

you know, still to this day, are the

Brahmans, the priestly caste, and the

Kshatriyas, which are the noble or

warrior caste, and the Vaishyas came

below that, and then Shudras, like

peasants, came at the bottom.

Or I guess the outcasts were below them,

I suppose.

And I mean, the traditional explanation of this is you got the invading Indo-Aryan tribes, you know, they were they were led by war chiefs and the priestly cla- the priestly caste or class at that time. You know, they were the leaders, and then the the descendants of the common soldiers, the invading common soldiers, would be the Vaishyas. You know, they be the the landowners, the farmers, eventually merchants, although in you know, very [clears throat] early times, the Vedic times, you didn't really have merchants cuz there wasn't any money

yet.

You know, there'd be trading, but mostly people would be self-sufficient. They might trade some cattle or some crop, you know, food or something in exchange for something else, like bartering.

But merchants, [clears throat] money lenders, that kind of thing didn't didn't happen until shortly before the Buddhist time, which was long after the Indo-Aryan invasion.

You know, a thousand years later.

So,

yeah, I I don't Siddhartha Gautama must have been fairly innocent of ancient Indian history.

But he says, here's the actual question,

don't you think that if we put one of these two figures ahead of the merchant, as happens today in global capitalism, the world might be somewhat better?

Yeah, I mean, there was a similar question about you know, it used to be that the the leaders, the rulers were the warrior class. You know, that's the way it was I mean, since forever. The warriors are the leaders because of course, they got the weapons. They're the badasses. And if you don't follow them, they're going to they're going to kill you.

So,

I mean, that was that was

up until like the 1800s.

Probably by the 20th century, it wasn't so much of a thing that if you were of a noble family, you were a duke or an earl, a prince, you know, the son of a duke or an earl or a king, that you would just join the military and become an officer. You'd be a commander.

So,

I mean, that kind of fell through like in 20th century, seems to me. Maybe towards the end of the the 19th century.

>> [sighs]

>> So, if we put I mean, the warriors, I mean, at least I mean, if they're putting their lives on the line, leading their troops into battle, this

kind of thing, then they may have earned the right to some increased authority in society since they're the ones that are pretty much holding it together, at least by defending it against the other nobles.

So,

yeah, the priestly class, I mean, a theocracy, you know, some leftists want to accuse Republicans of wanting to establish a theocracy in America, which is kind of silly. I don't think that that would that would gain much traction.

But I mean, there there are a few theocracies left, like Iran

kind of is a theocracy, even though
their spiritual leader is

I mean, he's got one leg and
having to have lots of surgeries and
stuff to keep him alive at present.

Then you got the Vatican.

Uh Tibet used to be more or less of a
theocracy. You know, it was ruled by the
Dalai Lama.

The Papal States, I guess the Vatican is
just all that's left of that.

So, I mean, theocracies,
you know, like the the the Arabian
Empire was originally ruled by, you
know, the successors of Muhammad.

So, that was kind of a theocracy.

Uh in fact, I mean, you could even say

to some degree that the Roman Empire was sort of a theocracy in the sense that the the emperor was also the Pontifex Maximus.

You know, he was the first intermediary between humans and gods.

But then you got like, you know, god emperors, you know, the the warrior priests, that kind of thing that was sort of combined the warriors and the priests, although the Roman Empire was not particularly spiritual.

So,

don't you think that if we put one of these two figures ahead of the merchant, as happens today in global capitalism,

the world might be somewhat better?

Well, it might be.

But I mean, any any kind of
any kind of like governmental system
inclines towards corruption.

And

I don't know. I mean, it just it just
depends on like the spirit of the times
and the condition of the spirit of the
people

that's going to project to to their
government. I mean, every every people
gets the government they deserve. That's
the old saying. I think it's attributed
to Voltaire.

You know, every every nation gets the
government it deserves. You got a

degenerate population, you're going to
wind up with a degenerate government.

You got like this strong,

vibrant kind of

culture that was a lot of vitality,

you're going to have strong, vibrant

leaders with a lot of vitality.

So, I mean, it's it seems to me that

it's not so much whether the the leaders

of the country are

uh military [clears throat]

commanders or priests or like merchants

and financiers, it's just that what

state is the society in.

And it may be that there's you know,

like

Oswald Spengler or someone

may have come up with some theory with some good evidence backing it up.

That in the more vibrant

kind of societies, you know, the really strong ones that are still in the ascendant,

that you would have more of a military government. I mean, that's history does kind of show that. You know, Rome as it was climbing up, I mean, they were just badasses.

And then they started getting decadent, you know, it's like hard men make good times, good times make weak men, weak men make bad times, bad times make strong men. And we're right now, the the

phase of history that Western civilization is mainly in right now, is good times make weak men. We've hardly even gotten into the weak men make bad times aspect of the thing.

>> [snorts]

>> And

yeah, it may be that it's just more likely that you're going to be at an ascendant, vibrant stage of civilization when you still have like the warrior kings.

Or like the Roman Republic, I mean, they didn't really have kings.

They had consuls.

But it was kind of the same sort of

principle.

You know, at least you had a republic.

And and in the Roman Republic, like
early

I don't know, just throughout the Roman
Republic, I mean, the common people did
have a voice. It wasn't a very loud
voice,

but still, I mean, I do think that
regardless of who is ruling, that all
law-abiding citizens, at least the male
ones who obey the law and pay taxes,
should have a voice in government if
they want one.

But again, it's like the individual
isn't going to make much of an a
difference.

But if you got lots and lots of individuals that feel the same way, it can make a difference.

So, yeah, I mean, it might be somewhat better, maybe.

I'm just going to move on to Siddhartha Gautama's next next question here.

Is Judaism a Vaishya philosophy religion? Well, this is trying to like mix analogies, mix models. You know, because of course, Judaism really is not Vedic.

Um in the Bible, I think, it says that Israel is a nation of priests. You know, it was kind of a spiritual kind of a

country, you know, it was based on religion to some degree, worship of of Yahweh conflated with El.

So,

Judaism originally may have been more of a Brahmanistic. I mean, also, I mean, they were military badasses at various points in their history.

But mainly the military badasses tended to

they tended to sort of overlap with the priests. You know, like the whole um like the Maccabees thing.

You know, they were they were like warrior priests.

But

now that we're in like the decline phase
of Western civilization,

you got more merchants involved in the
thing. And the Jews, people of people of
Hebrew ancestry,

um yeah, they tend to be more

more like Vaishyas, more like merchants
and money lenders, obviously.

I mean, they were pretty much forced to
become money lenders in the Middle Ages.

I mean, once Western civilization became
Christian and usury was still considered
to be a sin,

you know, like Dante's Inferno has a
special circle of hell for usurers.

That's people who would lend money at

interest. The Christians couldn't do it. And so, that's one reason why the Jews are in the position that they are, is that Christians were not allowed to lend money at interest, but sometimes you'd have nobles, the upper classes, they want to borrow money.

So, they would actually protect Jews from the Christian rabble who resented them cuz the Jews tended to be rich because they were the money lenders.

They were the bankers. They had to be. Nobody else could do it.

So,

yeah, I'd say Judaism wasn't originally a Vaishya, like a mercantile kind of religion, but then again, I mean, it's

like trying to combine the Indian caste system with something alien to the Indian caste system, where it's just, you know, the Jews were all of these things.

Maybe not so much of the Shudras, you know, the like the peasant farmers. I mean, there are some of those, you know, you got the kibitzes and so forth in Israel.

So, yeah, I mean it's

I wouldn't say that Judaism is a particularly Vaishya religion, even though there is a lot of emphasis on mercantile aspects since the Middle Ages.

But of course there's a lot of
Brahmanistic stuff, too, because of
course

Judaism is a religion and the Brahmans
were the religious caste, you know, the
priestly caste.

Uh but it is true that Judaism I mean
they they still have quite the military,
you know, they've got probably the
the the best, most advanced military in
the Middle East.

So, I mean they still kick some butt.

It's mainly with American weapons, but a
lot of American money.

But still, I mean they're they're still
fighters, partly because they're like a
modern crusader state in Israel, where

they're surrounded by people who want them dead. Or at least

I mean maybe less so now because of Trump, because of the Abraham Accords and now like the the Arab Gulf states are actually allies with Israel.

We'll have to see how that goes.

I think I answered that question, so I'm just going to move on to the next one.

This is from the Saboteur, also known evidently as Victorno.

Either that or through a strange coincidence, the Saboteur asked one question on BitChute and somebody named Victorno asked the exact same question on YouTube.

So, the Saboteur or and Victorno, if they're two different people.

Maybe that's why the Saboteur used to be in the plural.

They say, or he says, "Karma notwithstanding, how can one avoid reincarnation and remain in the heavenly realms at least for a few thousand years being non-attached?"

The way the world is going, I don't think it's a great idea to come back with World War around the corner." Well, World War has been around the corner for quite a while now.

I mean, one reason why I didn't want to have kids as a young man was cuz World War was right around the corner.

And we came damn close a few times.

>> [cough and clears throat]

>> Anyways,

how can you avoid reincarnation

and remain in the heavenly realms at

least for a few thousand years? Well, I

mean, the only way to avoid

reincarnation is become fully

enlightened. So, I think he just wants

to delay reincarnation by staying in a

heaven realm for at least a few thousand

years. And I mean that's through

magnanimity, greatness of spirit. This

great virtue or or otherwise some

greatness of spirit, where you become

like a god-like person. If you die with

a god-like mind, a god-like personality,
just through greatness of spirit or
purity of spirit, you know, the intense
intense fire of a pure spirit,
then

there's a good chance you're going to go
up in heaven, especially if you haven't
created a lot of bad karma that might
act as obstacles to that.

Way more good karma than bad karma,
let's say.

Um yeah, I mean that's the best way to
do it. I mean, if you if you can somehow
master jhana,
you know, the the more advanced Buddhist
meditative or contemplative states, that
if you master jhana, then you're going

to wind up in a Brahma realm, a very high heaven realm that might be a little too boring for your taste. I mean, if you want celestial mansions and harems of celestial nymphs and all that, then you're probably not going to want to master jhana, because in the Brahma realms there's not even a distinction between male and female.

They don't even have a a sense of touch, I'm pretty sure.

At least according to the texts.

You know, there there's no tactile sensation in the Brahma realms.

They can see and hear though and think.

Uh [sighs] so, yeah, if you want to be reborn in a heaven realm, then be more good than bad and just try to have an angelic or god-like attitude and mind, especially right before you die.

But this last statement he says, "The way the world is going, I don't think it's a great idea to come back with World War around the corner." I mean, there's not just one world.

You're going to be reborn where you ought to be reborn. You know, your karma is going to land you where you deserve to be.

And if you don't deserve to be in a thermonuclear holocaust, for example,

then you won't be.

I mean, it's not just this one world. I mean, there was like this debate going on on the Discord server associated loosely with this this series of Q&A videos,

where there's this one person who he just thinks, you know, determinism is the way it is, there's only one version of this world.

Now, he doesn't have much use for the the block of marble

or, you know, with God all things are possible and all that, even though he sometimes he he does temporarily, at least, convert to Christianity.

>> [sighs]

>> Uh in my father's house are many mansions and all that. In an infinite universe, anything that can happen does happen.

And time and space are largely illusions.

So, I mean,

trying to to like run and hide from your own karma, that's not very realistic.

I mean, if you haven't done anything, I mean,

I mean, maybe not in this life, but you may have some karmic seeds that may land you in a horrible situation, even though you may not have done anything in this life to deserve it. But sometimes karma

will throw [__] at you that it may be that you don't deserve it through your own actions so much as just through kind of a a reckless, crude sort of attitude, which causes you to create your reality in a kind of like, what's the word, incompetent sort of way, sort of like a drunk driver.

But I'm I'm

wandering away from this question.

I've already answered the part about how to get reborn into heaven.

But still [laughter]

addressing this part, he doesn't want to be reborn as a human going into World War I mean, I really don't worry about

that. I mean, you just think about even
if there isn't a World War
III,

you know, there's transhumanism and AI,
all right? I mean, we're on the we're on
the verge right now.

You know, it's like, do you want to live
in a world where you're going to have
like a a computer [clears throat]
implant in your brain and you're going
to think like a computer and and just
sort of be human,
not entirely, but pretty much.

Or just AI just takes over everything.

Who I mean, who knows what the world's
going to be like 100 years from now?

But if you don't have the karma for

that, and this is one thing that I take some solace in, is I have confidence in my own karma to the extent that I don't think I'm just going to land in some nightmarish dystopia or or like go to hell.

So, I mean, you should have a certain amount of faith in your own spirit.

You know, that like the the deep down core of wisdom that you have, that you're not just going to land yourself in some sort of nightmarish hellscape.

And your ex- expectations do have influence. I mean, if you're expecting something bad to happen, something bad

is more likely to happen than if you just have faith. You know, it's not like you're in denial or anything. Nope, nothing bad is ever going to happen to me. But if you just kind of have like this quiet faith in like your deep down root of virtue and wisdom that's that's always there. I mean, there's like an enlightened element to everybody. It's the Mahayana Buddhists call it like the Buddha nature.

Just cherish that.

And just kind of and dedicate your life to, you know, sort of upward things.

Try to cultivate virtue and wisdom

to the extent that you are capable.

And I mean, this kind of thing really shouldn't bother you. Worrying is always bad karma, kukkucca in Pali.

It just makes things worse.

So, worry is bad karma.

So, just do your best to get into heaven, I suppose. But I mean, if you don't succeed, still at least you were trying to get into heaven and doing a lot of good things in order to get into heaven, so that even if you land back on some human realm, chances are you're not going to wind up in some nightmarish hellscape.

So, I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from PSA, and I was asked this question several times, and I answered this question even during the the course of the recent the previous Q&A.

PSA says, "Why didn't you mute the constant beeping of the two toddlers throwing tantrums at each other on Discord?" And those of you who watched the previous Q&A may remember that it was like right before I started doing the video, there was at least two people. I think it might have been more than two people started this vociferous debate on Discord. And although I keep my computer muted,

because otherwise the feedback from the microphone would have would just be screeching anyway. Still, my woman's computer will still have these notifications going beep beep beep and I'm sitting sitting right in front of her computer right now. I got my computer which is a laptop right in front of her monstrosity of a the desktop computer and I really didn't know how to operate her computer to turn off the beeping, but now I know.

I just turned down the the speaker. I muted the speaker on her computer right [clears throat] before starting this video, so we have no beeping even

though in all likelihood there is some debating going on cuz another debate had pretty much started right before I started recording this.

So, all I had to do was just find the speaker that had the control the volume control, which for some reason was lying on the floor under the table.

Took a while.

But, I managed it. I do learn. I do adapt.

That's one of the uh the signs of life is adaptation. If you're dead, you don't adapt much.

But, if you're alive, you can adapt to like changing circumstances.

So, that's something to bear in mind if

you're not sure if you're alive or not.

So, yeah, it wasn't my computer. It was my woman's computer. I never really bothered to learn how to operate her computer. You know, it's it's it's kind of a

I mean, I've not fully mastered the art of even turning it on.

But, I'm I'm it's it's under control.

You don't hear any beeping this time.

And so, I'm just moving on to PSA's next question.

What are your thoughts on the US-Israel war against Iran?

Yeah, that's kind of been in the news lately, hasn't it?

The US and Israel have been bombing the
[__] out of Iran.

And

to tell you the truth, some of the main
thoughts I have are just like
frustrated astonishment
that so many people on the right have
turned against Donald Trump because he's
Zion Don and he's just Netanyahu's [__]
and he's fighting this war just for
Israel with no real benefits to the
United States.

And it's such simplistic propagand- and
propagandistic thinking. It's just
simple-mindedness in my case because
some some of these people, even if you
present them with evidence to the

contrary that I mean, there are some benefits to America from attacking Iran just as there were benefits to America for attacking Venezuela, which was a much smoother quicker sort of process, I have to admit.

So, I mean, it is true probably Israel was trying to talk Donald Trump into helping them bomb the [__] out of Iran. You know, it's there Iran was always on the verge of developing nuclear weapons, which is sort of like this joke and also a lot of politicians will say Iran probably wasn't really at the verge of creating nuclear weapons, but I do think

it is significant that one of the stumbling blocks in negotiations is that Iran absolutely refused to stop striving to get nuclear weapons.

I mean, they they made no secret of the fact of the of the fact they fully intend at some point as soon as possible presumably to get nukes and then if they do get nukes, they're going to be like a theocratic Islamist North Korea that says death to America and they're going to hold parts of the world hostage. They'll be able to do what they want more easily because they got nukes. But, even that I mean, that just set that aside. Just set the whole nukes thing aside because

[laughter] I don't think that was necessarily the main reason.

Donald Trump is not as stupid as the left wants to think or like some a lot of people on the right that now have turned against him because they're like throwing tantrums because he's not doing exactly what he said he was going to do or he's not doing exactly what they want him to do. So, it's like [__] America, to hell with it all. Let Let America become like a feminized socialist dystopia because Trump isn't doing exactly what I want him to do.

I mean, that's just infantile.

Or

or just hating Israel as an excuse to hate Trump.

I mean, that I mean, there it [clears throat] really hatred of Jews and hatred of Israel

I mean, it's not a virtue. It's still a hate.

But, the thing is Donald Trump apparently

is is like playing a long game or trying to. And I mean, one of the main reasons why he's doing this to Iran

is because of China. Like China was getting a lot of its oil cheap from Venezuela and Iran and now it's not. And China is the main geopolitical rival enemy of the United States in in the

21st century.

So, Donald Trump is like trying to gain possession of like troublesome spots or trying to get control of troublesome spots and neutralize China's influence over these spots. Panama Canal, Venezuela, Straits of Hormuz, like the Straits of Malacca in Indonesia. That I mean, that's under the radar for most people, but Trump has has done stuff there to get that out from under the control of China.

And I mean, a lot of this is subtle and not so subtle maneuvering against America's number one rival and threat in this world, which is China.

And so, China's having an energy crisis right now.

Largely because of what Trump's doing.

And it's not just because Netanyahu has got control over Trump and is making him do this.

I mean, that's just simplistic.

I mean, at the very least, I mean, it's like the Ayatollah was like taunting Trump not too long ago.

Just like

Maduro was taunting Trump. And I mean, Trump does have an ego. He's kind of a narcissist guy.

Somebody taunts him and he's going to he's going to smack him down. So, I I wouldn't be surprised if that was a

factor.

But, also I mean, Iran has been a thorn in America's side since its existence. I mean, one of the very first actions of Iran after the Ayatollahs came to power was to take a bunch of American citizens hostage for over a year.

Death to America.

So,

Trump I mean, he's going Roman Empire

[snorts]

on the world and the world is so

feminized and degenerate at this point

including a lot of right-wingers in

America who don't fully realize just how

degenerate they have become through

conditioning and from their their environment.

That they just well, he's it's he's in this war against Iran and that's it.

[__] him. [__] America. Let America go to hell because

we're bombing the [__] out of Iran and it's not really necessary because I mean, these people don't have the info that Trump and Trump's advisers have with regard to like the geopolitical grand strategy of the whole [__] thing.

So, personally, I'm willing to give Trump the benefit of the doubt. I'm still a Trump supporter. I'd vote for him again if he ran again, I guess,

[clears throat] but he can't and he's
he's too old anyway.

I'd vote for Vance if he ran.

Because I mean,

from the Buddhist point of view, of
course, war is murder. It's mass murder.

It's always bad. From a political point

of view, if you are a superpower,

you've got to act like a superpower or

people just aren't going to take you

seriously anymore and they're going to

walk all over you, which is generally

what has been do happening at an

increasing rate in recent decades.

So, Trump's just saying [__] that. We're

a super a superpower. We're going to act

like one and you guys our allies, you're going to have to [_] man up.

You want to play in this game.

You want to have a seat at the table.

You're going to have to man up and stop it with all this feminized socialism crap.

And America's enemies

I mean, they're they're intimidated.

So, I mean, one one way I look at it is like let's say that you're a citizen in the Roman Empire in the 4th century.

When Rome is well into its decline phase in in the fall phase is just right around the corner.

Of course, you don't know that for sure cuz you can't see the future. But, still

Rome is in decline and then Valentinian the first becomes emperor. Valentinian the Great.

And he is a sadistic sociopath.

He is just a brute. He likes seeing people be tortured to death.

I mean, he

he has people maimed or or killed executed for making honest mistakes.

You know, just off with his head, you know, have him beaten to death with clubs, chop his hand off. This kind of stuff.

But,

at the same time, he was just unleashing fury on the enemies of Rome and he He

doing his best to make Rome great again.
And so he got the name the great. He got
the title of the great. I mean, he
didn't call himself that, I assume. That
was just attributed to him
by successive generations that
appreciated that even though he was a
sadistic sociopathic bastard,
nevertheless
he was like the only man standing
between Rome
and collapse.

And shortly after he died, the the fall
of Rome began with the Battle of
Adrianople in which the Roman legions
were just pretty much destroyed by
Visigoths.

So, I mean,

even though

I mean,

>> [clears throat]

>> war is murder.

Trump has been doing a lot of stuff and

and like a lot of these people

supposedly on the right like on social

media will say, "If Trump would just do

what we voted for him to do, just

completely ignoring you know, like the

immigration issue

you know, just dealing with like leftist

institutions like the SPLC and all this.

I mean, they just ignore that. It's

like, "Nope.

They just focus on or like Trump is Israel's [__] and he's fighting against Iran for no reason." Which is it's just like infantile. I mean, it's it's almost like willful idiocy.

So, anyways

I mean, if Israel wants boots on the ground, they want to like just knock themselves out knocking out Iran.

That's fine. I mean, Iran is in big trouble now. It's like Iran's [snorts] like the current government, what's left of it, you know, the like the two top two or three tiers of leadership most of them are now gone.

And you know, it's like the the country is fractured.

You know, it's like kind of like the
what is it? The

I don't I can't

the guard, the Ayatollah's

um

what do you call it?

Uh

I'm trying to remember the
never mind.

But I mean, Iran is their only hope of
surviving. You know, the current regime,
the current government, what's left of
it

only hope of survival

is to just hide and survive, stall for
time until public opinion in America

forces Trump to stop attacking them.

But they're losing half a billion a day

through having the streets of Hormuz

closed by Trump

at present. Of course

you know, oil prices are going to go up

throughout most of the world,

fertilizer, problems with that.

What? I mean, it's

>> [clears throat and sighs]

>> It wasn't their war. They I mean, they

didn't want to help guard the streets of

Hormuz.

So

feminazi socialism is I mean

I'm just read history. What was his What

has history been like since forever?

Sometimes

you've got to fight your enemies.

If you don't want to fight your enemies,
first of all, don't join the military,
of course. But if and if you're just
really serious, you're not even going to
endorse it or support it in any way
then stop paying taxes, willfully go to
prison, or just renounce the world like
a Buddhist monk and go out into the
forest, go alone like the horn of the
rhinoceros.

That and and just be like that. Be like
uh

Thoreau and live live in cabin by a pond
and not pay taxes.

Uh because if you pay taxes, you're still supporting the war.

You're still supporting the killing of human beings.

Uh

Anyways, enough ranting and rambling about that.

>> [clears throat]

>> I'm just going to move on to P.S. next next question, which is a question that I really can't answer very well.

He says, "Alex Jones said he doesn't like them putting chemicals in the water that turn the freaking frogs gay. What chemicals is he talking about?"

I don't know what chemicals it was. I did take a class in college, biological

effects of environmental pollutants, and there's some relatively nasty effects of environmental pollutants, especially like organic chemicals like modern technologically developed chemicals like DDT was one. I mean, that DDT is kind of a past. It's like a historical thing now. But the thing with a lot of organic chemicals is we have not evolved a way of of like metabolizing them or getting them out of our system. So something like DDT, I mean, your liver couldn't digest it. I mean, it couldn't break it down and get rid of it. And so it would accumulate and your liver would just keep trying

and trying just increasing the the
exudation of enzymes to break it down
and until eventually it would just start
breaking itself down and you'd die of
like liver failure if you got like a too
much of a dose of some of these
chemicals.

PCBs is another one.

Uh but what chemical it was that was
making the frogs gay or just causing
like spontaneous sex changes in
amphibians, that kind of thing. Like
some fish they'll just
go from male to female or vice versa.
Like groupers start off male and turn
female, something like that.
It was some kind of deal like that.

I don't think that I don't know if the frogs were actually turning gay.

They may have turned trans. They were may have been transing or something.

But some kind of chemical, I don't know what the hell it was.

I don't I could have just said that and just moved on to the next question.

Uh

>> [clears throat]

>> but instead

I do this instead.

And the next question is from Damma River.

Damma River says, "How diverse are Burmese temples? Do they allow Mahayana

and Vajrayana monks to come and practice and live in their temples or do they only allow Theravada monks?"

Um

>> [clears throat]

>> God, it depends on the the Burmese monastery. I mean, I don't like the word temple. I mean, technically I mean, monks live there, so it's a monastery.

And I mean, it depends. There's the full spectrum of Burmese monasteries and just completely lax, completely open-minded with regard to damn near anything. And then you got like the really strict ones that are not very open-minded with regard to accepting certain types of people there. I mean, some Burmese

monasteries only monks can stay there.

Lay people can't even spend the night.

And from a Theravada point of view,

Mahayana and Vajrayana monks are lay

people. Or at least it would be

nanasamvasaka, which means belonging to

a different sangha. You know, they're

not really

Theravada. They're they're not our

religion.

You couldn't do sangha kamma with them.

You couldn't sit together and do like a

formal act of the sangha because they're

not sangha.

They're maybe a different sangha

but they're not the Theravada sangha and

it's just doesn't work.

I've stayed in monasteries where lay people simply were not allowed to spend the night, which would include non-Theravada monks.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> But some some Burmese temples like I stayed at um Panditarama back when Mahasi Sayadaw was still alive in Rangoon.

They were just starting up the the so-called forest monastery, which is where the foreigners eventually went to.

But I was in Rangoon with Upandita at the time and there was one

he was a Korean, maybe a Zen monk. He was some kind of Korean Mahayana monk.

He wore like gray pajamas.

And he was allowed to stay there and he was practicing [clears throat] meditation, but I mean, he wasn't considered to be a monk. I mean, he wasn't considered to be a real monk anyway. Like he didn't go for alms round. And when the monks were going into the refectory, he had to go after the monks.

They let him go before the regular lay people, but still you know, he he had to sit with the lay people pretty much to eat his meal. He didn't sit with the the ordained Theravada bhikkhus.

And he didn't like that. And so he was

ordained as a Theravada Buddhist monk while not disrobing from being a Mahayana monk.

Which technically is against the rules, against vinaya, against the rules of monastic discipline.

Um and probably after he left Panditarama, he just disrobed back to the gray pajamas without having to reordain anything like that. So, I mean, there's a lot of weirdness like that. I mentioned that there was a Catholic priest that I met wearing monk's robes on one occasion that some Burmese monasteries, they'll ordain damn near anybody.

But with regard to the monks like

Mahayana or Vajrayana monks coming and staying at the monastery, like some of the Buddhist uh like universities like in Rangoon would probably allow that.

But

they're I mean, they're not considered to be the same as a Theravada monk.

They're not really our sangha. And so you really wouldn't be doing formal acts of the sangha together anything like that.

And some some Burmese monasteries do allow only Theravada monks and novices to stay there.

So

I guess I'm just going to move on to

this question. This is from Rui. This is an easy question. Rui says, "How are you?" I said, "I'm fine."

Rui's next question "To your what is the dom role of reflection? Is it entirely outside the realm of cheetah bawana?" And I do not fully understand this question. What does Rui mean by reflection?

Let's look it up in the dictionary.

Let's see what the dictionary says with regard to reflection.

Oops.

>> [snorts]

>> Spelled it wrong.

Reflection.

Okay, so it's There's a bunch of

different uh

different definitions here.

So, let's see here. This would be the one.

A serious thought or consideration. He doesn't get much time for reflection. An idea about something, especially one that is written down or expressed. So, yeah, I guess like the the Buddhist meditation version of reflection isn't even in the dictionary here.

Maybe he's referring to what in Pali would be anusati, which would be literally like remembering after, recollecting after.

So, that would be reflection. Anusati,
like marananusati,
reflection on death.

Um the dom role of that is

I mean, if [clears throat] that's what
he means by reflection, I'm not sure
exactly what Rui means when he says
reflection. If he used the Pali word,
I'd probably have a better idea because
reflection is such a vague word and like
I just demonstrated, the the dictionary
doesn't even really have the Buddhist
version of reflection in it.

And there's different ways you could
define reflection from a Buddhist point
of view. I'm just going to go with anu
anusati,

which is like

remembrance.

And so, you know, like

reflection on death, reflection on the

foulness of the body, that kind of

thing.

Um

Is it entirely outside the realm of

cheetah bawana? No. I mean, cheetah

bawana would be meditation or mind

development.

So, it would be like uh

a relatively shallow level of

meditation. You could get into maybe

first jhana, supposedly, because in

first jhana, you're still thinking. And

to do reflection the way I'm
interpreting this, cuz I'm not sure
exactly what Rui had in mind, you know,
like reflection on the qualities of the
Buddha.

Right? I mean, that would be a standard
one. That would still be meditation,
but I mean, it's it's not very deep
because you never really stop thinking.
Thinking is pretty much the point.

So, yeah, I mean, it would be like an
elementary kind of meditation that at
best would get you into first jhana. And
maybe it would just be like uh
an act of
uh some mental self-discipline, sort of
like mental jumping jacks, you know,

just sort of mental calisthenics, just a way of disciplining your mind, just keeping it on this kind of like a mantra or something.

So, it can be useful and it's certainly within the realm of cheetah bawana or just

meditative exercises,
mind development.

So, yeah, I mean, the Buddha wouldn't have recommended it if it wasn't like didn't help you to develop your mind.

So, [snorts]

yeah, I guess I answered that question.

But again, I'm not exactly sure what Rui

has in mind with the word reflection.

And I'm just going to move on to

Ethiopian fake tig here.

Oh, he's asking a Majima question. Gosh,

I'm going to have to get the Majima

cafe.

I don't do this very often anymore.

Okay.

>> [clears throat]

>> Take off the Burger King crown. That's

an entirely different kind of question.

Nobody much asks about fast food.

Let's see here.

>> [snorts]

>> Okay, get that out of the way there.

>> [clears throat]

>> Okay, we're

All right.

>> [clears throat]

>> Kind of goes with the

uh the wife beater, too. It's nice.

So, Ethiopian fake tig says, "In Majima

Buddhism, you said there was some

philosophical method they used to break

down any argument down to emptiness. Can

you perhaps talk about what that

philosophy is in depth with examples?"

Um

Well, like the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā

of by Nāgārjuna

is is like this. And most of the book

consists of adopting or or just

considering a question, like is the

effect the same as the cause or is it different from the cause? And then you use a kind of Buddhist logic that has four possibilities.

The four possibilities are yes, it is true.

No, it is false.

It is true and it is false or it's neither true nor false.

And so, in the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Nāgārjuna just

addresses each question and he shoots down every possibility. You know, he'll he'll use logic to explain why the effect isn't the same as the cause.

And then he'll he'll shoot down the idea that it is the same or you know, he he

shoots down that it is the same, he shoots down the idea using logic that it isn't the same. And then he just dismisses that it is and isn't. And then he dismisses that it neither is nor isn't. And that just it rules out all possibilities. But I mean, it's it's kind of hard [clears throat] to refer to this kind of like early Majima as as a kind of I mean, it's sort of a philosophy, but I mean, it shoots down all concepts, including philosophical concepts. In fact, the the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, you know, it kind of saves its own

philosophy for last and then shoots that down. You know, it's it's you can't say that it's true, you can't say that it's false, you can't say that it's true and false and you can't say that it's neither true nor false.

Just using what I think Bertrand Russell would call logic chopping. Sometimes the logical arguments wouldn't really stand up to scrutiny by modern Western standards. You know, after like Aristotelian logic and you know, the developments from that over the over the centuries.

Um but I do think that

>> [clears throat]

>> the point is valid

that you can

I mean,

any kind of skeptical scrutiny can
dismantle just about any kind of claim.
You can pull the rug out from under any
belief with sufficient like a
sufficiently intelligent intellectual
attack. You can at least
shed doubt on it.

And that's pretty much what Majima does
to get to this point that I mean,
well, one point is that like you cannot
tell the truth in words. Words cannot
accurately represent reality.

And so, you can't even say whether
reality exists or whether reality

doesn't exist or that it does and
doesn't exist or that it neither does
nor doesn't exist. I mean, you can't say
anything really. And it just leaves this
emptiness behind because it's it's sort
of like this skeptical attack on every
possibility.

That's that's essentially how it works.

And then that kind of gets worked into
the idea of emptiness and voidness and
dependent co-arising where in the

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Nāgārjuna asserts
that emptiness and dependent co-arising
are the same. When we say that

everything is empty or everything is
void, we mean that you know, it seems to
exist because of context, but

I mean, under

careful enough scrutiny, it just kind of dissolves and there really is no inherent self essence to anything.

I mean, you can just kind of

doubt everything away in a sense. I

mean, that there's probably not a good

way of putting it. But that's kind of

what it's about. It's just applying like relentless skepticism to every point.

So, I mean, it's kind of like classical

Greco-Roman skepticism in a way in which

I mean, the

the uh the early skeptics, like the

Greek and Roman skeptics, skeptic

philosophers,

they would go for

>> [clears throat]

>> uh I should have looked up the Greek word.

Uh but it's like

it's like you you can you can doubt

everything, so you just don't really

believe anything and it causes like this peace of mind.

And I'm sorry, I can't remember the Greek word.

>> [snorts]

>> But it's it's sort of like

you know, all this agitation just kind

of leaves and there's just sort of like this

the the peace of emptiness. I mean, just

you're you're free of these belief
systems that enslave you.

Uh

>> [sighs]

>> I don't know how good of a job I did on
that, but I'm taking the fez off cuz
it's kind of hot in here.

Getting up into summery weather in South
Carolina now.

So, let's see here. Philosophical method
that they used to break down any
argument down to emptiness. Yeah, it's
just the you use the the tetralemma.

It's called of the four possibilities of
yes, no, yes and no, neither yes nor no.

And then you use like this intellectual

attack essentially.

This ruthless, skeptical logic to
dismantle every possibility.

And then what's left behind when you
when you get rid of yes, no, yes and no,
and neither yes nor no. I mean, what
else is there? It's just emptiness.

But still, we have to function within
the context of that logical emptiness.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to
Ethiopian fake Tigg's next question.

He says, "It is said that the Hindus and
Buddhists have had a thousand years of
debate before, and yet I can't for the
life of me find a long debate between
Buddhists and Hindus in YouTube. Is
debate perhaps something that's

discouraged?" Well, like I mentioned um
to a
an earlier question, in Buddhism like
the Pasura Sutta of the Atakavaga, it
really does discourage monks from from
engaging in debate. But as I also
mentioned, in ancient India it was very
common, and a lot of Buddhists
participated.

>> [snorts]

>> In fact,

I got a book. I've I've shown shown you
guys this book before.

Let's see here.

Buddhist logic volume two by Fyodor
Stcherbatsky,

and it was written back before the
Soviet Union in in Russia 1.0
or whatever whatever Russia was before
in Tsarist Russia.

And

um a lot of it is just translations
of
let's see.

Man.

Vasubandhu, that's not it.

Oh, well, I'm not going to try and find
it. I maybe I should have tried to look
it up before I started this video. But
this this book is mainly about the the
Dignaga school of Buddhism.

And most of what we know about the
Dignaga school of Buddhism is surviving

in texts by Hindus that were attacking the Dignaga school. And so most of what we know, most of the the medieval texts, cuz it was a medieval school, that that have information is like Brahmin philosophers trying to argue against it. But at least they're conscientious and not just sort of like in modern politics where you just slander the other side. And he's trying to give a fair representation of what this school teaches and then argue against that because if you just cook up some bogus straw man and argue against that, then in a formal debate you're just going to

lose because they'll just point out that you're you're arguing like a fool.

But it's it's too bad that really that I can't remember the exact name of the person. Oh, Vacaspati Mishra. So Vacaspati Mishra wrote a lot of critiques of Buddhist philosophy even though he wasn't a Buddhist. And just as a kind of kind of a debate thing.

And it it did happen a lot, and that's one reason why

as I said earlier that Indian philosophy has reached the level of sophistication that it has reached is that you had all these different schools, different religious systems even debating and arguing with each other. And it's like

if if somebody would level an argument that you couldn't answer, then you're going to have to come up with some answer. You know, you're going to have to go back and think about it. And then maybe in the next time you'll have a sufficient answer to stand up to that critique. And so that just kept happening over centuries so that you wound up with some relatively profound sophisticated philosophical systems in ancient and medieval India.

Even though maybe you're not going to find a long debate between Buddhists and Hindus in YouTube unless maybe it's in Hindi or something.

So let's see here.

Yeah, I mean

I wouldn't mind

like debating. I mean, it's like monks really aren't supposed to debate. I'm not a monk anymore. I mean, Buddhists really aren't supposed to debate.

But I mean, sometimes I mean, it's it's it's something that I think I'd be fairly good at.

I did get contacted by Modern Day Debate, which is a like a debate channel on YouTube, asking me if I'd like to participate because of some supporter or friend of mine kind of suggested me to them. But they wanted me to argue in favor of an

immortal soul, which I mean, I I
sent an email back to them saying that
you know, the the Buddhists teach
essentially the opposite of that. And so
I didn't hear anything back from them
after that. They wanted me to debate in
favor of an immortal soul.

So probably I would have been debating
like some kind of scientific atheist or
something.

But yeah, I mean, I'd be I'd be game for
at least a discussion with a Hindu.

But I mean, most of the like any kind of
debate with Hindus that I have engaged
in, I mean, at least half of it is them
just completely rejecting, saying that

it has been refuted, the whole

Indo-Aryan invasion

>> [clears throat]

>> has been refuted, and they'll cite some

you know, obscure

reference to like some journal article

or something with regard to DNA

sequencing or something. And invariably

it's always

either an Indian person or like a

Western convert to Hinduism that

believes all the stuff about people

speaking Sanskrit in India for millions

of years.

Anyways,

>> [sighs]

>> yeah, I mean, I guess there's debates

between Buddhists and Hindus, although I don't know. There's there's really not that much of an issue anymore. I mean, in the West nobody cares.

I mean, it was really a hot issue back when India was like 50% Buddhist and 50% Hindu.

Then I mean, it was going hot and heavy with hammer and tongs, so to speak.

But it's just kind of fallen out of fashion nowadays for Buddhists and Hindus to debate each other, apparently.

Now now it's more Christians versus atheists that you're going to find debates on YouTube.

So [snorts]

I guess I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tigg's next question, which is, "Have you ever met an Arab monk or Buddhist before or Arabs in general who were born in the Middle East under Islam

but took interest in Buddhism and actually took interest?"

Well,

I I know I knew a monk that was an American monk who was half Arab.

But I mean, he was born in America. His father was born in Iraq, I think.

Gosh, that's about it. Yeah, I've never really met

like

a natural-born

Arabic-speaking Arab who converted to Buddhism. I assume it'd be relatively rare.

Like Arabic countries tend to be pretty pretty much

you know, they're they're sold on Islam as a general rule.

I did meet one Muslim guy who he came to the monastery in came to a monastery in California where I was staying at the time. And he he said you know, he was open-minded. Maybe his girlfriend was a Buddhist or something. He came there and he was saying

you know, there's prophets Islam accepts prophets besides Muhammad, and he thinks

that the Buddha was a legit prophet.

So I mean, you could some open-minded

Buddhists or like Muslims

could be willing to accept Buddha as

like a pre-Muhammad

prophet.

I assume there are some that do that.

Maybe the Sufis were more inclined to do

that because they did incorporate some

Buddhist and Hindu ideas into Sufism.

But yeah, I have really have not met a

whole lot. I've met maybe two or three

black monks,

and I think they were all temporary.

I met one Mexican man who was

I mean, he was a layperson, but he was a

devout Buddhist and and fairly fairly

advanced practitioner. He just had a really stringent spiritual practice. And he was like pure European Mexican. No like Mayan blood or Aztec blood in that guy. He he looked like pure Spanish.

>> [sighs]

>> Yeah, I mean, there's it's yeah, this this question is kind of strange though. Have you ever met an Arab monk or Buddhist before or Arabs in general who were born in the Middle East under Islam but took interest in Buddhism and actually took interest? Yeah, I mean, like Malaysia, I mean, it's illegal

for a Malaysian person to convert to any religion other than Islam.

That it's illegal for a Malaysian citizen to read a Buddhist book or listen to a Buddhist sermon, and it's illegal for a Buddhist to deliver a sermon to a Malaysian citizen. And it may be similar in other Muslim countries. I know it's that way in Malaysia. I remember seeing like a Buddhist pamphlet that came from Malaysia. It was printed in Malaysia and it said, "Not for Muslims." on the cover. And at first I thought, you know, maybe it's just sort of like a I don't know. It wasn't like legally required. They just had their own

reasons for saying that. But it turned out that was like a legal necessity. You had to put that on the book, otherwise you'd get in trouble in Malaysia.

For printing a non-Muslim book.

You have to have a warning sign, like it's a pack of cigarettes or something.

So, I would assume that other Muslim countries are kind of like that. I mean, you'd have to leave the country in order to convert to Buddhism. I assume there are some people born in Muslim countries that then move to a Western country and then abandon their Islam and convert to some other religion. And I assume there's a handful at least who have

converted to Buddhism. It's just that they're rare and uh, I've never met one that I know of.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Robert.

And Robert says, "Why do you believe that any good gets met with a corresponding evil and that the pluses and minuses cancel out?"

Well,

first of all, I would just like to read a little quote by Carl Jung, which is appropriate to this question.

Carl Jung says,

"Every good quality has its bad side and

nothing that is good can come into the world without directly producing a corresponding evil. This is a painful fact."

And

there have been times when I've tried to think of something that was good entered this world that really did not have a corresponding evil. And the only thing I could really think of would be Buddhism itself. I mean, Christianity comes into the world and immediately, as soon as they gain power, they're persecuting the pagans worse than the pagans were persecuting them. And then they're like persecuting each other.

Holy wars,

the Inquisition, torture chambers, all

this kind of stuff. Witch burnings.

So, Christianity, I mean, you could

argue that there has been a lot of

badness brought into this world by

Christianity. But with regard to

Buddhism, I really haven't I have to

admit that that does seem to be somewhat

of an exception to the rule. Although I

I can't really think of what it would

be. Maybe I just I don't want to to see

the painful fact or something.

But with regard to this universe, it's

just a balance of positive and negative.

I mean, just even physics, like an atom.

It's a balance between negative

electrons and positive protons with some neutral neutrons thrown in. You know, it's it's it's just this cosmic balance of plus and minus. If you've got um, matter just arising out of empty space, then it I mean, it does happen. Like at the at the edge of a black hole, the where the the the space is getting stretched, supposedly.

You'll have like a a

uh, it's like a

positive and negative pair of

of

particles, like a particle and an

anti-particle that would arise out of

nothing and then usually they just

collapse back into each other and just
poof into nothing again.

So, the whole universe is composed, it
seems to me,

out of this cosmic balance of positive
and negative. And that works with regard
to

any closed system. I've I've developed
this this idea

that within any closed system, there has
to be a balance of positive and
negative. And our own mind is a kind of
closed system.

Because I mean, you could say that
outward things do influence us, but we
have no ex- no contact with the outward
things. We just have contact with what

we are experiencing, our own mental universe.

And so, it's like I called it the the principle of subjective equilibrium. Where, let's say, you could somehow get rid of everything in your life that you consider to be bad. Like the whole lower half of your world is removed. All that's going to happen is the line between good and bad is just going to shift so that the lower half of what you consider to be good is now considered to be bad. Or you're just going to have to come up with a bunch of new badness to replace the stuff that was gone.

And I mean, just look at the way the

world operates. You know, you cure a disease, a new disease crops up that there's no cure for. Or something good is added and there's always these unexpected side effects. So that really life is not better. I don't think people are any happier now than they were 2,000 years ago or 10,000 years ago.

You know, it's you can say that like in 2,000 years ago, for example, there was a lot more brutality, but there was a lot more of the opposite, too. Like ancient India in the Buddhist time, you know, there were sages walking the earth to an extent that I mean, it's practically unthinkable nowadays.

But at the same time, you had like

grizzly like public executions where the top of some of some criminal's head would be broken open and molten lead would be poured into his skull and there'd be like these bandits attacking people on the roads and all this kind of stuff. Just wars all over the place.

This king is invading the territory of that king and then his territory gets invaded by this other king and

I mean, it was it was like this mixture of good and bad that nowadays is just kind of working its way out so that we're just in this level of spiritual mediocrity.

So, there's not nearly so much badness,

but there's not nearly so much goodness, either.

It all balances out.

And it's even the way Buddhist heaven realms work. Where you get into this heaven realm, I mean, you can argue according to tradition that, you know, you get up into Tāvatiṃsa heaven and you've got the the celestial mansions and the the harems of nymphs and all this.

So, yeah, maybe. But you get up into the the higher realms and it's just subtlety. I mean, there's not much positivity and not much negativity, either.

So, I guess you could argue the other

way with regard to hell realms. It's just once you've been in hell for a while, you just get used to it.

That's just the way it is.

I mean, they have done studies on people that became quadriplegic. You know, they were they got in like a skiing accident or something. So that they were paralyzed from the neck down.

They can't move. And the study found that after a few months to adjust to the new situation, they were just as happy or unhappy as they were before.

So, I do think that that's just how the universe exists. It's just a balance balance of pluses and minuses that add

up to zero.

You know, that's the semi-joke that I used to tell about how God created the universe out of nothing.

You know, it's just the pluses and the minuses just add up to the same nothing.

Particle and the anti-particle could just come out of empty space.

So,

also,

I Taoism has that idea of yin and yang, which is also kind of a balance of opposites. There's really not a lot of emphasis on that in Theravada Buddhism other than the lokadhammā, the ways of the world. It's a pair of pairs of opposites, you know, like praise and

blame, this kind of thing that
that balance out.

Or at least you're going to have plenty
of both.

Success and failure, that kind of thing.

Anyways,

>> [sighs]

>> I guess I answered that. I'm going to
move on to Robert's second question.

And Robert says, "In the previous Q&A,
someone asked about Buddhist tattoos. Do
you think it can help a lay practitioner
to get a tattoo of a word like sati, or
mettā, or anattā, etc. to remind them to
practice dhamma?" Yeah, I don't see
anything wrong with that.

You know, I used to have a
my aunt

my aunt Betty was an archaeologist and
she was doing archaeology in Afghanistan
long ago, back in like the '60s or '70s.

And uh, one thing I inherited from her
was a little pocket knife. It had this
Arabic inscription on it.

And I've I've met an Iranian guy who
could read it. I mean, it wasn't in
Iranian, but it was similar enough that
he could read it. And he said it means,
"This too shall pass."

So, I mean,

and I eventually lost the knife, too.

So, it did pass.

But I mean, you could have like a any

kind of tattoo like that, you know,
impermanence, anicca,
you know, mettā, mindfulness. Are you
being mindful?

Um, yeah, I mean, you can do that. But
the thing is that I mean, after you've
seen it a million times,
it's like this area of your brain just
filters it out as background noise. You
mean, it doesn't make much of an
impression on you anymore. It's like
having a skeleton in your cave or a
skull on your table. You know, at first
it makes an impression, but you know,
after a few months, it's just part of
the background. I mean, you hardly pay

any attention to it at all.

So, yeah, I mean, yeah, you could do that. There was a a guy named Charlie Tart. He used to be a professor in UC Davis, I think.

And he had some kind of thing worked out on his phone that at random intervals, it would beep to remind him to be mindful. You know, it's like, "Are you being mindful now?"

You know, every time the the phone would beep, it would just be like calling you back to the present moment. Are you being mindful now? Or at least testing to see if you were being mindful.

And something like that, I mean, if you really wanted that, something like that

to remind you to practice Dhamma,
yeah, I mean, that might actually be
more effective than the tattoo. Just
somehow get
a your phone to just beep at random
times, preferably not too often so that
it's a complete distraction. Just to
remind you, are you being mindful now?
Are you being mindful now?
That might work better because you get
are you being mindful now tattooed on
your arm? I mean, occasionally you'll
consider it.
But after a while it just becomes, you
know, just this tattoo that you don't
pay much attention to anymore than you

pay attention to the the anchor or the heart with mom on it. That kind of thing.

But I mean, it couldn't hurt, I suppose.

If you think it'll work, you might as well. And

if it doesn't work, you're stuck with the tattoo for the rest of your life, probably.

But I mean, it's not a bad tattoo to have. It's better than having a scorpion or something.

Anyways,

>> [cough and clears throat]

>> time to move on to Robert's third question, which is the last question.

The last question of this Q&A.

And he says, you've said before that you think psychedelics can be spiritually beneficial, especially for beginners. At which point in one's spiritual development do you think psychedelics and weed, for that matter, should be entirely avoided in favor of a strict adherence to the fifth precept?

Well, the strict the fifth precept says, I undertake the precept to abstain from ale, wine, and any intoxicant which causes cloudedness of mind, which is often translated as heedlessness.

So, it's not any drug that is part of the fifth precept. You know, like caffeine, for example. I mean, caffeine

is a drug, but it doesn't really cause you to be clouded in mind or heedless. In fact, to some degree it can have the opposite effect.

Like paranormal investigators, like um like researchers into like psychic abilities, ESP, that kind of thing, generally say that you score better on these tests, like predicting cards, if if if you're caffeinated.

So, in in a way it makes your mind less clouded instead of more clouded. So, any drug, I mean, it's sort of like a West modern Western thing, you know, like Nancy Reagan, just say no to drugs, where all drugs, except for maybe a few legal ones, like caffeine, maybe

nicotine, maybe a little alcohol, it's just drugs.

But

I mean, reality doesn't work that way.

And like

heroin is very, very different from cocaine, which is very, very different from psilocybin mushrooms.

I mean, the effects they have are radically different from each other.

So, whether it would be a matter of a strict adherence to the fifth precept or not would depend on whether this substance is causing cloudedness of mind. I mean, if it's alcoholic, that's literally included, you know, ale or

wine. They didn't really have um
distilleries in ancient India. They
hadn't invented hard liquor yet, so it
was pretty much some kind of ale or
wine, you know, fermented grain or
fermented fruits,
essentially.

Maybe throw in some fermented honey or
something.

So,

getting to the actual question though,
at what point in one's spiritual
development do you think they should be
entirely avoided? When they stop being
helpful.

I would guess.

When it stops being a kind of skillful

means, like

um I've said before that like a tab of
LSD can get a person into an expanded
state of consciousness

that some people may try for decades to
get into just through meditation and
fail.

Other people might have to strive for
years to get to that same level of
expansion of consciousness

that a tab of LSD will do. You know,
let's say 500 micrograms of LSD.

300 micrograms.

So,

definitely it can be helpful. I mean, if
you're breaking new ground, you're

having experiences

that are like like a pure mystical state, like just wide awake and your your thinking process has largely stopped. Well, at the same time, your consciousness is expanded and you are more wide awake than usual.

Then, I mean, that's not a bad state.

Neem Karoli Baba up there once told um Ram Dass that I mean, this he told Ram Dass this this sort of substance was known in the Kuru Valley, you know, centuries ago, but this knowledge has been lost. But it can be useful if you take it in a place where it's not too hot, where it's quiet and you're alone, then you can get benefit from this.

But Ram Dass, who started off with
psychedelics,
um he eventually stopped taking them.
And he's he did say that there were
certain like negative consequences from
taking so much acid as he did. He mean,
he was taking lots of it in his younger
days or, you know, his his pre-India
days,

um that he was starting starting to get
like a blockage in like in his head
somewhere where it was kind of
interfering with his his meditative
progress or something.

But now, you can have genuine insights
from taking certain kinds of entheogenic

substances.

>> [snorts]

>> So, [sighs]

yeah, I mean,

what it all boils down to is, I mean, is

it helping you

to cultivate wisdom?

And it can at first, I mean, it can be

invaluable. You can get invaluable

insights from taking LSD under the right

circumstances or taking some kind of

psychedelic under the right

circumstances. You're just at a party or

a rave or something, just out for a good

time, maybe even then accidentally.

But I mean, if you're like alone in a

forest or something and

you know, you're you're sort of like
preparing yourself, you know, kind of
purifying yourself, maybe fasting, this
kind of thing, doing some meditation,
and then, you know, just with a like a a
spirit of reverence,
you you take the substance,
then, I mean,
it can give you this insight, especially
at first, that you are experiencing
something that is very different from
the normal state of consciousness, but
it's just as real.

I mean, a lot of people if you're if
you're having like a genuine mystical
experience, one of the common traits

characteristics of a mystical experience is the experiencer has no doubt whatsoever that this this experience is at least as real as his normal waking consciousness.

Another characteristic is that it has zero persuasive effect on anybody else.

But it's it's like a kind of triangulation. I mean, that was in in my generation, probably at least half

of monks that were ordained in my in my generation [clears throat]

started off with psychedelics because you start off with this expanded consciousness, these insights that arise, that, you know, what you thought

was reality the whole time before you
took this the stuff,
I mean, it's not reality. It's a kind of
virtual reality,
but it's not ultimate reality. And then,
of course, that just opens up this whole
new world. Once you realize that this
isn't ultimately real.

I mean, it's just
off to the races, essentially,
spiritually. I mean, you you really
can't go back from something like that.
As a general rule, people don't.

So,

I mean, once you've I mean, you're not
breaking any new ground,

or maybe your meditation has got good enough that you're like making progress with that and don't need the the artificial assistance anymore, you know, the training wheels or water wings or whatever, then, sure.

And uh did I answer the question?

At what point at which point in one's spiritual development do you think psychedelics should be entirely avoided in favor of a strict adherence to the fifth precept? I don't consider that taking an entheogenic substance for spiritual reasons is violating the fifth precept anyway.

I mean, if it doesn't cause cloudedness

of mind, it doesn't cause heedlessness,
maybe has the opposite effect,
then I do not consider it to be a
violation of the fifth precept.

But at which point should you just stop
taking these things all together? Well,
when it stops serving you. When it
starts becoming more of a hindrance than
a help, or when it's just

I mean, it's just uh irrelevant,
unnecessary,

then you might as well stop taking it.

And that's it.

I'm done.

Poke me with a fork, I'm done.

And as I I always say at the beginning

and pretty much never do, if you have
any questions you think maybe I can
answer,

no more than three per person per
episode, please,

and just include them in the comments
under the video,

and uh

if I see them and I generally do,

I will do my best to answer them. If
they're asked in good faith. I mean,
some people might ask some kind of
you know, snotty kind of question.

Doesn't happen very often. Relatively
rare, actually. You guys are are polite,
which is good.

>> [snorts]

>> And like and subscribe if you have not done so already,

and check out the URL links below.

I do have a new book out, which you might be interested in. It's like autobiographical

essays regarding my life as a monk, mainly in Burma, but in other places also.

And uh aside from that, I say unto you, be happy.

Now, I will stop recording.

Alrighty then.

Looks like we're recording. I'm just going with that.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 194.

I am your host Panyo Boss

and 194 of course is not a prime number.

It is in fact $2 * 97$.

This is my beverage.

Only one beverage here.

I'm pretty sure that one is not a prime number. One is just kind of a weird number

that is kind of

neither prime nor not prime apparently.

And this week has just been a very

hectic week for me. I haven't really been able to relax much this weekend either.

But we'll just we're going to just power through this.

Ah.

So,

I guess

it's a good thing that we don't have a whole lot of questions because then I can relax afterwards. Be be at at leisure

for a little while.

So, I think I'm I'm just going to like dive right into this. It's it's too too deep for waiting. I'm going to just dive right in. And the first question is from

Philaletes.

And Philaletes says, "Are you aware that the Buddha was a popularly venerated saint in the medieval Catholic Church under the name Saint Josaphat?

Look it up if you don't know already.

It's fascinating." And I have already mentioned Saint Josaphat

on these videos in the past. And it is somewhat of a technical fallacy

that Saint Josaphat was really the

Buddha because Saint Josaphat is based on a previous life of the Buddha.

So, let's say I was Thomas Edison in a previous life.

Not saying I was, probably wasn't, but

let's just say it.

I was Thomas Edison in a previous life.

So, in a to say that I was Thomas Edison in a previous life is not the same as to say that I am Thomas Edison.

So, the way the Buddha became conflated with Saint Josaphat or sort of transmogrified

into Saint Josaphat, who is on the Catholic calendar of saints. I think his feast day is like in November or December. He's got at least two churches dedicated to him. One is in Sicily, I think, and one is like in southern France.

Also, before I get into the story, I have been told that there is a

monastery Catholic monastery in Germany
somewhere that has a shrine to all of
the saints. And at the shrine to Saint
Josaphat, they've just got a Buddha
statue, just the Buddha sitting in
meditation.

Representing Saint Josaphat.

But again, technically speaking,
the Buddha and Saint Josaphat were not
the same person.

So, what happened was
you have what are called Jataka stories.

The Jataka is one of the
texts in the Pali Tipitaka.

Mainly, I'm pretty sure that the only
canonical part of the Jatakas are the

verses. The actual stories are technically commentarial.

So, anyways, I don't even I don't even know for sure which

um

which Jataka story

wound up with Saint Josaphat becoming canonized as a saint. But there was some I mean, the Jataka stories, at least some of them, when the Muslims conquered Northwestern India, they liked the stories. Some of them

They liked some of the stories, which then got translated into Arabic.

And the word Bodhisattva, apparently they weren't going with Theravadan uh Jataka stories

or like the the Pali Tipitaka, because
by the time the Muslims invaded
Northwestern India, Theravada had pretty
much migrated or been pressured
southwards into South India and Sri
Lanka, and also
parts of Southeast Asia.

So, it was a different school of
Buddhism's version of the Jataka stories
that had

these stories that some of the like the
Arab traders, Arab scholars liked them.

They translated them into Arabic, and
the word Bodhisattva was translated as
Bodisaf

into Arabic. So, then these stories

like move westwards across caravan
routes. And I've read that by the time
it got to
I think it was like Georgia or Armenia,
it became like uh see
Lodisaf.

The the just the translation
of Bodhisattva becomes Bodisaf in
Arabic, then like Lodisaf
in like the language of Georgia or in
Armenian, and by the time it got into
like Western Europe, just following the
the trade routes and so forth, just
stories
just people like these stories, that it
became in in uh
let's see.

Um

I think in Greek it was Yoasaf, and then by the time it got translated into Latin, it It Josaphatus, or in English, Jehoshaphat. And the story was of this I mean it was the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. I don't know who Barlaam was. But Josaphat was the Bodhisattva in a Jataka story.

And

um the people who read these stories just assumed that it was all true.

And

this this Josaphat was so wise and so virtuous, they assumed he had to be a good Christian.

And so this

uh Josaphat

from a Jataka story that was translated and migrated from India into Europe, uh he was canonized as a saint by some medieval pope.

And as I say, his feast day is in November or December. He's got at least two churches dedicated to him. But again, it's not really the Buddha because it is the Buddha in a previous life.

So, I mean also the Buddha has been identified as the man in the moon, which is also due to a Jataka story. In this case, I know I've read the Jataka story. It's the Sasa Jataka or the the Hare

Jataka, h a r e, like a rabbit.

Where in a previous life, the Buddha was a wise rabbit. And he was rewarded I won't tell the whole story, but he was rewarded by King Sakka, Sakka king of gods, who uh

squeezed the juice out of a mountain and drew a figure of a a hare, you know, a rabbit, on the moon. So, I mean in the tropics, you kind of see the moon sort of sideways, so that the man in the moon, he's got like if if you look at the face on the moon of the man in the moon, he's got like two streaks coming out of one eye. Those are the ears of the rabbit. You just kind of turn it

sideways, it looks pretty much like a rabbit. And that was also the Buddha in a previous life.

So, not only is the Buddha considered to be a Catholic saint, he's also the man in the moon.

Let's see. So, Phil Atheos, the the question here is are you aware that the Buddha was a popularly venerated saint in the medieval Catholic Church under the name Saint Josaphat? Well, technically, it was a previous existence of the Buddha. So, it's pushing it to say that it really is the Buddha who was a Catholic saint. But, I used to call myself

um

you know,

I used to call myself like

uh Fray Panyo Basso de las Tres Ratanas.

And, you know, I was a

a member of the Order of Saint Josaphat.

So, I could pass myself off as a

Catholic monk.

So, we Buddhists are

technically Catholics

of the mem- of the Order of Saint

Josaphat.

So, I guess uh I'm just going to move on

to the next question here.

This is from Maitreya Buddha.

And Maitreya Buddha says, "What will you

do next year when your woman's birthday

will land on the day you do your Q&A's?"

Well,

this year it landed on the day I I do my Q&A's. My woman's birthday was on a Saturday, and I usually, not always, but usually record my Q&A videos on Saturdays.

As of right now while I'm doing this, while I'm recording this, it is Saturday evening, and my woman is at the other end of the house wallpapering a hallway.

So,

I mean, I mean, I'm flexible.

I can do these Q&A videos on Saturday or Sunday, but

but

there can there's there may be some real

disruption in my schedule coming up

because

I've I kind of

mentioned in a previous Q&A that I may

be getting another job soon. That is

still a possibility.

And if I get that job, I'm going to have

weird hours. So, I'm going to be working

weekends sometimes. I'm going to be

working I'm going to have weekends off

sometimes. I'm going to be doing day

shift sometimes. I'm going to be doing

night shift sometimes. And so

it's it's going to be weird. I may have

to like record some of my Q&A videos

like on a Thursday or a Friday.

I'm not exactly sure. I think

Sunday, Monday is one of the the shifts.

And and choose Let's see. Tuesday,

Wednesday, is a shift.

And then Friday, Saturday. So, it'll be
alternating 4-day weeks with 3-day

weeks.

So, I think I'm pretty I'm pretty sure
that

all the time I'll have Saturday or
Sunday off.

But, the hours are just going to be like
casplooeey. I mean, there's

there's no telling. I mean, I'm going to
have to start doing it assuming that I
do start doing it in order to find out
exactly how this new schedule is going

to work.

But, no worries. I won't be making you guys get up at 5:00 in the morning to watch these videos.

So, you you have no need to have concerns on that score.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is kind of an interesting one.

I mean, it's it's a very compound question. I mean, you could tease a number of questions out of this question.

This is from Jeffrey. And Jeffrey says, "What do you think of the idea of Christianity being based upon Egyptian

history? That the teachings of Jesus being based in the ancient Egyptian wisdom texts, the Essenes, and his character being a mix of Thoth, Christ of the Essene, and Tutankhamun.

That Abraham is based on Uriah, the man from Ur."

So, that's that's quite a number of questions here.

Um let's just kind of separate them out a little bit. Let's just tease these apart, if you will.

Uh

let's see. His character being a mix of Thoth, Christ Okay, that's a different one.

Let's just tease that one out.

And that Abraham is based on Uriah,
the man from Ur. Okay.

So, technically this could be
multiplied into four questions, which is
transgressive.

But, let's just wade into this cuz it's
all like this big lump question that's
just sort of inchoate,
if you will.

So, the first part of this question,
"What do you think of the idea of
Christianity being based upon Egyptian
history?" Well, I mean there is a little
bit of Egyptian legend
in the Old Testament, you know, like

Joseph going to Egypt during a famine
and and and becoming like prime minister
of Egypt, which of course isn't in any
of the Egyptian inscriptions. And then,
you know, Moses leading the the
Israelites back out of Egypt, this kind
of stuff.

So,

also

Israel and Judah, the kingdoms of Israel
and Judah, which were

you know, approximately where the the
nation of Israel is today,

um

they were under the Egyptian sphere of
influence

a lot of the time.

That

sometimes they were under like the Assyrian or like Babylonian. Like they were like a satellite of Assyria or Babylonia. Sometimes they were like a satellite of Egypt. And in their more prosperous times, they were just kind of like a neutral buffer state in between these two regional powers, Egypt and whatever Mesopotamian power happened to be like the power at the time.

So, like in the the chronicles of the Old Testament, you've got like the bad kings who set up pagan shrines. And then you got the good kings who knocked down the pagan shrines and just follow the

Jewish or proto-Jewish religion. A lot of that was just political. Like if Israel or Judah was a satellite state of Assyria, then you pretty much had to honor the Assyrian gods or you'd get stomped. Or if you were like a satellite state of of Egypt, you'd have to have some kind of reverence, at least superficial reverence, like ritual reverence, for the Egyptian gods.

And so as when it was like a like a neutral buffer state in between the two powers, that's when you had the good kings who didn't worship these pagan gods.

At least sometimes.

Um I have read that Chris or like the
the the Hebrews
got their idea, or at least were
influenced towards monotheism
by the Egyptians, which may sound kind
of
like counterintuitive
or paradoxical because the Egyptians
were notoriously polytheist a huge
pantheon of thousands of deities. But,
back in the the the early days of the my
the the nation of Israel, the
Israelites, you know, after the time of
Moses, I suppose. I should have looked
this up, like the dating, when when like
Moses is supposed to have existed,

compared with um the Egyptian experiment with monotheism. Cuz it was um like Jeffrey mentions King Tut, you know, the famous King Tut King Tut Tutankhamun, and his father Akhenaten was like he he was the one who moved away from Egypt the Egyptian pantheon and became a monotheist. He worshipped only the sun god.

And King Tutankhamun, who was kind of like an unimportant king, but he's important to us because his tomb is one of the only tombs of a pharaoh that weren't raided and robbed thousands of years ago.

So, in the the early 1900s, they

actually found an unplundered
tomb of an Egyptian pharaoh, and that
was King Tut.

So,

it may be that Christianity derives its
monotheism

partly through Egyptian influence. And
some of their other ideas are partly due
to Egyptian influence. But, I do not
think that Christianity is largely based
on Egyptian history. It's more firmly
based on like Semitic Canaanite sort of
religion that

possibly migrated westwards

from Mesopotamia, which

I mean, that's what the Old Testament

says also because Abraham, the father of the Israelites, you know, the patriarch, the first patriarch, came from Mesopotamia.

So,

what do I think of the idea of Christianity being based upon Egyptian history? I think there's like some indirect influence of Egyptian history and Egyptian religion through like the brief experiment the Egyptians had with monotheism under Akhenaten and Tutankhamun.

But, I don't think that there really is like a strong link between them. Like like this causes that.

Which leads to the second part of

Jeffrey's questions, that the teachings of Jesus being based in the ancient Egyptian wisdom texts.

Well, I mean,

if you read the ancient Egyptian wisdom texts, it's largely just kind of mythology and magic. I really have not found much actual wisdom in the ancient Egyptian religion.

Like I've read the Egyptian Book of the Dead, or at least one one English translation of one version of it. And I mean, there's not much wisdom there at all. I mean, for that matter, there's not much wisdom in the Old Testament of the Bible, either.

I mean, there's some,
but I mean, it's is relatively
superficial. It's just this elaborate
like mythology
of gods and their powers and and like
spells, you know, it's like some of
these tombs of
I mean, not Egyptian pharaohs
necessarily, but queens or high-ranking
ministers of state and so forth, the
walls of these undestroyed tombs are
just covered with spells. the the
essentially like incantations that are
supposed to guide you through like some
sort of
other world into like some sort of
eternal heaven state.

And I mean like the ancient Egyptians believed that you were going to you needed your body intact in order to live in this future state.

And all this like paganism, you know, animal-headed gods and so forth. I mean there really was not a whole lot of wisdom to it.

I mean you look at the the early Greek poets and you know their stories about the Greek gods, there's not a whole lot of wisdom there. I mean the Greek gods were just essentially humans with longer lifespans and more power. You know, they were still petty and

sometimes vicious and kind of rapey.

This kind of stuff.

You know, the Trojan War supposedly was based on a beauty contest between three goddesses and they're all trying to bribe the judge. And then when he has to pick one, the other two want revenge.

This kind of stuff.

And Egyptian religion, I mean there might be a bunch of stuff in there that I just haven't seen.

But I have failed to find any profound wisdom in ancient Egyptian religion. It was more just like this elaborate mythology and magic spells and so forth.

So, the teachings of Jesus, again there there may be some slight

influence like it may be that the Jews got sort of got the idea of monotheism from the Egyptian brief experiment with monotheism.

Which didn't last very long after King Tut. I don't think he had any children. Then you had like Ramses the Great or somebody took over and just I mean they just kind of defaced the statues of these monotheistic pharaohs and just pretended like they didn't exist.

They just went right back to the Egyptian polytheism.

So, he mentions the Essenes.

I mean the Essenes, there has been some conjecture that the Essenes were

influenced by Buddhism more than they were influenced by ancient Egyptian religion.

That you had King Ashoka of India sending missionaries to like the the Hellenistic states.

Um and that

it may be that some of the the early proto-Jews got the idea of like monasticism, that kind of thing from like Ashokan missionary efforts through like essentially Buddhism more than ancient Egypt.

I mean

I I don't see a whole lot of similarity between like the Essenes or the early Christians on one hand and ancient

Egyptian religion on the other.

I think I already mentioned the the Egyptians even when they did become monotheistic, their one god was the sun.

So, and not the son of god, but like the star that up there that that our planet is orbiting around.

Although I I'm not sure if Jeffrey believes that the earth is orbiting the sun, so I shouldn't I shouldn't push the issue.

So, let's see. Then the next part was the character of Jesus being a mix of Thoth,

Christ of the Essene or the Essenes maybe, and Tutankhamun.

And no, I don't I don't see that at all.

I think

I mean, there's there's almost no mention of Egyptian religion in the Bible. Like the New Testament, it's like Jesus was I assume Jesus really existed.

And

I would also accept that of some of the details of the life of Jesus and the teachings of Jesus may be conflated to some degree with other teachings, especially John the Baptist. I think John the Baptist was like the spiritual teacher of Jesus.

You know, Jesus I think I've mentioned this in the previous Q&A. Jesus probably Yeshua was a carpenter's son living in

this small town of Nazareth in I mean,
north of Judea.

I mean, he was in Galilee, which in
eight more ancient times was seriously
the kingdom of Israel, which was
distinct from the kingdom of Judah.

But he was spiritually oriented. He was
not satisfied being a carpenter. He
hears about John the Baptist as a great
teacher and he goes and joins John the
Baptist's spiritual camp or whatever.

And while he is there,
the spirit of the Lord descends into him
like a dove. In other words, he has some
kind of profound awakening experience.

And then when John the Baptist gets

thrown into prison,

Jesus becomes the leader of the group.

But Jesus kind of went his own way. He I

mean, he took some of the disciples. I

mean,

um there is some disagreement in the

four Gospels with regard to how Jesus

got his apostles. Like I think it's in

the synoptic Gospels where it says Jesus

just walking along and he sees some

fishermen mending their nets and he just

says, "Follow me." And they just

get up and follow him. But more

realistic is

hints at least in the Gospel according

to John that as some of his apostles at

least like Peter were originally

disciples of John the Baptist. They met at John the Baptist camp and then when John the Baptist was imprisoned Jesus decided not to just stay out in the desert but to go into the towns and preach the gospel.

Some of these

previous disciples of John the Baptist became his first apostles and followed him.

So

let's see here. Yeah, I don't think there's a whole lot of thoughts. I mean there can be like indirect cultural things that are just slight in my opinion.

I don't know who Christ of the Essene is. I mean Christ is based on a Greek word

Christos which just means anointed and is like the Greek translation of the word Messiah or the original Hebrew of the word Messiah.

You know, the anointed.

The king of Israel, king of the Jews.

And Tutankhamun again, I mean he was really like an insignificant pharaoh. He died as a teenager. He didn't accomplish very much.

Um

so yeah, I don't think he really made much of an impression
1300 years later during the time of

Jesus of Nazareth.

You know, just the

like the Egyptian experiment with

monotheism may have influenced Hebrew

monotheism.

That's about as far as it would go in my

opinion. And Tutankhamun was one of

these

monotheist pharaohs.

But he lived like over a thousand years

before the time of Jesus.

So

yeah, I think the character of Jesus was

pretty much the character of Jesus that

was glorified when he was

considered to be the son of God,

especially by

in the Gospel of John, where Jesus is the creator of the universe. He is the Logos.

And I mean, what Jesus taught, probably a lot of it he got from his teacher, which is probably John the Baptist, and John the Baptist probably got a lot of that from his teachers, which some of whom at least were possibly Essenes.

So, let's just move on to the next part of this question. Abraham, based on Uriah, the man from Ur. Well, the only Uriah I know in the Bible is Uriah the Hittite, who lived during the the time of King David.

You know, he was the the husband of
Bathsheba, you know, of of Bathsheba
gate fame.

So, yeah, I don't I don't think that
Abraham would be based on that Uriah,
especially because that Uriah wasn't
even considered to have come from Ur,
but from like Hatti, that like the the
kingdom of the Hittites, which would be
centered in what is now Turkey.

So, I mean, Abraham as the the patriarch
of

um

you know, the Hebrews and since the the
Arabs also.

You know, the Arabs were Ishmaelites,

you know, they're they're also descended from Abraham.

Um

yeah, I think it might be just a coincidence

that Uriah in the Old Testament has the same two letters at the beginning of his name as the city of Ur in Sumeria.

Uh

yeah, I mean, you know, that there's just a different Uriah that I'm unaware of, but I'm pretty sure the only the only famous Uriah in the Old Testament would be Uriah the Hittite, who King David gets killed because he was a soldier in King David's armies, so that King David could mess around with

Bathsheba and marry her
after she became a widow.

So, yeah, who Abraham is ultimately
based on

that I don't know. That's just lost in
the mists, the murky mists of of time,
ancient prehistory.

So,

I guess I I kind of answered the the
multiple
compound question there as well as I am
able.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the
next one. This is from Seovac N C Pad
Zidona.

And Seovac N C Pad Zidona says,

You

Excuse me. He didn't do that. Seovac did not cough.

Seovac N C Pad Zidona says,

You say the good and bad have to cancel out, but can you tell me how that would work for what the Buddha calls blameless pleasure of the jhanas? The first three jhanas come with immense pleasure, and there are seemingly no downsides whatsoever if it is blameless. It makes the idea of it all balancing out seem at least not to match with the Dhamma.

Well, first of all, the first three jhanas don't necessarily come with immense pleasure.

I mean, you are able to experience

pleasure and pain up until you get into fourth jhana.

And then, I mean, the pleasure and pain is just physical and not mental in third jhana,

if I remember correctly.

I mean, if I just remember what it says in the texts correctly.

So,

I mean, there is PT, which is a kind of like sometimes it's translated as rapture. I mean, it could be a sort of like

like pleasurable interest or enthusiasm, that kind of thing. But, I have found in my own practice as a monk that that PT

happens like in the early stages when you're not used to it yet. But, then when you get used to it it just becomes more of a neutral state. Jhana is is not so much you're just wallowing in pleasure that it's largely neutral.

So, anyways, let's just say that there is pleasure. You know, I'm sure a lot of people get a lot of bliss, they just get blissed out when they meditate. So, let's just kind of go with with that angle.

So, I mean, how do you get there? It's It's It doesn't just go one way. It's just if you have pleasure, there must be pain that that comes after that or or accompanies it. I mean, it it So long as

it balances out in the long run. So,
it's In a case like that, you're
starting off with the pain. You're
starting off with like rigorous
austerity and self-restraint,
which is damned unpleasant sometimes.

And so, the payoff
of that unpleasantness
is this blissed-out state of meditation.
It's It's like Jesus talks about this
sort of thing like in the Sermon on the
Mount where he's talking about how it's
good to be miserable now in order to go
to heaven later.

In his case, it's not really an like an
equitable trade because you're just

talking a few decades of being miserable
now for an eternity of pleasure, which
doesn't balance out.

But, we're not talking Christianity
here. Well, I I I kind of was.

But we're talking Buddhism more than
Christianity.

Even though the pre the previous
question was about Christianity.

So, yeah, I mean it would be
you're you're blissed out in your
meditation, which helps to compensate
for just this like discomfort and sweat
and bugs biting you and just austerity
in general as a monk.

Of course, there are some people that
like live in Marin County, California.

They do yoga on the beach.

You know, they they have like acai berry smoothies.

You know, they're they're living in a kind of a

a lower level heaven realm.

And some of those people might be able to just go right into jhana and be all blissed out. And in a case like that, you know, it's still the principle of subjective equilibrium applies, where they're going to be having other stuff that balances that out when they're not meditating.

Anyways, just about any kind of pleasure, just pleasure in and of itself

is blameless because that's just the fruition of past karma or present karma, but it's just like the the result of something.

I mean, it's just kind of an involuntary thing that happens, so to speak.

So,

seemingly no downsides whatsoever. If it is blameless, it makes the idea of it all balancing out seem at least not to match with the dhamma. No, not really.

I mean, C of action, C of bad zero na. I mean, if he's

going with the the jhanas in the text, then he should also be going with the the bhikkhu's life in the text, which is

a rough, unpleasant life a lot of the time.

So, this is the bliss of the jhanas is a kind of payoff. You know, it's it's compensation

for all this austerity that and self-restraint and frustration that monks are having to go through enduring heat and cold and sickness and thirst and hunger and all the rest.

And then they get into this bliss of meditation.

So, it can still be said to balance out.

And like I said, even if you get into these these blissful states, I mean if you're really good at it, I mean it just

you get used to it and it just becomes neutral.

So, I'm just going to move on to see if action C 5 Z is in on his next question here.

Please make the best argument you can that idealism is true and that there is nothing outside of conscious experience that actually exists. I'm curious why you think

what we can experience is all that actually exists. I know the alternatives are also not provable, but I'm curious for the case of idealism itself. Well, there's there's various ways you can you can approach this. You know, it's sort of like Immanuel Kant.

Immanuel Kant was I I can't remember exactly what kind of idealist he is he is called because he didn't deny that there's physical matter. He's just saying we can't know it. We can't possibly know that physical matter even if it does exist. All we can know is mental states.

And so, um you know, it's just sort of like this assumption that there's physical matter out there, but his successors, you know, like Schopenhauer and Hegel being the two most famous, I mean it was like it's redundant. I mean it's unnecessary.

You know, it doesn't even do anything

really necessarily. I mean

whether there's matter out there or not,

our experiences are exactly the same.

Because, I mean, all we really know is

mental states. So, it was like the the

German idealists of the the 19th

century, mainly,

I mean, it just just it just seemed

redundant. It was like, "Now, why even

bother even like discussing it when I

mean it's it's so problematic, you can't

possibly prove it's there?

You might as well just assume it isn't

there. It's like Occam's razor, it just

simplifies things. And also, it

simplifies things like psychic powers,

or not even psychic powers. I mean, how

does your consciousness

like control physical matter through

your nervous system even? I mean, let

alone like moving objects, you know,

by psychic means,

like psychokinesis.

I mean, even moving your own body, like

I'm waving my arms around. I mean, in a

way, that's kind of psychokinesis, too.

So, there's no way really to explain it.

And scientists really don't know how

to explain how like conscious experience

relates

to the physical system of our body.

So, I mean, that's a complication. It

just still isn't proven anything. Like

like Searle backs says you can't prove anything.

Like

I think it was

Spinoza was one of the first

modern philosophers to point this out.

Hume also like pounded away at this that the only thing you can know for sure is what is completely contained within your own mind.

So, I mean, you could work out theories of Euclid, you could prove that you can cause a checkmate in chess with your opponent having only a king, and all you've got is a king, a bishop, and a knight. You can you can work that out entirely in your head. And so, you can

kind of prove that conclusively. But
with regard to matters of fact existing
out there somewhere,
you can't prove [—]

I mean, it's just beyond your
experience.

Your experience is what you are
experiencing, which is mental states.

So, I do think that one of the
best bits of evidence
that that

mind is all there is. I mean, just
setting aside like Buddhist texts,
especially Mahayana Buddhist texts,
the Mahayana Buddhists were kind of
like, I mean, like the Theravada

Buddhists or like the Buddha himself was sort of like Kant, where, you know, mind is the emphasis, but he wasn't like openly denying the existence of physical matter. His successors, in this case Mahayana Buddhists, they just denied physical matter.

And one of the reasons for that is how do you explain how mind can like influence matter?

I mean, it's like nobody knows other than just saying that mind is just an epiphenomenon of electrochemical processes in a gray lump of meat.

But, I mean, that's not really persuasive to me either.

But again,

this

another another angle of this is

something that I pound away at a lot,

that a lot of people just don't get, I

think, and that multiplicity is

necessarily perceptual.

Any kind of variation, any kind of

difference

is necessarily an artifact of

perception.

Because in order for you to have two

things, or even just have one thing,

you got to have like relations.

That one thing has to be same as or

different from in order for it to exist

as a discrete entity.

And same as and different from do not exist out there somewhere. That's in your mind.

So, you want to believe that there's like some multiplicity of things out there and forces and and particles or whatever.

I mean, it's not really possible. What people are doing is they're trying like a scientist is trying to understand the universe if there was no human mind there. Just originally like modern science was trying to see the world the way God sees it, but that kind of has fallen by the wayside.

So, you just want to know what's really

there. But what's really there, what they're trying to do is dismiss human perception and then sneak it back in through the back door because you can't I mean, without human perception, it's just void.

And any kind of multiplicity, I mean, I've I've pounded away at this, but I I don't think I'm very persuasive.

Any kind of multiplicity requires relations.

It requires perception to differentiate.

And without perception, there is no differentiation.

Without same as and different from, which don't exist out there but are

artifacts of perception, there is no
same as or different from.

It's just void.

So, it just seems way more elegant, more
explanatory, and more likely to me
that

the the universe or samsara as we
experience it is a manifestation of
perception.

Ah, sweet tea.

You got to drink it in the south.

The machine at work in the break room
ran out of sweet tea last last week and
just all hell broke loose.

But I digress.

So there was something else I was going
to say

with regard to this,

but now I can't recall what it is.

So,

yeah, I guess I should just move on.

And this this is the third question from

Seal of Action C Bad Zina. He says,

"Please analyze the karma of Epstein."

And technically that's not a question.

There's no question mark at all. It's

it's a request, but let's not quibble.

Please analyze the karma of Epstein.

And he's talking about the famous

Epstein

who had the Little Saint James Island

and the teenage girls performing

massages on wealthy celebrities and so

forth.

Karma of Epstein. I mean,

in a way he's kind of like a a human

Mara figure.

And I mean,

I should elaborate. I mean, I should

kind of be a little more specific that

Mara, you know, it's the Buddhist devil,

so to speak. I mean, he's not really the

god of evil. He's called Mara the evil

one because in a way he is the god of

samsara. But Mara, he's not in hell. He

is in a high heaven realm with his three

voluptuous daughters. He's living in the

highest heaven realm of the sensual

sphere.

And so, some beings, they just have like

this

very hyper-samsaric

sensual success kind of momentum going,
which is their karma. You know, that's
part of their karma anyway.

You know, it's like how do you get to be
a rock star? How you get How do you get
to be a king?

You know, it's it's you just have this
karma that leads you into this realm of
plenty and

not necessarily satisfaction but but
sensual pleasure and so forth. This
relative power
wealth, that kind of stuff.

He was born into that and had this

momentum going of

sensual pleasure. I mean, he liked

girls, apparently.

Including teenage girls.

And that

I mean, there there are some people who

argue that most of the dallying with

teenage girls wasn't so much for

blackmailing

like celebrities or politicians, but he

he just was into them himself.

Um but even so, I mean, with the guard

to the the blackmailing and him being a

Mossad agent and all that, a lot of this

is just conjecture. A lot of it is just

kind of lurid imagination.

And I don't know where fact and lurid

imagination, I mean, where what is the
dividing line with regard to Epstein,
Jeffrey Epstein.

But I mean, he was really I mean, he had
supposedly

I remember when they first raided his
his townhouse in New York City, I think
it was in, they talked about having this
like seizing a video library.

And I mean, whatever happened to that? I
mean, that just disappeared. That
probably got

just erased, burned, whatever.

I mean, assuming that it even existed.

So, I mean, I mean,

Epstein, I mean, there there's there've

been lots and lots of Epsteins. I mean, there have been like kings and and rock stars and lots of people who have just been doing all kinds of like the Medici. You you go back to like Renaissance Italy. A lot of those those politician types, I I they that put Epstein to shame.

Some of I mean, there's stories of like the Medici having like these pleasure barges on a river between two political jurisdictions so that they were in like a legal no man's land and they'd be like molesting nuns or like torturing people for entertainment on these barges. This kind of stuff, Roman emperors I mean, there've been no no shortage of

just sociopathic kings and so forth that could just do whatever they want like Caligula for example. I mean, some of the stuff about Caligula may maybe exaggerated, but even if 20% of it turned out to be true, I mean, Caligula was way beyond Epstein.

So, I mean, like some of these kings, I mean, they just see it they see some teenage girl that they like or a teenage boy, it's just like bring them to me.

And there's nothing anyone can do. He is the law.

So, yeah, Epstein was pretty much along those lines. I mean, what he was doing that was like with regard to

blackmailing and that kind of stuff, I really can't say.

Some of it may have been going on for all I know, but still just because people are saying it on social media, it doesn't necessarily mean that the thing is true.

Or that he was like a Mossad agent, maybe he was.

I can't know for sure.

But just think of Mara in in like Buddhism or some of the even the kings in the Buddha's time.

Even the Buddha himself before he renounced the world, he lived in a man I mean, just according to the legend, he lived in in three

palaces and only beautiful young women lived in these palaces with him. Harems of beautiful dancing girls.

Probably some of them teenage because back then

it wasn't considered to be that that outrageous of a thing. You know, some in the some of the Pali Suttas is describing a woman at her peak of attractiveness is describing a woman that's like 15 or 16 years old.

So, I mean, there have been so many Epsteins and it's just like Mara, the evil one. I mean, what kind of karma got him to be like overlord of samsara, so to speak. Overlord of the sensual

realms, anyway.

Mara trying to lure people away from enlightenment.

So, yeah, I mean, you can't really analyze the karma of someone you don't know very well.

But, I mean, there have been countless Epsteins in this world. I mean, it's not like he's some sort of singular phenomenon.

I'm sure there have been a lot a lot of people more depraved than Epstein.

In in just I mean, that are walking the streets right now.

Powerful people, you know, musicians, for example.

Rich ones, not poor musicians. Not the guy with like his guitar case open on the sidewalk playing the guitar for handouts, not that guy.

Rock stars, this kind of thing.

P. Diddy.

So.

I mean, there's really not much else I can say, I suppose. Not that I can think of, anyway. So, I'm moving to the next question. This is from Drip Walker.

And Drip Walker says, are there any spiritual benefits of going vegetarian?

To give you some context, someone said their meditation improved after becoming a vegetarian, but I am not sure if it

was Buddhist meditation or some other weird esoteric meditation. Back then I was not that spiritual as now to go into specifics, but somehow he said he is a Buddhist.

Also, keep in mind this is a guy from California. Hope that helps in any way.

Well, Mahayana Buddhists tend to be vegetarian.

So,

yeah, the early Buddhists like Theravada Buddhists,

um they weren't vegetarian just because it was so early that India in general wasn't vegetarian. Monks were beggars.

Beggars can't be choosers. And so, they weren't allowed to eat meat that was

killed on their behalf, but if it was just leftovers from somebody else's meal, then it was allowable.

The Buddha himself apparently ate meat.

So, we're going with Buddhist ethics. I

mean, if you can do something

without unwholesome mental states,

like eating food with without

unwholesome mental states, you're you're

doing nothing wrong.

I mean, if you're just wallowing in the

pleasure of some vegan gourmet dish, I

assume vegans have gourmet cooking,

then I mean, that is

unethical. I mean, that's that's like

you're doing something worse

by just wallowing in the sensuality of being a vegan foodie than you are by just eating meat that is leftover from somebody else's meal, and you're just eating it just in a neutral mental state in order to keep yourself healthy so that you can continue practicing Dharma.

Um I have I do remember reading in a book by Ram Dass, one of my first spiritual teachers, who was born Jewish, incidentally, but he said that uh the main benefit of being vegetarian is like a spiritual benefit is that when animals are killed, let's say there's an

animal like a cow at a slaughterhouse and they are freaked out. I mean, they smell the blood, they know that things are not good. You know, they're trying to get away, they're scared. And so you've got these like hormones, fear hormones. I think Ram Dass called them purines, going through their system. And then when you eat that, you're eating some of that, which is going to be influencing your mind somewhat because cow hormones really aren't so different from human hormones because we're both mammals.

Genetically, a cow and a human are I would guess somewhere in the the range

of 90% identical.

Definitely up in the 80s anyhow.

So from the point of view of Ram Dass
anyway,

that that would be the main spiritual
detriment of eating meat is you're
eating these

like chemicals that can influence your
mind. And like you're going with like
yoga,

you've got three different kinds of
food. You've got like sattvic food,
which is like dairy products, fruits,
grains, nuts, this sort of thing.

Then you've got um

rajasic food, which is causes like
increase of passion. And that would be

meat and also like spicy food.

And then you've got tamasic food, which
is leads towards darkness and lethargy
and

um

it would be like stale or like food
that's kind of going off. I had one I um
I think it's a he was like a Ayurvedic
kind of guy in California said that
mushrooms are tamasic.

You know, they just you know, they grow
in the darkness [__] and this kind of
stuff. You know, I was thinking maybe
blue cheese, maybe something like that
might count as tamasic.

But,

um meat would be rajasic, which would increase like amount the amount of passion in your system. If you go with, you know, like yogic interpretations of the the influence of food on the system.

But, I mean, the Buddha ate meat. Jesus apparently ate meat.

Most Tibetans, like living in Tibet, have have eaten meat because, you know, crops just don't grow very well on the Tibetan Plateau.

So, I mean, it is possible to become enlightened while eating meat. It's just that it could be it could have like subtle influences on

on like your

your mind or your system. But, also, I think the main detriment of eating meat is people that feel like it's wrong somehow and do it anyway.

And if you feel like it's wrong and you do it anyway, then there's just going to be like this guilty conscience kind of stuff that is going to interfere with with your practice.

So, I mean, if you think eating meat is wrong, you know, deep down you have like trepidation or doubts about whether it's it's cool to be eating meat or not, then maybe you should avoid eating meat. I mean, when

in doubt, you know, avoid the situation in a from a moral point of view, if possible.

But, I mean, from the point of view of early Buddhism,

um killing is wrong, but eating meat is not. And then, of course, you've got modern people saying, "Well, if killing is wrong and you're eating meat, you are endorsing killing." But, Buddhist ethics do not work that way. I mean,

Western even a lot of Western Buddhists just cannot wrap their head around the idea that Western utilitarian ethics, modern Western utilitarian ethics are not the only valid ethic to go with.

And from the Buddhist point of view,
it's just subjective. If you can do
something without unwholesome mental
states, you have done nothing wrong.
It's just that some things are very
difficult to do without unwholesome
mental states, like
attacking somebody, telling lies, this
kind of thing.

So, I guess I answered that question.

I'm just going to move on to Drip
Walker's second question, which is kind
of a follow-up on the first one. He
says, "What kind of meat do you eat?"

And

I mean, I'm not really fussy.

Um my woman might argue that. She was going to cook up something with eggplant in it today, and I told her eggplant's better if you fry it not like put it into curry because it turns into this mush when you put it into curry. So, then she just kind of thought that I was being fussy.

But uh

yeah, I mean, I eat pretty much all kinds of meat, although

I've never really liked pork all that much. Possibly I was like a Who knows? There was some sort of pig taboo in in my culture in a previous existence.

Who knows? But I was never really much into pork and and watching documentaries

about factory farms, also just the way they treat pigs is horrible. Also, chickens, I had my mind poisoned against chicken

by watching these documentaries.

Although, nowadays, partly because of these kind of documentaries, the treatment of chickens has improved in that a lot of eggs that you buy at the grocery store now is, you know, say free-range

chickens. You know, it's like they're not in these little cages anymore.

Although what is free-range mean? It could just mean that they're wandering around in the dark in a big warehouse or

something.

Steak, I eat beef.

I like steak, I have to admit. I was a vegetarian for many years up until I became a monk. I was a vegetarian as a monk for maybe 2 years. But then when I'm in Burma, I was living in central Burma, which is just dirt poor.

Just I mean, one reason why it's so poor is because it's semi-desert.

That is very arid there and at least one out of every 3 years the crops fail due to lack of rain.

And so, if you don't eat meat, I mean, your options are very limited trying to survive in like central Burma.

Lemyethna Village, for example, or

Pindaya Village, or let's see, what was the other one? Tezu Village.

It's like you get pink chewy rice. These are very poor people. Pink chewy rice and badass cookies. Just most most Westerners would choose not to eat these cookies.

And like pork.

I mean, I've I've eaten every edible part of a pig, I'm sure. Maybe not eyeballs, but aside from that, I've pretty much eaten every edible part of a pig.

Pig brains, just like pig spleen, pig blood that has been congealed into something that looks kind of like liver

but isn't.

So,

yeah, I've

I eat pretty much any kind of meat

that's that's put in front of me,

really. I wouldn't want to eat octopus.

I like octopi.

So, I wouldn't eat that. I mean, I

wouldn't I wouldn't eat like dog meat or

something, yes. But, the standard kinds

of meat, you know, chicken, pork, beef,

lamb sometimes, you know, I eat that

stuff.

My my woman does, too, and she's a very

good cook. She makes She makes steaks

that are just

to die for.

Especially uh for the cow to die for, I guess.

I mean, I eat burger fast food burgers occasionally.

Just the other day at work, we got a safety snack,

which was like Zaxby's chicken sandwiches, and I ate mine.

I don't know. I was I was a good boy.

So, anyways, you know, I just eat meat nowadays, and fish.

Even Even when I was a vegetarian, I was a vegetarian from from my teenage years up until I was a monk for like 2 years.

So, it was like 10 years that I was vegetarian. But, still I would eat like

invertebrates,

like shrimp, that kind of thing. And I

suppose

maybe I can

see if we can get this computer to stop

making the beeping noises cuz somebody

is

beeping away on Discord.

So, let's just go like this. See if this

works.

Okay.

Yeah, I don't hear it anymore.

I'm on the ball. I've got what it takes.

So, I guess I should just move on to the

next question.

This is from Damma River.

And Damma River says, "What are your

thoughts on the 22 Sri Lankan monks
caught at the airport smuggling drugs?"

Well, I'm not surprised. I mean, I have
mentioned more than once in these Q&A
videos that

Sri Lanka has probably the highest
proportion of crooked monks of any
Theravada Buddhist country.

You know, and you're going to find them
anywhere you find Theravada Buddhist
monks pretty much.

Um but still in Sri Lanka, it's just
mainstream that you you can see in like
some some big city in Sri Lanka, like
Colombo, you can see a monk just walking
down the street with a briefcase who has

a job. He's earning a salary. This kind of thing.

In fact, um I knew this one American monk who told me that he had a teacher who was a Sri Lankan monk who said that even having sex is allowable for monks so long as they practice coitus interruptus, the sin of Onan, which is just nonsense.

But I mean, you're going to find crooked monks in Thailand. You're going to find crooked monks in Burma, also. Just because somebody is ordained as a monk doesn't necessarily mean that they are a saint or a saintly person. A lot of a lot of like Asian people who are ordained as monks, you know,

just who are born and raised in a
Theravada Buddhist culture, they'll
become monks not because they have like
a vocation, like a spiritual calling,
but just because

I mean, they want to live an easy life
or they want the free education of a
monastic university. They want higher
social status.

They don't want to be a subsistence
farmer working their ass off to eat
crappy food when they could just be a
monk sitting around having good food
handed to them.

So, there's a lot of a lot of monks that
are like that, especially the ones that

were born and raised in Theravada

Buddhist cultures like Western monks.

The amount of crooked Western monks is proportionally less than the amount of of crooked like monks who were born and raised into a Theravada Buddhist culture because a Western monk or anybody who was not raised in a Buddhist culture is having to go against their own culture, possibly going against the wishes of their own friends and family. I mean, they have to really be serious about becoming a monk and usually it's not just because they want to live an easy life.

They were jilted at the altar and so in disillusionment, they just join a

monastery. One of my teachers was like that. He Or maybe he wasn't jilted at the altar, but he told me he was he was one of my my first teachers. He's my first teacher of monastic discipline. Who said that he became a monk because um his girlfriend dumped him and so he was disillusioned and joined a monastery.

Another one of my teachers told me that he became a monk just because his family was poor subsistence farmers living in some remote arid village. So, they just decided they wanted to live an easy life.

So,

with regard to these 22 Sri Lankan

monks, I mean

um I mean I know little more about the

situation than what is right here in

this question. You know, it was it was

in the news a few days ago. 22 Sri

Lankan monks were arrested for trying to

smuggle some god awful amount of

cannabis into Sri Lanka.

I mean, it was

I mean, it was the it was a lot. I don't

remember how much it was. I think it

might might have been more than 100 lb.

It was it was a lot.

But for some reason, this reminds me of

a story somebody told me about of There

was a a monastery in in Montreal, Canada
where they brought over it was like 12
novices. I think they were from from Sri
Lanka.

And so they they invite these 12 novices
to live at this monastery in Toronto.

I think it was Toronto or Montreal, I
don't remember which.

And as soon as they got the Canadian
equivalent of a green card,
every single one of them dropped out
because I mean that was it. I mean they
just wanted to to live in Canada and and
have like an easy comfortable life.

But there are some

some I mean I've told some horror

stories. I mean I don't want to really poison people's minds against the Sangha cuz there there are really wise saintly monks also. I mean it's sort of like the situation in Burma especially. I have the most experience with Burma. It's it's like medieval Europe when it was Catholic. You know, it's like in in medieval Catholic Europe you had some genuine saints and the the the lay people just had unquestioning faith in their religion. It's but the the clergy as a whole tended to be pretty damn corrupt.

And that's the way it is in Burma and it may be even worse in Sri Lanka. There are some reform movements in like the

forests of of central Sri Lanka where
you've got serious monks again.

But most of the the monkhood in Sri
Lanka is just kind of degenerated.

It's due to largely cultural reasons and
just human nature, anthropological
reasons.

And so new monks that are joining the
Sangha, they're just following along
with what the other monks are doing and
so they just follow along with
corruption and so it just the
corruption's perpetuated or gradually
gets worse because it's easier to go
downhill than uphill.

But there are wise,

good, saintly monks out there, too.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from RFS.

And RFS says, "At what point in time do you think the majority of Theravada monks began handling money?"

And it's hard to say, but I mean, it just reminds me of the canonical story of the Second Council. It's like the last chapter of the Vinaya Cūḷavagga in the Vinaya Piṭaka of the Pāli Tipitaka.

It's the canonical history of the Second Council, which happened about 70 years after the time of the Buddha's passing from this world.

His parinibbāna, his final

enlightenment.

And according to the story leading up to the Second Council, like 70 years after the time of the Buddha, you had this monk from the west, like a proto-Theravada monk, who travels east into like Mahāsaṅghika territory or proto-Mahāsaṅghika territory, in like further further east in India.

And there had been some sort of donation event, and so the monks were divvying up the money.

And then so they they offered this visiting monk from the west his share of the money, and he refused to take it.

And this offended those monks, and it

started this kind of a legal battle between the monks of the west and these eastern monks over whether or not monks should be allowed to handle money.

And I mean, it's right there in the text. It's it would be odd that the Second Council would really be over the issue of whether monks are allowed to handle money, considering that it's right there in the Pātimokkha rules that it is strictly forbidden for monks to handle money, except under very rare circumstances. For example, you find a wallet or some money lying on the ground inside the monastery precincts, it is your duty as a monk to pick up

that money and and like put it somewhere safe so that when the owner comes back for it, it can be returned to him.

I mean, it's your duty to handle money then, but it's not your money and you're not going to do anything with it other than put it somewhere safe so the owner can get it back.

So, it just It is kind of strange that according to the Theravada Pitaka, monks had already started like entire monasteries had already started handling money

within 70 years of the time of the Buddha.

Or I mean, some people would say 100

years, but within a century of the
Buddha's own time, ancient India,
apparently monks were already starting
to handle money cuz it's just one of
those things that a lot of monks, they
just
they just can't resist the temptation.
I remember one time I was
living at a school monastery near
Mandalay. I was a junior monk at the
time. I'd only been a monk a few years
and some Sri Lankan monks came to visit
and one of the Burmese monks told them
he doesn't handle money. He's very
strict in his his vinaya. He doesn't
handle money and the the Sri Lankan
monks just stared at me in amazement and

I was like, "How do you manage?"

It's like, how did the monks in the Buddha's time manage?

I mean, for one thing, if you follow the rules strictly, people have more respect for you and they're more I mean, they're more

eager to support you.

Not that that's why you shouldn't handle money. You shouldn't handle money just cuz monks aren't supposed to handle money.

But it's just like this side effect. It's like good karma. It's meritorious to follow the rules and you just to up more fortunate because of it.

But when monks started handling money,
it's it's hard to say.

It fairly early on, it seems. Although
even in the Buddha's time, money was
kind of innovation in India. Money was
sort of a new technological advancement
in in India, Indian society in the
Buddha's time.

I mean, it had been around a little bit.

It was still kind of like hadn't been
fully worked into the system. There's
probably a lot of barter and so forth
still going on as as like mainstays of
the Indian economy in the Buddha's time.

But

it's hard to say. I mean, probably you
had monks even in the Buddha's own time.

I hope a tiny minority who are already like handling money.

And maybe a few even good monks were handling it a little bit before it became against the rules.

Now, even an arahant was the at least he was like responsible for the making of one rule.

Where there was this enlightened monk who would go for alms around like once a week, something like that. And then he would just save his leftovers. He'd dry the rice out in the sun so it would keep and then just eat that for the rest of the week.

And then the Buddha said, "No, you're

not supposed to do that." So

I mean, there's nothing technically

immoral about handling money.

Or just like there's nothing technically

immoral about eating food that has been

stored overnight.

But it just became against the rules at

some point. And it may be that before it

became against the rules, there were a

few even

like wise monks who were handling money

a little bit.

But I mean, who knows?

I mean, this is just lost in the the

mists of antiquity.

And I'm going to move on to the next

question. This is from PSA. What is the

sound of one hand clapping?

PSA is a wise guy.

And it's a question that technically has no correct answer. And PSA can't hit me with a stick if I answer incorrectly anyway. So, I'm moving on to the next question.

PSA's second question. Can an animal make merit if it circumambulates a Buddha statue three times? For example, if you take a dog for a walk with you around a Buddha statue three times, does it help the animal come out of the animal realm faster?

And

probably not. I mean, the the dog just

hanging out with humans probably helps
them to get out of the animal realm
um more than the dog circumambulating a
pagoda or a shrine or a Buddha statue. I
had a a conversation
um
with with a monk, a friend of mine, in
Burma, back when I was living at the
school monastery near Mandalay, where
I think, if I remember correctly, he was
talking about how animals are stuck in
in the animal realm partly because they
do this demeritorious stuff without
realizing it. Like, a cow can walk
through a monastery and just [_] on the
ground.

And I was saying, I mean, the cow really

doesn't even know it's in a monastery.

It has no concept of of being in a monastery. I mean, it it hasn't done anything worse than if it shat on the ground right outside the monastery.

Or if it shat on the ground like in its own pasture.

I mean,

like, morals, ethics in Buddhism is based on intention.

So, I mean, if if the cow was taking this uh the [__] with the same placid bovine mental states that it would that it would [__] anywhere else, it hasn't really done anything worse by [__] on monastery grounds than than if it

were like taking a crap out in its own pasture.

And it's the same. I mean, for a dog to walk around a Buddha statue three times, it has no concept of what it's doing. I mean, there might be a certain empathy, you know, it might get a kind of subtle spiritual vibe from you if you have that kind of attitude when you're circumambulating. And then that might kind of the dog might pick up on that a little bit.

But there is something that dogs do that I think might earn them merit. And that's when a dog bows to you.

You know, like a dog as an as an act of

submission, I assume,

that, you know, it'll like put its its
paws out in front and just kind of like
bow to you.

And I a lot of the time, especially when
I was in Burma and I was a monk, and
some scroungy village dog would do that,
you know, it would like
practically prostrate in front of me.

I'd say, "You get a kudo point for that
one." You know, kudo is kusala kamma in
in Burmese.

So, I mean, it's possible. I mean, if
they really are not necessarily because
you're a monk, they probably don't have
any concept of that. But, you know,

they're considering you to be somebody
that is, you know, like superior to them
or higher than them, somebody that they
kind of respect and trust, and then
they're like prostrating in a way, kind
of bowing to you,
then

yeah, I think that that might be
meritorious for that dog. I mean, even
for a dog to just love you. You know,
dogs have a purer love for their master
than most humans have for each other.

You know, you can kick your dog, you can
abuse it, you can ignore it, the dog
still loves you. It's just
unquestioning.

Unconditional, really, so long as you

keep feeding it, anyway.

So,

I do think that hanging out with humans
can help dogs and other animals to get
out of the the animal realm just

because, you know, there's like this
subtle infiltration of higher mental
states kind of entering their world.

But, for a dog to just walk around a
Buddha statue

isn't going to get it any more merit
than the cow is going to get demerit
from crapping on the ground in a
monastery instead of crapping on the
ground outside the monastery.

It could be just like subtle empathy,

you know, like

uplifting mental states just from being with a human being that's having uplifted mental states.

That would be much more likely.

Now, I'm just going to move on to PSA's third question. Why are birth rates falling all over the world? Well, they're not falling all over the world.

Sub-Saharan Africa is exploding with its population still. I mean, if you look at a map of like birth rates all over the world with like bright red being the highest birth rates and like blue being the lowest birth rates, most of the world is blue.

Sub-Saharan Africa is just ruby red.

Plus a few like undeveloped parts of Asia.

Just a few. Maybe Afghanistan, some some area around in there might still have like a positive birth rate.

But, I think it's largely sort of like

the comforts of modern

modern society, modern cult modern technology.

Part of it is that.

Um I mean, in the West it's like testosterone levels in men are plummeting.

For I mean, there could be some conspiracy.

You know, it could be that something's getting put into our water, that kind of thing.

Or it could just be that we're just kind of decadent.

You know, it's like masculinity is frowned upon nowadays. It's toxic.

So, you know, it's it's sort of like And then, of course,

in like progressive liberalism or whatever you want to call it, which is pretty much global at this point, you've got um

um feminism.

You know, women I mean, they want a career and all that. They don't want to get tied down with kids.

You know, when I was young, I didn't want to have kids, partly because I mean, partly it's just this huge like karmic thing that I mean, it's you it takes a like heavy responsibility to have children. It's not something you should do lightly. I mean, not just like animals that just you know, have sex and next thing you know, they got they got offspring.

Yeah, I mean,

I was thinking about, you know, the world is so overpopulated. Back in the '80s, when I was a young man, it was like the overpopulation is is people are going to be starving by the billions by

the year 2000, this kind of thing, which never really happened.

Technology and also, ironically, the the increase in carbon dioxide has increased the amount of plants that grow, which has largely staved off mass starvation and famine in this world.

But also, I mean, it was like the Cold War was still going on in the '80s, you know, it's like you don't know what the world's going to be like 20 years from now. It could be like this radioactive like nightmarish wasteland for all I knew.

And there's still some of that. I think it's largely cultural, plus maybe if there's something besides the culture

that's causing male testosterone rates to plummet. You know, their testosterone levels.

I mean, that's that's probably a factor, too.

But, I mean, I'm probably not the correct person to ask. I mean, you'd probably get a better answer if you asked Grok

why birth rates are falling all over the world except in sub-Saharan Africa and a few like underdeveloped Asian countries.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Stellar Supreme.

And this is kind of a strange question.

And And really it's it's

it's a very compound question.

There could be any number of question marks in this if one were inclined to include them.

But Stellar Supreme

says, "What is the most dharmic insect, reptile, mammal, amphibian, bird, plant, fish, arachnid, crustacean, mollusk, and cnidarian?" And for those of you who are unfamiliar with like

biological taxonomy, a cnidarian would be like a jellyfish or a coral or a sea anemone.

And then he includes here, "No wrong answers, just creativity points question."

So, idle curiosity, maybe an

entertainment value kind of a question.

So, what is the most dharmic insect? I would guess like a honeybee.

You know, I mean, they're not like killing other insects except for maybe in self-defense, defense of the hive, that kind of thing. Making honey, they work hard, you know.

So, yeah, let's let's go with the honeybee as the most dharmic insect.

Most dharmic reptile?

Gosh, maybe some kind of land tortoise.

I mean, in order for it to be dharmic, you probably wouldn't be a predator.

Most reptiles are like predatory at least on insects. I mean, you've got

like the the marine iguana of the
Galapagos Islands that feeds on seaweed.
But then you've got plenty of tortoises
that that feed on plants and so forth.
And they're kind of slow and chill. So,
let's just go with some kind of giant
land tortoise.

I mean, the Galapagos Islands apparently
has the most dharmic reptiles.

So, the most dharmic mammal, humans.

Also, probably the most adharmic mammal
is also the human cuz there's a lot of
variation in humans.

Let's see, the most dharmic amphibian?

Well, the frog god.

Let's just go with the Buddhist
mythology, Buddhist Buddhist legend. The

frog who was listening to the Buddha
give a give a talk, and he didn't
understand the words, but he was
uplifted just by the vibe, so to speak.
He was soothed by the melodious tones of
the Buddha's speech. And so, as the frog
was

like squatting there in rapt attention
listening to the sounds of the Buddha's
speech that he couldn't really
understand, some shepherd accidentally
squished the frog's head with his stick,
not even knowing what he was doing. He
didn't look down. He just shifted his
stick and killed the frog.

The frog became a deva, landed in a

heaven realm, became the frog god.

So, that would be the most dharmic amphibian that I can think of. The most dharmic bird?

Man.

I mean, you've got the the hamsa or the the ruddy shelduck, which is considered more or less sacred in Buddhist cultures in India.

I think it's like the like the What is it? Like the mascot bird of of the god Brahma.

Um I mean, they probably do eat some some animals like invertebrates and so forth, but the associations with Buddhism are are fairly good.

Let's see, the most dharmic plant would be the Bodhi tree, *Ficus religiosa*.

See, the most dharmic fish?

Gosh. Well, I mean the Buddha was a a fish in a previous existence. He was the fish king.

So, yeah, maybe we should just go with that like like the most Dharmic bird.

Maybe it's like a quail. There's the Buddha was a quail more than once according to the Jataka stories in his previous existences.

So, most Dharmic fish?

I don't know. Maybe maybe like an otocinclus algae eater because you know

they're just helpful little fish.

They're unobtrusive. You know, they don't have an attitude and they just eat biofilm like bacteria and diatoms and then algae and that kind of stuff. So, if if we're not going to go with the Buddha's previous existence as the fish king, let's go with an otocinclus.

The most Dharmic arachnid?

Let's go with I think it I think a daddy longlegs, a harvestman, is technically an arachnid and they're detritivores. You know, they're not predators. They're not like stinging things to death, biting them and injecting digestive fluids, that kind of thing.

You know, they're just harmless little
They look kind of like spiders but
they're not. The difference between a a
daddy longlegs harvestman and an actual
spider is a spider's body is divided up
into a head and a cephalo No,
cephalothorax and an abdomen, just two
parts. You know, everyone knows an
insect's body is divided up into three
parts, the head, the thorax, and the
abdomen. Like a spider or other No,
let's just go with spiders. You know,
they got the the cephalothorax. The head
and the thorax are fused into one and
then they got the abdomen. A harvestman
is all just one lump.

It's all fused.

Yeah, so let's just go with that, the daddy longlegs. The most Dharmic crustacean?

Well,

my amano shrimp. I mean, they're like the the crustacean version of an otocinclus little aquarium algae eater.

So, yeah, some of these little shrimps that just feed on algae or detritus, you know, just they're just like part of the cleanup crew of the ecosystem. You know, they're just helpful little beings, unobtrusive, mind their own business.

The most dharmic mollusk?

Gosh, this is this is so weird.

The most dharmic mollusk?

How about an oyster?

Although they they do handle pearls, I guess.

And the most dharmic cnidarian? Gosh.

Well,

you got your choice of jellyfish,

let's see, the Portuguese man-of-war
wouldn't be it.

Um sea anemones,

or

corals.

Some kind of coral, I guess. Who knows?

Like the Buddha's palace before he
renounced the world, probably had coral
in it. That kind of coral, because it's
associated with the Buddha somehow.

And I'm just moving on to Stellar

Supreme's next question, which uh let us hope is not as weird as that one.

Well, actually, I guess it kind of is.

What is your favorite creature from the Cambrian explosion? The organisms of this time period are so diverse and interesting-looking. Consider

Anomalocarididae

and Opabinia.

Well, I really don't know what those are. And I haven't really studied the extinct phyla of the Cambrian explosion very much. I remember there was a kind of It was It was sort of like an armored worm that had a mouth like the iris of an old-time camera. You know, it the it

just it was like a circle that opened
and closed by like the same kind of iris
um movements of like a a camera iris.

So, I mean that was kind of cool.

I don't know what it would be called
though.

But, this I think brachiopods arose from
the the Cambrian explosion. You know,
the brachiopod is is really this super
ancient

kind of of animal. It's it's sort of
like a clam that's got like a stalk.

Or I would guess that even what do you
call them? The the feather stars.

Crinoids. I would have I would guess
that crinoids arose during the Cambrian

explosion. They're also like a really early sort of animal.

Um

yeah, maybe a brachiopod or a crinoid.

But,

it's it's something I don't really think about much. You know, what's my favorite creature from the Cambrian explosion?

So, let's just move on to Stellar

Supreme's next question, which is something entirely different.

He says, "Can celestial nymphs get pregnant?"

And this is kind of based on a discussion we were having on the Discord server.

And

I think going with orthodox Theravada celestial nymphs like in the Tāvatiṃsa heaven realm for example, the most famous celestial nymphs are from Tāvatiṃsa heaven. I don't think that they get pregnant because according to orthodox Theravada, or so I was told by a German monk in Burma many years ago, that celestial nymphs and also the demons in hell are not real beings. They're just a kind of apparition. They're just a kind of a virtual being with no subjective experience or karma. they're just sort of a manifestation of your karma that's sort of projected out there somehow. So, the celestial

nymphs of Tavatimsa heaven, according to
this German monk's account of like the
the

Theravadin commentarial tradition,
that

yeah, they wouldn't get pregnant.

That they're just kind of like
animated love dolls or something.

But, I'm kind of skeptical of that. I
think just some commentator just cooked
that up.

So, I mean,

I do not think that even in Tavatimsa
heaven, you have pregnant goddesses.

That yeah, I think you just um manifest
spontaneously

as a youth, you know, you're already

pretty much full grown when you just appear in in a a heaven realm like Tavatimsa.

However,

it is my understanding based on what I've read in the in the Pali texts, that the the heaven realm or the the deva realm, just one level above us, the the level of the five the four great kings, not five, the four great kings, this one level above us, the lowest level of small g gods, which includes like terrestrial deities like tree spirits, nature spirits, this kind of stuff, they get pregnant and have children. Because I remember there's the

rule against a monk like damaging green plants. It is a pacittiya rule. It's in the Patimokkha rules. A monk is not allowed to damage green plants. And the story,

which may be considerably different from the actual reason for this rule being laid down, but according to the story, there was a monk who was going to chop down a tree. And there was a tree spirit, a female, like a tree goddess, a Rukkhadevā, Rukkhadevī because she was female.

She lived in that tree.

And she's trying to talk the monk out of cutting down her tree. And she holds out her baby

to say, "Look, my baby and I live in that tree." But, the thing is the monk had like a crude mental state. You know, he apparently hadn't mastered Jhana. And so, he didn't even see them. You know, he couldn't see or hear these Devas. And so, he accidentally, if I remember correctly, chops off the baby Deva's arm with his axe.

You know, he's just swinging away at the tree. The goddess who was irresponsible for holding her baby out in front of a swinging axe.

Um

So, I mean, there there are baby small gods, baby Devas, like at the

terrestrial level. And up in like the Himalayas, that kind of thing, where a lot of these beings supposedly live.

Then you can have pregnant Devas.

According to the texts.

But, I mean, if you're going to reject the authority of the texts, then

I mean, what are you going with with even talking about celestial nymphs?

I mean, you have personal experience of them, I suppose.

So,

I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Erin.

And Erin says, "When did the Egyptian religious timeline begin in relation to the start of Buddhism?" So, this is

another ancient Egypt question.

Maybe we'll have to have a thumbnail with an ancient Egyptian theme.

Erin says, "When did the Egyptian religious timeline begin in relation to the start of Buddhism?" Well, the ancient religious timeline began in prehistoric times.

Whereas the start of Buddhism was, you know, 5th or 6th century BCE.

So, at the

during the Buddha's lifetime, I think like the Great Pyramid of Giza was already

Well, it was like what? At least 2,000 years old. I mean, the Great Pyramid

supposedly, I mean, going with mainstream archaeology, wasn't it wasn't it built like it was either 2500 BCE or 3500 BCE? So, I'd make it like 2 or 3,000 years before the time of the Buddha, and Egyptian religion had already started.

I mean, they they already had this idea of you're going to have to take your body with you into the next life, and so they're trying to preserve mummified pharaohs and that kind of thing.

Some people out there think that that the pyramids were not burial tombs, just partly because they've never found the remains of, you know, a mummy or anything in these in these uh

in these pyramids. Although, they did find like a mummified foot in one. But, I mean, the main reason, I mean, it's it's fairly well documented even in like ancient Egyptian inscriptions that these were burial tombs. And the reason why you haven't found like a a mummy, like a an intact mummy inside of a pyramid, is because all of these periods these pyramids were plundered thousands of years ago. That's why they eventually stopped using pyramids and started burying their their pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings, like in hidden places underground or in the mountains, because if you have a pyramid, I mean,

it's just like this big advertisement,
there is priceless treasure inside this
thing.

So, every single pyramid got plundered
long ago.

So, when did the Egyptian religious
timeline begin in relation to the start
of Buddhism? Well, literally it would be
thousands of years before the time of
the Buddha.

I mean, probably pre-dynastic times.

Already the Egyptians had some of their
pantheon intact, some of their religious
beliefs already intact.

When exactly is hard to say because it
would be literally prehistoric.

But it would be thousands of years

before the advent of Buddhism.

So, let's just move on to Aaron's second question. Is there one word that describes what their religion was called over such a long span of time? Well, what the Egyptians themselves called their religion,

I don't know. It might just be like the ancient Egyptian equivalent of religion because I mean, that was it. That was their religion.

Um from a modern point of view, I don't think there is one word that would describe ancient Egyptian religion. I mean, that would that would be it. It'd be three words, ancient

Egyptian religion.

I mean, if you had if you were forced to use just one word,

then like Egyptian. But then modern

Egyptian religion is Islam. And then

there was like a Christian period

between

the like early ancient Egyptian

polytheism, you know, the little

experiment with just worshipping the sun

god, back to Egyptian polytheism, and

then you had like Christianity and then

Islam.

Uh maybe a little bit of the uh

classical religion got And some of the

classical religion got added into

Egyptian religion when the pharaohs

started becoming Macedonians or Greeks,
you know, the the Ptolemaic dynasty.

So,

one word that describes the religion was
called over such a long period of time
and just Egyptian, I guess.

So, Aryan, third question. It seems like
the ancient Egyptian religion was the
complete opposite of Buddhism when you
compare the main tenets. Is this true or
can you come up with another religious
school that contradicts Buddhism even
more? I'm thinking of their veneration
of the soul versus no self, their burial
practices that attempt to preserve the
body and material possessions forever

versus impermanence

and renunciation of materialism, their goal of the soul reaching the field of reeds where they achieve some kind of immortal heaven realm for the soul, their polytheism, etc.

Well, I mean

gosh, this is this is kind of a difficult question. I mean, what religion is the most opposite to Buddhism? It's It's like the the short form of this this question, I think.

I think that's what this question boils down to is was the ancient Egyptian religion the farthest from Buddhism that has existed or was there a religion even more different from Buddhism than the

ancient Egyptian religion?

And I have said already

with regard to the earlier questions

about ancient Egypt

that really I have not found a whole lot

of genuine wisdom

in ancient Egyptian religion.

Much like I never really found a whole

lot of wisdom in the Old Testament,

either.

I mean, Ecclesiastes, you get some like

superficial worldly wisdom like in

Proverbs, that kind of thing.

But, let's see here.

I don't think there's any religion that

would be the complete opposite of

Buddhism. They would believe the the opposite of Buddhism on every point.

Like polytheism, that's that's mentioned on the list here. I mean, Buddhism also has it accepts the existence of a multitude of deities. I mean, even more than Egypt probably because they're just like

essentially just infinite number throughout throughout the cosmos, you know, there's just countless superhuman beings out there, most of whom don't give a damn about us. Don't pay any attention to us.

So, see veneration of the soul versus no self and most religions believe in an eternal soul. Buddhism is one of the few

exceptions on in with regard to that.

The burial practices, yeah, in in

Buddhism it was

largely cremation, especially for monks.

Like in Burma,

monks and the parents of monks are

cremated while lay people are are

buried.

What?

Gosh.

Yeah, it's Buddhism is puts a lot more

emphasis on impermanence.

That's for sure. See, the goal of the

soul reaching the field of reeds where

they achieve some kind of immortal

heaven realm for the soul.

Yeah, I mean

um

I guess I mean, the the approach I would take to answering this question is just try to think of a religion even more different from Buddhism than the ancient Egyptian religion and

I mean, maybe sort of like you'd have to have like an amoral religion. And there have been plenty of amoral religions.

With regard to ancient Egyptian religion, I'm not even sure if they had like moral precepts.

You know, like don't kill, don't steal, don't lie. This don't commit adultery, you know, the basics that most religions have.

I mean, I really don't know enough about ancient Egyptian religion to even know what their basics were with regard to ethical conduct.

I mean, the pharaohs were the ones that were getting their main shot into immortality. And I mean, they were commanding armies and so forth.

Marrying their own sisters, that kind of thing.

So, it could be that you could be even more different if you got into a just an amoral kind of religion, sort of like the cults of the emperors in ancient Rome.

I'm not sure what kind of ethical

conduct there would be. I mean,
especially you got somebody like
Caligula declaring himself a god,
and you've like requiring people to
venerate him,
to offer incense at his altars and so
forth. I mean, something like that would
probably be farther from Buddhism than
an Egyptian religion that really was a
religion that kind of
you know, it it sort of stabilized
society. You know, it added a kind of
cultural structure to society that kind
of strengthened this the culture, that
kind of thing. So,
yeah, I mean, maybe some kind of really
warlike religion, you know, like the the

religion of the ancient Huns. I think
their their symbol of their god that
they didn't really have statues because
they just really probably couldn't even
make statues very well. I have read that
I mean, their their like shrines or
their

religious imagery was essentially just a
sword stuck into the ground.

You know, or venerating the the the
eagles in the Roman legions, something
like that.

So, it'd be some kind of amoral sort of
religion would be farther from Buddhism
than probably ancient Egyptian religion
because, I mean, ancient Egyptian

religion

was, you know, it was a stabilizing religion for mainly like an agricultural society.

So, I would assume that there was some emphasis on just being honest and not stealing and not murdering people, that kind of thing. Whereas,

some more primitive kind of religions, more barbarous sort of religions that were amoral or you know, like

the cult of the emperors again,

especially if you got like some

sociopathic

kind of egomaniac sort of emperor

who's got some kind of cult going,

then yeah, that would be more different

from Buddhism, I think. But, it's hard to say. I mean, I don't I'm not familiar with all religions, but I would assume that you'd have some kind of you know, you you you could even say that like Satan worship would be a kind of religion.

In which case, Satan worship might be farther

from Buddhism than than just about any other or just have some kind of religion that like

reveres some amoral, warlike, violent kind of being and kind of emulates that.

But, exactly which religion comes goes

farthest from Buddhism, is the most different from Buddhism,

I mean, I would have to do some considerable research and get back to you on that one.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

And this is from Ethiopian Fake Tig.

And I'm going to finally check and make sure we are recording and yes, we are indeed.

That's good.

Ethiopian Fake Tig says,

"In one sutta, there are stories of the Buddha meeting some Brahmin and one of them treating him badly and some spirit appearing before them to smite the young

ignorant Brahmin since the Buddha asked him a simple question about his chase. I don't know what that means. That he couldn't answer.

If spirits recognize the Buddha as a Tathagata and very bizarre occurrences like these happen, why do so many people who meet the Buddha never see anything special about him? There are countless stories of people questioning him and doubting his enlightenment, but there are also many things that are otherworldly that happen all around him. I can't seem to reconcile that.

Well, I mean, when I first looked at this question like when I was cutting

and pasting it onto the list here,
um it struck me as a question asking why
so many people treated the Buddha as
though he were just an ordinary person,
whereas like Devas, higher beings,
treated him with the reverence. And the
answer to that, I mean, just within a
Buddhist con- context, you could say
that Devas, you know, they have some
mind reading ability. They can see
subtle things that humans can't see. And
so, even if they have a mind reading
ability, and they just look into the
Buddha's mind, look into his spirit, and
they it's just like this unreadable
void.

Like in in the text, it does say that

when a Buddha is is like in deep in meditation, even the gods don't know what his mind is resting upon.

You know, it's like they're just hit this wall or just sort of this this empty space. So, they would know there was something unusual about this this person.

Um I mean,

if we're going with Buddhist tradition, it it doesn't make much sense. You know, it's the Buddha, according to Buddhist tradition, according to commentaries, he was like 27 ft tall.

which is just impossible.

So, I mean, why would Brahmans be like

having insulting the Buddha?

You know, if he was 27-ft tall,
you know, you you shaveling, you
skinhead, this kind of stuff. No.

Or like

in the the beginning of the Samannaphala
Sutta, where King Ajatashatru wants to
meet the Buddha.

So, the doctor

Jivaka

takes King Ajatashatru to meet the
Buddha. And when they get to where the
Sangha is

is assembled,

Jivaka doesn't know which one is the
Buddha. And so, I mean, I mean,

Ajatashatru King Ajatashatru doesn't

know which one is the Buddha. And so, Jivaka points him out as he's the one, you know, facing east. I don't remember what direction he's facing. You know, leaning against that pillar. He's sitting back against that pillar over there. He doesn't say, "Oh, he's that gigantically huge one up there."

But with regard to spirits recognizing the Buddha as the Tathagata, I mean, they can see things that ordinary people can't see. You know, they're more sensitive. They've got the divine eye and so forth. You know, they maybe see this this blazing aura or whatever.

But I mean, it's you're getting into the realm of,

you know, legends and mythology and so forth. That I mean, it's like an academic thing.

Let's see. So, where's the actual question mark? Before I move on, I should at least

I should at least make sure

Here it is. If spirits recognize the Buddha as a Tathagata and very bizarre occurrences like these happen, why do you so many people who meet the Buddha never see anything special about it?

Well,

with regard to devas and humans,

yeah, it's it's sort of like that, where

the devas have a more spiritual eye.

They can see subtleties that some crude human can't see.

But, I mean, this is getting more towards like ordinary human human beings like

Neem Karoli Baba up there. I mean, he was

he was like an extremely highly advanced human being spiritually. He was like a spiritual superman in my opinion. And according to the testimonies of many people including Ram Dass who I consider to be a

an honest human being, he could do just these this amazing feats, you know, that

would be called miracles, psychic powers, that kind of thing.

But, a lot of people, I mean, they just didn't have faith in him. They just weren't open to that. They just did not have the karma to be influenced by a saint like that. You know, they were just closed off to it. And and they they would just see this old fat man.

And that And that's it. That's all they'd see.

And then sometimes um Neem Karoli Baba or Maharaj, I mean, he would just kind of like make sure they wouldn't see. I mean, it was like he knew that they weren't going to see anything and he just he would just do things that would

trigger them.

You know, just for for whatever reason.

I have this a certain story in mind. I probably shouldn't repeat the whole story, but

Yeah, I I won't I won't tell the whole story. It would take too long, I think.

But, I mean, he had his reasons. And so, there were some people that were just ripe to encounter a sage that would be profoundly influenced by him. And then there were other people that were just closed off. They They just weren't ready. You know, they were they were like completely locked into materialism or whatever. You know, they didn't even

believe that such such human beings are possible.

You know, they just see this old fat man.

In fact, and there is one story. And and what the hell? I mean, there's there aren't a whole lot of questions. There's a story by

I think his name was Larry Brilliant.

He was a He was a doctor.

It was is the story of how he came to be a disciple of Maharaj.

And I think his his Sanskrit name is his disciple's name was like Subramaniam or something like that. But, he was married to an Indian woman. This is back in the late '60s. You know, they were hippies.

And his wife was just a devotee of Maharaj. And so, this American doctor who is married to the Indian lady, I mean, he's you know, he he wants he loves his wife and he's going to give it a shot. He's going to go and and meet Maharaj. And

it's like he's just completely turned off by Maharaj. It's like he's just this old fat man and these these people are just like brainwashed into a cult.

And so, finally

he's he just kind of calls in sick one day. You know, he just doesn't show up.

He he gives the excuse, "I'm not feeling well. I think I'll just stay at the the

hostel or the the hotel or whatever."

And he just kind of goes for a walk around this lake. And he's just sort of soul searching, so to speak. You know, he thinks, "And my wife, she's she's like brainwashed into this cult.

I don't It's like my marriage is going to come to an end over this. What should I do?"

And then he thinks it's like he does something kind of experimentally. For the first time since he was a kid, he actually prays. It's like, "God, give me a sign." And then he's like looking around for like a rainbow or something and nothing happens. So, finally he just goes back

home. And the next day he's just going to go and have it out with Maharaj and just say goodbye and go back to America. Because Maharaj had just been ignoring him the whole time.

You know, ever since he got there, he'd been there for like a week at least, Maharaj had hardly even looked at him.

So, this young American doctor, he goes one last time. He gets there before anybody else. He just wants to have it out with him. And

uh I should say that

before I get to Maharaj meeting with him that one thing that used to bug this doctor more than anything else was

people bowing and touching Maharaj's feet. You know, it's just to an American like groveling like that. It just rubbed him the wrong way. He did not like to see it.

So, anyway, he gets there early. Maharaj hasn't come out yet out of his his little cabin.

And people had already offered some fruit and there was an apple that had fallen off the platform and was on the ground. So, he he's just going to pick it up and put it back onto the platform. He reaches out to pick up this apple and that's exactly when Maharaj comes out and puts his foot on top of this doctor's hand hand.

And so, the doctor is in this position that he always hated to see the most, touching Maharaj's foot. You know, he's down on his knees touching Maharaj's foot.

So, then Maharaj just sits down and he starts talking with this this doctor and he asks, you know, "Why weren't you here yesterday? Did you go to the lake?"

And this doctor, I mean, when Maharaj says lake, it just he gets like this weird feeling like there's this surge of energy starting to go through him.

And then Maharaj is just kind of toying with him a little bit. He says, "What did you do at the lake? Did you go

swimming?"

And the doctor says, "No."

"And did you go boating?" And the doctor says, "No."

And then Maharaj says, "Did you go horseback riding?"

And the doctor says, "No." And then Maharaj leans over and says very quietly, looking intently at him, "Did you talk to God?"

Did you ask for something?" And this doctor had asked for a sign, and he hadn't told anybody about this. There's no way Maharaji could have known this through ordinary means, according to the story here.

And he said it was just like he just

fell to pieces. I mean, he starts like crying like a little kid. And Maharaji is like stroking his beard cuz he's a he's a hippie doctor. You know, so he's like Maharaji's just kind of like pulling on his beard and just saying over and over again, "Did you ask for something?"

Did you ask for something?" And he's just crying and crying. And by this point, other devotees have arrived and they're all just sort of like kind of putting their hands on his back and just kind of kind of caressing him a little bit, you know, just kind of lending support because most of them had gone

through a similar event where their mind
just gets completely blown wide open by
some inexplicable
miracle
performed by Maharaji.

So, getting back to this question, it's
like some people they're just not open
to it. They just don't have the right
karma to
realize that they're in the presence of
a of a like a very advanced being.

And you really can't know for sure that
someone is advanced just by looking at
them unless you're as advanced as they
are.

Cuz there are a lot of fakes out there
who can pass themselves off as

enlightened beings, and they really aren't.

So, anyways, Dr. Larry Brilliant became a disciple of Maharaji after that and got the Pali name of or the Sanskrit name of Subramanian, I think it was.

So, I hope I answered that question.

I'm just going to move on to the next one. This is also by Ethiopian Fake Tig.

He says, "I did a deep dive into Daniel Ingram and his claim into being an

arahant. And in an interview, he talks about how many of his teachers, some of which were Burmese, were said to have had many, many achievements. And even the Buddha himself actually would point

out the many different achievements of the monks in his sangha and that it was not anything that taboo. In his book, Daniel talks about arahantship as if it's something you can attain with enough practice. And the famous monk U Pandita, who apparently hated you, but also taught Sam Harris, loved Sam Harris, and thought Sam was actually at stream entry in the practice. Sam spoke about this with Joseph Goldstein in a podcast and how U Pandita was wrong. But, if stream entry can be attainable within 5 to 6 years of rigorous practice, won't that mean arahantship is just a few miles away? And to now ask an actual question,

if all this is so, could arahantship be simpler than we thought? Well, arahantship is completely simple. The problem is that our delusion is complicated.

Let's see. I look like I was lagging a little bit. Maybe I am.

But, I mean, just look at this here. I mean, the question kind of debunks itself a little bit, it seems to me.

That I mean, Ethiopian Fake Tig says, "Well, if stream entry is that easy, but Sam Harris, who was declared a stream entry by U Pandita, Sam Harris says, 'No, I'm not a stream enterer. U Pandita was wrong. In fact,

I've met two other people who were declared to be arias by U Pandita, who came to the conclusion that U Pandita was mistaken.'

And in one case, it was fairly obvious.

I knew this Burmese monk in Burma who completed the course at U Pandita, and U Pandita himself declared him to be an Arya.

And he actually believed he was an Arya for a while.

Although it would be pretty obvious to most people that he wasn't cuz he was very crusty. I mean, he was he gave me the insight that hate and anger are very different cuz he would just seethe with hatred for certain

people

while not really being angry.

It was just when he's talking, you could just see the muscles clenched in his in his cheeks as he's talking through gritted teeth at this person that he just despised.

But U Pandita declared him to be an Arya, and this this monk thought, "Well, maybe I really am an Arya." Up until he finally had enough intelligence and objectivity and common sense to realize that he wasn't really one. And the other person who was declared to be an Arya by U Pandita who realized that he was wrong that I have met was Pa Auk Sayadaw.

Pa Auk Sayadaw also, as a relatively junior monk, went to U Pandita, went to Panditarama, or maybe this was when U Pandita was still at the Rangoon Mahasi Center, and he finished the course, was declared to be a Sotapanna, and in that case, um Pa Auk Sayadaw knew right away that "No, I'm not a Sotapanna."

So,

I mean, U Pandita turned out a lot of fake Aryas. The The Mahasi tradition turns out fake Aryas.

I mean, I won't I won't go so far as to say all of them are fake, but I mean, the Mahasi tradition, it it used to actually hand out a diploma.

When you finish the course, then they just assumed that you were already like at least a Sotapanna. You were literally a an Arya, like a Buddhist saint.

But I mean, there was one teacher I I heard about this. One teacher at the Mahasi Center.

And if you're a teacher, then you pretty much have to be an Arya.

It's weird. In order to be a teacher of the Mahasi tradition, you have to be an Arya, at least like at the Mahasi Center, the main Mahasi Center itself.

And then one fine day, he went into the office and stole a bunch of money and

disappeared with one of the female meditators.

Supposedly an Arya.

So, just because U Pandita or just the Mahasi tradition in general considers someone to be a stream enterer, it

doesn't really mean very much.

So, I mean, that kind of undermines the whole question here. If stream entry can be attainable within 5 to 6 years of rigorous practice, won't that mean Arahatsip is just a few miles away?

And if this is so, could Arahatsip be simpler than we thought?

I mean, again, I mean, people are they just they kind of overlook the fact that

I don't even consider the four stages of Arya hood to be likely to be genuine, to be authentic teachings of the Buddha.

I just don't think so. Like the Samannaphala Sutta that I mentioned, where it's talking about the fruits of like the the monk's life, in ascending order, it starts with, you know, you get more respect and this kind of thing, and it goes all the way up to enlightenment, the four stages of Arahatsip are not even mentioned.

So,

I mean, a stream enterer probably was kind of like just someone who had just like a new convert to Buddhism. You

know, they had started practicing,
started interpreting life along
spiritual lines, that kind of thing.

In my opinion. So, this whole question
is just kind of this weird academic sort
of question

based on

declarations by U Pandita that even the
question itself

indicates was probably a

a false conclusion jumped to by U

Pandita.

And U Pandita really did despise me. He
didn't like me at all when I was when I
was there. I was told he didn't like
Westerners in general unless they spoke
fluent Burmese.

Maybe maybe I just kind of like a tall
Westerner too. So maybe he just didn't
like that.

I'm not sure exactly.

It's in It's in my my recent book.

A fellow at U Pandita or a fellow at
Pandita Rama is the the name of the
chapter that discusses my my two months
of intensive meditation at Pandita Rama
in Rangoon dealing with the notorious U
Pandita.

So,

why U Pandita loved Sam Harris, I don't
know unless Sam was just uh like
experiencing

what he was supposed to in accordance

with the cookbook method. That can happen, too.

But I I wasn't experiencing what I was supposed to be experiencing in the proper order and so forth. And so I was just seen as just kind of a waste of his his time.

So,

the uh I mean stream entry, I mean I don't even consider this to be just even a valid interpretation of stream entry.

It's a traditional orthodox one, but in this case, I do not consider a stream enterer to be to have attained some superhuman mental state.

I mean there there could be different levels of like partial

enlightenment where you're starting to get glimpses. You've reached a kind of point of no return, that kind of thing.

And that may have been how stream enterer got reinterpreted to mean.

But I don't think that it was originally taught by the Buddha himself for various reasons.

Arahantship, I mean, just because Daniel Ingram declares himself to be an arahant doesn't mean that Daniel Ingram was an arahant any more than Sam Harris was a sotapanna. I mean, Daniel Ingram just brags about how enlightened he is.

And you should think that an arahant wouldn't be bragging about how

enlightened he is, even though the Buddha in the text is just bragging, bragging, bragging in certain suttas about that just that about how enlightened he is.

But Daniel Ingram, it used to be on his website

in this the home page of his website, he's just listing off all of his attainments and being an arahant wasn't even the highest attainment, apparently.

So, I think Daniel Ingram is is sort of like a

a clever con man type, if I had to guess. I mean, maybe he's got some kind of attainments, but fully enlightened, I would be surprised.

I won't insist that he's not fully enlightened. I don't want to be slandering a fully enlightened being anything like that, but still, I'm pretty skeptical of Daniel Ingram. Just I mean, I've seen him on on videos and he just seems like this fidgety, nervous kind of guy, anyway.

But who knows?

But arahantship, I mean, if arahantship were so easy, there'd be a hell of a lot more arahants in this world, seems to me. Most people just aren't ready for it. They don't even want it.

But even the people that are trying for arahantship, the overwhelming majority

of those do not succeed.

Just because they're just not right for it. I mean, just it's hard to blame Buddhism for that.

It's just that most people just deep down, they just want to stay in samsara. It's It's not like we are we're not enlightened because we're not trying hard enough to become enlightened. We're unenlightened right now because we're continually trying to stay unenlightened.

Uh so that's it. This that whole question is just kind of a a strange kind of conditional, you know, sort of a conditional traditional kind of question

based partly on what is declared to be a falsehood in the question itself and then comparing that with something different that also is conjecture.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is the last question.

And also by Ethiopian Fake Tig.

You got in under the wire today.

So here's the question. There is a lot of confusion about jhana due to

Buddhaghosa who apparently thought it was a one-in-a-million kind of

experience, but in the suttas even first jhana is described as something very easy

that the Buddha would sometimes experience as a child. Was Buddhaghosa just wrong or could jhana really be something that rare?

Well, again, this is another one of those things where orthodox Theravada and I part ways. You know, I don't really think that the four stages of sainthood are an authentic teaching of the Buddha.

And with regard to the four jhanas being superhuman mental states, even first jhana being a superhuman mental state, I I just I think that probably, and I've said this several times, that jhana originally just meant meditation. The four jhanas were just

the four stages of meditation.

And stage one would be even elementary meditation that you're doing correctly.

And in first jhana you're still thinking. You're still thinking in words in many cases.

You know, it's So it's I mean, it's not that exalted. You know, you haven't gotten into any kind of deep mystical states yet.

Like with the with the Catholic contemplative orders, they don't even get into what they call contemplation until you have stopped thinking.

So Catholic contemplation wouldn't even start until at least second jhana.

So I do think that jhana originally just meant meditation. The four jhanas were just the four levels of meditation. And I mean, they weren't necessarily superhuman. I mean, obviously humans are attaining these things, especially first jhana.

Also, if you read the Mahasatipatthana Sutta, which is the Bible to to Vipassana meditators, and it it defines the eightfold path.

Each step on the eightfold path it gets a definition. The definition of samasamadhi, right concentration, is the four jhanas.

So I mean, why would like right concentration require a superhuman

mental state? It just means meditating correctly, in my opinion.

And then of course, the Abhidhamma scholars invented a new jhana, so they had five. And then like the formless jhanas get added on top of the four basic ones.

But I mean, everyone tradition already settled on four, so they had to make the formless realms or the formless contemplations like annexes of fourth jhana. You know, they're just like varieties of fourth jhana.

But Buddhaghosa, I mean, he was a scholar monk. I don't know how much he actually practiced.

You know, I mean, nowadays if you go with nowadays, most scholar monks are notorious for not practicing much.

That's why they become scholars. Like Bhikkhu Bodhi even, I mean, he doesn't practice much.

He I mean, he has admitted that he can't meditate. He gets like killer headaches if he tries to meditate.

So, he's a scholar. You know, that's how he he dedicates his time, and at least it's in a relatively wholesome direction of, you know, translating and explaining texts.

But, it's not based on his own personal experience in many cases because he doesn't have very deep

spiritual experience as far as I know.

Like Ajahn Thanissaro's translations would be better, at least um with regard to how much of it is based on his own experience and understanding based on his own experience.

So, let's see. Yeah, Buddhaghosa like Buddhaghosa's main text, his most famous text, is the Visuddhimagga, and it does seem to me that the most Visuddhimagga is a kind of a manual on self-hypnosis.

It seems to me.

I could be wrong. I know more about hypnosis than most meditators do. My

father was a hypnotist, among other things.

And so, I do think that there was a lot of confusion

from ancient times up to the present time, like in Burma, where people just cannot differentiate between like a jhanic state and a hypnotic trance, like self-hypnosis.

Like someone who goes into a state where you almost stop breathing, your pulse and almost stops. You know, you're oblivious to everything around you. I mean, that's a deep hypnotic state.

My father's third No, my father's second wife, not my mother.

She'd go into these deep trance states,

hypnotic states, where it was just like that. She was like a hibernating squirrel.

Her breath rate and her her pulse would almost stop. They'd become almost undetectable. And then, I mean, she did have like some kind of like Edgar Cayce type abilities while she was in these states.

Or while she was in similar states.

But,

I mean, I do not consider that to be necessarily samatha-samadhi. I mean, my father's second wife, according to his testimony, was a hardcore alcoholic with the morals of an alley cat.

In addition having talent similar to
Edgar Cayce.

Ooh, so did I answer the question?

Was Buddhaghosa just wrong? I think

Buddhaghosa was wrong with regard to a

lot of things. The commentarial

tradition is is just laughably wrong

with with regard to a lot of things.

Sometimes they're just making guesses,

but they won't admit that they're

guessing.

Um sometimes they're just cooking stuff

up.

So,

let's just get to the See, make sure

that I answered this question.

See, a lot of confusion about jhana due

to Buddhaghosa or due to a lot of things, especially the inability to differentiate between samatha-samadhi and miccha-samadhi, right and wrong concentration, or between like a like a an expanded superconscious mental state and being in a hypnotic trance where you're like a hibernating squirrel and oblivious to everything around you.

See, I mean, the fourth jhana is supposed to be the perfection of mindfulness,

not being a hibernating squirrel.

Even a hibernating squirrel who is like channeling or whatever.

So,

yeah, I do think that the four jhanas were originally just the four stages of meditation with first jhana just being like elementary meditation that you're doing correctly.

But, that's not what tradition says.

So, I am a heretic. I make make no secret of the fact that I do not believe everything in the texts.

So, I guess we're done.

Might as well might as well be done.

And so, as I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, if you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to Dharma in the broadest sense of the term, then feel free to ask in the comments

below. No more than three questions per person per episode, please. And like and subscribe if you've not done so already, and check out my URL links, which includes the Amazon link to my new book, which is largely autobiographical with regard to my life as a monk.

And uh

be happy.

All righty then. We appear to be recording.

Probably recording even in audio.

Hear that?

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 195.

I am your host Panyo Boss uh.

And 195 of course is not a prime number because the only number ending in five that is prime is five itself.

195 is $3 * 5 * 13$.

This is my beverage. Oh man, I forgot to get an emergency backup beverage which uh could result in emergency in and of itself.

But we'll see how we do.

I'm not just going to rush out and grab the emergency backup beverage yet, but it may happen at some point in this video.

Uh I guess I have a one announcement to make.

That is they're probably very probably, but I can't say for sure, but probably no Q&A video next weekend because

I'm getting married. I'm going to get married that weekend officially. My mate and I have been unofficially married for quite some time now, but we're going to do it legally, like with a license and an officiant who's going to be my

ex-boss from the first metal shop I worked at. He's also an ordained Baptist minister.

He's He's happy to marry us.

And it's going to be a very private ceremony, so none of you are invited.

This is just uh kind of a hectic weekend. We uh got another car to replace the one that got smashed a couple months ago.

Uh

>> [sighs]

>> Right before

right before I was going to do this video, mowed the lawn. It's the weekend.

It's kind of like a guy's duty to mow

the lawn on weekends. And then after that, my sweetie sees that I'm actually like moving around doing stuff. So, it's like she she jumps at these opportunities to give me a list of other things that need to get done.

And one of those things on the list was about 600 lb of rocks had to get moved from the garage back to the backyard.

So,

it's a hot sunny day in South Carolina.

I was covered with dirt and sweat by the time I was finished with that little project. So, then I take a shower, hence the bathrobe.

But, we're [clears throat] doing it. I'm getting it done.

And the slight disruption this coming weekend, which probably is going to happen, maybe the beginning of a whole new wave of disruptions because it's looking like I am going to start a new job May 26th, which is going to have really weird hours.

I'll be working weekends, sometimes days, sometimes nights, sometimes.

But, it's going to be paying a heck of a lot more than the job that I am soon to stop working at. Which is kind of a shame. The job I'm work I'm working in a metal shop right now, running a big saw cutting through metal.

And it takes a while to cut through metal, especially if it's thick metal. So, I'm just pretty much standing there a lot of the time, just babysitting this saw while it's moving in ultra slow motion cutting through this slab of metal.

So, it's kind of a laid-back chill kind of a job. Actually, I kind of enjoy it. I mean, there's also a certain amount of like physical labor involved from like after you cut the pieces of metal, you got to like stack them and that kind of thing. So, that's good. Exercise is good. I'm really bad at artificial exercise. I like to get my exercise naturally.

But, I mean,

when you get paid when you get offered

job that's almost 50% more

than you're currently getting, then it's

an offer that I really can't refuse. So,

I'm going to be doing that.

So, new job, new wife, new car, just

boom boom boom. So, this is kind of an

eventful like week or so.

Ah,

but it's it's turning up. I mean, this

this year was like cursed up until just

recently.

So,

it seems that the curse is finally

lifting and things are going to go good.

Maybe.

It's all balancing out, I guess.

So, let's see. What else do we got to do before I I start answering questions? I guess

I can just kind of make up a question and answer it myself because there was like a discussion going on, sort of a debate going on on the Discord server

about process ontology, how there are some people who try to be clever and say, "Well, Buddhism isn't talking about things. It's talking about processes."

It was called process ontology, where you know, there aren't this thing and that thing. There's just these processes

that are working themselves out. And I pointed out that you can't have a process without a thing. Like, there's this famous statement in the Visuddhimagga.

It's you know, like the number one commentarial text in Theravada Buddhism about how there there is no doer of the deeds. There are just the deeds themselves. But, it's like, take walking, for example. How are you going to have walking without some being walking?

There has to be somebody or something doing the walking.

And

it's one way of looking at it. And this is this is the whole reason I'm bringing this up is that this could be one of the best examples of dependent co-arising as I understand it, of paṭiccasamuppāda, because you cannot have a process without things, because you cannot have change without stasis.

Something always has to stay the same, otherwise you just have like like chaos. It's just like meaningless chaos. If everything is changing, where nothing remains the same, even like the identity, the generalization at least, doesn't stay the same, then you just got meaningless chaos. So, in order for there to be any kind of subjective

conscious experience in the human sense,
there has to be change, because if
nothing changes, that's just static
death. But there also has to be
sameness, because if nothing stays the
same, again, you've just got meaningless
chaos. So, you have to have something
changing and stomp something staying the
same.

You know, it's like the walker, the
person who's walking. You got to at
least perceive that as the same person
who's walking. If it's completely
different from one moment to the next,
there's not even any walking.

So,

I really do not see dependent co-arising as these 12 links that in my opinion got cooked up after the Buddha's time, that it's dependently co-arising. The samuppāda, that sam literally means with or together. It's It's sort of uh cognate with con in Latin, c o n, or s y n in Greek. You know, it means together or with. So, paṭiccha means having depended on, having relied on, and samuppada means rising up together with.

So, dependent co-arising.

And like our entire world is just to give one really basic example, it depends on the dependent co-arising of sameness and change. You can't have

all sameness, that's death. You can't have all change, that's meaningless chaos. There has to be something that is perceived as staying the same throughout any process.

So,

that's just that's just how human perception works. That is how human conscious experience works.

This sameness and change dependently co-arising.

And that wouldn't be the only example, but it's really a good example, in my opinion, of how I think dependent co-arising really works.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

one other thing.

It's like I'll answer one of my own questions. It's like

I'll just come up with a question like, why do you believe in psychic powers if they're impossible?

So, I'll answer that question that some anonymous non-existent person just asked.

And the way I'm going to answer this question is by reading a story from this book.

Miracle of Love.

See, stories about Neem Karoli Baba, and it's edited by Ram Dass. And this story I'm going to read is it's just a short

story, just a couple paragraphs. And let us assume for the sake of argument that this is a true story.

And it may very well be true. I don't think that necessarily every story in this book is true, especially the ones told by Indian devotees that I mean it's just more of a cultural thing in India I think to be very imaginative in recounting things to some degree. But let's just say that this story is true. Still, I do not think it's necessarily impossible. It could be like statistically very unlikely, but it

doesn't even necessarily indicate
psychic powers. It could be that Maharaj
meaning Curly Baba here
just was like a
an epicenter for synchronicities.
That just strange coincidences continued
happening around this man without him
necessarily even trying to make them
happen. And I do think that that is
largely how it works. Anyone who's done
a lot of intensive practice may know
that synchronicities and just strange
coincidences
can happen in a with strange frequency.
So, let's just read the story, shall we?
Okay. One time Maharaj asked me to make
reservations for two first-class

air-conditioned places on the train
leaving that very day.

All the officials told me it was
completely booked from Calcutta to
Kalka, which means the east of the west
coast of India.

Still, to be prepared, I bought two
unreserved tickets. I was sure that I
was wasting our time and we'd have to
cash them in. Maharaj walked into the
station, walked slowly along the
platform, and stopped solid at one spot.
When the train pulled in, a first-class
air-conditioned car was stopped directly
in front of Maharaj. I had watched how
he chose that very spot to stand in, so

I asked the conductor, who happened to be standing right there, for two berths in that car, and he said, "What? Are you crazy? This train is full from Calcutta to Kalka."

At that moment I lost my insurance and looked over to Maharaj. He merely raised one finger and said quietly, "Attendant."

So, I went over to the car attendant and asked again for two berths, and he said, "Yes, yes, there's room for you. You see, a party who was reserved clear through had to get off at Mogul Sarai to attend to unexpected business. There are two berths are vacant in that car. It was the car directly in front of

Maharaj.

So, as I say,

I mean, that could be true even at like
a purely materialistic,
spiritually bankrupt perspective or like
at that level of reality because it's
not impossible.

It's just it could just be some weird
coincidence. Maharaj was just kind of
eccentric

and just decided he's just going to
stand right there and ask for these two
first-class tickets, and it just so
happens

two first-class tickets or two
first-class berths just happen to be

suddenly vacant right then there.

So, I do think that

psychic powers can work that way

where

the person is just so liminal

that just weird synchronicities just

happen all around them over and over

again.

And it's not even necessarily

I mean, it's not necessarily

in violation of laws of physics or any

such thing. It's synchronicities.

But,

with all that stuff is just sort of

introduction.

I guess I'm just going to have to start

answering questions now.

So, first question is from Rui.

And Rui says, "Do you see any way in which the conscious can emerge from the non-conscious?"

And this is kind of a strange question.

I It's kind of a good question

um because I think I might enjoy answering this question.

Because it's

it's kind of a trick question.

Do you see any way in which the conscious can emerge from the non-conscious?

In a way, the answer is no, because there is no non-conscious.

It's like if you consider the entire

universe to be conscious, or going with a more scientific, physical kind of explanation where you say energy is just a very elemental form of what a psychologist would call consciousness. I mean, it's already the other way around. I think scientists would agree that what a psychologist calls consciousness is just a very complicated form of what a physicist would call energy.

You know, it's a manifestation of energy of some sort. The entire universe is, according to modern physics, seems like to me.

So, I mean, from that point of view, I mean, it really answers just this big

mystery that science is completely
stumped by, and that is how
electrochemical reactions in a gray blob
of meat and some nervous tissue is going
to generate
like subjective experience.

They have no idea. Science cannot touch
this question as far as I know. How do
electrochemical reactions cause
conscious experience?

But, I mean, if you consider the brain
to be sort of like a computer,
then I mean, the analogy is a pretty
good one, because a computer does not
generate its own electricity.

A computer is not creating electricity,

it's just taking that electricity and organizing it and complicating it and utilizing it.

And that's what the brain is doing.

You know, it's taking the conscious energy that's already there and just like complexifying it and organizing it and utilizing it.

So, which is one reason why I really don't see why a computer could not become conscious because the entire universe is conscious. You just need the kind of complication that will cause the consciousness to sort of dissociate or start like becoming self-aware and kind of unaware of what's around it

to the point that it considers itself to be this self-existent entity.

I mean, that would be kind of what human consciousness is like, what animal consciousness is like. It's just kind of a self self-referential dissociated aspect of like infinite formless consciousness.

The block of marble,
if you will.

The uncarved block.

So, from that point of view, I mean, the conscious that the consciousness cannot emerge from non-consciousness because the universe starts with consciousness. The entire universe is

permeated with it. It is a manifestation of consciousness.

So,

yeah, I mean,

in my opinion, a hydrogen atom has some rudimentary this elemental spark of consciousness. It's not self-conscious.

It doesn't think,

but still, there's like this

I don't know, just consciousness.

I mean, at that primitive level, you might just prefer just call it energy because it wouldn't be conscious in the human sense, but it would just be like this elemental particle or spark of consciousness.

>> [sighs]

>> Uh, so, yeah, I don't I don't I don't think anyone sees any way in which consciousness can emerge from non-consciousness even though it happens.

So, I mean it's like it happens like I mean just going with like science, scientism.

Nobody would say that the egg and sperm that produce a human being are themselves conscious in the human sense. But then, you know, they form an embryo and then the embryo becomes a fetus and by the time it's like a relatively well-developed embryo or fetus, it's

starting to [laughter] have like brain activity going on. You know, an unborn child is presumably already in a kind of a dream state at least sometimes.

So,

how does that happen? I've already said science can't explain it.

But you've got what science would probably considered to be consciousness emerging from the non-conscious.

Unless you just want to accept that the sperm and the egg were already conscious.

Or that the atoms from which they were composed are already conscious.

So, I just do away with the whole

mind-body problem by just accepting that energy and consciousness are essentially synonyms.

Let's see here.

I guess I answered that question.

So, I'm I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is This is from the Saboteur.

And strangely the Saboteur asked a question that I'm pretty sure I answered in the previous Q&A. Just the Q&A before this like the Q&A under which the Saboteur posted this question.

He says, "What is the karma for eating meat, fish, eggs, etc. if you know how

it harms the animal and you had studied vegetarianism?

I ask as a layman, not as a bhikkhu, nor as an ordained monk." Well, the karma would be essentially the same. I mean, a monk would have some complications of the karma breaking rules that lay people don't have.

I mean, lay people would other have certain other complications of karma that monks don't have like they're making the effort to go out and buy food, this kind of thing.

But the karma for eating meat, fish, eggs, etc. I mean if you know how it harms the animal and you had studied vegetarianism, I mean

just eating meat, just the physical act is neither moral nor immoral. It's neither wholesome nor unwholesome going with Buddhist ethics like like I said in the previous Q&A.

So, I mean, if you can do something with peace of mind, if you can do something without unwholesome mental states, you have not done anything wrong by doing it.

But, like I said in the previous Q&A, if you think it's wrong and you do it, then you're going to have a guilty conscience maybe. And that's going to be the worst karma you get. It's just you're going to be afflicting yourself

with these feelings of guilt
for having done this thing that in in
and of itself wasn't even necessarily
wrong, not from a Buddhist point of view
anyway. From a a Western utilitarian
ethical point of view in which
Westerners, including Western Buddhists,
are pretty much saturated then sure, you
can say well,
you're contributing to I mean, you're
voting with your money for the the
killing of animals by by buying meat.
But then again, I mean, if if these
indirect ramifications really
I mean
>> [clears throat]
>> I mean, if they really are ethically

binding, then you know, even if you're buying like vegan food, I mean, if if the farmer who grow this grew the soybeans is wearing leather shoes or was using insecticides, even organic ones, still you're indirectly causing the deaths of all these creatures.

So, I'm really

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> kind of stubbornly going with a Buddhist ethic because this is primarily a Buddhist Q&A.

And so, just the eating of meat, fish, eggs, etc. in and of itself is not

I mean, you're not making bad karma

except for the mental states.

And if if you're just wallowing in sensuality, regardless of whether it's steak or whether it's salad, you know, if you're just like clinging to the pleasure of eating this stuff, you're being a real foodie about it. That's unwholesome mental states right there, whether it's meat or salad or whatever it is you're eating. You can be completely vegan. You could have hunted down farmers that don't use any kind of pesticides and and wear this cloth slippers. They [snorts] don't wear leather. They don't have a leather belt, you know, it's none of it. They don't pay their taxes.

So, they're not indirectly, you know,
paying for bombing civilians in foreign
countries and all that.

Still,

if you are just really

like indulging in the sensuality of
eating it,

then you're

you're engaging in unwholesome
activities.

You're making bad karma for yourself.

Bad karma.

But, I mean, if you eat meat and you
just have like

just this neutral mental state while
you're eating it,

you know, it's not guilt from from this animal having been killed so that I can have this good taste in my mouth and it's not just wallowing in the pleasure of it, you know, it's just you're eating this in order to stay healthy enough to continue practicing Dharma or just continuing your life, then I mean [clears throat]

you haven't done anything as bad as the person who's just wallowing in enjoying vegan foodie-ism.

Or just being self-righteous and and proud and arrogant about being a vegan. Conceited about it. This sort of thing.

>> [sighs]

>> So,

if I mean just the knowing how it harms the animal, like killing an animal definitely harms it.

And you've studied vegetarianism. Like you've read Animal Liberation, you know, this I read I read it myself back in my my early 20s. You know, it's like a philosophical book about, you know, this the the ethical

It's just the bad ethics of killing animals and using animals in laboratory testing, this kind of thing. From like a Western utilitarian ethical point of view.

And I mean they do horrible things. I mean like even like

relatively innocuous stuff like like women's makeup, they do what's called the Draize test. I assume they don't do it nearly so much now, but like back in the in the '70s and '80s, they'd have to take any kind of household chemical including like women's makeup and put it directly onto the eyeball of rabbits to see if it would cause irritation or damage or this kind of thing. So, you got these these rabbits just all kind of lined up in this this laboratory with their heads sticking through a hole where they can't move, you know, they can't scratch or kick at the the scientists or anything. And then they're like putting stuff directly onto their

eyeballs, this kind of thing.

I mean

there's there's practically no escape
from that. I mean even if you buy vegan
food, you're going to be paying taxes
presumably

somehow or other

which are going to go to in part bombing
civilians in foreign countries, killing
people.

So, if you're going to go with the
utilitarian ethic, I mean, you're pretty
much [__] really, but still, I mean,
the best you can do is just minimize.

Minimize the amount of indirect damaging
ramifications of your actions, but still

you're never going to be perfect at it.

But, if you go with Buddhist Buddhist ethics, I mean, it's hardly like you're ever going to be perfect at Buddhist ethics, either. I mean, even enjoying your meal is unwholesome from a Buddhist point of view. You're wallowing in sensuality.

So, I guess from an ethical point of view, it's I mean, you may be better off just going with like Old Testament ethics, where as long as you're just following these basic rules that God laid down, you're doing fine. And you can like kill people if God tells you to, or whatever it is, you know, you have the right to dominate dominate all

the other animals of the earth and all that.

So,

the karma for eating meat, eggs, fishes, there is your mental state. So, if you got unwholesome mental states while eating the food or afterwards because you got a guilty conscience or whatever, that's unskillful. If you got skillful mental states while eating the food, let's say you're you like let up you like say a prayer for the animal. You know, you're thanking the animal for giving its life. The animal probably doesn't give a damn, but the gratitude

is like a wholesome mental state. Or the meta that you're that you're generating, sincere meta, wholesome mental state.

You want to share your food with somebody? Wholesome mental state. So, it's your it's the mental states and not the action itself. I've said this so many times in these videos.

I mean, just the the mere physical act of a deed, of an action, is more is like morally neutral.

It is the mental states which accompany the act that determines whether that act is wholesome or unwholesome or otherwise, skillful or unskillful.

>> [sighs]

>> So, if you study vegetarianism, which it

makes it more likely that you have a guilty conscience for eating the food, then the guilty conscience is going to be the main bad karma you're going to get.

Probably.

For some people.

I'm just going to move on to the Saboteur's next question.

He says, "If after months of intense suffering from a serious illness such as the big C, previous karma notwithstanding, do you earn any merit either spiritually and/or materially?" Well, just again, just getting a disease is

is the fruition of past karma, but you're not necessarily making any new karma at all. Any new karma is going to be the result of the mental states you're having, and two different people would having the same catastrophic situation are going to have different mental states and they'll be making different karma.

So, it's not like your karma is like I mean, you don't earn merit from getting sick.

Yeah, it's No, it doesn't work that way.

I mean, you're you're like paying off some kind of past karmic debt. And if you can accept your situation with a semblance of equanimity, you may not be

creating more karma that may like cause a new karmic debt or an increase of the pre-existing karmic debt.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean, sometimes [clears throat] people that have like a a serious illness or some some such, I mean, it's it's a wake-up call for them, and it can change your life, you know, it's like a near-death experience can change your life, or just you know, just facing your own mortality can cause you to re-evaluate things and cause you to be a better person.

That kind of thing. I mean, I've seen that happen before. It does happen for

some people. And other people, it won't necessarily help them at all. They'll just maybe even get even more bad karma as a result of it.

From being like freaked out or black-pilled or or whatever it is.

So, let's make sure I I answer this question here. If after months of intense suffering from a serious illness, previous karma notwithstanding, I'm not sure exactly what that means. Do you earn any merit, either spiritually and or materially? Not necessarily at all. I mean, there is no meritoriousness to being sick.

It's just the mental states that accompany your experience or or just

your seeming outward experiences
are going to determine the karma.

Okay.

I don't I'm I'm obviously not answering
questions like this very effectively cuz
I keep getting the same kind of
questions.

Where I mean, it's
does action X cause this kind of karma
or the the other kind of karma? It's
like, the action X is morally neutral.

It's your own mental states. Two
different people can do exactly the same
thing outwardly. Inwardly, one's earning
merit, and the other one's earning
demerit. Just because of the mental

states accompanying the actions.

So, I mean, like one kind of obvious example is the ladies in Burma who put food in amongst bowls. You know, I was going for alms pretty much every day when I was a monk.

And there are some ladies, you know, they're poor village ladies, married to a subsistence farmer, and they just happy, you know, they're thrilled to offer food to the monk.

Whereas, there's some other ladies that will only offer food if they they see the neighbors are watching.

So, in that case, they might still earn some merit for offering food, but still there's like this

hypocrisy or, you know, just they're they're not doing it out of a sincere desire to give. It's just that they don't want the neighbors to think that they're stingy or something, and so they just kind of fake it, this kind of thing. So, it's like two women offering the same kind of food in the same amounts, and one of them's earning way more merit than the other one.

I mean, they're both earning some merit, but still the karma is not the same because the mental states are not the same.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Seal of
Action Cpad Zidana.

He says, "If you somehow found out this
life is all there is, materialism is
true, and upon death we cease to exist
completely, would you have lived your
life any differently, not in a regretful
way, but just out of curiosity?"

How would I somehow find out that this
life is all there is and materialism is
true?

I mean,
that this life is all there is, I mean,
that's not
too wild, I guess, but materialism is
true, I mean,
I don't even see how that's even

possible.

Because we are not living in a material world. We are living in a mental world.

Everything we experience is mental.

So,

yeah, I mean, if materialism turned out to be true, if I suddenly realize materialism is true, especially at this point, I mean, I would have been insane up until that point. And it would take serious reevaluation, and there's no telling what the hell I would decide on.

Huh.

>> [sighs]

>> But, I mean, if this life is all there is, then still, I mean, Buddhism is

still The Four Noble Truths are still true, even if there's no rebirth.

Desire is the cause of all suffering.

And if materialists don't believe that, they're just

ignorant

or deluded.

I mean, that That should be self-evident if you're capable of

like any moderate degree of introspection.

That desire is the cause of all

suffering. If you're unhappy, all you got to do is just

just look into what it is that I'm

desiring right now, and it's usually pretty obvious. I mean, if it's just

kind of like this vague malaise

kind of a depression or something, it might not be as obvious as to what it is that you are desiring that's making you miserable, but it's it's there.

It may be that you won't be able to penetrate into the deeper layers to find out exactly what it is, but in most cases, if you're unhappy about something,

you know, you're late for work or something, it's obvious what it is you desire. You're desire You're wanting something intensely, which is causing you to suffer intensely.

Even if you It's like you stubbed your

toe, and your your toe hurts, I mean,
the mere physical pain is not the same
as suffering. The suffering comes from
the desire for that pain to stop.

Pain is just like the signal, it's like
a red light flashing.

The suffering comes from the desire for
the pain to stop.

So,

would I have lived my life any
differently?

I don't know. I mean, it's it's kind of
a It's It's a kind of logical fallacy.

You know, if this hadn't happened
different, then this would have happened
instead, but you you can't really know
for sure.

But, if materialism is true, I mean, if I'd known that a long time ago, I probably would have just been a like trained to be a scientist or something.

That's kind of the direction I was headed anyway before I became a monk.

So, it's like how when do you find out about, you know, this kind of

materialistic scientific realism,

nihilism kind of stuff? You know, when

is that true? Is it just that you never

I mean, you never get red-pilled? You

never take the red pill? I did watch The

Matrix last night. One of my favorite

movies.

One of the greatest movies ever made, in my opinion.

And that's what the red pill comes from.

It comes from that movie.

And if if you just

don't ever take the red pill, where

you're just completely immersed in

samsara,

then

you just you're just a normie. I mean,

you just

get a job and

get a house and a wife and maybe some

kids and a dog and

car or two and just go down that route,

and that's that's reality for you.

I mean, most people are just lost in in

the matrix.

They don't even have to take the blue pill. They've They're already blue-pilled. They're just blue-pilled by default.

And so, I mean, if if that's the way it was, then I I mean, Buddhism like even to investigate into Buddhism, I mean, I mean, I may have never really had the urge for that.

Just uh

go the academia route.

Wind up

just

being a normie.

So,

yeah, I mean, this question is is kind of a vague question and it's it's conjecture, you know, how would I have reacted

in the some hypothetical case in which um

I learned that materialism is true, which I don't even think is possible. I mean, it'd be more along the lines of just believing that materialism is true, which is something I kind of always did at a surface level anyway until around the age of 17.

In which case, I mean, up until 17, I was just planning on, you know, getting a Porsche by the age of 30 and just going to college and getting a good job.

That kind of thing.

But, I mean, this is it's kind of a weird question.

I somehow found out this life is all there is, which I mean, most people pretty much believe, I guess, even the Christians, I think.

Materialism is true, I mean, that's pushing it.

And uh upon death, we cease to exist completely. I mean, that's still a possibility. I mean, I don't insist that there's an afterlife. I am going with the hypothesis there does seem to be from some fair evidence for it, including the

testimonies of people much wiser than me.

But still, I mean, there are people like uh Nisargadatta Maharaj, who's considered to be an enlightened being by some people, at least.

And he says when you die, you just merge with Brahman. There's no rebirth or anything. There's no life after death. He's still a spiritual person.

>> [snorts]

>> So, it's really hard to say.

I mean, if I were just blue-pilled, then yeah, I probably wouldn't have become a monk. I'd probably just gone to grad school and maybe go to post-grad after that, get a

doctorate,

teach at a university

till I got kicked out for being not

left-wing enough.

So, it's it's really hard to say. This

This question is

I mean, it's there's too many

suppositions

and variables to even make an

intelligent guess other than just what

would I have done if I had just never

been red-pilled and just stayed a normie

my entire life.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is also from Seal of

Action Cpod Zeena, and I think we're

still recording. Yeah.

The little green bars for the microphone seem to be in the correct ranges, which is good.

Okay. Seal of Action Cpod Zeena says,

"In some texts when Mara sends his armies to attack the Buddha, the earth itself declares the Buddha's great deeds, and the earth scares away Mara and his armies away.

What is the Buddhist explanation of the earth itself being able to scare gods from the highest sensual heaven realm away? Seems the ground itself is greater than all devas and maybe even some brahmas.

Cuz Mara didn't seem too afraid of even

Baka Brahma and tried to make him
prideful, seems quite strange. Well, I
mean,

I think the first mistake is expecting
some kind of logical sense from ancient
Indian folklore.

Um yeah, I've never really thought about
this.

I mean, it's it's just like mythology.
It's just legends.

I mean, there are some literalists who
would insist, "Yeah, if the text says
it, it must be true."

But,

yeah, I mean, it's the earth is just
considered to be just sort of like the

ultimate basis, ultimate grounding for
our version of reality anyway,
that uh even samsara is kind of
earth-centric at least for us humans.

So, it's just sort of like the cosmic
order

kind of taking the side of of the
Buddha. This earth itself is being sort
of like a manifestation of cosmic order,
I guess. That would just be my guess. I
mean, I don't think the com-
mentaries even bothered to explain it
because they're not as autistic in in
seeking out these kind of anomalies as
Seuvax and Sipadzidana is.

You know, it's just accepted. You know,
you just like people watch a movie and

there's these incongruities and contradictions that can arise and some people like me will notice it and it'll kind of detract from the movie, but most people just are just immersed. They just accept the contradictions or like in a dream where there's just contradictory anomalous stuff happening all all the time and it's like you just accept it. That's just the way it is.

So, yeah, I would just guess that the earth itself is just kind of like a personification or manifestation of just sort of cosmic order.

You know, it's just like the foundation

of samsara.

At least for us.

Uh so, did I answer the question? I mean, this question also I mean, I don't know if there really is a correct answer. There could be, I suppose.

>> [sighs]

>> Yeah, but I mean, it's just mythology.

You know, it's like why doesn't Medusa's Medusa's snake hair bite bite her own face?

You know, it's like it never occurred to anybody.

All

>> [sighs]

>> I guess I'm just going to move on to

Seal of Action Cpod Z in his third question here.

And this is another meme type question requiring me to type it out instead of just cutting and pasting the question.

He just posts a kind of meme like a picture, has two buttons, a red one and a blue one. You know, red pill, blue pill, but different. It's buttons.

And

the it's like a um kind of moral

I don't know. What's the what's the word?

There's some kind of word for this.

But if

it's kind of like an ethics problem or

just a which would you pick kind of problem.

And so you got the red button and the blue button and if more than 50% of the people press blue, everyone survives.

But if not, if more than 50% don't press the blue button, only those [clears throat] who press the red button survive.

And then I guess he's asking me which button I would press. And there's just insufficient data. I mean, does everyone have to press the button? Or or is it there there's going to be a certain amount of apathy where like with with elections, a significant amount of people don't even bother to vote.

In which case you might be better off with the red button. You know, if you're just assuming that there's not going to be enough turnout for 50% to press the blue button.

You know, something like that. I mean, I don't know all the all the variables. I don't know all the the information that would be required to make an intelligent like decision. I mean, if this were really the case, it's in all the news and everything, I'd be studying it intensively just to be able to make an more informed choice on which button I should push.

As it is, I really don't know.

If more than 50% press blue, I mean, if if you've got like movements, you know, like the Muslims are saying press the red one cuz we Muslims are all going to press the red one and we're in the minority and so we will survive. This kind of thing, then you got to take all that into consideration.

Otherwise, I mean if it's just an angel just an angel for each person on the human on the on the planet. Each human on the planet has its own angel designated assigned to them to come down and right now without any kind of you know, you don't get to read the news about it. You don't get to study up. They just show you the two buttons and

they say press one.

Then still, damn.

I guess I'd press the blue one. Just
just like if I were having to go with
impulse

I'd go with the blue one.

But more realistically, if I had time to
to think about it I'd be, you know,
studying up and looking at the trends
and seeing how other people are going to
be voting.

But I mean, it seems like if everyone
has to vote

I mean, you'd have at least a 50% chance
of everyone surviving if you press blue.

>> [sighs]

>> Be like a coin toss pretty much. Just I mean, if if you you really can't calculate the like the statistics of it.

It'd be like a coin toss, I guess, and so you might as well just go for the the the coin toss that allows everyone to live.

But still, I mean, if I had the chance I'd I'd have to like study up on this. See how other people were going to vote and in or in order to calculate my odds.

But I mean

Yeah, okay.

Let's see.

Yeah, even if you press red and then more than 50% of the people

still press blue anyway, you're still
going to you're still going to live.

So,

damn.

Yeah.

Well, hell, okay. Wait a minute.

If everyone If I press red, I'm
guaranteed to survive.

>> [laughter]

[snorts]

>> And this is is dawning on me now.

Yeah, because if if more than half of
the rest of the human race presses blue,
I'm going to survive anyway. And if less
than half of the human race presses
blue, then

nah, [clears throat] I'm going to survive anyway. So, I mean, you're guaranteed a survival if you press red.

And so, all you'd have to do is just just have this just notify the entire planet. Everyone just press red.

But then, who knows?

Yeah, I think I mean, if you're in you're looking out for number one, then it'd be and it would just make perfect sense to press red cuz then you're you're guaranteed to survive, regardless how anybody else feels about it.

Ah, so

then it's kind of tricky. I mean, are you are you willing to be altruistic enough to take a

the chance of dying

by pressing blue?

Yeah.

I think

ah, I mean, it's seriously though,

I would want to be able to at least warn everybody. Everybody just press red and you're guaranteed to survive.

Just put it in the put it on X, this kind of stuff. Then I'd feel better about pressing red and saving my own skin.

Ah.

>> [sighs]

>> I think I'm just going to move on to this question.

This hypothetical questions are kind of weird.

What would it be like if you if If were you you were born and and Hitler had won World War II? This kind of question is like how do you answer it?

But it does make sense to push red and you're guaranteed to survive. I mean, everyone should push red. I mean, if everyone knew this except for some stupid people, I guess.

Everyone should just press red.

I mean, if you guys if it comes up, press red and we'll all press red and we'll all survive anyway.

Okay.

Next question is from Damma River.

Is there any aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path or the Damma in general that is often overlooked but you think is extremely important and should be prioritized or at least studied more often?

Well,

there are there is one
one aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path
that it gets the least amount of press.

It's samma vayama.

Right effort.

That's that seems like the one that is
the least mentioned

of the Noble Eightfold Path. That that
fold that one fold aspect of the path
is uh the least mentioned. So, I mean,

>> [clears throat]

>> that would uh I mean, I hope I'm right
when I call it samma vayama. I mean,
it's it's an obscure one kind of cuz
nobody talks about it.

But,

yeah, right effort.

Um but, I really don't think it's

extremely important to be prioritized or

I mean,

I'm I really [clears throat]

am kind of skeptical of the Noble

Eightfold Path, to tell you the truth.

The probably the original Four Noble

Truths, there was a path, but it wasn't necessarily eightfold. I mean, there are a few prototypes found in the suttas like there's a tenfold path that you can find in the sutras.

So,

yeah, I mean, I really

I mean, the the eight of these and the the seven of those and the four of the other, I mean, that these kind of lists I've I've never really based my Dhamma on numerical lists anyway.

So, I mean, it's just sort of like an intuitive moment-to-moment thing that you're living rather than memorizing lists and and jargon and like

philosophical

principles and this kind of thing. I mean, there's a time and a place for that.

But, I mean, it's really never been a priority really for me

is like learning the all the the various numerical lists of things. I've I'm still confusing like obstacles and fetters and this kind of thing.

Hindrances and fetters.

The samyojanas. Is this just the lists?

I get them confused in my mind. Always have.

So,

samma vayama.

Yeah. I mean, right efforts.

I think it's mainly four right efforts.

And it's like any good habits you have, you try to strengthen and maintain them.

Any good habits you don't have yet, you try to cultivate them. Any bad habits you already have, you try to eliminate them. And any bad habits you don't have, you try to avoid acquiring them.

I mean, it's

just kind of

basic ethics. Wholesome, good thing to know, I suppose.

So, that's because it's the one that gets the least amount of mention. I was I guess it's it's number six on the the

noble eightfold path. So,
yeah, I'd I'd sort of encourage more
emphasis on that one, I guess. Although,
it's really not something I think about
much,
if at all.

Except for just now.

So, [snorts] let's just move on to the
next question.

This is from Churzaskas is.

And he's quoting

Let's see here.

I believe

Let's see.

It's one of the part part Jiko rules.

It's part Jiko number three. The third
part Jiko rule.

And then

let's see here. It says, "Quote, if a monk intentionally kills a human being or seeks an instrument of death for them or praises death or incites someone to die saying,

an instrument of death or ins- Now, he This is he's messed it up here.

See, or incites someone to die saying, "My friend, what's the point of this miserable and difficult life? Death [clears throat] is better for you than life." Thinking and intending thus, if he praises death in many ways or incites someone to die, he too is expelled and excluded from the community." Unquote.

So, this is kind of a slightly
typographically errored version of the
third part Jiko rule.

Let's see. Yeah. But that saying an
instrument of death, yeah, that's that's
not in there. That's I don't know where
that came from. It's just a typo.

Okay, so
that's the rule.

So, if a monk
kills somebody or causes them to kill
themselves or

I mean, he he causes a human death
knowingly and willingly.

He's he's committed a part Jiko. And
then at the end of the rule it has
non-offenses.

And here the non-offenses, there is no offense if it is unintentional, if he does not know, if he is not aiming at death, if he is insane, if he is the first offender. So, you kill somebody accidentally, you're not guilty of a parajika offense.

And here,

um

Trizaskas is has if he is insane in bold type. And then he says, "Do insane monks not commit any parajika offenses?" And in the the Patimokkha rules, one of the very last rules, it's it's it's not even like a precept, it's just like a technical addendum at the end of the

parajika rules, there is this insanity clause

where if a monk is so out of his mind, he doesn't even recall what happened after he's he's come to his senses, then it's in in a way it's unintentional.

He is he is not responsible for his actions, but there's a certain definition of the insanity where you don't even recall what you're doing.

It was just sort of like this psychotic episode, sort of like be like a black a drunken blackout, which caused me as a monk to think that if you got so drunk that you blacked out, and then you just went on some spree, I mean, you like have sex with women and so forth, the

next morning you can't even remember it, technically, you would not be guilty of a parajika offense. Sometimes monks lie around thinking about this kind of stuff.

So,

yeah, it's the kind of insanity, not just a little bit nutty, you know, not neurotic, that kind of thing, but if you are so out of you have like this episode where I mean, you don't even recall what you did, you were just completely out of it,

then what you did is it's in a sense unintentional

because you're not even aware of having

done it.

It's kind of like something you did while you were sleepwalking, that kind of thing.

So, not all insane monks are like immune to parajika offenses or any offense.

I mean, anything you've done in that kind of state is

um I think you're pretty much exempt from from like ecclesiastical rules.

But,

>> [sighs]

>> you have to you have to be like really out of it so that you're you're really just not even you're not in your right mind so out of your right mind that you don't even recall what you did after

you're back in your right mind again. In the there's like a the stereotypical insane monk in the poly taxes whose name was Gaga.

I think it was g a g g a was his name.

He was like the the standard

like insane monk and he would have like these episodes. It wasn't like he was just kind of nutty all the time.

Walking around declaring himself to be a sotapanna, that kind of stuff.

So, yeah, it's a certain kind of insanity.

It's being out of your senses kind of a thing.

So, I'm just going to move on to

Chruzaskas's next question.

Why people often look for ancient wisdom as opposed to modern wisdom? Why ancient is viewed as better? Yeah, it's one thing that's it's sort of a difference between East and West to some degree. Like in the West, like information is is better than newer it is, especially if it's like science. You know, scientific evidence, course newer scientific evidence trumps older scientific evidence as a general rule. If newer scientific evidence conclusively demonstrates or at least conclusively enough that the scientific community is is switched paradigms, then it's going to be, you you more

authoritative than older scientific information. I mean, science books that were written over 100 years ago, they aren't really read all that much. Even though they they could be a classic, you know, just really a earth-shattering, groundbreaking new discovery in science, still

not many people, including not many scientists, are going to be reading some article that was written in 1898.

Maybe just for like historical reasons.

But they're not going to be going to that old source for information very often at all.

Um whereas like in Burma, it's like the older something is, the more venerable it is. And to some degree, I mean, you could say that it's just in a traditional culture, elders are considered to be more wise than young people because they've been around long enough. They've seen a few things.

They've been around the block a time or two.

And they have managed to avoid death, so that's why they're old. So,

traditionally,

up until modern times, old people were

kind of venerated as being wise. And

ancient [clears throat] wisdom is kind

of along those lines. But also, ancient

wisdom has stood the test of time. I think that would probably be the one of the best justifications for preferring ancient wisdom to like recent wisdom is that ancient wisdom is still venerated after thousands of years. That, you know, it has withstood the test of time. You know, it's it's still holding strong. And so, in a way, it has kind of survived all the the attempts to debunk it well enough that it's still standing. And there's somebody parked right in front of our house with their lights on. I don't know why they're doing it. I don't know. Could be somebody's going

to come over.

I don't know. Maybe they just see waving my arms around inside the window.

Like, why is that guy in there waving his arms around?

But, I don't like people just parked right out in front of our house with the lights on cuz it's distracting.

So, yeah, people look for ancient wisdom as opposed to modern wisdom. Personally, I mean,

I consider some recent stuff. Now, I guess somebody's coming to our house now.

Like, Eckhart Tolle's The Power of Now, for example,

just to give one example. I mean, that
contains more quality wisdom
than the Old Testament. And now
somebody's ringing the doorbell.
And the dogs are all going berserk.
This is one of the one of the
complications of being a householder.
Maybe I should get up and close the
door.

>> [clears throat]

>> Okay.

And the dogs are still going for it.

>> [sighs]

>> So, yeah, I would assume that's the main
reason why people prefer ancient wisdom
to modern wisdom.

Also, there's just sort of like a a
veneration for the past. Oh, for the
good old days. And it was like that even
in ancient times. And I'm going to have
to get up and yell at the dogs to shut
up if they don't do it pretty soon.

Damn.

Just a minute.

Hey, shut up.

>> [sighs]

>> Noise.

I don't even know why they're at the
door.

I'm not going to find out till later,
either.

So,

yeah, I mean, there is sort of like this

looking back to the past, like to a golden age, where things were better. It seems to be like a prevalent human attitude, you know, that things in the past were better than now. You know, it's like even Buddhism

has this idea that we're in a state of decline. We're kind of in the Kali Yuga, going with more Hinduistic terms, where

things are just getting worse and worse. All of the evidence really doesn't seem to indicate that.

Now, since the Buddha's time, I don't think things have been getting worse and worse since the Buddha's time.

Um maybe spiritually to some degree,
but like lifespans increased
considerably after like industry and
capitalism kind of took over the world
and eradicated most of the poverty, that
kind of thing.

Let's see. But, yeah, this So, I I would
assume that people look to the past for
wisdom, respect ancient wisdom more than
modern wisdom.

Um partly

um

just because

the ancient wisdom has survived for
thousands of years, whereas the new the
new wisdom hasn't really been, you know,
exposed to Darwinian natural selection

very much yet. You know, it hasn't stood the test of time or withstood the test of time.

And also, there's just this idea that things were better in the past.

And even like in the Bible, in Ecclesiastes,

the book in the Old Testament, it says, you know, don't think, "Why were things so much better in the past?" because it is not a wise way of thinking.

So, it's like it's always been the case that people have looked into the past as for as some kind of golden age. Things are [__] now, but they used to be great.

And if you read history, I mean, there

never was a golden age.

Things have pretty much always sucked to some degree.

I mean, certain problems are solved and then new problems take their place. It's just the way it is. It's just the world is an outward like representation of our own mental states.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

yeah, I would assume those the stuff that I rambled about are

the main reasons for that. Although, I mean, something like The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle or Moby Dick by Herman Melville or The Book of the New Sun by Gene Wolfe contain more wisdom than a

lot of scriptures out there.

So, it is kind of weird that you can have really profound literature that isn't scripture. And then you can just have a bunch of just kind of silliness that is just considered sacred divine scripture.

Not that all the ancient scriptures are silly, but some of them are.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I I guess I answered that question about as well as I'm going to.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Raphael.

And Raphael says, "To what extent does the concept of gratitude play a role in

Buddhist thought and practice? For instance, how is it appreciation for basic capacities, such as the ability to walk, see, or meditate understood within this framework?" Gratitude really is not a major virtue in Theravada Buddhism. I mean, there's like Anumodana or rejoicing in like the good deeds of others, that kind of thing, but that's not apparently what Raphael is talking about here.

Um, Kadannu da or gratitude. I mean, it is considered to be a virtue.

Literally, it's knowing the maker or knowing the doer.

>> [clears throat]

>> Acknowledging the doer of a good deed,
essentially.

That would be gratitude or what is often
translated as gratitude in English.

Um,

but gratitude for the ability to walk
or the ability to see.

Um, yeah, I mean, it's it's I've never
really encountered that in the texts,
any encouragement to be grateful for
your ability to walk and see.

Or to meditate, I mean,
the gratitude for the ability to
meditate is is sort of like
uh

being a monk.

You know, it's like that's monks were mainly the meditators in ancient times. So, you can have a gratitude for finding the holy life, gratitude towards the Buddha for starting the wheel of Dhamma rolling, that kind of thing.

Um, so I mean, it's in there, it's in the texts, gratitude towards others who have like gratitude towards benefactors, gratitude towards the Sangha, that kind of thing. It's in the texts. It's not really emphasized a whole heck of a lot, but it's in there. But

appreciation for basic capacities such as the ability to walk or see.

Yeah, that's that's too basic, I think, for you to find hardly any mention of

that at all in the Pali texts. At least,
I don't recall seeing anything like
that. I mean, you could sort of I mean,
there is like a an elementary type of
meditation, which is sort of
recollection of your own mer- merit
as a way of

Oh, looks like I'm
lagging.

See.

This

recollection of your own merit. So, that
would be kind of being grateful to
yourself
for having earned merit that you are
enjoying now

or are bound to enjoy in the future. So,
I mean you could kind of stretch that a
little bit
and you could sort of
um be grateful for your past meritorious
deeds that haven't caused you to go
blind or be crippled. That kind of
thing.

But, yeah, that's it's really too basic,
I think,
to get much mention or emphasis in the
texts.

And I don't know why I'm lagging. Maybe
I've got too many
too many tabs open. Just a sec.
Get rid of that one.

Get rid of that one and get rid of that

one.

Maybe I should have restarted the computer, but now I'm lagging even more that I closed Now that I closed some tabs, I'm lagging even more.

Oh, well.

So, I'm just going to move on to Raphael's next question. There's There's some like difficult sort of subtle vague conjectural kind of questions in this Q&A.

Uh

>> [sighs]

>> okay. Next question from Raphael.

Do you or did you previously experience an internal conflict between black pill

Panyo, according to whom life is a kind of mistake and human beings are merely biologically driven organisms without free will or metaphysical grounding, and Buddhist Panyo, who affirms the existence of metaphysical phenomena such as higher consciousness and rebirth. I don't I've never considered myself to be black-pilled.

I mean, there were few times in my life when I was depressed that maybe I was temporarily black-pilled.

But, there really is no abiding aspect of my personality that I consider to be black-pilled. To be a To be black-pilled is to be like like pessimistic, negative, and just

advocating just giving up.

That would be a black pill.

Red pill is something entirely different that some people confuse with black pill.

Like, one person on the Discord server the other not long ago, couple weeks ago, maybe, was saying that Buddhism is black-pilled. But, Buddhism is not black-pilled. It is red-pilled. I mean, it's There's like Buddhist symbolic elements in the movie The Matrix, which came up with the original idea of blue pill, red pill.

Blue pill is a normie. Red pill is someone who's sort of seeing through the

illusion.

Black pill is just like

it's all It all sucks, and I give up.

So, I mean, I've never really been

black-pilled other than just brief

episodes of maybe some depression over

the course of my life that didn't last.

So,

life is not a kind of a mistake.

Human beings,

I mean, they're not merely biologically

driven organisms. I mean, for the most

part, we are. That's one way of looking

at it. But, it's never been the only way

I've looked at it.

And without free will or I mean,

yeah, I mean, that's not black-pilled if

you don't if you don't really believe in
free will.

I mean, it is a paradox. I mean, there
could be something along the lines of
free will that is like paradoxically
generated by

uh human self-consciousness just being
self-referential.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> no metaphysical grounding and and I just
don't see that at all.

Okay.

And then,

is there any conflict between that and
Buddhist panna

who affirms the existence of metaphysical phenomena such as higher consciousness and rebirth? Yeah, I mean, there there's never really been much of a conflict.

I mean, I started off with science. I mean, like

I mean, I I I got an education in science.

But still, I I didn't I mean, I wasn't so completely into scientism that I just interpreted reality along scientific terms, except for maybe when I was a kid.

You know, you're a little kid, you want to be a scientist, you want to be like

Mr. Spock on Star Trek or like the Professor on Gilligan's Island, whose knowledge of science gave them practically superhuman powers.

You know, I mean, the Professor on Gilligan's Island, he can make elaborate electrical equipment out of just vines and coconut shells.

So,

okay, let's let's get back to the top of this question. Do you or did you ever previously experience an internal conflict?

No, not really. I mean, I have experienced internal conflicts before.

It's like one part of me wants to become

a monk and the other part of me still
likes girls and ice cream and rock and
roll.

You know, and so there's there's that
kind of conflict. But I mean,
it wasn't really
just

I don't I don't know how to explain it.
That there there is that kind of
conflict. It's just which do I want to
do, but it wasn't like two warring
worlds worldviews or paradigms. I mean,
my paradigm has never been so locked
down

that it's just irreconcilable with some
other aspect of my personality. That's
one thing about me that

that kind of made me bad at samatha
meditation and better at mindfulness
meditation because there are certain
kinds of people who have a comp
partmental I can't talk.

compartmentalized

mind. So, like new age people are like a
classical example from my own personal
experience. They can believe mutually
contradictory stuff.

And it's just that one one thing that
they believe is in one compartment of
their mind, which is kind of closed off
with like mental bulkheads from this
other belief that you know,
like sort of postmodern feminists

who you know, they're opposed to the patriarchy, but they're completely in favor of Islam. This kind of thing. It's It just doesn't work like that with me. My mind is more integrated than most people.

I mean, it's not like I'm trying to brag or anything. I just have that kind of mind where like in meditation people who are good at samatha generally have more compartmentalized mind where you just have to like purify this one compartment.

Whereas if everything is interconnected, it's very difficult to get your entire mind, every room, every compartment of your mind pacified so you can get into

the same depth of like concentration as someone who only has to purify this one compartment when they're meditating.

So,

um yeah, my mind is just more integrated, you know, the various aspects of it. And so, I mean, there are like sort of enigmas or or gray areas or uncertainties, this kind of thing, ambiguities, I guess is the word I'm looking for. But, I mean, I'm relatively comfortable with ambiguity, but um you know, I can live with ambiguity. I've made my peace with ambiguity cuz there's no way we're going to know everything. There's always going to be

some ambiguity.

So, let's see here.

This is This is another one of those weird questions that I'm not exactly sure how to answer. I'm getting just getting a lot of them in this Q&A.

But, I was never really black-pilled other than, you know, brief episodes, maybe.

See, life is kind of a mistake. No, I don't think life is kind of a mistake.

Human beings are merely biologically driven organisms. No, although we are at that level,

you know, at a scientific empirical level, we are species of animal. We're like an upgraded ape.

But, when we without free will, I mean,
that's not being black-pilled. I mean,
that's just logic, really.

And

being without metaphysical grounding, I
don't know where Raphael came up with
that one.

Cuz I mean, I had this metaphysical
father who was telling me metaphysical
stories since I was a toddler.

So, let's see here. Buddhist point of
view I mean, from the Buddhist point of
view, you could say a lot of the same
stuff here.

No free will, for example. I mean,
Buddhism does not really advocate for

free will.

See, I mean, it doesn't advocate for determinism, either.

So,

yeah, I mean, it's

I there's various ways of looking at reality. Some ways are better for various purposes. You know, scientific way of looking at things is very useful in in certain respects, even from like the dharmic point of view, to look at a a human to to observe human nature as instincts of the human animal that have evolved over time through Darwinian natural selection to help promote the the to survival of the species. Yeah, I mean that's definitely valid and it

yeah, has helped me a lot in understanding myself and other people. But I mean it's not really in conflict with anything. I mean it's if I mean if it's true, one truth shouldn't be in conflict with another truth. And if there is some kind of conflict, I mean that indicates that, you know, the theory hasn't been entirely worked out yet and you can still kind of deal with that sort of like in modern physics how like quantum theory and relativity don't kind of mesh together extremely well just because one's dealing with the very tiny scale and one's dealing at a very large scale.

So I mean,
just because there's ambiguity and
things that don't quite fit together
right, I mean it it doesn't necessarily
mean that there's a conflict. It's just
like, well, these two pieces of the
puzzle don't fit together all that well
yet. But then every once in a while
you'll come across a book or something
that will just fill in gaps and will
help to reconcile things. I've come
across those a number of times in my
life and those are like my favorite kind
of books is the ones that help to,
you know, reconcile
what you couldn't really reconcile
before or just fill in gaps in your in

in your ignorance, in your knowledge.

So,

let's see, internal conflict

between apparently kind of like a

scientific panyo and a Buddhist panyo.

No, I mean they they're sort of like

both tools that can be used. I mean,

they're both helpful.

So, yeah, I mean, I never really had a

conflict between

like a scientific approach to life and a

Buddhist approach to life.

They're just two different ways of

looking at the same thing and it's just

like looking through two different

lenses from two different angles.

You know, two different kinds of lens.

So, yeah, I mean, it's it's

I was never really conflicted over that.

Although, I have been conflicted over things in life, but it was just like not being able to fully make up my mind one way or the other, rather than they're sort of like at war with each other and one of them has to win necessarily.

Oh, this kind of tough questions this time.

Maybe I'm just tired.

This has not been a particularly restful weekend.

And it is Mother's Day at the time that

I'm I'm recording this, so happy

Mother's Day to all you mothers out

there.

Probably not a whole lot of mothers watch my videos, though.

Anyways, the next question is from Maitreya Buddha.

And Maitreya Buddha says, "How does one prove or know about their past lives if we are given a new brain with each life? Does the cheetah transcend the material brain?" Well, I mean, you can't prove anything about past lives. I mean, maybe you could have like a past life regression where you knew the name of the person and where they lived and like you know, what time frame and then you can go back and look at like the the

records and see if there really was a person that lived like that. You know, it's like you recall being you know, a soldier in World War II and you can remember your serial number and then you can like look that up and see if that person really did exist, that kind of thing. But still, that wouldn't prove that it was your past life. It could be that just the spirit of some other person has like communicated to you or is just sort of like implanting their own memories into you. It could be a kind of clairvoyance where you're just seeing this past life that it wasn't even really you.

I mean, just even then if you can like

or like

what's the word? Confirm some of the
information that you had in a past life
regression, still that wouldn't prove
that you were reborn

you know, from that person as this one.

I mean, there's no way you can prove
that kind of stuff.

So, I mean, it's of limited value
really.

I mean, it could provide some insights
into why you are the way you are, maybe.

>> [sighs]

>> I mean, sometimes past life regressions
are therapeutic.

Like, there was this one woman I read

about in a book who kept having these bouts of vertigo.

And then she was hypnotized, had a past life regression, and she recalled being this teenage girl in like medieval England. And she was visiting a sick friend of hers, and then the friend died, and then she got accused of being a witch that caused the death of this person, and this angry mob was chasing her to lynch her or burn her at the stake or whatever, and she jumped off a cliff to get away from them. Get away Get away from them. And it was the vertigo was like this deep emotional impression of this sensation of falling as she was falling to her death in in a

previous life. And once she relived that,

then it kind of caused closure, I guess, and then she stopped having the the bouts of vertigo.

That There have been cases like this where past life regressions have been therapeutic. But, I mean, still it doesn't prove anything. It could just be that her subconscious imagination just conjured up this event that maybe didn't even really happen in order to produce a kind of closure so that she could kind of set aside this subconscious neurotic emotional need for dizziness or

whatever.

So, you can't prove anything about past lives.

I mean, you can't prove that they exist or that they don't exist.

But, the other part of this question, um

how can you remember past lives if you were given a new brain with each life, you have to like transcend the limitations of this particular version.

That's one reason why

um according to some authorities, small children

are more likely to remember past lives.

What was that?

Huh.

I thought a dog or something was up.

Uh [snorts]

Let's see. Where was I? Oh, yeah, small children are statistically more likely to claim to remember past lives just because they're not so firmly enmeshed in this one.

So, they're not as strongly identified with this life yet.

You know, they're not culturally conditioned into believing that you can't remember past lives.

That kind of thing.

But, yeah, in order to remember your past lives, I mean, it wouldn't be recorded in this brain. It would be

>> [clears throat]

>> beyond the brain.

Where, I mean, even the question of where is just kind of a meaningless question cuz I mean, time and and space uh I mean, they might not even really have any meaning when you get into the level of higher levels of consciousness that really have like the are connected with all of your past lives, maybe your future lives, too.

You know, you get beyond the limitations of time. You get into like a four-dimensional space-time continuum.

You know, there's a level of your consciousness that is operating at that level, which some people might call a

soul, although from the Buddhist point of view even that wouldn't be ultimately real.

It could be like a higher level of reality than the level that your conscious ego is thinking is is dealing with now.

But still it's not ultimately real.

So, yeah, in order to remember [clears throat] past lives, you have to transcend the limitations of your ego supposedly generated by a brain in this life.

You have to go beyond those limitations

somehow.

So, it would kind of be imprinted into
your karmic karmic momentum
to some degree.

And I'm not sure of why I keep lagging.

Those of you who are just listening to
the podcast or just not watching won't
even care

that the sounds coming out my mouth are
not

synchronized with the actual movements
of my mouth.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question.

This is from RFS.

And RFS says, "If life begins when the
sperm egg and rebirth linking

consciousness meet, does that mean
frozen embryos should be treated as
ethically significant?"

Well,

you don't know if the frozen embryo

Well, I guess from the Buddhist point of
view, if it's an embryo, if it's already
fertilized,

then there would at least be a latent
being there if

that being is going to continue to
develop.

But you don't know that for sure unless
you can

see into the future somehow.

Man, this I'm getting so many this kind

of weird vague conjectural kind of questions that are they're just not straightforwardly answered.

So, again, like if life begins when the sperm egg and rebirth linking consciousness meet, I mean, that's what Theravada Buddhism teaches, you can't really prove that that's true.

So, again, this is just like taking an assumption

and then going with that and seeing what the ramifications of the assumption are.

But, now, from a Buddhist point of view, if you know, this

you can't have an embryo unless there was a rebirth linking consciousness or

the Gandhabba, as it's called in the texts.

Um

yeah, then it would be a human being.

It'd be a frozen live human being.

But, then even the fact that it's frozen indicates that there really is no metabolism going on. So, I mean, whether it's even alive or not is questionable. See, this is the kind of question that never really came up in ancient Indian Buddhism.

If if a creature is frozen solid or some kind of like lungfish or amphibians can just dry out and then their their metabolism stops. I mean,

are they still alive or are they dead?

You can reconstitute them, add water, they come back alive again, or thaw them out and they come back alive again. But, I mean, there's no metabolism going on at all while they're frozen or desiccated. So, are they alive? It's a question that I don't know if ancient Indian Buddhism bothered to even address cuz it maybe didn't even occur to them to address the question.

But, I mean, from a Buddhist point of view, yeah, you'd say that a human embryo is ethically significant. Whether it's alive or it's frozen or not is is another question. So, it'd be just another level of ambiguity added to

that.

>> [sighs]

>> Yeah, I mean

should they be treated as ethically significant? It depends on how you look at it. I mean, if you're a Buddhist and you think that even if something that's frozen is still alive then yeah, I mean, you wouldn't want to kill it.

So

but I mean, this is this is just kind of like an obscure sort of question that I mean, maybe RFS works at some kind of fertility clinic or something. In which case, it might be a valuable

question, but otherwise, I mean, if if
RFS works at a paper mill

then I mean

it's it's just kind of off the scale of
any kind of relevant applicable kind of
question, I guess.

Yeah, I mean, I'm not entirely persuaded
that rebirth linking consciousness has
to occur

at the moment of conception. I mean,
what is [clears throat] the complexity
of a full human stream of karma going to
do in a fertilized zygote?

So

I think it's the Hindus and maybe some
other religions like like Ram Dass was
saying and according to Hinduism that

some babies just they take
you know, they take now it's like their
spirit or their their karmic momentum or
whatever enters like a baby in his
mother's womb shortly before birth.

And you can tell those cuz they're the
ones that look completely spaced out
when they're born. They're just like in
this state of confused [clears throat]
just dazed confusion.

Whereas a baby that had been that took
rebirth linking consciousness, so to
speak, earlier on in like the embryonic
development is already completely
identified with a being a baby and is
just crying and acting like normal baby.

So, I mean, I'm kind of skeptical to the idea that sperm that that like rebirth linking consciousness necessarily occurs at the moment of conception.

I am skeptical of that. I'm not saying it's true, I'm not saying it's false.

I'm just suspending judgment because I don't know for sure that it's true or otherwise.

And then when you add the frozen embryo part, when you just frozen, is it still alive while it's frozen?

It's frozen solid, there's no there's no respiration going on, there's no metabolism going on.

So, is it still alive?

And there's like a 3-second delay now.

Sometimes it catches up and then it starts delaying again. I don't I don't understand why.

I should have just restarted the computer before doing this, but I don't always do that.

So, RFS is asks another question.

Finally, at long last, we get a straightforward question with a straightforward answer.

RFS says, "Do strippers at a bachelor party count as adultery?" Only if you have sex with them.

Unless maybe you're a Christian, in which case, according to Jesus in the New Testament, even if you look at a

woman with lust, you're already guilty of adultery with her.

So, in that case, I mean, yeah, if you look at the stripper with lust, then you've already you've already fornicated with that woman or committed adultery with her or whatever.

But from a Buddhist point of view, I mean, adultery is essentially having sex with another woman. I I assume even like oral sex would be sufficient.

But just like
gooning over a stripper
is not necessarily like technically adultery.

Not from a Buddhist point of view.

I mean it could be a kind of sensual

misconduct, but it would be
not like full-blown sensual misconduct,
which would involve sexual activity,
like actual coming together of two
beings in a sexual way.

I don't know if even like pulling the
rolled-up \$5 bills
uh while letting her pull the \$5 bill
out of your mouth
with some part of her body or something
like that. I don't know if that would
even count, but I mean we're this is
still I mean this is not as
straightforward as I assumed because
there's all this sort of ambiguity. Like
where do you draw the line? And some

people going to draw the line over this way, some people are going to draw the line over that way, but technically adultery would require at least oral sex with another person with at least one of you being married. Otherwise, it would be fornication. And sensual misconduct is generally identified with the actual sexual act and not just like ogling naked titties or some such. I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is another fairly easy question, which is appreciated at this point.

This is from Drew.

And Drew says, "Do you think when he squeezed the juice out of the mountain, the delicious beverage was made? Maybe that's when people started doing the do. So, he's referring to the Sasa Jataka when Sakka, king of gods, squeezes the juice out of a mountain and then draws the image of a rabbit on the surface of the moon.

Um no, that wasn't Mountain Dew.

That was something completely different.

Mountain Dew I'm sure has other ingredients in it like that that What is it? Some kind of ester [snorts] rosin?

Something like that. It's got weird

ingredients in it, which is probably why so many people are addicted to it.

Mountain Dew I never really understood drinking Mountain Dew. I just I don't I can't remember drinking Mountain Dew. So I guess it's just I never got addicted to it.

Anyways,

>> [sighs]

>> next question is from Fred and this may be a rhetorical question. It's hard to tell with Fred when he's really asking a question.

I mean there could be a question mark there, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he's legit asking a question. But he says, "How could you possibly believe

Muhammad?"

And I don't know if he's this is like a real question. Is it a rhetorical question? Is he asking me personally how I could believe Muhammad? Or is he just saying how could a person in general possibly believe Muhammad?

Um

Well, I mean Muhammad seems to have been like sincere. I think he was doing some hysterical dissociation like a lot of new age channelers do.

But I mean

he apparently was persuaded by his own visions.

So I mean he believed his own visions

I'm assuming even though, you know, it's there's some fairly good evidence that it was a lot of his own subconscious desires being manifested.

But

I mean

with regard to me believing Muhammad personally, I mean

some of the stuff in the Quran I assume is true.

And I mean, at least he appears to have been sincere at a conscious level.

But if Fred is asking how anyone could believe Muhammad, of course people can believe anything, especially in the realm of religion or politics.

You got people that are they can believe

absolutely freaking anything.

But I think I could I could be a
a Muslim more easily than I could be a
Christian. Just because there's less of
a an absurd narrative that is required
to be believed. I mean, for for a Muslim
it's God is one God and Muhammad is his
prophet. I mean, you're doing okay if
you get that far. Whereas with
Christianity, you got to believe that
this Jewish carpenter who lived in the
early Roman Empire is somehow the
creator of the entire universe and the
only begotten son of God almighty.
And it's just way more difficult to
swallow than God is one God and Muhammad

is his prophet.

Not even his only prophet, just a prophet. His most recent like capital P prophet.

That for me would be easier to believe than Christianity.

Just because it's it's simpler. There's less absurdity that has to be swallowed.

I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Master Po and this is an easy one.

Master Po says, "Have you heard of Sanbozen?"

It's a new one to me, but so far I find it interesting. And no, I haven't I mean, this is it. I just heard of Sanbozen, S A N B O.

He left a a YouTube link that I haven't watched yet. So I still I'm completely in the dark with what exactly Sanbozen is.

I just do not keep up on these things.

I'm moving on to the next question.

This is from Nichiren Buddhist.

And Nichiren Buddhist says,

"I presume that as a person from the West that became interested in Buddhism, you have considered both the Mahayana and Theravada traditions at least at some point and time.

What factors influenced your choice of vehicle?

And then parentheses, got textual

authentic

textual authenticity overall worldview

etc."

Well, as I've said before, I was

originally drawn towards Soto Zen.

When I first decided I wanted to be a

Buddhist monk, I was kind of gravitating

towards Soto Zen.

And then, I checked out a Soto Zen

monastery and also a Burmese Theravada

Buddhist monastery.

And it was plain as day that the

Theravada monks were

they came closer to following what the

historical Buddha actually taught

than the Zen monks and and the Zen nuns.

I mean, the Zen monastery, both of them

were in California, but the Zen
monastery it had just
there was so much stuff that you don't
see in the books, you know, all this
pure land stuff mixed in with the Zen
and I've never had any use for pure land
Buddhism. And just so much bowing and
chanting and then you had the monks and
the nuns kind of living together in the
same compound. They'd be putting on
layman's clothing and driving the car to
the store to buy groceries to the
monastery. They ran a little store
selling candles and incense and Buddha
statues and that kind of thing. And then
you go to the Theravada Buddhist

monastery in the Burmese tradition and
it was just monks just sitting in like
like peace, meditating, just
I mean, it it really was very different
and it was clear if you read the texts
and you look at how the monks were
living the Theravada monks were living
closer to what the Buddha originally
taught and
um it just got me more interested in
Theravada.

Um I was originally got I originally got
interested in Theravada reading the
Sutta Nipata. It was some really old
translation by someone named Fausbøll, I
think.

Um it was in Max Müller's Sacred Books

of the East. It was like from the 1890s,
this translation. But the Sutta Nipata,
I mean it it had it was
old texts of like ancient India and
monks were like macho, you know, it's
like you had to be tough to be a monk.
You're just wandering around homeless,
no money, sleeping under trees, this
kind of stuff.

So, gradually I was kind of leaning more
and more towards Theravada. I liked Zen,
at least what you read in the books
about Zen.

But

it became more and more clear the more I
looked into it that Theravada came

closer to what the Buddha originally taught.

And that's mainly I mean if I'm going to be a Buddhist, I want to follow what the Buddha taught.

You know, it's like especially if I'm going to be a Buddhist monk dedicating my life to following the teachings of the Buddha as well as I can, I want to get as close to the teachings of the Buddha as I can in order to follow them correctly.

And the more you look into Mahayana, you see that lots and lots of it is just like real, just fairy tale, absurd and the Buddha probably would have denounced much of it.

Although I mean in even in Theravada,
there's a lot of absurdity and miracle
stories and talking animals and
fire-breathing dragons and all that.

But less of it than in Mahayana.

And so, ultimately, what got me
more persuaded towards Theravada is that
it just became fairly clear that if I
want to follow the teachings of the
Buddha,

then Theravada comes the closest to the
teachings of the Buddha of any school of
Buddhism in existence today.

And also, just they seem to be
practicing more

I don't know.

More sincerely,

I guess. Uh practicing at a deeper level.

So,

that was that was essentially what cured me of a desire to be a Zen monk was actually going to a Zen monastery and seeing what was going on. I mean, it was in California, so I'm sure that there were other monasteries like in Japan that would be much more serious and much closer to what you read about in the books, but still, you know, there's Vairocana Buddha and all the Bodhisattva stuff and Pure Land elements getting in and it was just Theravada comes closer to what the

Buddha taught. I mean, if if you're a Buddhist, it would seem to me that you would want to follow what the Buddha taught.

So, even some of these Pure Land Buddhists who are following what the Buddha would almost certainly have denounced, still, they've got their text where the Buddha is sort of advocating for it.

And so, they'll just use that. They're not you know, they're not going against the Buddhist teachings because in this obscure sutra with all the fairy tale elements in it, the Buddha says it's okay to be a Pure Land Buddhist. And

then they just ignore the Buddha after that cuz they've got all these other Buddhas that they're they're paying attention to.

But, yeah, it was mainly

>> [clears throat]

>> um the Buddha was the enlightened founder of the tradition. You want to be a Buddhist, you should follow what the Buddha taught. Just like if you're if you're going to be a Christian, you should try to follow what Jesus taught. Not so much Paul of Tarsus, not so much what the Pope says, not so much what these later like ecclesiastical councils decided.

You just try to find out what Jesus

taught and follow that [clears throat]
as well as you can. That would seem to
me what
a Christian should do.

Which is one reason why I'm not a
Christian.

>> [sighs]

>> I think I'm just going to move on to
this question.

I think that's what I'm going to do.

This is from PSA.

And PSA says, "Have you watched the new
musical Oh Africa, Brave Africa?" It's a
laugh riot. And no, I have not watched
that musical. In fact, I really don't
have much use for musicals.

Uh I've never really liked watching musicals. There are some musicals that I can watch like the old Wizard of Oz with Judy Garland.

I mean, that's that's watchable. I've watched that since I was a kid.

Uh

So so I so I've watched some musicals.

Like uh The Beatles Yellow Submarine. I guess that would call it qualify as a musical. That'd probably be my favorite musical. Or like uh Cabaret with Liza Minnelli and Michael York.

I mean, that's

that's a good movie and it's it's sort of a musical. It's got lots of music in it.

But yeah, I don't go out and look and watch the new musicals.

I I haven't seen a new musical in many years.

So, I mean, it's just even as a kid, it just kind of struck me as odd. You've got this movie where people are like walking around talking and everything and all of a sudden, they all just like start singing and dancing around. It just

it's just silly.

People don't do that in real life.

Of course, a lot of stuff that happens in movies, people don't do in real life.

>> [clears throat]

>> Anyways,

PSA's next question.

You said on this Q&A, I guess the previous one, there's nothing technically immoral about handling money.

Could you please elaborate on why it is a precept then and what is the real skillful purpose of this precept?

Um

I think one reason why the Buddha made a like a very strict rule saying monks are not allowed to handle money. It's I guess

I should back up a little. There is a statement from the Buddha in the text that says, if money is allowable for

monks, then sensual pleasure is allowable for monks.

So, it's like with money you can just buy whatever you want and a monk is supposed to be restraining himself and like avoiding worldliness. He is supposed to renounce worldly society.

Money is like the lifeblood of worldly society and has become even more so since the Buddha's time. And so, it's just part of opting out of society.

It's like monks are not allowed to buy their own food. They're not allowed to grow their own food. They're not allowed to pick their own food out of trees unless there's some kind of famine going

on. Even then I think they're supposed to just pick it up off the ground and not pick it.

Uh

>> [snorts]

>> So,

let's see. Could I elaborate on why it is a precept? I mean, a lot of precepts are not moral precepts for monks. Having to shave your head, I mean, it's not immoral to have long hair.

Having to wear robes of a certain material cut and sewn in a certain way, dyed a certain color with certain kinds of dye, I mean, that's not moral.

Eating not eating in the afternoon, I mean, there's nothing inherently immoral

about eating at 2 in the afternoon.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> yeah, it's a it's a precept in order to prevent monks from indulging in worldly pursuits, mainly.

And from [snorts] just being kind of autonomous from laypeople.

The Buddha did make rules that that ensured that monks would have to depend on laypeople. So, even if the monk is out in a forest meditating most of the day, at least once a day, he's got to come into the village and make himself seen, partly for the the edification of the laypeople.

But, of course, once money becomes allowable, then you can have monks that are grubbing for money, just trying to like cadge for money.

Like, there are monks doing that even now.

So,

yeah, I mean, it was partly like a like a tradition in ancient India that holy men do not handle money, especially the renunciants. It's just a sign of renunciation that you're not handling money. If you're still handling money, you haven't fully renounced worldliness.

So, a lot of it is just sort of ancient

Indian

like monastic

what do you call it? Etiquette.

It's just the way things were done in ancient India. But, also, it's just part of the

>> [clears throat]

>> the the renunciation process.

Not handling money, not cooking your own food, that sort of thing.

But, again, as the Buddha said in you know,

famous passage,

if money is allowable, then sensual pleasures are allowable. In fact, there's

>> [clears throat]

>> one passage of the Buddha that's quoted in the last chapter of the Cūḷavagga.

The it's regarding the the second council. I've never found and this monk is quoting the Buddha,

but I've never found the quote anywhere else in the sutras. It's just

you know, 100 years after the time of the Buddha, you've got this monk quoting the Buddha. And it could be in one of the sutras. I just don't recall seeing

it there. Maybe I never saw it. But, it's talking about how monks that handle money are like

they're like blinded by greed. They're as foolish as animals. They're bound by

the chains of their own desires. You know, it's it's like really coming down hard on monks who handle money.

>> [snorts]

>> But,

that's it's just I don't know.

I think I should just move on to the next question.

This is from Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb.

And Stellar Supreme says, "What's so good about voting that can't just be solved by not voting?" Well, I mean, what [clears throat] is solved by not voting?

I don't think anything is solved by not

voting.

You know, it's just being black-pilled and giving up.

So, if you if you just give up, I mean, nothing is really solved.

I don't know. I don't know how you're going to solve any political problem by not voting.

So, it's like what's going on a lot of the with I mean, lately with some elements on the right is they're pissed off at at Trump. I mean, some of them like Nick Fuentes, he's declared himself a Democrat now. It's like we're going to vote for Trump as the lesser of two evils.

But, the lesser of two evils isn't

wonderful. And so, [—] the lesser of two evils. We're going to vote for the worst of two evils. That seems to be what people like Nick Fuentes are like advocating now.

The lesser of two evils wasn't good enough. So, vote for the worst of two evils.

You know, the only man standing between us and Western Europe-style decline and fall is Donald Trump, apparently.

But, he's not doing everything we want him to do. He got us involved in this war with Iran for reasons we're conjecturing negatively about, and so [—] it, we're just going to let the

Democrats take over and just let America go go the route of Canada and New Zealand and Western Europe and the UK etc.

What if enough people vote the right way, at least it will have some impact.

I mean, look at the the local elections in in the UK just recently where labor was just completely trounced.

That has an effect.

Like UK voting for like Brexit, that had an effect. I mean, it might not be as much of an effect as these fussy crybaby right-wingers are demanding.

But I mean, it has an effect.

So, let's see here. I'm just going to move on to Stellar Supreme, formerly

known as Liberal Lam. Second question, what is the karmic status of Reddit mods policing online spaces according to a mob mentality? Well, it depends on their own mental states, doesn't it?

The karmic status depends on their motivations, why they're doing what they're doing, how they feel about what they're doing.

So, if they're feeling like intolerant and vengeful,

hateful, well,

they're going to have the the karma of acting with intolerance and vengeance and hate.

If they think they're doing the right

thing, then there's going to be some good karma possibly from at least them being conscientious, even though if it it's even if it's a kind of misguided conscientiousness.

But again, it's these acts that these people are doing is based on their own mental states. So, it's as if they're a court acting in accordance with a mob mentality, then yeah, it's it's it's going to be more unwholesome than wholesome.

But, their karmic status is going to rely on their own mental states.

And different ones are going to have different mental states.

So, I'm going to move on to Stellar

Supreme, formerly known as Liberal

Lamb's third question.

Which is kind of a straightforward one.

Do you take all 13 suttas of the

Sīlakhandha Vagga, the first 13 suttas

of Dīgha Nikāya, to be authoritative and

archaic?

Well, I don't think any of them really

is archaic. Although, the Sakkapañha

Sutta,

which

gosh, I'm not even sure if it's in the

first 13.

Um

yeah, maybe it isn't.

But, the most archaic portion of the

Dīgha Nikāya that I'm aware of would be like the central portion of the Sīla or no, not Sīlakhandha, the uh Sakkapañha Sutta, where Sakka is asking the Buddha these questions, and the whole dialogue, I mean, it's it's very reminiscent of the Atthakavagga of the Sutta Nipāta.

Um the Nidāna Sutta, I think might be in the first 13, which has an early, but not super archaic version of Paṭiccasamuppāda.

It's it's not even the the standardized 12 links yet, so it's older than that, presumably.

Um yeah, I the the second sutta of the Sīlakhandha is the

Sāmaññaphala Sutta, which is largely archaic. It's relatively old.

But, I don't think that all 13 suttas of the Sīlakhandha, like the first 13 suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya, um they're all authoritative from a Theravāda Buddhist point of view, but that doesn't mean that they're necessarily all true.

I mean some of it's not. I mean some of it's bound to be mythological elements that have gotten in or later developments in Buddhist philosophy. Still relatively early, but not like original.

So,

most of it isn't archaic, although it's relatively old.

You know, like within the first 100 years of the existence of the Buddha or of Buddhism.

Authoritative though, I mean what makes a sūtra authoritative? You know, from the orthodox Theravada Buddhist point of view, all of it's authoritative. From my point of view, I mean, authoritative is just kind of like a value judgment. I mean, it's a matter of opinion. I mean, what what determines whether it's authoritative or not?

Just you decide that it's authoritative, you decide that you're going to accept it as an authority?

In that case, I mean, I really don't consider any of the the Pali texts to be authoritative.

Authoritative in quotes.

I mean, what does that even mean? I mean, is just because it says it, it's true? I don't think any text is authoritative in that sense.

So, you got officially authoritative in that the entire Pali Tipitaka is officially authoritative from the point of view of Theravada Buddhism. Even the commentarial tradition is officially authoritative for Theravada.

But, I mean, what other kind of authoritative do you want? I mean, I

don't consider any text to really be authoritative in the sense that it's necessarily true just because it's in this text.

So, archaic is a more meaningful term than authoritative. And even that is is kind of a judgment call. How how primitive does it have to be in order to be considered archaic?

I mean, is the

like the early version of

Paṭiccasamuppāda found in the Nidāna

Sutta, is that archaic? Just because

it's not the fully developed 12 links

that is found elsewhere in the suttas.

But it's still not archaic in that there

are older versions, uh like older

prototypes of the 12 links, like in the
Sakka Pañha Sutta or the
um Kalahavivada Sutta of the Atakavagga
that have like a really like a archaic
form of the 12 links of
paṭiccasamuppāda.

So, how how primitive does it have to be
to be archaic?

Some of it's relatively archaic. The
Samaññaphala Sutta is relatively old.

But

I wouldn't say

all of it is necessarily archaic

um or like

necessarily like

objectively true.

>> [snorts]

>> Something like the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna
Sutta

I think that might be in the
Sīlakhanda. I'm

Maybe not. I don't remember like what
order the suttas come in
except for [clears throat] some of them.

The The Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, I mean
um I like G.C. Pande's theory that the
Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta really is just
sort of like

uh a collection of meditation various
meditation instructions the Buddha had
given or was attributed to the Buddha
that were just sort of collated into
like this

It's sort of like the Sermon on the Mount

where it's just sayings of the Buddha regarding meditation that were all sort of combined together into one sort of artificially reproduced discourse.

So, I mean, is that authoritative and archaic?

Some of the Some of it might be really old. Some of it might not.

So, I guess the easy question for this answer would be no. Do I take all 13 suttas of the Sīlakkhāṇḍa Vagga to be authoritative and archaic? No.

But, I mean this is kind of a vague no because, I mean,

I don't even know what authoritative would necessarily mean in this question.

And what exactly is archaic? Where do you draw the line?

How early does it have to be to be archaic?

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Robert.

And Robert says,

"If everything cancels out, why attempt to make spiritual progress assuming you will not reach enlightenment?" Well, I mean, wisdom is a matter of neutrality.

I mean, Robert seems to be assuming that enlightenment or spiritual progress is like positive.

And to some degree you could see it that

way. But, I mean, if you've lived a monk's life, you see that it's not all positive. I mean, still there's a balance of positive and negative. It's just that it becomes more subtle. It becomes less extreme. [clears throat] Instead of the roller coaster ride, ecstasy, misery, ecstasy, misery, it's more smooth sailing. It's more simple. So, you're getting closer to neutrality, the sort of the neutrality of zero.

So, I mean, everything cancels out to zero. And then your the monk's life is trying to just approach zero and avoid the extremes.

Smooth sailing instead of stormy seas.

But, I mean, if you perceive it as something positive, then it'll have to be balanced out by something perceived as negative. But, when you just live the holy life and just see it as life in general, it's just neutral, then I mean, it doesn't really have to balance out with anything.

Or can't cancel out with anything.

I mean, you're going for neutrality, which doesn't have to be canceled out unless you've got this weird perception of neutrality in a dualistic opposition to non-neutrality, and then they'll have to balance out.

But it's

depends on how you look at it.

It's sort of like the Bodhisattva path where you're doing good all the time, but you're not perceiving it as good. You're just doing what you do. So, that that causes it not to have to balance out with something bad.

Okay.

So, I guess I answered that question. I'm going to move on to Robert's second question.

So, have you ever been to or have any opinions on the traditional Latin Mass? I've never attended Mass in Latin or any other language. I've never attended a Roman Catholic religious ceremony in my life.

Um

>> [clears throat]

>> I did have sort of a a mild opinion in that I read that just within the past several decades, they started phasing out Latin Mass and like doing Mass in the vernacular language of, you know, whatever country they happen to be in.

And

in a way I can understand how, you know, it might be more beneficial for people to actually understand what is being said, but still at the same time, maybe because, you know, I kind of am biased in favor of the Roman Empire or something, I kind of

like the idea of Latin Mass. You know, when I heard that they were phasing out Latin Mass, I kind of disapproved or just didn't feel quite good about it.

Not that I have a dog in the fight. It doesn't matter to me, really. I've never attended Mass in my life. I probably never will, to tell you the truth.

But then again,

I've also considered, like in Burma, that they will blast Patthana in Pali over loudspeakers sometimes for a week straight, day and night.

Just blasting this stuff that nobody understands. Even the monks who are

chanting it, most of them probably don't understand the meaning of what they're chanting. It's just like this sacred blah blah blah that has some sort of magical beneficial power, supposedly.

And I've thought many times, it would be so much more beneficial to the people if you just, instead of blasting Patthana in Pali that nobody understands, blast like a Burmese translation of the Dhammapada. At least the people would understand some of it and maybe learn some Dhamma from it.

So, from that point of view, I mean, I it might be a good idea to chant mass in a vernacular language that people actually understand.

But, I don't know.

I can go either way, I guess.

But blasting Pali over loudspeakers, it just seems kind of

I don't know. It just seems kind of pointless.

That it people would get a lot more benefit if they actually understood what was being chanted.

And so, I move on to Robert's third question, which is the last question of the evening.

And he says, "Do you think Ramana Maharshi was an arahant?"

And if there are arahants in this world, if there are enlightened beings in this

world, I think Ramana Maharshi would be a good bet for one.

That he was [clears throat]

he seems to have been the real deal.

I've I've never heard the slightest hint of any scandal

regarding Ramana Maharshi. And his his

biography is fascinating. I have read

Ramana Maharshi's biography, at least

one of them. And he started off as just

a a relatively normal Brahmin kid in

British India. He was going to like a

British high school, like a like an

English one. It was run by the English

in India. He was still living in India.

Southern India.

But he was going to become like an

electrical engineer or something. He was going to go to college after he got out of high school. And so he's studying math and and this kind of stuff in high school.

And then one day

he's alone in the house doing his homework, and he has like a panic attack. He feels like he's going to die.

And so he just thinks, "Well, if I'm going to die, I should prepare myself."

So he just lies down on his back on the floor.

And he's sort of waiting for death. And then he thinks, "Well, if I'm dead, I won't be thinking anything. So I should

just stop thinking, too." So he's lying on the floor and he stops thinking. And just boom. Supposedly, according to the story, he became enlightened.

And

in in later years, Ramana Maharshi allegedly claimed that the only real spiritual practice he ever did was as a high school student having the panic attack lying on his back preparing for death.

And

after that, it was it was like this I mean, he definitely had this awakening experience. He was radically changed after that.

And so he would just spontaneously go

into these meditative states. And then one time his brother um he lost interest in in his homework and everything. So one day his brother looks at him, and instead of doing his homework, he's just sitting there meditating. And his brother in sort of sarcastic disgust says, "Oh, you're useless. You might as well just go off and become a sadhu."

And even though he's being sarcastic,

Ramana Maharshi

he I mean he wasn't called Ramana Maharshi at the time yet, but he he realized that what his brother said was true. But his family was completely

unreligious. He wasn't particularly religious up until he had this awakening experience. So he didn't really know where to go. So he heard about Arunachala, the sacred hill, sacred to the god Shiva. You know, it's almost the only sacred spot he even even knew of. So he just took off and went there and went into a temple and just sat down and started meditating. And he was just like in this trance state, this deep meditative state for quite a while. That they were having to help him. I mean he was getting bitten by ants and everything. He didn't even notice. There's like the the temple like the guardian guy, you know, the guy that the

groundskeeper of the temple or the the head priest or whatever, you know, he's kind of keeping an eye on him and they're like trying to keep the bugs off of him and stuff. Sometimes they're they're feeding. They got to put food into his mouth cuz he's just completely out of it. And then after he finally comes out of this trance or this I guess it was like a trance. It was a deep meditative state. He was mute for for like 2 years afterwards because it was like he could not reconcile the enlightened state with just worldly samsara. It took him years to really be able to start integrating this

realization that he had with this
talking and making noise and moving
around and doing stuff.

>> [sighs]

>> So yeah, I think Ramana Maharshi would
be a good bet. There's no way to prove
anything.

But

like people who lived in the 20th
century that I think may have been fully
enlightened, Ramana Maharshi would be up
near the top of the list.

Even though he he worshipped a hill.

And then Ram not Ramdas, but uh Neem
Karoli Baba up there, Ramdas's guru.

He worshipped the monkey god, but he'd
be up near the top of the list, too. I

think

um two people that I think may have been fully enlightened in the 20th century would be Neem Karoli Baba and Ramana Maharshi, and they were very different from each other.

Ramana Maharshi was more like the stereotypical saint and sage, whereas Neem Karoli Baba was sort of the opposite. He was like a a divine rascal. But yeah, there's a good chance Ramana Maharshi was an Arhat. If an Arhat even makes I mean, if enlightenment even means anything in a samsaric context. And I guess I've answered all these questions. I don't think I did a very

good job of answering all of them. Some of them were kind of weird, difficult questions to ask to answer.

But like I should always say at the beginning and usually don't, if you have any questions you think I can answer, don't use this Q&A as an example of what I'm able to answer because some of the questions were difficult to answer in this one.

But if you think I can answer, you know, especially about Dharma, Buddhism, that kind of thing. Oh, wait, there was a question that

I don't think I answered yet.

It was a question about lama Tibetan
lamas. Okay. Yeah.

All right. Yeah, PSA asked this
question. I I just scrolled past it and
didn't notice it.

Okay.

>> [clears throat]

>> One last question before we end this
thing.

PSA asked, "What's the difference
between a lama and a monk in the
Vajrayana tradition?" It looks like
they're assistants to monks who are not
obligated to take so many precepts, but
I'm not sure if this is correct. I'm
mainly trying to understand their

dynamics and purpose. It's my understanding that a lama would be like a a more advanced level of monk, sort of like

You know, kind [clears throat] of correspond to a sayadaw in Burmese or an ajahn in Thailand, where it's just sort of like a higher level or with a prelate prelate in in Catholicism. They're like a higher level priest.

So, I think a lama would be a higher level

than just an ordinary monk.

Um, like a

like in in Burma, like a sayadaw would be like the the abbot. He'd be like the the senior monk at a monastery. He would

be called a sayadaw. You might have more than one sayadaw if if you got like uh like a venerated teacher who isn't the abbot, but still is is a good teacher, that kind of thing. He might still be called sayadaw.

In uh Thailand ajahn, I mean, it's not even necessarily used for monks. It just means teacher, you know. Sayadaw and ajahn both are derived from the Pali word achariya, which just means teacher or master.

But, lama, yeah, I'm pretty sure a lama is just like a a higher level monk.

So

but I I'm really no authority on Tibetan

Buddhism. That's just

what I've

sort of

conjectured

just from what little I know about it.

It just seems to me that a lama is a

higher is more prestigious than just a
monk.

So with that,

hopefully I didn't pass any other

questions, just skip over them, scroll
past them.

If you think I can answer a question,

especially regarding early Buddhism

you know, Theravada Buddhism, archaic

Buddhism, that kind of thing,

um, just Dharma in general

philosophy

I mean, the farther away you get from um, like Theravada Buddhism, then the the odds of my being able to give an intelligent answer kind of go down. I am fairly well versed in Christianity and also like Western philosophy, that kind of thing also.

But no more than three questions per person per episode, please. Like and subscribe if you have not done so already. Check out the URL links below this video, which includes my books that are for sale on Amazon and be happy.

Okay, then. I do believe we are recording.

Hail audience.

Hello and welcome to question and answer episode number 196.

I am your host Panyo Bossam.

And 196, of course, is not prime. It is, in fact, $2 * 2 * 7 * 7$, which makes it the the product of two perfect squares. $2 \text{ squared} * 7 \text{ squared}$. Isn't that fascinating?

And you may have noticed that I did not do a Q&A video last weekend because I was getting married.

And those of you who have congratulated me, well, thanks for the

congratulations. Those of you who have
tried to warn me,
then, well,
your warnings were in vain.

And this is the first time I've ever
been married, so it's kind of this
weird, almost magical kind of feeling
that I literally have a wife now.

A woman changed her last name to my last
name, and we're like joined
in in in front of God almighty.

At least that's the way it's supposed to
work traditionally.

And one of the many things I love about
my new wife is I'll tell her something
and I'll say, "Know what I'm saying?"

And she always says yes. She always know

what I'm saying.

But, I'll go into a few more details a little later on cuz there are at least there's like one or two questions about the wedding.

So, I'll go into that then.

And remove the little paper umbrella.

Take a drink of my primary designated beverage.

Uh and I suppose we should just get right into this.

Not a whole heck of a a of questions this week. I think you guys are going easy on me

for whatever reasons.

So, first question is from Yoshi Bouie.

And Yoshi Bouie says, "Does the electromagnetic wave in which the magnetic field component begets the electric field component, which begets the magnetic field component, constitute a good example of dependent origination?" Well, I mean, it's kind of an obscure example of dependent origination. I mean, you could say that. Maybe. I really don't know enough about physics to really know exactly how that works. But, I mean, just the the necessary balance of positive and negative would be a good example of dependent co-arising. Like, for example,

forget electromagnetic waves, just go to what's like the essence of electricity itself, which is a flow of electrons.

And just the structure of the atom, you know, you've got negative electrons, positive protons,

balancing each other out. You got neutrons in there, too, but it's my understanding that a neutron is essentially just a proton and electron that have been kind of squashed together.

So, it's you got to have like this balance of positive and negative even in the fundamental building blocks of matter.

And I think it's arbitrary that they chose the electron to be negative and the proton to be positive. I mean, they could have I'm pretty sure that it was just arbitrary and it could have been the other way around. Just so long as you got one designated as one pole and the other designated as the other pole.

So,

yeah, I think you If you want a good example of dependent origination, you should come up with one that people are familiar with and can grasp easily.

It might be a good example for a physicist, but again, I'm not exactly sure how magnetic fields and electric electronic fields, electric fields. I

mean, what is the relationship between them? When essentially they're kind of the same anyway.

Probably too obscure to be a really good example.

And I'm just [clears throat] going to move on to Yoshi Boy's second question.

Okay.

So this is

This is a little bit late that I'm asking this cuz he's asked he's asking about my marriage or my wedding in the future tense. He says, "Will you be required in your wedding ceremony to place your hand on the Bible and swear to it that you will raise your offspring

as Christians?" I've never seen anything like that at a wedding ceremony before. That you've got to swear on a Bible that you'll raise your children as Christians.

Um first of all, it's kind of unlikely that we're going to have kids.

So

there is that.

But no, [clears throat] I mean, that didn't happen. I mean

I've never even seen I've never really even heard of it happening. I'm assuming that it does happen. I mean, there's probably some fundamentalist sects of Christianity that may require this kind of stuff.

But as it turns out

um the person who married us was my
first boss at the first metal shop I
started working in here in South
Carolina.

And it turns out he's also an ordained
Baptist pastor. I didn't even know this
until relatively recently.

I mean, I certainly didn't know at the
time that he hired me.

You know, he's just
the the manager at a metal shop, but
he's also an ordained pastor.

So

um

my my now wife and I, before the before

the wedding, you you several months before the wedding, we're trying to figure out, you know, who should marry us. You can't really I I mean, Theravada Buddhists,

you know, a Theravada Buddhist monk or priest, it's strictly prohibited for them to participate in a wedding.

So, in Theravada Buddhist countries like Burma, a wedding is a purely secular affair where the the prospective bride and groom will just go to the village headman and sign papers saying that they're they're married with a village headman like, you know, being the witness or whatever. And then, after the fact, then they go to the

monastery and get the blessings of the monks over a done deal.

Then they'll throw maybe a week-long um a reception where they're like feeding the whole village, this kind of stuff, if they can afford that.

Ah.

So, anyways, the boss was a cool guy. He knew I was a Buddhist.

And so, my wife wanted him to marry us just because she didn't want a stranger to marry us. He was like the only ordained minister we know. And he's he's a nice guy. We you know, we respect and like him and everything.

Seems He seems to have some wisdom about

him.

So,

um you know, I did point out to him that
my my bride and I are not really
Christians.

So, I mean, I

I didn't want him to just try and do a
Buddhist ceremony. I mean, he's I don't
want him to be blaspheming
according to his own principles while
marrying us. I just asked him to kind of
go easy on the Jesus stuff. I mean, to
mention God, you know, we can have like
an open interpretation of God. We don't
have to identify capital G God with
Jehovah.

So, he wants to talk about God bringing

us together,

fine. I wasn't going to push the issue.

Just kind of go easy on Jesus Christ

because

we really don't believe in that sort of

thing. And he was he was completely fine

with that.

And so

he married us with a little bit of

mention of God, no mention of Jesus, no

insisting that we raise our children as

Christians, no insisting that we

ourselves be Christians.

So everything was very nice. It was very

private ceremony in our backyard.

And then that was it. We had two two

witnesses aside from my bride and me and
the minister was the minister's wife who
goes everywhere that he goes
and
my my now mother-in-law.

My sweetie's mama.

So yeah, I didn't even have to touch a
Bible. I don't even I'm not even sure if
he brought a Bible with him.

Anyways, [clears throat] let's just move
on to the next question.

This is from Phil Atheist, another
wedding question. Would you upload some
sort of video commemorating the wedding?
Nope.

We didn't we didn't record the wedding
or anything like that. There's a few

pictures taken.

They're not going up on on the internet.

My sweetheart is a very private person.

Doesn't like being plastered all over
the internet. So it's not

[clears throat] going to happen.

Next question from Phil Atheist.

What new job and car and wife or what
model?

Well, the job is I'll be a
chemical operator.

I'll be overseeing chemical reactions.

Mainly for like harmless household
chemicals. I'm not going to be working,
you know, like making Agent Orange or or
whatever the the pesticide of choice is

nowadays. What's that stuff that
Monsanto has?

Uh

Monsanto has the soybeans that are
resistant to it now.

The name escapes me.

The new car

is uh a Jeep Compass. My sweetheart

likes Jeeps. So, we got a Jeep Compass.

I mean, I wanted just a car that handles
good, gets decent gas mileage.

She likes the Jeeps. I really don't like
Jeep Wranglers and just to drive because
they don't handle very well, that sort
of thing. They don't get good gas
mileage.

So, it was kind of a compromise where we

got just sort of the Jeep version of a Nissan Rogue. It's like every car company in the world except for maybe like Maserati or something makes like their equivalent of a Nissan Rogue. Just almost every make of car has their equivalent of a Rogue. Porsche has a car that looks just like a Nissan Rogue. Why in hell anyone would want to buy a Porsche that looks just like a Nissan Rogue?

I have no idea. Mercedes, BMW, like

What is it? Range Rover?

The you know, Lexus. They've always They got this car. They all look the same,

the same shape and everything.

I don't get it.

But, we got one.

And it drives It drives fairly well. So,

yeah, it's It accelerates better than

the the Nissan Rogue we had before that.

So, let's see. Job, I kind of covered.

Car,

wife, what what model of wife? Well,

she's the only classy city girl I've

ever I've ever hooked up with.

You know, all my other girlfriends I've

pretty much had to buy them their first

pair of shoes, show them how light

switches work, that kind of thing.

But, my current my current woman, my my

legally wedded wife now,

sophisticated, classy city girl.

Went to private schools.

That kind of thing.

Let's see now. Let's just move on to

Phil Atheist's third question.

Thoughts on Shinto, shamanism,
genealogy, and other forms of deva
worship.

Well, I mean, if I think of deva
worship, you know, like polytheism with
small g gods. I really don't think much
of Shinto, shamanism, or genealogy. I
think more along the lines of like

Excuse me.

Like classical paganism.

Zeus and Apollo and Athena and all that.

So,

or or like ancient Indian, to some degree even modern Indian polytheism.

So, with regard to Shinto,

I mean,

I've I've spent some time in Japan. I have some familiarity with Japanese culture, but whether Shinto really has any deeper, more spiritual, mystical kind of teachings or experiences that they endorse, I don't know. It just seems kind of superficial to me. You know, it just sort of adds structure to like a nation's belief system.

Shamanism,

>> [clears throat]

>> I don't know if shamanism is really deva worship. I mean, it doesn't have to be. There's different kinds of shamanism. I mean, that's getting back into like animism.

So, whether animism would count as deva worship, I mean, I'm sure there's overlap. But again, shamanism, there's so many different kinds.

Um and shamanism, I would say that there is some deeper spirituality aside from just superficial superstition that kind of helps to regulate the belief system. You know, get everybody on the same page, so to speak. Everybody in the tribe kind of shares common values

because of this belief system. I mean, that's like the more superficial kinds of religions, that's one of their main purposes. Genealogy, I mean, it sounds like it'd be kind of a a Muslim thing cuz jinn are a kind of supernatural being in Islamic theology or mythology or whatever.

And I really don't know that much about the jinn either other than that what I saw on I Dream of Jeannie as a kid.

Let's see. Other forms of deva worship, I mean, there's there's different kinds. I mean, some of it just is purely superficial.

You know, it's just for the purpose of getting everybody on the same page in in

within within the the culture to they
have shared values and it lends
stability to the system and everything.

So, I mean,

there's that. And then you've got other
kinds of deva worship that get into more
more spiritual deeper stuff in which you
get into what is called henotheism
where, you know, you pick one small g
god but then make them a kind of gateway
to the to the ultimate to the absolute.

So,

um there's just like a full spectrum of
different kinds of deva worship as uh
Phil Laith here here calls it.

And it's just a a very wide

very wide spectrum with everything from the ridiculous to the sublime in it.

But, some kinds of

of like paganism, if so long as it's got

like like a deep spiritual aspect and

maybe like cultivated mystical

experiences and that sort of thing,

I'm sure that there have I mean, it will

get you as far as a human being can

possibly get in some cases. It may not

be the the like the most perfectly

designed system

for for someone make spiritual progress,

But, so long as there's some support for

it,

there's always going to be talented

people, spiritually talented people,

that are going to make progress in accordance with with whatever system they're in. So, yeah, I mean, like ancient Greco-Roman paganism, for most people it was fairly superficial. I mean, most religions for most people are fairly superficial. But, I'm sure there were like deeper like mystery cult kind of things going on that could get lead people deeper into it.

I think the Neoplatonists didn't just flatly reject classical paganism.

So,

yeah, I would just say that there's there's like the a full spectrum from

the ridiculous to the sublime, just like
there is in Hinduism, just like there is
in Buddhism, especially Mahayana
Buddhism,
Christianity,
you know, there's there's always going
to be a spectrum.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on
this question. He just asked for
thoughts and I shared some thoughts.
He wasn't really asking a specific
question.

So, let's just move on this question.
This is from Seal of Action, Seapad
Zidan.

He says, "There is someone I know with
beliefs that are opposite of mine. He

constantly insults my beliefs and calls them nihilistic while reframing the teachings as actually teaching the opposite of what is written. Despite these insults, I feel sad that we couldn't work things [clears throat] out because I do like him as a person, but I also feel sad that the person insults my beliefs and traditions, and eventually have snapped and insulted him for spreading what I think are lies about certain teachings. Bad outcome no matter which way I move, so I feel stuck on which way to act with such a person. How do I navigate a situation like this and accept the way I end up moving.

Well, I think I might have some idea as to what person Seal of Action C Pod Zeena is referring to here if they're on the Discord server.

Because there is a person on there that kind of fits this description.

Um

Yeah, I mean

he

if this is the person Seal of Action C Pod Zeena is referring to. I mean he's a kind of Mahayana Buddhist who this kind of rejects what the historical Buddha presumably most likely taught in favor of just grotesque absurdities. But he's very puritanical in his insistence on these grotesque

absurdities and will just flatly reject that he is

well, Seal of Action C Pod Zeena

eloquently put it, [_] on the

teachings of like the historical Buddha.

And there's really you really can't make

any headway with this person. I mean, if

Seal of Action C Pod Zeena says that he

likes him as a person

then he's kind of a step or two ahead of

me because I can't even I can't even say

that.

I've been talked out of kicking him off

the server

more than once.

Anyways,

um

I mean

there's

there was a a wise monk in Burma,

Sayadaw U Zawtika, Mahayana U Zawtika

he's called. I don't know if he's still

alive, but he was ordained in the same

tradition as me, I'm pretty sure. He was

a disciple of Pa Auk Sayadaw.

And he said that the ability to allow

people to be stupid is one of the most

difficult, yet important steps to take

in spiritual progress. And I mean

there's there's people that you're just

never really going to get them to like

respect you or see your side or anything

like that. There's [clears throat] just

going to be people that are just
intransigent

if if I use that word correctly.

You know, they're just

stubbornly stuck in a certain way of
seeing things. And everybody is to some
degree, all of us are to some degree.

And so, some of those people that are
stuck in their ways are going to be
stuck in a way that sees your way as

[__] And you're not going to be
able to really persuade a lot of these
people. So, I mean, it's just it. You
just got to have some equanimity. It's
just

I mean, ultimately they don't exist

anyway. Neither do you.

But let's see, where's the actual question?

How do I navigate a situation like this and accept the way I end up moving?

Well, I mean, once you take to heart the idea that regret and remorse are bad karma, akusala karma.

It's kukkucca in Pali. Just regret, remorse, any kind of anxiety or worry, this kind of stuff. It's always bad karma. It's always unskillful mental states. Just makes things worse. So, I mean, once you take that to heart, just bear that in mind. Whatever you have done in the past, there's no point in regretting it,

wishing you had done otherwise because
you're not going to be able to undo it.
All you're doing is just sort of setting
yourself up against reality.

Wishing things were different when all
the wishing in the world isn't going to
change it.

So,

like accepting what you end up
accepting the way you end up moving. I
mean, that's just

it's just common sense, really. Once you
take to heart the idea that regret and
remorse, a guilty conscience,
are always unskillful. And in this case,
it might not even be a guilty

conscience. It's just maybe thinking that you made a mistake and beating yourself up over that.

But I mean it doesn't help anything. It just makes things worse.

Just adding more negativity.

So how do I navigate a situation like this? I mean

if the person is a fool

then you know, the very first blessing of the Mangala Sutta may may be a value, which is the very first blessing of the Mangala Sutta is not associating with fools.

But

>> [sighs]

>> I mean there is no really correct way of

of going about it. There's any number of correct ways and even greater number of incorrect ways. You know, so I mean so long as you know, you got meta in your heart or at least equanimity then you can pretty much do as you please.

You can continue to associate

[clears throat] with the person. You can just not associate with the person.

Or I mean if the person has blocked you then

I mean you associating with the person may not even be really an option.

So

I mean it seems to me that if your attempts to interact with the person you

feel like you ought to try to interact
with the person, maybe get along with
them

and

if if these attempts are always causing
agitation to your mind, you know,
they're always resulting in you being
dissatisfied and that kind of thing,
you're better off just opting out.

If you just feel like it's a duty
that you should I mean

it should never be a duty to try to make
him see the error of his ways because
that's never going to work.

But I mean if it's a duty just to try to
make amends with the person, be friendly
and you know, amiable to that person

that's fine.

But just take care that it's not
increasing unskillful mental states in
the process.

But, like like Gurdjieff
is some famous Western guru of the early
20th century.

I mean, he made a special point in
having very difficult people
at like staying [clears throat] at his
ashrams or his whatever he called them,
you know, his spiritual centers
just because it's it's kind of good
[clears throat] to be triggered. It's
good to have somebody pushing your
buttons to the extent that if you're

really spiritually oriented, you can see that. You know, you can see how you react when things aren't going your way. And then you can learn about yourself and maybe do something about it. But, if you just avoid being triggered, then it's always latent and then you don't really have much opportunity to fix [clears throat] it.

>> [sighs]

>> But, again, I mean

if

>> [clears throat]

>> if interacting with the person increases your wholesome mental states and decreases your unwholesome ones, then you might want to continue attempting to

interact with this person. If it's the other way around, which I think might be a little more likely

where you interact with them and it just increases like unskillful mental states, then probably better [clears throat]

just

have as little to do with the person as possible. If you are required to interact, just be polite and bland.

You know, don't tell him that he's

[__] on the teachings of the

historical Buddha even if in a certain sense he maybe really is.

Well, I mean, it's really not that big of a deal to me.

I mean, at least [clears throat] with regard to myself. I mean, if somebody dislikes me, somebody just openly dislikes me, it has happened a few times in my life. Has happened a number of times in my life.

Mahasi Upasika just took an instant dislike to me. I mean, those of you who read my most recent book, you read the a fellow of Pandita Rama chapter, you would you'd be aware of that. My own preceptor didn't like me very much just because he didn't like western barbarians very much. He considered me to be a kind of loose cannon cuz I wouldn't just like mindlessly conform with what everybody else was doing. That

kind of thing. So, I mean, it's like
you can't really beat yourself up over
it. I mean,
the [clears throat] Buddha himself had
people who disliked him.

You know, there's
no matter what you do, there's going to
be somebody who disapproves of it.

And if you don't decide not to do
anything, they'll disapprove of that,
too.

So, it's just have a certain equanimity
with regard to people who don't like you
as much as you can manage.

Uh

and if they're just like looking down

their nose at you, feeling very superior to you, and so forth, which I mean, you can come across that in just about any comment section or or social media or whatever, then let me just the water off a duck's back. I mean, just being being bothered by it really doesn't help anything.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to see what action see if I can answer the second question.

And he says, "When someone is in a blind rage, extreme fear, lust at seeing someone they find drop-dead gorgeous, etc., their thinking goes out the window and absorbed in the intensity of the

emotion. Are these mystical experiences by your definition, why or why not?"

Um in some extreme cases where you kind of go off the scale, it may count as a kind of mystical experience, but I think Theo of Action See by Zidane is misunderstanding my interpretation of a mystical state, it's not just going beyond thinking, it's going beyond perception.

And so, strong [clears throat] emotions are still strongly perceptual.

So, blind rage, extreme fear, extreme lust, and so forth. I mean, there's still a very strong basic perceptual component to that, which is not

particularly mystical. So, it's like I would say it's mystical only if it's so intense that it just kind of jolts you out of your normal perceptual range, and it's just kind of you go off the scale to some degree.

Like sex, in particular, can be mystical.

You can have mystical experiences. I mean, it may not be the ideal way of cultivating mystical experiences, but still it's like you're kind of transcending, at least ideally, for some people, you know, you're transcending the limitations of the self. There's at least a merging with with another

person.

And then there's, you know, the the
moment of eternity, supposedly.

>> [sighs]

>> So,

yeah, I would say that just
not thinking, in and of itself, is not
necessarily a mystical experience.

It's It's like transcending or
attenuating perception

until it becomes so attenuated or
transcendent

that

like the the reality that is being
screened by these symbolic perceptions
is able to like bleed through or shine

through a little bit.

That would be what a mystical experience is. It's like direct experience of like reality,

which lies beyond the symbolic images of perception. Not just thoughts, but also emotions or just sensory sensory data.

All of that is perceptual.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to Seal of Action C 5 Z 0 0 third question.

Which is as follows. You have said the quote from the Visuddhimagga about there being suffering, but no sufferer, no doer of actions, just the actions, path traveled, but no traveler, etc. Is based

on bad logic and that there is probably
actions being done

either. Yeah, I think he

>> [clears throat]

>> there's some kind of typo or bad grammar
in here. Probably no actions being done

I less that's what I'd be saying.

That just getting rid of the doer
with the action still there

is is it does strike me as bad logic.

So, it's like

you either have to create some sort of
like like in Theravada Buddhism like

Abhidhamma, they had to create like

these subatomic particles that are the
things. And then in order to save the

process or the action.

But then you get into like Madhyamaka Mahayana Buddhism and they just in my opinion more wisely do away with the things and the actions.

Anyways,

I haven't even got to the question part yet.

Seal of Action C 5 Z 0 0 continues.

However, in the Bahiya Sutta, it talks about seeing with no seer, hearing with no hearer, thinking with no thinker, etc. It never says that these things don't happen despite there being nobody there experiencing it. So, why would it be any different in the Visuddhimagga examples? To me it seems clear that

samsara still happens without the Buddha saying it doesn't exist, but there is no being there experiencing or doing it and arahant sees the truth of this. Well, I mean he's just mixing things up here.

See, in the Bahiya Sutta, it doesn't talk about seeing with no seer hearing with no hearer thinking with no thinker.

Um

See, it never says these things don't happen despite there being nobody there experiencing. Well, it's not really dealing with with no self at all.

It's I mean, what what the the Buddha said to Bahiya in the Bahiya Sutta is in

the seen there will be only the seen, in
the heard there will be only the heard,
in the the see in the mentally sensed
there will be only the mentally sensed
and felt there will be only the felt.

And I mean, in a way it's kind of
it's kind of tr-

it's it's kind of transcending the
duality between subject and object or
noun and verb because in the seen only
the seen data is is like a past
participle

which is sort of a verb acting as a
noun.

So, in a way it's just it's dealing with
like perceptions. It's like how do
attenuate perceptions? Like getting into

the mystical state stuff again.

I mean, it's he's not even making any kind of metaphysical statement here.

He's giving yogic instructions here.

He's not talking about no self. He's not giving any kind of metaphysical discourse.

He's talking about how to become enlightened

which is just yogic instructions.

And so, what he's doing is trying to

teach Bahiya to attenuate his

perceptions so that he doesn't have like

this stream of consciousness monologue

commentary going on when when he's

seeing or hearing or whatever, it's just

he's as immediate in the moment as as it is possible to be. And that is like the jumping off point for enlightenment in a sense.

So, the Visuddhimagga making a metaphysical declaration. You know, there is doing, but there is no doer.

And it's like with regard to like walking like in the example I gave in the previous one in the previous Q&A.

How can you have walking

all by itself with no legs or anything?

How can you have painting with no paint?

This kind of thing. So it's

what I'm what I've been talking about is

I think some people are not

understanding the point

that you have to have stasis and change
dependently co-arise. You can't have one
without the other. And that stasis, the
something that has to stay the same,
I mean, if you don't have anything that
is perceived as staying the same,
then you got meaningless chaos.

I mean, I I went over this in the
previous Q&A.

So it's like

somebody who's saying that actions are
real, but things aren't. It's like
saying verbs are real, but nouns aren't.
Or temporal aspect is real, but spatial
aspect isn't real. Like time is real,
but space isn't. This kind of thing.

>> [cough and clears throat]

>> And I just I just don't see it. It's like it's just built into the way we perceive reality. You have to have stasis and change. Something always has to be changing, or you've got death. Something always has to stay the same, or you've got meaningless chaos.

And either way, you've got this meaningless nothingness.

So the only way you can have anything resembling the world we live in right now is to have some things perceived as staying the same, and some things perceived as changing.

And then they dependently co-arise and produce this entire universe. It's a

kind of dualism.

So from the Tao comes the one, from the one comes the two, and then from the two, from the dualism, comes the 10,000 things.

This the myriad things of this samsaric world.

So, let's see.

>> [sighs]

>> To me it seems clear that samsara still happens without the Buddha saying it doesn't exist. Yeah, well, I mean
Yeah, I mean, people existing seems clear, too, doesn't it?

There is no being there experiencing or doing it. There has to be something

perceived as staying the same.

Otherwise, you you don't have any meaning at all.

There is nothing meaningful unless you have got dependently co-arising stasis and change.

And then C of Action C 5 C 2 not concludes with an arahant sees the truth of this, but I would guess that he is not an arahant and he is just guessing. So.

Yeah, I mean, you do away with one, you got to do away with both, it seems to me.

You get rid of spatial aspect, you get rid of temporal aspect, also. You get rid of the stasis part, you get rid of

the change part, too.

But I'm just moving on to the next question.

This is from the Saboteur.

And the Saboteur says, "According to Hindu beliefs, he who buys, he who cooks, and he who eats meat gets the animal's karma?"

Question mark.

I'm sure there are some Hindus that believe that.

I

mean, I've never read that in any Hindu text, but it wouldn't surprise me. It's like I already mentioned, Hinduism is just this full-spectrum religion. I

mean, a lot of people would argue it's not even a religion, it's just this It's like a cultural conglomeration of various religious beliefs and practices.

But, yeah, mean, it wouldn't surprise me if there are some Hindus out there who think that if you buy and cook meat and eat meat, you get the animal's karma.

But from the Buddhist [clears throat] point of view, that's just not how it works. There is no transfer of karma like that.

I mean, the karma is the mental states.

Karma is volition. Karma is cetana.

Cetana ham bhikkhave

As the Buddha is said to have said in

the Samyutta Nikaya, in a sutta the title of which I don't remember.

But he said, "Monks, I say that karma is volition or will.

It's mental states.

It's not through outward mechanical actions

like cooking meat."

Karma is the mental states. I mean, I don't know how many times I got to say it.

An infinite number of times, and I'll probably die of old age before I get to that high of a number.

Anyways, Saboteur's second question.

He says, "Again, Hindus accept that

painful karma can be lessened and or negated by the grace of God, by meritorious deeds. They also maintain that karma which has not begun to sprout, as it were, can possibly be negated by yoga, meditation, feeding the hungry, etc. Question mark."

Well, again, I mean, Hindus can say whatever the hell they want to, really. So what?

I mean, if you're a Hindu, it might be important. If you're not a Hindu, or if you just want to be like educated with regard to what Hindus believe, I mean, it could be have some importance.

But just because Hindus believe something doesn't really necessarily mean very much. That's except for to the Hindus themselves.

But

See, painful karma can be lessened or negated by meritorious deeds. Even Buddhism believes that. I mean, if you've got lots of bad karma and very little good karma, you're not going to have much like ameliorating karma, anything to soften the blow. Whereas if you got lots of good karma and not a whole lot of bad karma, then even if something bad happens, I mean, it's going to be way less bad than if you

didn't have all that good karma. Like, I've told stories like this before. Like, for example, the two times I had to be hospitalized with malaria, just through seemingly random chance, a car just happened to show up that same day that I decided I'm going to have to go to the hospital and was able to drive me into town to a hospital.

Or another another example, I've told this story before, when I was living in Burma, I was continually biting into rocks in my food. You know, little white rocks get mixed in with the rice cuz it's threshed on the ground. Little brown rocks get mixed in with the beans.

And I'd be biting into a rock out in the
middle of nowhere

and it would make this crack and it
would hurt and I'd be feeling around in
there

with my finger seeing if I broke a tooth
or at least lost a filling or something.

And I'd be thinking it's like if if I
break a tooth out here in the middle of
nowhere,

I might be in some trouble. But as it
turns out, I didn't break a tooth out in
the middle of nowhere. I go into one of
the the rich neighborhoods of Rangoon.

It's it was the same neighborhood that U
Ne Win lived in after he the the

previous dictator who retired. He lived in that same neighborhood.

And I was going for alms in this rich neighborhood. Some servant girl offered me some bean curry, has a little brown rock in it. I break three teeth biting into this one rock. You know, kind of right in between two on top and one on bottom all got these big pieces broken off of them.

But, as it turns out due to my good karma, I mean that was bad karma to break my tooth. It was kind of good karma that it didn't happen out in the middle of nowhere, but happened in you know, the biggest city in the country. And it turns out the servant girl who

gave me the the bean curry with the rock
in it was the servant girl of the Dean
and Rector of the Rangoon Dental
College.

And so, I just had to walk across the
street and the Dean and Rector of the
Rangoon Dental College who had this this
little dentist shop, like a dentist
chair in his house
fixed my teeth for free and just said,
"If you ever need your teeth fixed, just
come right on back." And so, for a while
I had I had the same dentist as the
dictator. He was like the number one
dentist in the whole country.

His servant girl is the one that gave me

the rock in my food that finally broke my teeth.

So,

that's how good karma can mix in with bad karma and make it not so bad. And I mean, to some degree

um

like he talks about karma which has not begun to sprout can possibly be negated by yoga, meditation, feeding the hungry, etc. To some degree or also, you just avoid the situation in which that karma could reach fruition.

And I mean, some karma just has like an expiration date and just kind of fades out after a certain period of time if you just haven't put yourself in the

situation where it can reach fruition.

That's

orthodox Theravada Buddhism.

But, I mean it's it's not so much grace
of God

as just your own karma, which is very
complicated, and so all this stuff mixed
together, so you got one

one thing of bad karma, one unit of bad
karma or something. I mean, all by

itself is just bad karma, but if you got

all this other karma interacting with

it, I mean, it can certainly modify it

or add,

you know,

circumstances that make it not so bad,

that kind of thing.

But again, I mean, whether Hindus accept it or not is largely irrelevant to anyone who isn't really a Hindu.

And I'm just going to move on to this question, which is from the Saboteur again.

And he says, "There is also the true story of a Buddhist monk, female, who was asked by the spirit of a recently slaughtered buffalo to eat some of its meat, thereby it's gaining some merit.

Your opinion, please. Do you know the story?" Well, first of all, I'd say that a female Buddhist monk is a nun.

And also say, I mean, how does the Saboteur know this is a true story?

I mean, it's kind of suspicious to me that you've got the spirit of a recently slaughtered buffalo asking a nun to eat some of its meat.

I mean, do
do buffaloes, even if they're alive,
have enough like
intellectual capacity to even form that
idea?

So it's sort of anthropomorphizing this
buffalo,

which causes it to be kind of more like
folklore than a true story.

And uh I do not recall encountering this
story in Theravada Buddhist texts. It
could be a Mahayana Buddhist thing.

Uh well, I mean,

>> [clears throat]

>> maybe you could have the spirit of some creature

and why like

getting satisfaction

from some holy person eating its meat.

Maybe.

But it seems to me just going with

Occam's razor,

it would seem that it's more plausible

that this just isn't a true story, that

it's like folklore.

But

I mean, it's theoretically possible if

a

slaughtered the spirit of a slaughtered

buffalo

actually has the intellectual capacity
to appreciate that if it rejoices in
somebody benefiting from eating the meat
of its previous body,

um

>> [clears throat]

>> yeah, I mean,

if they rejoice and they be getting good
karma from it. But whether a dead
buffalo really does have that kind of
intellectual capacity or

I don't know. And there's so many wild
stories you can find in Buddhist texts,
just like the texts of just about any
other religion that I mean,

>> [snorts]

>> just because it's in a book doesn't mean that it's true.

Talking animals, fire-breathing dragons, flat earth floating on water, eclipses of the sun and moon being caused by a large demon swallowing them into his mouth. You can find all of this in text, some of it in the so-called core texts of the sutras themselves.

But that doesn't mean that we necessarily have to believe it.

Anyways,

next question is from Rui.

And this is kind of a weird question.

I'm not exactly sure why Rui even cares.

But Rui says, "How pervasive was the use

of fluorescent lighting in Burmese temples and viharas.

The use of fluorescent lighting, I think just throughout the world fluorescent lights are replacing incandescent lights, or they have been for decades.

And now I guess it's LEDs are starting to replace fluorescent lights. But the like the fluorescent tubes, yeah, I mean that was fairly common. That you'd have little fluorescent tubes, maybe 2 ft long, and they'd be off most of the time until they fire up the generator, and then they turn on.

So yeah, I would say that probably fluorescent lights, I mean

I wasn't really taking notes on this. I mean I wasn't really making a note of the proportion of fluorescent to incandescent lights at monasteries in Burma.

I mean most of the monasteries I stayed at were forest monasteries that did not have electricity except from a generator, or maybe from a solar panel, that kind of thing.

And it seems to me that there would be more fluorescent light tubes than incandescent lights, if I remember correctly.

And then also you you you got like the Christmas lights around the like the the Christmas light halo around the the head

of the Buddha image on the altar, that kind of stuff. Sometimes it'll be like fluorescent tubes, too, that are kind of radiating out from the head of the Buddha image.

So, how pervasive was it? I mean really, why are you asking this question?

Yeah, I mean it's fairly common, but I mean I can't really give any percentages, anything like that.

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from RFS.

RFS says, "From your perspective as someone who lived the monastic life, does sexual desire in men naturally burn

out with age, or do even geriatric men remain sexually driven, perhaps even frustrated, given that in places like America, 65-plus communities uh American 65-plus communities, intimacy often resembles a cesspool fueled by Viagra and cosmetic surgeries well into one's 80s.

Well, I can tell you from my own experience that I mean, as you get [clears throat] older, your sex drive, your testosterone levels, you know, your hormone case tends to decrease over time. Like I mentioned before, I stopped having like um erotic climactic dreams, so to speak, in my early 40s. And I kind of missed them when they stopped

happening.

And so,

yeah, as you get older, as a general rule, your sex drive, your your libido decreases.

Just because, you know, the hormones decrease. You know, you have less stamina and vitality and so forth. Less, you know, animal spirits, so to speak.

So, yeah, as a general rule, that that does happen. But then, you've got like like the masculine pride, you know, male ego, or just a lifetime of like lustful habits that can still carry some men further and further. Like, I remember my

father, he was like 80 years old.

And he was his wife had had

um

like a kind of surgical operation that made her no longer able to fulfill her wifely duties, so to speak. And so, my father, approximately 80 years old, is sitting in his chair talking to me with this wistful look on his face, saying that he's sorely tempted to be unfaithful to her, but their relationship is based on trust, and he could never do anything that would hurt his wife. So, he's just reconciled himself to being celibate for the rest of his life.

An 80-year-old man, but he was My father

was oversexed, definitely. I mean, he's still watching porn at the age of 80.

So,

I think a lot of it was just again, like, male ego, masculine pride, and just sort of, like, being determined, and just force of habit, also just keeping you going in that direction.

But, in America, it's it's sort of a youth culture, and so a lot of older people just try as hard as they can to look and act and seem as young as they possibly can.

Which can be kind of pathetic sometimes, I have to admit.

So, did I answer the question?

Does sexual desire in men naturally burn out with age? I don't think it completely burns out totally, but it does wane. It does decrease over time.

I think I mean, I remember long ago, you know, saying that a man reaches his sexual peak at around the age of 17. You know, it's all downhill after about 17. Whereas with women, I think it it peaks at about 35, something like that.

So, yeah, I I mean, it's it's well known. Hormone levels, sex drive, and so forth, decreases, even though it may never reach zero until you die.

Probably not even then, because that's

one of the the urges that kind of causes
[clears throat] rebirth to happen.

But, I'm just going to move on to RFS's
next question,

which is kind of a related question.

He says, "If you, as a monk practicing
diligently with celibacy and meditation
found that you could not fully
extinguish this desire even under those
ideal conditions. What real hope is left
for a lay practitioner, let alone an
ordinary person with no spiritual
training at all?

Well, an ordinary person with no
spiritual training at all probably
wouldn't even want to extinguish sexual

desire. He might want to enhance it.

Ah, but the thing is

we are human, we have hormones, we have

certain areas in our brain in this

version of reality

of reality in quotes, scare quotes.

And so, I mean

it's

it's sort of like anger or or other

basic human emotions

that you don't necessarily cure

yourself, you just learn how to

experience them without reacting.

Sort of like

obsessive-compulsive disorder. I used to

know one of the world's leading

authorities on obsessive-compulsive

disorder. And according to him, if you're cured of obsessive-compulsive disorder, it doesn't mean that you don't have like the compulsive urges arising, you just learn to detach from them, to kind of objectify them with mindfulness and not not act out those urges.

That's how you get cured. Once you stop reinforcing them, that goes way down.

But still, you're going to have the occasional nagging compulsive urge to do something or say something or think about something.

And I mean, you're never a 100% cured of that.

Not necessarily. But the cure comes, I mean, you don't you don't eradicate it, but the I mean, the cure comes from just learning to let it arise and pass away without acting upon it. Without reacting.

You know, it was goes you know, just like a cloud floats by and you do not you don't react.

Especially, you don't follow up on the urge.

So, yeah, I mean, we're as long as we're in this body, we're human.

And we've got human nervous systems and human endocrine systems. We've got human hormones, so to speak.

So, yeah, it's not eradicating
defilements. It's not eradicating
desires. It's just
getting to the point
where
you can just see it arise and pass away
without reacting.

I mean, it'll it'll arise and pass away
less often if you're not reinforcing it.
But, still, you're never going to
completely exterminate this kind of
stuff.

>> [snorts]

>> Using Khmer Rouge tactics against your
own defilements is not really a winning
strategy.

So,

mindfulness is the panacea. I mean,

mindfulness

cures all ills, really.

Or at least makes them not so bad.

And let's see here. I'm just

[clears throat] going to move on to the
next question, which is from Trisaskas
is.

And Trisaskas is has a quote from the
Bible. He starts off, "I know what it is
to be in need, and I know what it is to
have plenty. I have learned the secret
of being content in any and every
situation, whether well fed or hungry,
whether living in plenty or in want."
Unquote.

That's from Philippians [clears throat]
4:12, so I assume it's either by Paul of
Tarsus or at least attributed to Paul of
Tarsus.

So, then Trisaskas is continues, "Why do
Do think some people like me who have
learned to live with very low amount of
money have difficulties when living in
plenty?

That is probably the opposite of what
most people experience.

So,

I think there's different reasons why
different people have difficulty with
having life being too easy and the
necess- necessities and even luxuries of

life being too plentiful.

Um I remember reading, I think it was

Paul Lowe,

um who was a 20th century, very early

21st century spiritual teacher, said

that he he met a number of people who

didn't have to work for a living and

were just bothered by that.

They're bothered by really not having to

work for a living. And that would be

maybe one of one manifestation of what

Shuras Askes is here is talking about. I

think with some people it's just that

they have like

low willpower, you know, they don't have

much self-restraint.

And so being poor protects them from all

these desires that they would be able to act out if they had the money to to pay for it.

You know, you just you you could become like Hunter Biden, [clears throat] something like that. You know, which reminds me of certain teachings of the Bible like you cannot serve both God and mammon.

And that's one reason why the Burmese are so devoutly Buddhist is they just are so poor they don't have much mammon to serve. So, you know, it's much easier to serve God or just, you know, their religion because they're not able to just spend their time, you know,

wenching and and and drinking and and
you know, just chasing after shiny
things all the time.

So, that's that's part of it. I assume
some people just kind of fear having
lots of money or just feel uneasy about
it just because they know that they lack
the the the ability to resist temptation
and they're going to get in more trouble
because of it.

Or there's some people who just might
feel guilty. You know, they don't have
to work for a living when other people
do and they just have too much time on
their hands. You know, they just feel
restless or whatever.

But I assume there's different reason. I

don't think this it's all the same

reason

why

>> [clears throat]

>> people this feel uncomfortable when

things are going too well for them. I

mean, in my case, sometimes if things

I have too much good luck in a row, I'll

start feeling a little bit like, "Whoa,

it's like things are getting out of

balance here, so something bad's going

to happen."

You know, it's it's getting ripe to

happen soon just to keep the

cosmos in balance. This kind of thing.

So, I would assume that, you know, it's

like the more money you have, this the more commotion, the more mammon you've got, the less God in your life.

As a general [clears throat] rule.

>> [sighs]

>> So, yeah, I I would guess that there's there's different reasons.

And I I'm mentioned a few, I suppose.

But it's something I really don't haven't given much thought to. I mean, I know it's it's easier to be happy if you're poor. I mean, not in grinding poverty, not like watching your kids go hungry.

That kind of thing. But I mean, if you have enough, that's enough. And that's that's best,

really.

To have like an excess is I mean, it's better than just being starving, freezing to death, that kind of thing. Especially if you've got a family, people who depend on you.

But still, just living a life of moderation really is is best. And I would assume some people have like an intuitive unease about having life being too easy because, you know it it isn't completely in balance. You know, it's like always doing what is easy makes you soft and weak. Certain amount of challenge is good to keep you like strong and resilient.

There's There's all these factors have to be taken into consideration, I suppose.

And I don't want to do that right now.

So, I'm moving on to Trisha's as his next question.

And this also is in quotes. This is a quote from Socrates.

He says, "It is a disgrace to grow old through sheer carelessness before seeing what manner of man you may become by developing your bodily strength and beauty to their highest limit." And at this point, I would just like to point out that it does kind of unsettle me a little bit when people are using a hyphen instead of a dash

before the name of someone who has
who has a quote attributed to them.

But I'm I'm trying to be a trying to be
a open-minded here.

But still, I think it's grammatically
more correct to use a dash, an M dash,
and not a hyphen.

Anyways, I mean the Buddha wouldn't
completely disagree with the statement.
I mean he would agree with it right up
to the very end. I think the the Buddha
would agree

um I mean there are verses in the

Dhammapada that kind of

have overlap with this. It is a disgrace
to grow old through sheer carelessness

before seeing what manner of man you may become. Up to that point, the Buddha would agree. And then at the last part, by developing your bodily strength and beauty to their highest limit. Yeah, the the Buddha probably would not agree with that.

Um

>> [clears throat]

>> developing bodily strength and beauty. I mean if you're all spiritual, like your spiritual strength and beauty, that would be fine. But yeah, the ancient Indians didn't have like gymnasias like they did in classical Athens. You know, it was sort of the the the cult of the of the male body

really. I mean, the the ancient Greeks considered the male to be more beautiful than the female.

Which is probably one reason why their naked goddesses are kind of stocky and flat-chested.

With kind of a big nose.

>> [sighs]

>> So, yeah, the Buddha wouldn't completely disagree, but he would he would disagree with seeing what manner of man you may become by developing your bodily strength and beauty to its highest limit. Yeah, I mean

Socrates maybe didn't accomplish his beauty to his highest limit. I mean, he

he he sort of notoriously was an ugly
guy.

But maybe he did his best, you know.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> But yeah, the Buddha would disagree with
the very last part. But probably would
agree with

um the first part. That it is a disgrace
to grow old through sheer carelessness
before seeing what manner of man you may
become. Just cut it off there and the
Buddha would agree. It's just that very
last part about developing your bodily
strength and beauty to their highest
limit that he would consider to be just
irrelevant to a like to Dharma.

To a spiritual life.

I mean, it may be helpful for some people. Like it may be that the Buddha himself

he developed his body bodily strength and beauty to their highest limit back when he was allegedly like a royal prince.

And and for some people it may be helpful where you just get everything that you can in a worldly life and it's realized that you're still not satisfied. So, So, a case like that, some guys

it may be to their benefit to looks max, for example, and then realize that they're still not

satisfied, and then they start looking for something else.

I think one weakness of a lot of Burmese village monks who go to America, especially go to the West, is that they lived a life of poverty up until they finally made it to some rich monastery in the West somewhere, and then they just can't resist temptation. They never really had the insight that all this material stuff really doesn't cause satisfaction.

So, they just you know, they have very little resistance to this temptation like a lot of Westerners would have.

So, in a case like that, maybe

developing your bodily strength and beauty to their highest limit may have some spiritual benefit if you have the wisdom for the insight to arise that well, been there, done that. That's an ideal, a worldly ideal that I accomplished and I'm still not satisfied.

So, now [clears throat] what do I do? I mean, there is some indication the Buddha himself lived that way. You know, he was I mean, even if he wasn't a royal prince like the legend says, you know, he apparently was of the upper class, lived a relatively affluent life. Maybe he really did have a harem of beautiful

dancing girls and all that.

And he just had the wisdom to realize that that was not making him completely happy. He was still dissatisfied.

So, he turned to turned to spirituality. Successfully even.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Ethiopian fake tig

who changed his name on YouTube, but he's still Ethiopian fake tag.

He says, [clears throat]

"Thinking about karma and realized that it's actually the perfect system to keep a caste system in check. Apparently, the Indo-Aryans who dominated India probably liked the system since it would make

sense."

Make sense. Why else would one group rule over another?

"Thinking about all this, started to think perhaps the truth could be that enlightenment is the realization that we need the lie that any of this has any meaning and purpose if we are going to love a life or maybe live a life worth living at all." "In the end, people will lose their minds in a meaningless world and perhaps that's what the Buddha realized and that's what we all realize deep down since all the laws and all the gods only care about what men care about, power, wealth, and

pleasure in life." "Having this realization, the Buddha instituted a not so true system to keep the sanity of everyone from spiraling.

Thoughts on this?"

Well, my main thought is what the hell are you talking about?

I mean this is just like this rambling this kind of rambling stream of consciousness thing. It's like uh Molly Bloom lying in bed in Dublin in 1902.

And this is just going through her head at the end of James Joyce's Ulysses.

Um

I mean

thoughts on this?

Well, karma, see, realized karma's the perfect system to keep a caste system in check. I mean, not necessarily. I mean you know, there's caste systems elsewhere. You know, medieval Europe had kind of a caste system.

You know, your peasants weren't socially mobile to become like nobles very easily.

And they didn't rely on karma. That was just God's God wills it.

Just the way it is.

And then he says, "Apparently the Indo-Aryans who dominated India probably liked the system since it would make

sense."

Yeah, it makes sense. I mean, they invaded and conquered the land, so they were the rulers.

I mean, the caste system I mean, it was just kind of default

when, you know, the you've got some group invades another country and

conquers it, you know, it's just

they're the upper caste just because

they won. They won the They won the

invasion. They succeeded in invading

this country and taking it over.

So, why else would one group rule over another? I mean, I

How do you even Why would one group rule over them? Because they can. Why does a

dog lick its balls? Because it can.

Thinking about all this, started to think perhaps the truth could be that enlightenment is the realization that we need

No, I really don't think so.

Enlightenment is the realization that we need the lie that any of this has any meaning and purpose if we're going to Yeah, no, that's not what enlightenment is.

Let's see cuz I mean, that was you're you're still wallowing in in some sorry delusion if that's all enlightenment is.

It's just more wallowing in delusion.

In the end, people will lose their minds

in a meaningless world and perhaps
that's what the Buddha realized and
that's what we all realize deep down
since It's etc. etc.

No, I mean, the default setting for
human beings is we just take all this
seriously.

So, yeah, I don't think that the Buddha
had to

I mean, it just it just doesn't make
sense to me. The Buddha would invent
Buddhism

as a way to give fake meaning to samsara
when I mean, [clears throat] really he
was doing kind of the opposite. I mean,
samsara comes with its own built-in fake
meaning.

I mean, that's what samsara is is
meaning.

But, I mean, people aren't just going to
like go insane or just
lapse into enlightenment
in a meaningless world. I mean, the
world didn't really become all that
meaningless until existentialism came
along in the 20th century.

Or, [clears throat]
you know, some some of the sophisticated
like Mahayana Buddhist philosophies like
Madhyamaka, I suppose.

So, yeah, I mean, it's it's mostly just
intellectuals who consider the world to
be meaningless. I mean,

maybe you can have some emo teenager
moping around because he thinks the
world is meaningless mainly because this
girl that he likes doesn't like him
back.

But,

no, we we have samsara just built-in as
the default setting. We don't really
need Buddhism to kind of reinforce
samsara in a skillful way or something.

It It just

I don't think so.

So, see, continuing with this weird
ramble,

have having this realization the Buddha
instituted a not so true system to keep
the sanity of everyone from spiraling.

Thoughts on this? Yeah, I really don't think so. Let's man.

>> [laughter]

>> Nope. I really don't think so.

The Buddha instituted just kind of like this skillful lie to keep people

I mean, by telling them that it isn't real or Buddhism telling that that this is not ultimate reality?

I mean, people just assume it.

So, yeah, I would say it's

almost the exact opposite of this weird rambling

theory or whatever it is. Except for the

top the he starts off with karma and the Indo-Aryan invasion.

It's It's There's really no structure to this. It's just like this meandering stream of consciousness thing with thoughts at the end.

So, that's my thoughts. It's a meandering stream of consciousness. It doesn't really make a whole heck of a lot of sense.

And I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake tig's next question.

Brace yourselves.

Cuz this one's

It looks like it's going to be kind of similar here.

I had a months-long debate with someone

online and we finally got to a conclusion about why people are so averse to homosexuality.

I coined the idea that the same discomfort people feel with two gay or lesbian people is the same discomfort people feel when they meet a heterosexual couple that can have kids but chooses not to have kids.

The idea that someone is completely okay with dying and not leaving something behind makes people feel so uncomfortable that we are naturally averse to it.

Buddhism is actually in sync with this ideology since it's if possible it's

best if everyone ordains and becomes a monk even though it's unlikely but still if we were to ask the Buddha he wouldn't say it's best

he would say it's best would he not?

And I'm looking around to see if I can find the fan remote cuz it's getting kind of hot in here.

Fan remote right here.

Oh, yeah.

Okay. So,

we can crystallize this down. Ethiopian Fake Tag has a theory that people do not like homosexuality because it's an evolutionary dead end. You wind up not having kids. But, I mean, people really don't feel that way.

Um

I mean, like Buddhism, as he points out, Buddhism also is kind of anti-natalist.

You know, it's ideal, the highest ideal is does not involve having kids. And I mean, there are some people that have a version for Buddhism because of that.

Like, in the Buddha's time, some of the Brahmins were calling, you know, the Buddha like a destroyer of life because he was endorsing people becoming ordained renunciants when they're young instead of having kids first.

But, I don't think

like if you're walking along and you see two men in a park making out

passionately,

you don't I mean, most guys, maybe most women, would feel uncomfortable seeing that. Not because they're thinking, "Oh, they're not going to have kids in the future."

No, I mean, that doesn't arise at all. It's just kind of goes against nature, really.

You know, it's it's kind of unnatural in a sense.

And it just It maybe even more importantly, it just goes against Well, maybe not more importantly, because now what it is is it's supposed to be cool and everything. But, I mean, it also goes against like traditional culture.

So, it's it's sort of liminal, kind of like violating norms. Maybe not violating taboos as much as it used to, but still violating certain norms, even if it's just like natural biological norms.

That that sort of thing is causes a certain discomfort in people who observe it. I mean, a lot of guys don't feel uncomfortable uncomfortable at all seeing two hot young lesbians getting making out hot and heavy on a video. I mean, that kind of lesbians doesn't bother them. Probably because, you know, they're not thinking of them

as homosexuals. They're just thinking of them as hot naked women or whatever.

But Yeah, I mean, another example I could give that might sort of fit what Ethiopian Fade is talking about is talking about is people who resent those who

auto delete, who self delete. You know, they they're resentful. They're like angry about it. You know, they'll even say it's the coward's way out and so forth. When the person ironically did what this person who's criticizing him fears the most.

You know, it's just this weird kind of like a hysterical reaction, really.

But really it's the resentment in that

this person just dismissed
everything that this other person values
most.

So, I mean, that might be more the case
than resenting that they're not going to
reproduce their DNA sequences.

Ah, [sighs] so let's see here.

We are naturally averse to it.

I mean, it's just like
not a good survival instinct. You know,
none of our ancestors were exclusively
homosexual.

And so, it's like homosexuality
um you know, it is a kind of natural
aberration.

And certain certain cultures it's still

very taboo. Although in postmodern liberal Western culture, it's uh it's decreasingly taboo, which is also indicative of just moral decadence and decline.

Not just because of, you know, being open towards homosexuality, it's just it's just sort of like a a symptom.

Like

Gibbon claims in the his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire that, you know, it was a truism back in his day, like the late 1700s, among historians, the a telltale sign of a civilization in decline is eunuchs rising into social prominence.

You know, in whatever
ancient or medieval civilization
that had eunuchs rising into social
prominence,
just for whatever reason, it wasn't that
wasn't the cause of it, but it was just
like an incidental symptom
of a civilization that was getting ready
to crash.

That is just like a telltale sign.

And nowadays, we have our own version of
eunuchs. They're they're called trans.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean,

Ethiopian Fake Tig really should try to
make his questions more concise, so it's

not like this nebulous blob of words
that I have to try and tease meaning out
of in order to answer the question.

Especially when it's just like thoughts
at the end.

But, let's see.

Well, I mean, the actual question here,
let's see, Buddhism is actually in sync
with this ideology since, if possible,
it's best if everyone ordains and
becomes a monk, even though it's
unlikely,

but still, if we were to ask the Buddha,
he would say it's best, would he not?

Yeah, he'd say it's best to be celibate.

Yeah. I mean, it says that in the texts.

That's if that's the question, I just

answered

So, let's just go on to the next question from Ethiopian Fake Tig. He says, "After almost 2 years together, now do you finally believe I am Ethiopian or not? Cuz I honestly am."

Well,

do I think that Ethiopian Fake Tig is really Ethiopian?

Could be Eritrean.

I'm just open-minded on the subject.

Suspension of judgment is really the wisest route to go.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Cole.

Cole says, "Is doing a parasite cleanse

against the precept of not killing? This precept is typically taken as an absolute, but in this case, wouldn't the preservation of one's own health be more important?" Well, we're getting into modern ideas here where

I mean, parasites in the Buddha's time primarily I mean, aside from external parasites like lice or mosquitoes or bedbugs or fleas, the internal parasites would generally be intestinal worms.

That would be the internal parasites that um

would be known of in ancient India. You know, they wouldn't know that, you know, malaria is caused by some microscopic

blood parasite anything like that.

And I think it's in the commentaries where they had this idea that when a body dies and it starts swarming with maggots, that's the the intestinal worms just percolating up to the surface.

There's actually a theory along those lines somewhere in the commentarial literature that I haven't countered before.

So, I mean, they didn't get it at all.

They just thought that everyone is teeming with intestinal worms.

So,

purging intestinal worms, I mean, it may be that somebody back then had the idea

that maybe purging intestinal worms is something that we'd be better off doing. Of course, they didn't have vermicides back then.

Although

one like a

What's the word?

I don't know, like village medicine.

What do you call that?

Like an herbal kind of vermicide that you can do is just take papaya leaves.

Or not papaya leaves, papaya seeds.

Either you can take them whole, I think grinding them up works better. And papaya seeds, supposedly, worms don't like it and they'll just evacuate. It won't kill them. So, a lot of Burmese

monks or devout Burmese Buddhists, if they're trying to deworm themselves, they'll take ground up papaya seeds and that will expel the worms without killing them.

But then what's the worm going to do once it's outside of you? I mean, it might just live in the Shangri-La of a cesspit, you know, this outhouse pit full of dung. You know, it might just be living in the lap of intestinal worm luxury down there for all I know. But I mean, if you're going to crap on the ground, it's going to die.

I mean, it is true that in the even a monk, even an

ordained monk, according to the ancient
Indian monastic rules of discipline, the
Vinaya,

that a monk can take bedding that is
infested with bed bugs and just spread
it out in the sun, the hot tropical sun.

And that and you are allowed to like
cleanse your bedding of parasites by
putting your bedding out in the sun. And

I have done that before. And what
happens is that within a few minutes,
you've got this

this highway of ants

just going straight to your bedding.

They're they're picking up the the bed
bugs and the bed bug eggs and
everything. And then you've got like

this little highway of ants carrying bedbugs and bedbug eggs back to this hole in the ground. So, I mean they're all going to die.

But still a monk is allowed to do that, even though he knows that he's essentially feeding the parasites to ants.

Also, a monk is allowed to wipe mildew off walls, that kind of thing. Even though the mildew is alive, it's a living living being of sorts.

Still monks are allowed to kill it.

So, is doing a parasite cleanse against the precept of not killing?

Depends on how you go about it, I

suppose. I mean, if you're just
you know, you're taking a vermicide and
you you

you can take this, worms.

Kiss my ass, worms. And you know, you're
doing it just

knowing full well that you want these
worms to die

for the indignity inflicted upon you of
infesting your guts.

Then yeah, I mean you're still going to
be making bad karma.

And still having you deliberately trying
to kill a being.

On the other hand,

if you're not even thinking in terms of
killing, you're just trying to be

healthy,

then I mean it's it's sort of like a
monk or anybody who's walking along, I
mean,

even if you know you're going to be
stepping on bugs when you're walking
along. Maybe the ground is swarming with
bugs.

Still,

I mean, so long as killing these bugs is
not your purpose,

you're not really breaking the precept
of of of not killing. I mean,

I mean, that happened to me a few times
in Burma where it's like right after the
rainy season in the desert, the entire

ground is covered with these little
gnat-like creatures. And there's no way
you could move. You couldn't take a step
without squishing lots and lots of them.
But so long as that is not your purpose,
so long as you're not like
stomping on them and giggling,
so long as you're just going from point
A to point B,
then you're not guilty of breaking that
breaking the precept. And if you've got
like a health problem
because of
whatever kind of worms you've got in
your intestinal tract, and you take the
medicine just to be healthy,
and not for the sake of killing these

damned little parasites,

then again,

I mean, that is killing is not your purpose, you're really not guilty of breaking the precept.

But some Buddhists, I mean, they will try to kind of at least alleviate their killing by taking papaya seeds or something that will just expel the worms without killing them.

Although, depending on where you take a dump next time, you know, they might wind up dead anyway.

You know, using a toilet probably is going to kill intestinal worms.

If you've just got like a cesspit

where it's just full of dung anyway, the worms might be better off. They might be really happy down there.

But I mean, what are you going to do?

You got lice or something?

Are you just going to like put them in a little cup and then let them go outside?

I mean, sometimes you just have to take a hit, seems to be, especially if you're a lay person.

If you want to be a completely saintly monk,

living out in a living out in a forest somewhere, yeah, I mean, you can you can endanger your own health and all that just for the sake of being, you know, like morally pure.

But a a lay person living in the world
to some degree, I mean,
I don't know. It just doesn't really
make

I mean, maybe when I was younger and
more idealistic,
it made sense that it's better to die
than to step on a bug or something. But
as a lay person, you've got a to support
and and this kind of thing, I mean, it's
just not really the best choice to make.
I mean, you may have to just take a hit.
You may have to be the the heroic you
know, like the tragic hero
and sacrifice some of your own virtue
for the sake of the welfare of others.

But again, I mean, if you're just doing a parasite cleanse, like taking a dewormer just for the sake of your own health

and killing worms is really not your priority, then you haven't really broken the rule.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Scooter Man.

And Scooter Man says, "Oh, I should have looked this up."

Just a minute.

Okay.

Scooter Man is quoting something in this text

from the Atthakavagga, in fact.

Let's see.

From the Discourse on the Cave.

Eight-verse Discourse on the Cave.

Gosh, where the hell is it?

Towards the beginning. How come I don't see it?

Oh, okay. There it is.

So, Scooter Man says, and he quotes,

"Therefore, a person should train himself right here and now. Whatever he would know in the world to be a way of inequality, not because of that should he go along the unequal way. The wise say this life is but a little thing indeed."

Unquote. And then Scooter Man says, "Can

you elaborate on this verse from the
Discourse on the Cave?"

So,

let's see

All right.

Um I remember when I was translating
this and that was a
discourse on the cave is a difficult
one.

Um it's not one of my favorite suttas
and it's kind of awkward in in the way
it conveys its message. It seems to me.

And so when I got to this verse, I mean,
when you don't know exactly what it
means, you just translate it as
literally as you can.

And that was pretty much what I was

doing with this verse because it didn't really

I mean, it didn't really obviously, clearly

you know, integrate with the context.

So, the way I interpreted it to mean, therefore, a person should train himself right here and now. Okay, that's self-explanatory.

Whatever he would know in the world to be a way of inequality, not because of that would he go along the unequal way.

So, with that, I'm assuming that a monk is trying to live a life of neutrality.

You're trying to avoid dualistic extremes of positive or negative. You

just want neutrality. So, anything that veers away from neutrality, which would be a way of inequality, you know, too much positive or too much negative, then a monk would just kind of avoid that if he could.

You know, so it's like you know you're going to get some kind of gain or pleasure by going this way, a monk, you know, an ancient Indian monk especially, you know, he just continue going the neutral path even though he knows he would get some sort of pleasurable gain by veering off that middle path, he won't do it.

That is how I interpreted it, but it was it's one of the more difficult verses to

translate in the Atikavaka. There are some quite a few difficult verses.

And this is this is one of them just because it was

I mean, you have to just read it as literally as you can and then try and figure out how that would fit the context.

And it was a little bit of a challenge.

And then at the end the wise say this life is but a little thing indeed. You

know, it's like

you know,

being a human being really is not all that great.

You shouldn't be chasing after, you

know, momentary pleasures or even pains. You know, you shouldn't be veering off the path of neutrality for the sake of this meat puppet that you're inhabiting because it's really not that big of a deal.

That is generally how I would interpret it.

But you know, the discourse on the cave, it is uh it's a difficult one.

So, I think I answered that question even though I did it fairly quickly. I'm just going to move on to the next question. This was Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb, and this is the last question.

So, we're doing pretty good. This is only an hour and a half. Um that that one week of vacation didn't result in more than the usual number of questions and uh somehow it is kind of helped to weaken my habit of digressing wildly.

So, Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb, says, "You once said, quote, the problem is that if we avoid friends that are worse than us and choose friends that are better, the friends that are better are choosing friends that are worse than them. Unquote.

But what if we factor in one-way friendships like some kind of charitable friendliness from one to another that the other decides makes one their friend? So, this this occurred on the Discord server.

Somebody quoted uh a well-known verse from the the Khaggavisana Sutta, Discourse on the Rhinoceros or Discourse on the Rhinoceros Horn, saying that you should have friends, you should avoid friends that are more foolish than you. You should only choose friends that are equal to you or wiser than you. And I was pointing out that if if you choose friends that are wiser than you, then the wiser friend is

choosing a friend that's more foolish
than him, and so he's going against the
Sutta.

So, either way, it's just like this
obvious kind of logical
glitch
in the reasoning.

But, the way I would interpret it,
um just setting aside Stellar Supreme's
alternative here for now,
um it's like

this is advice to someone who is
practicing Dhamma,
um

and possibly like a beginner. I mean,
not a not like a total rank beginner,

like a layperson just learning about Buddhism, but someone who is like an ordained monk, who maybe has just recently converted from some other ascetic system.

And so,

um you know, they need guidance. It helps them to have, you know, spiritual friends and so forth. They don't want to choose more foolish ones. But, I mean, it is like advice on how to get wiser, how to become enlightened possibly.

But, once you you become an adept, you know, once that you're like a wise teacher, then of course you're going to have to like be the good friend, the kalyana mitta, of people who are less

wise than you in order to help them, in order to teach them.

So, yeah, I would assume that, you know, the statement in the Sutta really is not taking that into account.

You know, it's just talking about sort of

you know, as as like colleagues, not like a student and teacher relationship, but just, you know, you guys are out meditating together out in the forest, that kind of stuff. That you should avoid the foolish ones. You know, not associating with fools, blessing number one in the Mangala Sutta.

But, I mean, once you have gotten enough

seniority and enough wisdom that you can be a teacher, of course, you're going to have to be teaching people who are less wise than you.

But getting back to Stellar Supremes alternative here, what if we factor in one-way friendships, like some kind of charitable friendliness from one to another that the other decides makes one their friend? Yeah, I mean, that's that's kind of what he's talking about, like the Kalyana Mitta or the teacher. You know, you might consider him to be your friend, but he just considers you to be his student. You know, he's got like metta, you know, goodwill and like compassion and that sort of thing

towards you, but, you know, it might be that you know, he's he's got a certain detachment that, you know, he's not really seeing you as his friend, as more as, you know, if he sees you as anything, it's it's like a you know, some somebody that he's helping, you know.

So, yeah, I think my answer and Stellar Supremes alternative do overlap, I think, in that, you know, if if you're just talking about colleagues, yeah, you should avoid the foolish ones. Um so, you're probably better off being equals. Or, I mean, maybe there's just going to be a wiser one who's just

willing to take the hit in your case and have his, you know, he's he's not adept enough that he can resist being kind of brought down by a lower a lower consciousness.

But, I mean, it does happen. Mental states are contagious.

So, you know, a wise person will uplift a foolish person, but that foolish person will drag down the wiser person unless that wiser person is so wise that they're just kind of immune or any dragging down will be minimal and it won't really affect them that much.

But yeah, I mean sort of like a student disciple kind of situation might not be considered the same sort of situation as

this spiritual friendship kind of
situation that the rhinoceros horn
discourse is talking about.

And I guess I'm done.

I guess so.

So,

like I always used to say at the
beginning and pretty much never do,
if you have any questions you think I
can answer, especially with regard to
Dharma, Dhamma, Theravada Buddhism,
early Buddhism, Buddhism in general,
although the farther you get away from
Theravada Buddhism and early Buddhism,
like archaic Buddhism, the the odds
become somewhat reduced that I'll be

able to really give a satisfactory answer.

And also I know some things about Hinduism, Western philosophies, and so forth, Christianity. So, this Dharma with an R is just sort of like a catch-all for all anything that is remotely spiritual.

And no more than three questions per person per episode, please. Like and subscribe if you have not done so already. Check out my URL links below, which includes my books on Amazon.

And be happy if you dare.

Alrighty then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 197.

[clears throat] I am your host Pony Bosa
and this is my co-host my refreshing
beverage.

And as you may have guessed already, if
you happen to be like Rainman, for
example, and 197 is a prime number,
which goes very well with my primary
designated beverage. [snorts]

And I guess the only real announcement I
have to make before we wade into this is
that this will probably be the last time
you see me with a full beard,
possibly for several years.

because I recently got a new job in the chemical industry and I'm going to occasionally have to wear a respirator, which means all this side stuff has to get shaved off. And so, I guess I'm just going to go with like the the mustache and the goatee kind of look. My sweetheart, my wife, who uh usually grooms me, is going to be experimenting with various designs tomorrow.

[sighs]

But I think probably it's going to be like a goatee mustache and then have them be like attached. I was considering maybe the Doc Holiday look, you know, sort of like a a pronounced mustache and just like a little soul patch or

something.

But we're just going to have to wait and see.

And we really do not have a whole heck of a lot of questions to answer this time. Although the situation is complicated somewhat by a few questions that I do not fully understand.

And so without further ado, whatever ado happens to be in this particular case,

I'm just going to start answering questions. And the first question is from RFS.

And RFS asks, "Did the Buddha lay down the five and 8 precepts?"

And that's kind of a I mean, it's a good question, but also it's a question that you can't really give a certain answer to unless you're just like faithoriented dogmatist who just believes whatever is in the books, in which case, yes, he certainly did.

But there are certain complications.

I mean just because the texts say that the Buddha laid down the five and eight precepts and also the 10 precepts and very possibly even the nine precepts.

Nine precepts are kind of a thing in Burma where there's an emphasis on meta.

The ninth precept is having meta for all beings or some such. I never really learned how to give nine precepts in

poly.

Um

but yeah, I mean according to the text,
the Buddha laid down 5, 8, and 10
precepts plus all the precepts that
monks are required to follow, which a
lot of people think is 227,
but that's just the py mocha rules. Um
actually there are probably a few
thousand rules including all the ones
that are outside the scope of the py
mocha. And also even within the pty
mocha there are like sub rules that
aren't on the list but it's like
um for example one of the parajika rules
I think it might be the first parajika

rule there's u

some [clears throat] monk

makes a hut out of clay you know he

makes just like this adobe kind of a hut

and then he puts a puts a bunch of like

combustible material in inside the hut

and lights it on fire which bakes the

hut hard. And this is like a like an

origin story leading up to a potty mocha

rule, one of the first py mocha rules.

But the Buddha made this rule that a

monk is not allowed to make a clay hut

and fire it in that way because of all

the small creatures that will die when

he's doing it.

So let's just get back to the actual

question now.

[snorts] Did the Buddha lay down the five and eight precepts? It's my understanding that five precepts for lay people was pretty much standardized even before the Buddhist time. So the Jains had their version of the five precepts. The the Vedic protohindus had their version of the five precepts for lay people. probably other like aesthetic spiritual traditions had five precepts and the first four tended to be the same. The fifth precept varied like in terra Buddhism the fifth precept is not taking intoxicants which cause heedlessness.

I think in Jainism it was something more

along the lines of personal property not having private property or some such. I remember reading something along those lines. I don't recall what the fifth precept for like the the followers or the the lay supporters of the fire worshipping matted hair Brahman aesthetics

would be. So I mean it was already five precepts was kind of built into Indian religious tradition before the Buddha came along. But it may very well be that the Buddha gave it the okay for the support the lay supporters of his his tradition.

Um and he may have like specified what the the five precepts would be

especially the fifth one which varied more than the first four. With regard to the eight precepts, it's possible that the Buddha also originated the eight precepts for Buddhists, which are stricter. You know, there's more of them. The third precept, which when you have five precepts just means no sensual misconduct, which means, you know, no adultery, no promiscuous sex, you know, no sex with strangers you pick up in taverns, that kind of thing. Then in if you take eight precepts then that third precept just becomes not being unelibate.

But I'm not it's not necessary for me to

go over all the precepts here because RFS is just asking if the Buddha laid down these precepts and there's a good chance of it but you can't really know for sure. I mean, you can't really know anything for sure that lies outside your own mind.

Spinoza and David Hume kind of made that idea famous in western philosophy in modern times and 10 precepts like noviceses are required to follow 10 precepts plus the seia rules which is one of the last uh collections of rules you know one of the last chapters in the py mocha which is just minor rules of like manners and etiquette and so forth But did the

Buddha lay down the five and eight precepts? According to tradition, he did, but you can't really know for sure. So, I mean, it's kind of an academic question, but it is found in the polytopica. According to the poly texts themselves, the Buddha laid down five and eight precepts for lay supporters. And that's about the best we're going to do because I don't think there's any way to really prove it conclusively one way or the other. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from the Sabatur. And the Sabatur asks a kind of strange question. He says, "What sutra is

referred to here?" and he leaves a link to a kind of blog post, I think, that's referring to some kind of Buddhist sutra dealing with what days are appropriate or inappropriate for getting one's hair cut.

And I do not recall coming across this in any sutras. I assume it is a Mahayana Buddhist sutra.

Um, and it's

I mean it's obviously not an important one.

It's just dealing with what days you should and should not get your hair cut or your head shaved if you happen to be a monk. There is some kind of tradition along these lines in Burma

where I think in Burma monks it's it's I wouldn't go so far as to say that it's a taboo, but it's like a tradition. You shouldn't get your haircut on a Friday. And also, you shouldn't get your haircut on your birthday. And in Burma, your birthday is the day of the week you were born on, not the day of the year. So, if you're born on a Thursday, like I was. I didn't even know this until I became a Terabara Buddhist monk. Then you shouldn't get your haircut on Thursday or Friday. But, I mean, it's just like a superstitious kind of thing. I mean there's I mean there's nothing intrinsically different about a Tuesday

and a Thursday. This let's say you're out in the woods somewhere. You don't have like a schedule you have to work according to anything like that. Then I mean all days are the same. It doesn't matter. It's just a calendar is just like this artificial construction of you know human culture. You know it's just like this cultural construct. You can say that the year itself like the the the the seasonal year or the sideral year, you know, those kind of things there there can be like an objective reality to them from an empirical point of view. But the days of the week, I think that was invented by Babylonians, you know, a 7-day week. And um you know,

each each day of the week is named after some heavenly body, you know, the sun, the moon, you know, Sunday, moon day, or or various, you know, obvious planets. I mean, that was I'm pretty sure that was like a Mesopotamian thing that spread westwards into Europe and also eastwards into India and also Burma cuz like the Burmese days of the week are based on the same planets and so forth as you know like the way the the Romans had it. But it wasn't that the Burmese got it from the Europeans. It's just that the Burmese and the Europeans derived it from the same Mesopotamian source, I'm pretty sure.

But the exact sutra
saying what days are appropriate or
inappropriate for getting your haircut
[clears throat] or your head shaved,
I've never read it before. And clearly
it's it seems fairly unlikely the Buddha
would have taught this kind of stuff
because really it is just kind of like
superstitious semi-taboo kind of stuff
that I mean maybe there was some ancient
Indian tradition [clears throat] that
you know it's just like bad luck to get
your hair cut on a certain day and so
then the monks might go along with that
just to kind of
you know not get blamed. by
superstitious lay people or some such.

But I mean it really doesn't have anything to do with actual dharma or dharma.

And so I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Master Poe. And this is one of the questions I do not understand.

Master Poe says if comma which he spells K A M A, there should be two M's.

Comma with only one M. Especially if the A is long. The first A

has the little Mron over it. That's comma like in Kama Sutra. That means like

sensual desire and sensual pleasure, sensuality in general.

But master poe says if kama is only
volition carried on to [clears throat]
next life in rebirth and a child dies
experiencing a neardeath experience.
Wouldn't that voluition be experienced?
Children have a very different neardeath
experience account than adults. Yet
Buddhists say mind comma is volition
question mark exclamation point. And
it's like if a child dies experiencing
an NDE. If a child dies experiencing a
near-death experience, then it's not
just a near-death experience. It's just
a death experience. It would seem to me
if a child dies experiencing an ND de
unless he means that the child dies and
is has the NDE and is and then

resuscitated.

Um

but I mean volition in my opinion

is not the best translation for You know

there's the famous verse in the kaya I

think

where the Buddha is saying monks I tell

you that karma is volition or rather

karma is chidana

and so it's usually translated as

volition I think schopenhau's will might

fit better urge might fit better but

also it's just like the kinetic aspect

of your stream of consciousness of your

mental states. You know, it's like the

momentum of your mental states.

So that's what's carried on into the next life is the momentum of your mental states like the momentum of whatever like perceptions and so forth that sort of generate or form your personality.

So if comma is only volition carried on to the next life well it's the momentum of your mental states and a child dies experiencing an NDE and I'm not exactly sure what he means by a child dying experiencing a near-death experience when I mean if you're actually dying then it's just a death experience it would seem to me. Wouldn't that volition be experienced?

I mean, if you're experiencing anything, the the temporal or kinetic aspect of

what you're experiencing would qualify
as it's kind of like the motive force,
you know, so long as there's uh like a
what do you call it? [clears throat]

How do I say this? So long as is there's
something perceived as remaining the
same over time.

you know like an idea like a thought
you're having a thought that has a
beginning a middle and an end then the
actual volition would be you know what
is stringing together those those mind
moments in a sense

but my interpretation of exactly what
Cheduna is differs to some degree from
like what Abiid Dhama says Chiduna is

and probably Most western Buddhists
would disagree with Abid Dama on
numerous issues including possibly this
one.

So [clears throat]

if a child dies,

wouldn't that volition be experienced?

I mean, you're experiencing valition all
the time. I mean, whatever is changing
yet remaining the same to some degree.

you know, it's not just a totally

different mind from one m from one

moment to the next where you know you

you don't you can't even remember it. I

mean there's no generalization or you're

just kind of like coalescing various

moments over time into like units that

kind of thing. I mean this is kind of
hard to explain

exactly what you know [clears throat]
the momentum of your mental states is
sort of like one moment of mind
you know sort of causes the next one
which causes the next one and that's
sort of you know that this kind of
causation

is generally what karma is
like defined as or perceived to be in
Tibetan Buddhism a lot of people
think karma is just some like
mysterious law of the universe where if
you do something bad, something bad has
to happen back to you. If you do

something good, something good happens back to you. Although karma is usually seen as something negative in Western culture, like instant karma videos, this kind of thing.

But that's not really the Buddhist like understanding of what karma is or karma.

Uh, so children have a very different near-death experience account than adults. I'm not exactly sure. I think there may have been a link that Master Poe posted, but as a general rule, I I don't always like refer to links unless someone specifically is basing a question on me viewing the link. And if that happened, Master Po didn't specify. So,

golly. I mean, this is I really do not fully understand this question.

First of all, I'm not exactly sure how children have a very different near-death experience account than adults do. I mean, it would be good to have like an example. And if Master Poe sent me an example in some, you know, link of like random letters and numbers that didn't really say what it was, then yeah, I probably should have consulted that.

Um, but when a child dies or comes close to death in a near-death experience, wouldn't that valition be experienced? Yeah, we're I mean we're experiencing

our valitions

at least at a surface level, a
superficial level. There are deeper
levels that

I mean they extend beyond the scope of
the ego. You know what we consider to be
our mind is really the ego. It's like
this self-contained self-referential
system of mental states. But there are
other mental states that lie beyond the
scope of our ego. Just like there's
mental states in other people that lie
beyond the scope of our personal our
personal ego, but still there are mental
states that are part of our own psyche,
so to speak, that are beyond the scope
of our conscious ego.

So I mean like

hysterical symptoms, you know, that's like subconscious stuff like burbling up to the surface of the conscious mind and the conscious mind isn't fully aware of what's causing the hysterical symptoms, especially at first.

So I mean I really don't know how to answer this question. Um, wouldn't the volition be experienced of a child dying experiencing a near-death experience? I don't know what that means, but anybody who has a near-death experience or anyone who has any kind of experience is experiencing some of the valitions, the ones that lie within the

scope of, you know, the the the range of the ego, that which lies beyond the range of the ego, you have to expand your consciousness

um in order to be more aware of what in most people would be considered subconscious.

It may be some people when they're having near-death experiences have greater access to what under ordinary circumstances would be subconscious processes. So, there's that, but I'm not exactly sure what Master Po is getting at here. And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Clefy.

And Kify says there is an anarchist

principle called non-aggression
principle.

Do you think it can be do you think it
can function in this reality that we
call samsara?

Um, yeah. I mean, the anarchists, I I
remember uh Stefan Molyneux, who I used to
I used to watch his videos back when he
was still on YouTube like back around
2016, and he would bring up the
non-aggression principle. There are
anarchists
who bring up the non-aggression
principle, which is, you know, there's
there's like one main rule, and that's
you're not allowed to hurt anybody, at

least nobody else. I mean, you might be allowed to hurt yourself, but I mean, who's going to enforce that in an anarchistic society? I mean, anarch anarchy or anarchism, I mean, it just doesn't seem to work in real life. It's an idealistic kind of system, but I don't think anyone can really point to an anarchistic society that ever. [clears throat]

I mean, there has to be some kind of enforcement. If you're going to have rules, there has to be some enforcement of the rules or else it's really not a rule. It's just kind of like a suggestion. And then nobody's really obliged

to honor that suggestion.

And human beings, especially some human beings, can be aggressive or even violent.

So to some degree, the non-aggression principle, especially if it's applied to an entire society, not just somebody adopting that as their own personal principle to follow, but if you apply that to an entire society, it goes against human nature.

It's kind of like Marxism goes against human nature. There are certain aspects of communism, certain aspects of anarchism that really are not realistic because they are just not in harmony

with the animal instincts of the human animal.

And our animal instincts often go by the term human nature.

So

you can set up you let's say you have some anarchistic society. I mean, what would hold it together? I'm not exactly sure. And they they have this non-aggression principle. Nobody's allowed to harm anybody else. Um, they all agree on it, I guess, which would make it fairly anarchistic, I guess. They're all voluntarily following it, but all it takes is one person to say, "No, I'm going to be aggressive." Who's going to stop him

now? How are you going to stop him
without being aggressive?

just be passive aggressive. Somebody
starts being aggressive, you just
whatever.

I don't think so. So yeah, anarchism, I
don't consider it to be particularly
realistic because it just kind of
rejects certain ugly facts about human
nature that we are a kind of upgraded
ape

and we're just laden with all these
animal instincts that most people aren't
even aware of. I mean, it was like the
scandal of 20th century psychology that
so many 20th century psychologists

up until maybe the very end of the 20th century believed that human beings just don't have instincts. We don't have animal instincts. Even my own father who was a relatively open-minded person believed that we only have two instincts. You know, the the baby a baby has like the suckling instinct, the nursing instinct and also babies instinctively know how to swim.

But we are laden with animal instincts that are like upgraded ape instincts and idealistic

like

utopian

systems aren't going to work very well.

Whether it's anarchism or Marxism

[clears throat] or anything else,
there's always going to be this ugliness
and messiness and aggression and
dishonesty and greed and hatred and lust
and all the rest because it's built into
human beings.

So I think um like in a small group some
like a commune or an ashram or something
where people can voluntarily follow the
non-aggression principle while they're
there and then like be politely ushered
out of the premises if they stop
following these principles.

then something like that could work. You
know, like most like monasteries,
ashrams, places like that, you know,

this pretty much everyone's following the non-aggression principle fairly well.

But for the entire human race or for an entire nation, an entire ethnicity, I don't think that that is very realistic. I mean, even to hold it up as an ideal is not very realistic.

something to work towards is not particularly realistic because we would pretty much have to stop being human in order to follow something like that or to follow communism. I mean, communism works at gunpoint. That's why you're never going to have anarchocomunism because you have to have a strong centralized government that

forces people to follow the communism.

And there's might be a communist out there watching this just thinking I'm just totally ignorant and don't understand it at all which is fine.

[snorts] So I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Scudamain and this is kind of an interesting question might actually come up you know in like your practical life.

Scooter man says, "Would calling a transman

he be against the fourth precept like Elliot, what's it? Elliot Paige who allegedly is going to play Achilles in the upcoming Odyssey movie. It's just a

rumor,

but it's really caught hold." And there's all kinds of memes about Elliot Page just being stomped on by villains and so forth.

So the fourth precept is wrong speech.

I undertake the precept to abstain from wrong speech.

So would calling a trans man like Elliot Page a he be against the fourth precept?

Well, I mean there's different kinds of wrong speech. The main one being lying.

And I it may be that Scooterain here has that particular form of wrong speech in mind. And in order to lie, you have to have the deliberate intention to deceive. I mean, that's key to

understand lying from a terra Buddhist point of view that even if you say something that's false, you're not lying unless you know it's false and are deliberately trying to deceive people.

So, if someone sincerely believes that a trans man is a he, then calling him a he would not be lying. If someone doesn't believe that a trans man is is a he and so if he calls him he, he might be lying maybe if he's trying to deceive

somebody. But he would be I mean if a person sincerely believes that a trans man is really still female, it would be more honest to say she, but they might get in trouble. might lose their job or

some such that it might hurt somebody's feelings. Maybe they don't even want to do that. So then you might be started getting into like the white lie kind of thing.

Um if you don't really believe that the person is a he, but you called them a he to be polite, you know, that's you're you're getting kind of on thin ice with regard to truthfulness from a Buddhist point of view. There are other kinds of wrong speech like

[clears throat and cough]

The the only other one that really would obviously apply would be perusacha which is like abusive speech. I mean that's also a kind of wrong speech. So

yeah, I don't I there might be some way where you could be like sarcastic and sort of like calling them he in like a like a a different tone of voice than the whole rest of the sentence where you know they know that you're just sort of pretending that to go along with their choice of designated gender or whatever then maybe I mean if you're you're saying it in such a way as to deliberately, you know, cause them to be unhappy or hurt their feelings or whatever, then again, that could be against the fourth the fourth precept. But again, I mean, in order to tell a lie, you have to know that what you're

saying is untrue and have a deliberate intention to deceive. So if you sincerely believe that Elliot Page is a guy

calling calling Elliot Page he would not be dishonest at all.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is also from Scooter.

And this question also

um [clears throat] I kind of understand it. I think I may not completely

understand it. Scooterman says, "I often see posts where a criminal, usually if a sex crime or mult usually if a sex crime or multiple time criminal getting released after only a short sentence.

The comments are typically group outrage that these people aren't spending the amount of time behind bars that seem reasonable in relation to the crime.

Do you believe these people, regardless of time served, are karmically affected by what they've done anyways, if they haven't been already? So, I guess the the gist of the question here is like a criminal who commits a crime, some atrocity,

um, are they karmically affected by what they've done? Yeah. I mean, that's what we are. We are the result of our actions.

Everyone, you know, their actions are

their own. And that really is all you take with you when you die according to Buddhism is like your actions, the result of your actions. Karma literally means action.

So yeah, I mean if you're actually going to

like grievously hurt somebody, you know, you got to be careful about what language you use on YouTube, but you're going to grievously cause harm to somebody deliberately,

then your mind is already messed up. It reminds me all of a sudden of Dostk's masterpiece, Crime and Punishment. He had more than one masterpiece, but the novel Crime and Punishment where you've

got this young student Rascalikov who's going to commit uh a crime of homicide, I guess you can say homicide on YouTube.

And

it's like once he makes up his mind, the punishment already starts. You know, he hasn't even committed the crime yet, but once he has made up his mind once and for all that he is going to take an axe and terminate the life of this disgusting old pawn broker that nobody likes. Well, not very many people like them. But once he has made up his mind he's going to do this, he starts getting like this brain fever. you know, he's like staggering around like public parks

at night, just falling asleep on benches, having nightmares. You know, it's it's already affecting his mind. I mean, the punishment isn't from the police. It isn't from the legal system. The punishment is from his own like inner goodness, knowing that what he's doing is really messing him up.

So,

do I believe these people like the fellow on the public transport in I can't remember if it was North Carolina or South Carolina. I think it was North Carolina who committed homicide on some young Ukrainian woman for no apparent reason. He was just sitting behind her on the

train. He just pulls out a knife and just terminates her her life. And it turned out that he had already been arrested [clears throat] many times, well up into double digits, some like violent crimes and so forth. And the these liberal leftist judges will keep just letting him go partly because it might be perceived as racist because he belonged to a certain ethnicity that wasn't white.

Or they just have like these progressive ideas about how criminals are really victims of society that they're pressured by white patriarchal

oppression or whatever into a life of crime and they should have compassion for them. Give them another chance and then another one and another one after that until finally I mean they just perpetrate some atrocity so heinous that they can't just be let go again.

But yeah, I mean if

I mean that's just what karma is really.

It's it's just the the effects of your

karma or the effects of your actions

on like the momentum of your mental

states. Like any kind of positive thing

that is added to your mental states

leads you in a in a positive direction.

anything negative. And I mean, if you're

going to be stabbing people, for

example, I mean, [clears throat]
you got to have negative mental states,
there's got to be like this rage or
hatred or some kind of really like
negative mental state urging you on to
do something like that.

So, I mean, you [clears throat] do
something bad, you're already harming
yourself. you even you just tell a lie
to somebody to deceive them, you've
you've harmed yourself in the process,
you know, you hurt somebody, you screw
them over, you've you've screwed
yourself over at the same time.

[sighs]

So yeah, I mean this is kind of an

obvious question it seems to me.

I mean if you understand like the Buddhist idea of karma or kama then yeah it should be fairly obvious that even if you don't get arrested you know like a a thief or someone who's assaulting others someone committing homicide you know even if they don't get caught by the legal system or whatever or the the judge just lets them go with a slap on the wrist still they are just poisoning themselves. I mean just feeling hatred towards another person. Even though you don't lift a finger against that person, just the fact that you hate that person, you're really poisoning yourself.

It's just toxic mental states. But when you act them out, then that reinforces the toxic mental states and make them even more toxic.

>> [snorts]

>> So

I guess we don't need to get into ideas of criminal justice or anything like that. So let's just move on to the next question. This is from Tzasquez is and this is another question that I don't I don't fully understand the meaning of this question.

So Tzas is says why do we dream when our thoughts mean nothing?

Um, when I first read this, my first

interpretation of this question is that
our thoughts always mean nothing.

But I mean, that's not true. I mean,
thoughts have meaning. Even if it's kind
of a delusional sort of meaning
within a samsara context, our thoughts
do have meaning. I mean, meaning is
samsara.

So maybe he's asking why do we dream
when our thoughts mean nothing. Um you
know it doesn't mean why do we dream
even though our thoughts mean nothing.

It's like why do we dream at times
when our dreams the thoughts in our
dreams mean nothing

but our thoughts always mean something
it seems to me. I don't know if there is

such a thing as a totally meaningless thought. You know, even if you just like look at a Jackson Pollock painting where he's just splattering paint onto the canvas, you know, he deliberately made paintings that had no meaning.

But still, I mean, it's you you perceive it as a painting. You perceive it as a pattern. you know, an art critic would have all kinds of stuff to say about this painting about, you know, the balance of light and dark and the color scheme and just, you know, he'd have lots to say about it. So, I mean, even to perceive anything, there's already some meaning. Even if it's just what is

that, you know, it's just this, still
there's at least that much meaning.

So, I wouldn't go so far as to say that
our thoughts never mean anything. I
mean, you can just have like this I
mean, I have these kind of dreams,
especially when you're like drifting off
to sleep. You're not like in a deep
sleep yet. You can just have all kinds
of weird images. Like, I remember I was
doing intensive practice as a monk under
this big rock ledge in northwestern
Burma and I was deliberately
sleeping as little as possible. I had
this rule that if I woke up and I had
already been asleep for at least four
hours, I had to get up. The only excuse

for going back to sleep was if I hadn't been asleep for 4 hours yet. And I'd be noting in my journal sometimes just these weird images. you know, you're you're sleepdeprived, you're you're falling asleep, or sometimes even when you're you're sitting there trying to meditate, there's just like these dream images arising that are just disjointed, just an image of oh, you know, whatever it is. Just it could just be like a a big number one, just appears in your mind and then fades out, you know, or like a a fish jumping out of water and that's it. That's that's the whole dream is just this image that lasts two

seconds of a surface of water and a fish jumping out and and just splashing back down and that's it. Then you the mind just goes on to some other disjointed image that kind of thing. Then I mean it doesn't really mean nothing. And so I mean what is the purpose of dreams? like from from a biological evolutionary point of view, dreaming does have a function that they have um determined that animals that don't dream for whatever reason have to have a larger brain to accomplish the same amount of mental processing. So, I wrote a paper when I was in college about intelligence in bottl-nose dolphins. *Tersops truncatus*

and the Atlantic bottl-nose dolphin.

And, you know, I was putting forth as good of a case as I could that in their own way, a bottl-nose dolphin is at least as intelligent as a human. It's just that their intelligence takes a different form because they they've got a very large their their brain is larger than ours. You know, their body is a bit larger than ours, too. But they don't have like manipulatory appendages and so forth that use up a lot of brain tissue like we do. You know, they have like no manipulative appendages other than just a mouse. Even their tongue is sort of like attached to the bottom of their

jaw. So that they can't even use their tongue as like any kind of prehensile organ.

But it turns out that I didn't I didn't realize this until after I'd already turned in the paper and gotten an A on it that bottl-nose dolphins don't dream. They can only sleep six minutes at a time because that's as long as they can hold their breath. They, you know, they have to hold their breath while they're taking these naps. And so they never really get into the REMM stage of sleep. You know, it just hasn't evolved in them or they they their ancestors lost it. And so that could account for some of the reason why they need such a large

such a such a convoluted brain.

So I mean dreaming it's it's processing information. It's like you know reinforcing neural pathways that you've already started on. So, a lot of the stuff, you know, you're just remembering things in in your dreams or, you know, you you talk to somebody during the day and then the same topic of the conversation just comes up in a different form in some dream, that kind of thing. Then the purpose of that supposedly is you're establish you're like reinforcing newly formed neural pathways. You know, you're helping to process information. it's helping you to

sort of locate it in your mind, so to speak,
that kind of thing.

So, I don't I don't really know if I answered this question by tras is cuz I'm not 100% sure how to interpret the question. Why do we dream when our thoughts mean nothing? I'm at first I thought that he was just being sort of existentialist and just claiming that thoughts don't mean nothing. our thoughts don't mean anything. But now I'm sitting here reading this, I think he's asking about certain kinds of dreams where, you know, it's just like a meaningless spam kind of a dream. And everyone has spam dreams.

But even the spam dreams have the
purpose of you know like
you know helping you to process
information that you picked up during
the day in in mysterious ways maybe
sometimes

I've read that the American possum
delus marsupialis
dreams more than it is awake. What it
dreams about I'm not sure. maybe just
like getting into garbage cans or eating
dog food off of back porches, that kind
of thing.

[sighs]

But they have actually found that
similar species, you know, the same

general body size and everything, one of them is known to dream and the other one isn't. The one that doesn't dream has a larger brain to compensate. So there is a kind of biological purpose for dreaming. It's not just um the gods implanting information into our mind, that kind of thing.

So, I'm just going to move on to trask as is a second question.

Is not enjoying your meal wholesome or the meal should be h neutral and then in parentheses not too bad and not too good. Well, yeah, not enjoying something isn't necessarily wholesome. I mean, especially if you've got a version, if you're bothered by it, then yeah, it's

unh wholesome. Attraction and aversion
are both unh wholesome.

So, enjoying your meal to the extent
that you're wallowing in sensuality,
that's unh wholesome. But like grumbling
about how your food doesn't have enough
salt in it, you know, your lobster is
too buttery, this kind of thing, that's
not wholesome either. So I mean from the
Buddhist point of view and as a monk I
was there was a time when I would chant
this daily. You know it's like I partake
of my alms food not for the sake of
sensual pleasure not for the sake of
beautifying myself but only to keep
myself healthy so that I can continue

practicing Dharma.

So

um the wholesome way of eating a meal
would be with a certain equanimity and
if pleasure or displeasure arises you
observe it mindfully to eat mindfully
[clears throat]

and anyone who's tried to be like
thoroughly mindful while eating a meal
knows that it just takes the pleasure
right out of it. It's like you know
you're [clears throat]

I mean the process there's any number of
steps in the process of eating
mindfully. It's like you you feel the
spoon in your hand, the pressure of it,
the temperature of it, you know, the the

the hardness of it, the stiffness, and
then there's the intention of
[clears throat] reaching with the spoon.
And then there's all the the like the
mental instructions and the muscular
process of scooping the food up and
bringing it back to your mouth. And then
it's like like some relatively
elementary
um techniques would have you like
counting how many times you chew.
I was doing that as a junior monk. And I
mean it's it's not fun. I mean it really
does take the pleasure out of your food.
Even if it's good food, when you're just
like mindfully chewing and then like

feeling this tasty food maybe just turn into like gooey mush like mixed up with slobber,

that kind of thing. Um, yeah. I mean, it's it turns into like a a reflection on foulness. There is one of the the 40 standard meditations is a reflection on the foulness of food. And all you got to do is just

just continue perceiving the food after it goes into your mouth. You know, it tastes good and everything, but then you're it's getting chewed up into this mush mixed with slobber going down the esophagus into the stomach with a bunch of other stuff that's essentially puke.

Stomach acid, hydrochloric acid, and all

this stuff down there. And then it goes farther down and turns into something that it's different from puke but still not entirely pleasant.

So there are wholesome ways of dealing with eating food. The main one being just doing it mindfully. I mean that's that's the panacea. I mean really it's mindfulness is the answer to a great many of life's questions.

Just as long as you're doing it mindfully, then you're doing it more wholesomely than if you're not doing it mindfully. And that that includes even like telling a lie or some such. If you told a lie mindfully, it wouldn't be as

bad as if you were just being a compulsive liar and just being unmindful while telling one lie after another.

Now, how does that lie make you feel when you're telling it? That kind of thing. just to be sort of in tune with your body while you're doing it, for example.

So, enjoying your meal, I mean, if you do it mindfully, then it's still at [clears throat] least the mindfulness aspect is wholesome, but not enjoying your meal. I mean, if it's you've got aversion, that's not wholesome either.

Just have some equanimity and mindfulness. Just observe. Observe whatever rises and let it go.

Now I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from practice meta and he says, "As a monk, did you ever have an illness that was near death?" I don't know why he has the quotes on near death.

[clears throat]

But uh yeah, I mean the first two times I got malaria, I mean the first the second time I got malaria, I was hospitalized, had a a fever of 105 degrees Fahrenheit. I don't know what that would be in in Celsius or centigrade, but I mean I wasn't quite as sick as I was the first time. And anytime I got

full cypro malaria like seven times at least.

And if I hadn't taken the the medication, the pills, mephaquin was the the main one I use at the time, I'd be dead seven or eight times over because of that.

Aside from that,

um I also got some kind of hepatitis A when I was in Burma and I really thought maybe I was going to die that time. Um, it [clears throat] was it just felt like my my batteries were just running dead, you know, my life force was running running low. It was weird. But obviously, I survived that. Some doctor, some Burmese doctor told me his his idea

was that I probably had amebic hepatitis where dysentery amebas invaded my liver.

But another doctor just said it's probably just something you ate, right? and I I'm more inclined to go along with that. Although amebic hepatitis sounds more exotic and interesting.

And aside from those, the other the only other illness that I had that was arguably near death was when I was about 20 years old. I got pneumonia. I was hospitalized with pneumonia.

[clears throat] I remember I went to the fair with my girlfriend and caught a cold there and it was a pretty serious

cold. you know, it was it was an icky cold. And then my father wanted me to drive into town and and pick up a trailer and and bring it back. And I told him I was sick and he just said, "It has to be done." So, I remember when I was driving into town to pick up this [_] trailer. I just I was kind of hoping I'd get sick, you know, just just to show him. And I wound up being hospitalized. So, I showed him, didn't I?

So, I mean, I'm not sure why Practice Meta asks this question because there's no real followup to it, but yeah, I have I have had illnesses where I was thinking maybe I was going to die,

especially first couple times I had malaria, especially the first time cuz I was very sick the first time. I remember um after I had taken the pills, I was lying in the hospital for days and it had been several days and the monk that was sort of attending me at the time suggested that we go for a little walk and I was able to hobble around the building, you know, like once and I was I was just covered in sweat and I just had to crash back onto the bed as soon as possible just because I know I was that drained.

I've already told the story before about this Australian monk I used to know who

had his story of how he got, let's see,
malaria,
challera, and tuberculosis all at the
same time. And he said he spent the
entire range retreat lying flat on his
back.

[sighs]

But yeah, I mean, I guess the main one
would have been false malaria that I had
like seven [clears throat] or eight
times. Although after like the first two
times, I got really good at diagnosing
the symptoms. when you've got chills and
fever and then you feel [clears throat]
better the next day and then you got
chills and fever the next day after
that. Like on alternate days you've got

chills and fever accompanied by a killer headache that won't go away no matter what you take for it. Then yeah, that's that's it. It's time to start taking the mephoquin tablets.

I always took prophylaxis when I was in an endemic area and I wound up getting malaria anyway.

[sighs]

So, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. [clears throat]

This is also from Practice Meta.

Practice Meta says, "One criticism you mentioned after your wedding was that people said that you should be renouncing the world, etc. But if you

were still a monk living in the forest, then I wouldn't have gotten to benefit from hearing your teaching. I'm sure there are others who have benefited who would never made it to Burma to find you and request a talk or ask a question.

Quite selfishly from my perspective then it appears that it is better that you are no longer a monk and that you live a worldly life. Thoughts?

Well, there's one kind of mantra that goes through my mind a lot. Sometimes I even say it out loud. Uh, I used to say it a lot when I was a monk and that's everything happens the way it's supposed to happen. It's like you get into a kind of a an uncomfortable situation. It

would just trigger this everything happens the way it's supposed to happen. So yeah, I mean I [clears throat] don't have any regrets. I'm probably better off now than I was as a monk. Um, especially towards the end when, you know, being a monk had just kind of run its course. my I was like stagnating.

Um

so yeah, I mean it wasn't just people saying that I should renounce the world. It was just I mean there's some kind of migtypes that are blackpilled on women that are saying, you know, don't get married just because of that. You know, they weren't

even telling me to to be a monk again,
anything like that. It's just be careful
if you get married. You know, this
you're going to lose everything. You
know, they're going to turn on you,
divorce you for no good reason. this
sort of thing.

But

I think trusting your woman is
necessary.

I mean, there's no point in getting
married if you don't trust her. And I
trust my woman.

I know what she's like.

So, let's see here.

Uh, I guess I answer that question.

appears it's better that you're Yeah, I

mean I'm definitely teaching more people more effectively maybe as as a lay person than as a monk. As a monk in Burma, I was I was just sort of like a living breathing pagan idol more than a teacher. I mean, first of all, I never fully mastered the Burmese language, which was deliberate. I mean, I didn't want to fully master it because I didn't want to be having to give lots of talks, especially because even with an ability to speak Burmese, there's still like this culture barrier because I just do not think like a Burmese person.

And you have to be very careful when you're teaching dhamma to Burmese

villagers cuz they might have only a fourth grade education but they know what is orthodox Theravada Buddhism because they go and listen to Seattle's every week you know it's like every Pulsara day you know they read books they're the average Burmese villager who's a devout Buddhist even though they might have a fourth grade education they understand dharma like orthodox Theravada Buddhist philosophy and ethics better than a great many Dharma teachers in the West, maybe even more than most.

But I think I'm straying away. Oh, yeah. So, if I would teach Burmese people dhamma, I'd have to be very careful

about what I say because you can't deviate from orthodoxy because then they'll they'll probably just consider you to be an ignorant foreigner. you're just this ignorant barbarian who doesn't understand dharma correctly.

Either that or you're a shameless heretic. One or the other. The Burmese tend to be very kind of compassionate and obliging and polite and so forth. So they'll take the charitable view that you're just an ignorant barbarian who doesn't understand dharma correctly.

But so long as I wasn't teaching dharma, then they just revered me because of my practice. is you know I'm living alone

out in the out in the forest and don't
handle money you know I actually
meditate that kind of stuff so you know
I was helping them by just you know they
were seeing a renunciant
and you know making offerings and so
forth so I was helping them in that way
coming back to America as a monk um yeah
it's like it just for for whatever
reason my own karma my own karma uh plus
the karma of the people I was
associating with it just uh it wasn't
working very well. I had I'd have a few
dedicated supporters, but most of the
the people like the domahal would kind
of just view me with suspicion or
indifference or even a certain amount of

resentment. There were a few people who just positively disliked me just because it's like I'm putting on airs, you know, putting wearing special clothes and shaving my head just to make myself look superior to others or some such. There's a lot of sort of Protestant Buddhists in the West who really have like a Protestant attitude towards Buddhism and they just do not like the idea of monks much at all because it's sort of like, you know, they're as good as anybody else and monks just make their own lukewarm mediocrity seem not good enough somehow and they resent that.

So being a monk in the west, it was

definitely had its challenges. Um, I mean I could still write blog posts.

Didn't never really went viral with with blogs.

Never I mean my viewership is still relatively small. Although even you know 500 people watching a video that's still a lot more people than I was able to share what I had learned with, you know, in in Burma, for example.

So everything has worked out the way it's supposed to I suppose.

So yeah, no regrets and uh everything's fine

as as some sorrow and the second noble truth will allow it to be fine.

And I'm just going to move on. Next

question. This is from seal of action
and sepa.

And see of action zera says you have
said before you consider second genre to
be a mystical state but in the last
video you claim mystical states are
beyond perception thus strong emotions
are not mystical states but perception
is still present in second genre. So I'm
confused about this point. I never
insisted that a mystical state is an
absolute absence of any perception
whatsoever.

that most mystical states are I mean
it's like a gradient it's like a
spectrum that you read like read William

James's the varieties of religious experience he's got at least one chapter in there on mysticism and he's got a lot of case histories you know personal testimonies of people who have had mystical states and most people when they have a mystical state it's not complete absence of perception it's just I mean that'd be like fourth Janna or something So, I mean, what it is, it's it's attenuating perception. And I've said this before. I think I probably said it in the previous Q&A that I mean, you attenuate perception. You make it subtle enough that reality can kind of shine through it.

So, you're getting some inkling at least of something beyond the symbols of the perception.

And most mystical states, I mean, almost all mystical, you'd probably have to be like fully enlightened or at least getting into like fourth genre, you know, the deepest possible meditative states in order to like completely [clears throat] silence perception.

But even according to terra Buddhism I mean even in fourth Janna I mean you've always got to have some kind of perception even if it's extremely subtle you know it's like the highest possible meditative state going with the various

Janna and the arupas and so forth is the realm of neither perception nor non-perception where it becomes so subtle you can't really say whether it's there or not

but even in second John when you're not thinking anymore it can be a mystical state is not necessarily a mystical state, but if it's attenuating perception enough that you're starting to

like get some sort of realization of what lies beyond the symbols of perception

and seovata

apparently is just addicted to thinking and can't get outside the mental box.

It seems to me

so you can still have a mystical state

even if you're thinking to some degree

if it's like the thoughts become

translucent enough, the perceptions

become translucent enough that there's

some kind of reality shining through or

at least you're you're able to not cling

to it so so firmly that you're you're

getting some inkling of something that

lies beyond

that the whole essence of mysticism, as

far as I'm concerned, is attenuating

perception sufficiently that you're

loosening your addiction to it. I mean,

you're loosening your grip on it so that

you're able to transcend it and be aware of something that lies beyond these mental symbols that most people are completely stuck in.

So [sighs]

I don't know. I think I might just move on to see of action. Cad Zeda's second question here.

looking at the time

he says, "I remember you talking about some ancient school in India, maybe the Nya,

trying to debunk Buddhism by claiming the five aggregates don't make sense because you can't have perception without volition and vice versa.

However, Majima 43 already says, quote,

"Feeling, perception, and consciousness, friend, are these qualities conjoined or disjoined? Is it possible, having separated them one from another, to delineate the difference among them?

Feeling, perception, and consciousness are conjoined, friend, and not disjoin.

It is not possible, having separated them one from another, to delineate the difference among them. For what one feels that one perceives, what one perceives, that one cognizes. Therefore, these qualities are conjoined, not disjointed. And it is not possible, having separated them one from another to delineate the difference among them.

And then section cipad zen continues,
it seems clear that the other aggregates
would also fit together like this as
well, like volition. So wouldn't that
kind of defeat the whole purpose of the
the other tradition trying to debunk the
aggregates model?

Well, first of all, I would point out
that there was no Indian tradition
trying to debunk it. But I'm going to
just see what um Majimeia 43 is.

Okay. Majimeia 43. Let's see what it is.
49 44. Oh boy. Yeah, I kind of thought
so. It's a Wala Suta which in all
likelihood is late. These wayalas, it
was a kind of question and answer
format. Uh often which doesn't even have

the Buddha in it. Maybe the Buddha shows up at the very end just to approve of what was said by someone who wasn't the Buddha. Yeah. Let's see.

Mahakota

and venerable Sar Puta. So yeah, it's it's not even attributed to the Buddha himself. So that's kind of a red flag or at least a yellow one when a sutra isn't even quoting the Buddha himself. Then you may have had some composers of like apocrypha who at least had the integrity not to put their own ideas into the Buddha's mouth. So instead they'll just put them into some enlightened disciples mouth

and because they're just maybe too
humble

to like put their own philosophy into
the Buddha's mouth and these way Dalutas
are like that. So in all likelihood
muchiah 43 even though it's canonical
it's probably late

but we we don't need to get into that
and see the nyaya school. Yeah, it's no
I think se of action caden is a little
bit confused with regard to what I was
talking about where um the the whole
there was one passage in a book that got
me thinking on this whole you know which
comes first perception over volition or
you know it's like you know how can you
direct your attention to something which

would be volal unless you'd already perceived it but how could you have already perceived it without directing your attention to it. So it's like I was trying to to understand this process of how you direct your attention to something. Do you perceive it first? You direct your attention to it first, you know, which is like perception and volition.

And it just happened to be in a book about the Dignaga school of of of Buddhism which was a like a Mahayana um like a logic school that was in medieval North India and most of what we know about that school comes from um

like Hindu or protohindu critics who are also philosophers who are trying to give a fair representation of what the DNA school was was teaching in order to try to refute it, you know, to argue against it.

So,

um yeah, they weren't trying to debunk uh Buddhism by claiming the five aggregates don't make sense because you can't have perception without volition. And and this this feeling, perception, and consciousness, it's

Yeah. And I would have to agree that feeling and perception are really pretty much the same thing. At least feeling

would be like a nonverbal kind of or a
nonvisual well just nonverbal
nonconceptual
kind of perception
that really feeling and perception it's
just like perception is a kind of
feeling or feeling is a kind of
perception

consciousness terra Buddhism does not
know how to deal with consciousness they
don't know how to define it because they
are stuck in this two-dimensional plane
of explanations and so they have to have
consciousness at the same level of
reality with perceptions which in my
opinion doesn't work.

So

with that as kind of a I don't know not exactly a disclaimer is it? Let's see.

Feeling perception and consciousness are conjoined. Uh yeah I mean you can say

that yeah feeling perception and

consciousness are conjoined but it's

like perception and consciousness

it's not like majica 43 are describing

it's like you take I mean I've I've gone

over this so many times you know you've

got this here particular tissue is it a

tissue or is it paper

which is it has to be one or the other

Right? It can't be paper and a tissue

because tissue and paper don't mean the

same thing. And then you'd be violating

the aricetilian laws of thought. It would be a and not a simultaneously.

Tissue does not mean paper. Paper does not mean tissue.

So I mean that's that's how I deal with consciousness. Consciousness is the essence. Consciousness is the paper. It is the essence of the tissue.

Just like well you know paper is the essence of the tissue just as consciousness is the essence of perception and valition and other mental states.

But Amidama goes a different way where nirvana itself is no more real than all these various mental states including

wrong view tongue sensitivity and on and on and on. There like 128 ultimate realities with Nibbana just being one.

Which is one reason why I've never had much use for Abhidharma philosophy and most western monks don't.

But getting back to like perception and volition.

It's like if you got something that you got two things that always have to arise together. They always have to occupy the same point in time and space. They always have to disappear together. They cannot possibly arise independently of each other. Then how the hell are they two different things? It's just two different ways of looking at the same

thing.

That was like one of the first like
breakthroughs,

inspirations, I don't know what you call
epiphanies that I experienced as a monk.

like a philosophical kind of insight was
that like perception and volition they I
mean especially according to orthodox
tanna they have to arise together they
can't possibly be separated they have to
exist in the same point of time and
space they arise together they pass away
together

how can they possibly be two different
things it's just two different ways of
looking at the same thing

the same phenomenon on

which kind of starts playing hob with
orthodox philosophy you know it's like
five precepts well I not five precepts
but five uh condas five aggregates I
mean how many are there really

I mean it's just sort of a ancient
Indian attempt to systematize things but
I mean you you can't really analyze it
too deeply because then it starts
falling apart

But where's the actual question? Where's
the question mark?

Okay, it seems clear the other
aggregates would also fit together like
this as well

like valition. Well, valition and

perception were the two main ones that I was dealing with.

So, wouldn't that kind of defeat the whole purpose of the other tradition trying to debunk the aggregates model?

Um, well, yeah, there was no other tradition trying to debunk the aggregates model that that I mentioned.

I mean, I'm sure there have been traditions. Let's see what the heck. I'm getting some kind of notification.

Okay. Oh, boy. And it just came back again. Go away.

Okay. So, yeah, there was no other tradition that I was mentioning trying to debunk the aggregates model. I mean I

do more to debunk the aggregates model
you know like rupacanda the aggregate of
physical matter there's no way to prove
it even exists

but if if you're just dealing with
perceptions of the body then you're
dealing with perception

and then of course the temporal or
kinetic aspect of perception is volition
and those are just forms of
consciousness

so and then feeling is just another kind
of perception.

So yeah, I mean I mean it all boils down
to like [clears throat] essentially one
condom.

But you want to be systematic and have

lists of the five of these and the seven
of those and the the 37 of the other and
the you know the 80 of these and the the
four and the three and you know it's
some people are really into that. A lot
of uh Burmese scholar monks, they've got
it all memorized. I was ordained at the
same time as an Argentinian monk who
also I mean he'd just be memorizing
lists from Abidama and the Wizudi Maga.

[sighs]

So yeah, I mean this this question is at
least I understand it.

But I mean he didn't understand what I
said earlier otherwise he wouldn't have
asked it at least not in this form you

know so I mean the actual question is so wouldn't that kind of defeat the whole purpose of the other tradition trying to debunk the aggregates model and there was no other tradition trying to debunk the aggregates model it was just um some statement made in a book about the daga school that got me thinking about the supposed difference between perception and valition

And I mean he wasn't even really trying to debunk that. He was just discussing the Daga school, you know, their logical approach to to Dharma. And he was, you know, I mean, even his attempts to debunk it weren't really included in the book because the book was just based on

describing the Dignaga school as well as Cherbatski, the author, could manage. He was relying on uh like a vadic philosopher, you know, Vasha Sparishra, I think was his name, as a source of this information.

But yeah, I mean, I was the one that was essentially debunking the five aggregates model.

[sighs]

And I think I should just move on to the next question also from CEO of action, Cipad Zena.

He says, "If karma is about intention and you are not a mind reader, then why would killing an arahant doom you

straight to the worst hellish rebirth?

Seems like it wouldn't be that

[clears throat] different than you

killing any other random person since to

you the intention is the same." Yeah,

I've thought about that a lot. Or

another one is there's the story about

the rich man. This is before the

Buddhist time supposedly according to

the legend. And there was a a pacheka

Buddha walking for alms. And then there

this rich man had one of the servants

put food into the the pacheka Buddha's

bowl. I mean, he didn't know he was a

pachcha Buddha. He just saw this

aesthetic, you know, renunciant walking

by. And so, you know, he has the servant

put food in his bowl. And then after the servant puts food in his bowl, the rich man starts regretting it, thinking, "Oh, man. I should have just fed it to the servants. just kind of a waste of good food. And so this this uh this rich man after he dies, I mean, he's got he gets like heavenly reward for offering the food to the Bacha Buddha, but also he gets like this really negative karma. I can't remember if he he burns in hell for a zillion years or what exactly happened to him. Um, but he also just took a really big hit for regretting offering food to a pachek boot even though he didn't even know he was a

pacheka Buddha. And really, it's like the people that that would like commit homicide on an arant for the most part, they're not thinking of them as an arhan. They're thinking of them as this damned heretic. You know, the the non Buddhists who beat Mahame Galana to a pulp. you know, they didn't think he was he he was an arroant. They just thought he was just this shameless heretic that they they should be rid of. So, yeah, I mean, um I've thought about this the same kind of thing a lot. But the thing is that a lot of your like vition again like I was saying earlier extends beyond the scope of your ego. The ego is this self-referential

system of mental states that is aware of itself but indirectly at best aware of what lies beyond you know its own limits and certain aspects of mentality are beyond the limits of this self-referential system called ego.

So there could be and I've I've seen claims made by various spiritual teachers that at a deep subconscious level there is a kind of telepathy that at a deep subconscious level somebody's lying to it. You know that they're lying to a deep subconscious level someone's going to rip you off that at this deep subconscious level you know they're going to rip you off and then your ego

lets you get ripped off that kind of thing.

So

the only way that this can really make sense from from my understanding of dharma is that there are deeper levels where you are more aware of the magnitude or the implications of what you're doing.

Deep down there's just a it might be too subtle for your conscious ego to be to really register it. But still deep down you can have like this intuitive or even empathic

recognition that that one person is a sage and the other person is like a con man.

So yeah, again

the the only way to really make sense of it is that there are subconscious mental processes and Buddhism even though it really doesn't talk about like any sort of Freudian or Yungian subconscious kind of uh events going on still like karma itself you know the karmic stream clearly is largely subconscious from like an orthodox Buddhist point of view. And then if you read Abidama texts where it's talking about all these complicated processes going on in each mind moment, well, you're not aware of those either even though they're going on in your own mind. So there is stuff that is just be

that's going on in your own mind that is beyond the like the cognizance of your conscious ego.

And so this kind of stuff would have to be going on at that level. It'd be going on like at a subconscious level that somewhere deep down you know the person that you are messing with is like a saintly wise sagely kind of a person or being

and I I can accept that

and also I'm going to move on to the next question

this is from Sedar to lohan.

And this is one of those questions that it's it's hard to really grasp even though it's a simple question. He says,

"According to you, which one is the most epic suta and I mean epic can mean all kinds mean all sorts of things. I mean I mean technically an epic is like a long poem discussing heroic deeds on a grand scale the origin of a nation this kind of thing.

So I mean in Buddhism like in Terravada Buddhism in the sutapitica there's not a whole heck of a lot of that going on. I mean I mean would an epic suta have to be written in verse? I don't think so. Not necessarily. I mean you could say that Toltoy's War in Peace is an epic novel even though it's written in pros instead of verse.

Um I mean with regard to something heroic.

Yeah. I mean that that might come closer. Or I mean nowadays epic. I mean that just means like rad. That's that's great man. That's that's you know something that you really like would be epic but I don't think Sedarta meant that. Anyways I I asked him what is what do you mean by epic and then he said something like reading it and thinking this is what it's all about or maybe the one who cultivated you more. I'm not sure what cultivated means but this is what it's all about.

Yeah. I mean and for me I mean there would be a heroic element to that

because

in my opinion I mean the sutanata
got it right here. This is KR Norman's
translation poly techch society. I've
had this since before I was a monk. It's
one of the possessions I've I have owned
for the longest of any any of my
possessions.

And um let's see the sutin pa who where
was I going with that? Oh it's the
sutini pa is it's one of the books that
converted me to terra that really got me
interested in terra just because of like
the heroic aspect of the early monks.

You know, they were they weren't just
people sitting in a meditation hall, you

know, sleeping in a in a in a hut or a cabin, you know, this staying in the same place just sedentary, going into the refectory to get their meals, this kind of thing. that the monks of the excuse me the monks of the sutin pata I mean there's a lot of really archaic kind of sutas in the sutin pa and um the the sutas were composed most of them it seems in an age before monks settled down into monasteries where they were just wandering renunciants sleeping under trees they had to be tough as wood and that's that's kind of heroic you know in fact there is a certain amount of heroic imagery like uh there's one suta in the in the sutin pata where Mara

is trying to talk the Buddha out of becoming out of striving for enlightenment because anyone who becomes enlightened is leaving Mara's domain.

You know they're escaping from his power. And that's that's the the sutta where the the bodhicatta says it is better to die in battle than to live in defeat which is a heroic sentiment.

There's like some suttas like the see I I wrote down my own translation into this book the discourse on right wandering the sama parajania sutta that would that was one of the the early suttas that really kind of inspired me was just the like the heroic

approach to dharma you know it's it's
you know you're you're out there in a
kind of spiritual battle not really
against Mara but just sort of against
your own delusion, you know, you're just
sort of struggling, you know, wrestling
with the devil in the wilderness, but
the the devil is your own defilement, so
to speak. I mean, I kind of outgrew that
eventually because fighting against
yourself is not conducive to peace of
mind.

So, I mean, I I eventually kind of
outgrew that sort of spiritual battle
mindset.

But just the there's several sutas in
the suta nipata where monks are just you

know tough wanderers just enduring
anything that that the universe throws
at them that kind of thing. The the
rhinoceros horn discourse is another one
the the kaga kagawisano suta. Um some of
the sutas like especially the longer
ones towards the end of the atakawaga
are similar just is it's the sutas that
are describing
you know the lifestyle of a very early
Buddhist monk back when most of the the
new monks the most of the Buddhist monks
had already been veterans of the holy
life that just converted over to
Buddhism you know they they weren't lay
people that became Buddhist monks they

were you know like followers followers
of of other um sas or philosophers that
just started following the Buddha
instead.

Um with regard to epic just in the sense
of the grand scale of just the scope of
it. Um some of my favorite sutas like
some of you may already know the God
suta which is a strange one. The baja
suta is a strange one. just lots of
weird and interesting things going on in
those sutas but epic in the sense of
heroic.

Yeah, I think you're better off looking
for um looking for those in the sutin pa
and the see what was it the sama
paribania suta it's a long word sama

paribajania suta would be possibly one of them it was one of the the the early sutas that inspired me before I became a monk when I was still kind of searching and I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG.

Okay.

And uh he's our last questioner of this this episode.

Ethiopian fake TIG says, "You once said there was no such thing as free will in Buddhism, but we also know there is no such thing as a self as well. So who then makes the decisions?"

having a conversation with people when I tell them it's not them that goes to hell and that they would not remember their past lives they seem to think it's a good thing since there is no them to actually take any responsibility for anything so the actual question who makes the decisions well it's like you have a chemical reaction like like I said I'm going to be working I'm working for a chemical company now doing chemical things and so you got this chemical reaction that goes on. Well, who is it that's reacting? You know, it's just instead of, you know, it's not like the chemicals are deciding to react. It's just certain circumstances

arise which cause the chemicals to react, cause the reaction to take place. But yeah, there is no such thing as free will in Buddhism at least according to like one cardinal suta which is the uh anata lakana suta which supposedly is the Buddha's second discourse after his enlightenment where he says with regard to all of the five condas you cannot say let it be this way let it not be that way and reliably have it happen and that includes volition so you don't have complete control over your own valitions It's it's like a certain amount of cause and effect. It's just the conditions that allow something to happen arise and

so that something happens.

So I mean there doesn't have to be a who there doesn't have to be this entity that's making decisions. It's just that the decisions just it's like the conditions are conducive to to this decision being made which is a matter of mental states and consciousness.

It's really hard to talk about this kind of thing because people just fight against it. I mean, people just ask the same questions over and over again, and certain things are just I mean, it's very difficult to grasp it with your mind, and you're never going to understand the truth. You're never going

to understand reality by thinking about it. So, just wrestling with thoughts and and concepts and so forth. I mean, your best hope if you're adopting this approach of trying to understand um reality intellectually, your best hope is that you're eventually just going to hit a brick wall and give up. And then you'll be in just such a total surrender that you're just going to like throw down all this baggage of conceptualizing, intellectualizing, systematizing all this thinking and just leave silence behind which is kind of the purpose of Zen colons, for example. You're using

your mind to try to answer this this
riddle that has no correct answer really
until finally it's just like something
just snaps or just stops. Your mind just
comes to a screeching halt and then
it's like reality shines through this
silence.

And that's your best that's your best
hope. I mean, to some degree, you can
have a little bit of preliminary
progress through intellectualizing just
by shooting down [__] ideas.

The intellect makes a pretty good
[__] detector. But you're never
going to understand reality through it.
It's just not going to happen.

So, who makes the decision? Nobody makes

the decisions.

It's just that you have conditions
conducive [clears throat] to the arising
of

mental states,

certain mental states, and it seems as
though somebody's making a decision, but
in reality, there is nobody there. In
fact, from my point of view, in reality,
there are no decisions that are real. I
mean, it's it's weird how some people
will try to say, "Okay, there's no
self." But then they're still still
believing that everything else is real,
but it isn't. I mean, the mental state
itself has no self.

So, I mean, ultimately there are no decisions there. Nobody goes to hell. There is no hell ultimately. But when you are like in this delusional um like momentum of unenlightenment sure seems real, don't it? And that's that's what really matters.

I mean ultimate reality that's just totally beyond your grasp. Forget about that for a while. Especially if you're just like vehemently clinging to try to understand things intellectually. I mean you're essentially vehemently clinging to samsara and unenlightenment.

So I mean so long as you're clinging to samsara and unenlightenment then you might as well think well okay you make

decisions and you're going to go to hell if you do the wrong things.

So anyways see Ethiopian fake tig also has like this parenthetical um kind of commentarial statement having a conversation with people when I tell them it's not them that goes to hell.

Yeah. Well I mean there is no hell either.

It's all a kind of illusion at that level. But anyways, he he continues, "And that they would not remember their past lives." Well, yeah, that they seem to think it's a good thing since there is no them to actually take any responsibility for anything. Yeah. Well,

I mean, ultimately there's no them, but
I mean, so long as you're stuck in
delusion, you're stuck with this
delusional person.

And as long as you're stuck with a
delusional person, I mean, you're better
off, it seems to me, just trying to live
your life in such a way that this
delusional illusion of a person is
happier than unhappy.

Going into a more of a a wholesome
heavenly type existence than an unh
wholesome hellish one. I mean,
ultimately in the grand scheme of
things, it doesn't matter at all whether
you go to heaven or hell or anywhere
else. I mean, from the the point of I

mean, like to ultimate reality, it makes no difference whatsoever.

Sort of like saying, you know, it doesn't matter to God really if you go to heaven or hell because God's just perfect and doesn't need anything. He doesn't need you to go to heaven. I mean, a lot of Christians will be kind of sentimental and think God's rooting for you and wants you to go to heaven even though he's the one that sends you to hell. And at the end,

So yeah, I mean part of the problem here is okay, there is no self, but everything else is real. And that's that's not the way to go about it. I

mean, none of it is ultimately real other than reality itself, which is just totally beyond your grasp. You're never going to grasp it.

When you give up on trying to grasp it, then maybe you have some hope.

But I think I answered that question.

The question, the actual question is, so who then makes the decisions? The correct answer of course is nobody.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question here. This is also from Ethiopian Fake Tig.

And I can't pronounce this last name because it appears to be French. But

Ethiopian fake TIG says while reading

George Battal's books, Battel B- A T A I

L L E

Bail.

While reading George Battal's books, I came across an idea I wanted your opinion on. When I ask people what happens to a tiger after it dies, they say nothing happens. But they can't really imagine that sort of nothing. And when I ask them about the possibility of that same nothingness being what happens to them when they die, they refuse to accept it. Could the answer really be that nothing happens when we die? But due to evolution, the human brain just can't think about a state of nothingness. And so we create different

ideas about how we came to be and where we go after we die. Well, I mean, the human brain can't think about a state of nothingness. Why are they saying that that state of nothingness is where the tiger is going? I mean it is true. You can't really imagine absolute nothing. You know, you can imagine the number zero, but the number zero is a thing. And you can imagine in your mind like empty space or something, but there's going to be qualities to that empty space like blackness. And also there's going to be a sort of like a boundary to it where your imagination fails. So, let's see. Could the answer really be that nothing happens when we die? But

due to evolution, the human brain just can't think about a state of nothingness. And so, we create different ideas about how we came to be and where we go after we die. Well, there could be some of that, I suppose. I mean, I was living in a monastery in Burma where the only other monk there was bitten by a cobra and died. And I really got some insight into why almost all cultures believe in an afterlife because I'm I'm talking to this person just the day before. You know, I think the last words he said to me is, "My eyesight's getting dim." Because he was getting old and he

couldn't see as well as he used to be able to. So he he'd wear these thick glasses when he'd have to read something. And then the next day, the next morning, I go down to check on him and he's he's dying. And then so it's like 20 it's like I'm hanging out with this person. We did together. 24 hours later, he's it's just this thing. It's this essentially a a corpse. And then 24 hours after that, all that remained was this little clay pot with some ashes and bone fragments in it. So it's it just seems very counterintuitive. I mean, this is what struck me at the time that you have this complex being with, you know, desires and hopes and preferences

and all this all these memories and skills and so forth. And then at the moment of death, it just b it. is just a thing, just an it. It's It's just so counterintuitive that all that complexity and depth and richness of experience just poofs out of existence into nothing.

That that seems to me um possibly more more of an issue than just the human inability to imagine nothingness. I mean there are plenty of likei atheistic scientists especially in the west that I mean they just think when you're dead you're dead yolo you only live once you know they don't have any problem

with that really

so yeah I don't think that George

Battail

I mean it's kind of a a clever idea I

suppose

but

there any any number of millions of

people especially in the West,

especially in Europe, they're just

atheists and and that's it. And after

you die, that's it. Nothing.

So,

could the answer really be that nothing

happens when we die, which means you

just poof out of existence?

And there have been some like advanced

spiritual teachers like Kisara Data

Maharaj who said there is no afterlife.
there there is no uh rebirth anything
like that but according to him you just
you merge back into Brahman.

So I mean you can't really prove one way
or the other. You can't prove anything
really that lies outside the limits of
your own mind.

But I do not think that this world is
ultimately real.

So I'm not going to use the limitations
of this world as a way of limiting just
the stream of consciousness. I think
consciousness is more real than this
coffee cup is for example.

You can know consciousness directly that

this coffee cup you only know indirectly through perceptions.

So golly.

Yeah. I mean, it's

theoretically possible, I suppose,

that nothing happens when we die. That

when you're dead, you're dead and that's it.

Um, of course, if you go with

Einsteinian spacetime, then you never

really die. You're immortal in a sense

because the past continues

you know sort of like the Sarvastada

Buddhists where you know it's like past,

present and future all exist

simultaneously in a sense. So I mean if

Einstein is right and the past doesn't

just disappear then you're immortal in a sense.

But I think George Battail didn't really consider that. At least Ethiopian fake TIG doesn't mention him considering that.

But that's something to consider. I mean, especially these scientific atheist types, you know, they want to be scientific atheists and say when you're dead, you're dead. Nevertheless, if time is the fourth dimension, which is ultimately no different from the three dimensions of space, then after you die, I mean, you're still

alive in the past.

So, that's a kind of immortality right there.

Let's see.

Yeah, personally, I don't think that when you die, you die. that that that's just it. It's all over. I just do not think so.

But people can believe whatever they want to believe. You want to believe the earth is flat, you can do that, too.

Nobody's going to stop you.

And I guess I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake TIG's third question, which is the last question.

He said, this is a kind of a weird one.

I don't fully understand this one

either.

He said, "I recently realized that I was suffering from an in parenthesis a possession according to Yung and thinking about the features of a possession and also how you spoke about the ancient Vedics who called the Buddha the destroyer of life. I began to think about how Buddhism actually goes against normal human life. And I thought to myself, could the Buddha or a big chunk of Buddhists potentially have a psychological problem of being possessed by their?

So, I mean, I know enough about Jungian psychology to know that the is sort of like the feminine aspect of a male mind. I asked Grock about possession and Grock just shut down. It would not answer the question.

So, I'm still kind of in the dark. This is the first I've heard of possession.

Apparently, you're possessed by the feminine aspect of your own mind.

I guess

so. Thinking about the features of a possession, which I mean I don't know any features other than just being possessed by the feminine aspect of your own mind. And also how I spoke about the ancient vedics who called the Buddha the

destroyer of life. Well, the Buddha was the destroyer of life called the destroyer of life because he endorsed celibacy

in in one's youth. He did not endorse waiting until you're old to renounce the world. That if you wait until you're old to renounce the world, you got less time to to practice the holy life. And also you've got more time of you just being set in your ways and old dog new tricks and all that kind of stuff.

So that's why the like the Brahmans were considering the the the Buddhists to be destroyers of life because they

weren't having kids before they
renounced the world.

So, I don't know what that has to do
with possession, but I'm not sure what
animma possession even is. To be
possessed by the the feminine aspect of
your own mind, like what apparently
happened to Ethiopian fake TIG recently.
So, let's see here. Buddhism. So, see, I
began to think about how Buddhism
actually goes against normal human life.
Well, I mean, what what does possession
have to do with this? I I'm not even
sure. Does possession go against normal
human life? I mean, for a man to be
possessed by the feminine aspect of his
own mind might kind of go against normal

human life, unless it's a common thing. I don't know. So he thought to himself, Ethiopian fake Tig did, he thought to himself, could the Buddha or a big chunk of Buddhists potentially have a psychological problem of being possessed by their animal? And I mean the Buddha himself, it's hardly freaking likely that a person who's considered to be fully enlightened, who who just the wisest person in the world or tied for first place among the wisest people in the world, actually was psychologically messed up because he was possessed by the feminine aspect of his own consciousness.

I mean,

I don't know. I don't know how

golly.

So, a big chunk of Buddhists potentially have a psychological problem of being possessed by theirma.

So, this is another one of those questions that really does not make a whole lot of sense to me.

First of all, psychological problem. I mean, like I've said before, a problem.

I used to say this a lot recently or not recently but I used to say this a lot that it doesn't matter what it is if you accept it it's not a problem and it doesn't matter what it is if you won't accept it it's a problem I mean that is

what a problem is a problem is any situation you won't accept so to say that the Buddha had a psychological problem that would just mean that some unenlightened person looking at the Buddha just could not accept what the Buddha was was saying or doing.

Psychological problem

or Buddhists, a lot of Buddhists potentially have this psychological problem or what would you call it like a syndrome maybe of being possessed by their and I don't even know what being possessed by the is. I mean, I've I've read a considerable amount of Carl Jung,

but I don't recall him talking about possession.

So

yeah, I mean to be a Buddhist like a like especially a Buddhist renunciant or any kind of renunciant any kind of spiritual renunciant who is trying to live a holy life who renounces the world who renounces worldliness who's like celibate then yeah they're going to be abnormal

in that sense you know they're going to be going against ordinary human conditioning to even their own human nature to some degree. Like it's it's just human nature to be lustful and jealous and angry and and to experience

hate and laziness and greed and all the rest. And you've got Buddhists, especially advanced Buddhist practitioners, who are striving not to be that way. It's like trying to cure themselves of their own humanity.

And I mean, it's not just Buddhists, like medieval Catholic saints also. I mean, when you're going against mainstream human nature, you're going to be more hysterical than the average person. You know, it's like it's to some degree, you're going against your own nature, which is going I mean, it's it's kind of problems waiting to happen. But for a

person sincerely striving
to attain the goal of their spiritual
system, nirvana,
the botific vision or whatever it is,
then it's worth it. You know, of course,
you might wind up with psychosomatic
illnesses. You might wind up just being
kind of nutty and hearing voices and
seeing visions all the time. But I mean
if you really are intent upon
you know achieving the goal then it's
worth it.

So yeah I mean you'd be abnormal to that
degree that you're going against
mainstream human nature but mainstream
human nature is not conducive to wisdom
or happiness.

See I mean if you're just acting
entirely in accordance with human nature
you're going to be a [—] up
individual.

Nature, like evolution, did not design
us to be happy. It did not design us to
know reality. It designed us to stay
alive long enough to reproduce our DNA
sequences.

So

yeah, with regard to animal possession,
even Grock couldn't tell me what
possession is. I mean, seriously, it
just shut down.

It would not answer. It was thinking and
thinking and thinking and finally it

just disconnected and I couldn't ask it anything after that.

So I mean I would say that anyone who was a a devout practitioner of advanced Buddhist practice,

you know, who who is celibate, for example, then yeah, they'd be going against what would be considered normal or natural in human beings. And if you want to see that as a psychological problem, yeah, I'm sure a lot of normies, a lot of just bluepilled normies would see that as a psychological problem. Whereas somebody like JF Gary Epi, who's mainly just obsessing on inseminating as as many women as possible, then yeah, I mean,

that would he would just consider
celibacy to just be like the ultimate
fail.

That would be a kind of problem for him
maybe.

>> [sighs]

>> But with regard to possession, even in
the beginning, he has possession in
parenthesis. I recently realized that I
was suffering from an animma possession
according to Yung. And I don't I don't
know. I don't know really don't know
what that entails other than maybe just
being more feminine than normal.

What else would possession be? I really
don't know. But yes, if you live the

holy life and you're kind of trying to cure yourself of your own humanity, then from a like a normie human point of view, that's going to be abnormal and weird and maybe dysfunctional and maybe a psychological problem.

And it is true that like the more you restrain your desires, which saints of all traditions do to some degree, the more you restrain your desires, those desires don't just disappear. They get pushed into the subconscious where they build up pressure until they percolate up to the surface in the form of neurotic symptoms like hysterical psychosomatic illnesses, visions, voices, that kind of thing.

So yeah, I mean that's um getting back to William James and his varieties of religious experience, he pretty much starts the book pointing out that like really advanced spiritual beings may seem pretty damn nutty from like the the normie point of view that by a lot of like medieval saints or ancient sages by modern western psychological standards would be considered like abnormal or even like mentally ill.

But with regard to animal possession, I really don't know what that is. And so I can't really say if some Buddhists uh are possessed by their, but I really

doubt it. I mean, if you're a serious meditator, you know your mind better than most people know their mind. And you're going to see imbalances and and like obstructions and that sort of thing in your own mind. And if you're just adept at it, if you're a master of it, like the Buddha allegedly was, you're not likely to have I mean, you're going to be way more sane than the idiot normies who are saying you've got a psychological problem.

So, I guess that's it. I guess I answered these questions. There were a few that I do not fully understand.

But I did my best, I guess. I hope. And

like I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, you think I can answer a question, feel free to ask. And as a general rule, these videos tend to be kind of Buddhist oriented or dharma oriented, getting into some western philosophy, other eastern traditions, little bit of Christianity here and there. That's all fine. Talking about Burma, talking about me personally.

It's all fair game, I guess, within reason. No more than three questions per person per episode. Please like and subscribe if you have not done so already. Check out the URL links below,

including the books that I have for sale
on Amazon.

And be happy.

All righty then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 198.

I am your host Pinyo Basson. This is my
designated primary beverage.

The emergency backup beverage is also
here, so no worries on that score.

And

this is my first video

with the new chemical operator

goatee

cuz

I have to be able to wear a respirator

which seals around like

somewhere like this.

And so it's all got to be like inside.

It's It's kind of scruffy right now
because as the film as of
the time I'm recording this, it's a
Sunday and so I'm going to have to shave
before I go to work on Monday.

Although we're still going through
stuff that doesn't require respirator,
so

it's just a formality.

And I do not know if the audio is going
to be coming out

like good enough, well enough for this
because for some reason it's like
some step in the software, like the
audio and video

um

processing software has apparently gone

belly up. So, if it still sounds bad, I tried to do a like a brief sound check which is sort of a complicated process.

Um

it it didn't sound all that great, so I may have to just

like re-upload everything because something apparently has stopped working.

And I have considered that

there is sort of a karmic thing. I mean,

from the Buddhist point of view,

anything that you experience is the

fruition of karma. And so, what is the

karma that is causing

this continual technical complications

in me trying to do videos? You know,
it's always something.

So, it's just like I'm revealing secrets
of the Matrix or something and the
Matrix is like pushing back by causing
these complications.

>> [snorts]

>> Or something.

Anyways,

198

is not a prime number, of course. In
fact, it is $2 * 3 * 3 * 11$.

Kind of an interesting combination
there. And it is possible I will do a
live stream for question and answer
number 200. It's possible. Although, I
probably will just do it without

announcing it.

Maybe on the Discord server. And so, you're going to be on your toes for that one.

>> [sighs]

>> So, without any further ado, I guess. I guess there's one more little ado is I got a sick fish. You guys want to send message to my fish, go right ahead. He's a a pygmy sparkling gourami.

And all the other fish are doing fine.

Just for some reason, he's he's going through some kind of syndrome or something.

So, I mean, he's tough. He's been kind of feeling [clears throat] sick for like

3 days, which is unusual for a an aquarium fish. Usually, an aquarium fish starts looking sick and they just go downhill. They just don't get better. I guess being warm-blooded has the advantage of having a more stable immune system that is functional at, you know, just all the time because it's got like this narrow temperature range at which it has to function.

Like cold-blooded animals like fish, they have to have very flexible enzymes that will it works at a broad temperature range or else they had just have to have different sets of enzymes that work at

different temperature ranges. Whereas we homeotherms, you know, it's just all like locked in to a certain temperature range.

Maybe that's the fish's problem. Could be just psychosomatic, I don't know.

But any meta you send to my fish would be appreciated.

And I guess I should just wade right into this now after those adieus.

And the first question is from Numa.

Numa says, "Would you ever re-ordain and try again?"

And

I don't know. I mean, it was like

if some sort of catastrophe happened and
I was all alone
and just, you know, my
job and everything just didn't seem like
it was worth it.

Theoretically, maybe like an option at
least would be like re-ordination as
like a novice. What in Burma is called
a koyin gyi, like an adult novice.

But yeah, I don't want to be
I don't want to become a bhikkhu again
in this life.

So, I mean, there have been I I've met
one or two monks in Burma that
just decided to be koyin gyis. There was
one who was a relatively well-known
sayadaw and he was just becoming too

famous. Then so he voluntarily disrobed down to a novice, a samanera in Pali, um just to kind of lighten the load on all the the visitors coming to to ask for his blessings and all this kind of stuff. He just wanted to live like in peace and quiet instead of being like the the epicenter of like a a three-ring [clears throat] circus.

So, I mean, an option might be uh like a Samanera, but I wouldn't want to take full orders again in this life. And chances are I'm not even going to become a Koenji.

So, I'm just going to move on to Newman's second question.

Samsara equals like being trapped in the hotel photo in The Shining, question mark.

Um

>> [snorts]

>> I I saw the movie The Shining with what?

Jack Nicholson

many years ago.

And uh I don't fully recall the hotel photo.

Being trapped in the hotel photo. I mean, I I remember the movie vaguely, but I do not remember the hotel photo.

So, I can't really comment on to what extent Samsara

is like being trapped in the hotel photo. I mean, other movies as a

comparison, it it's like Groundhog Day pretty much. And I'm still unsure if Groundhog Day was a deliberate parable for rebirth or reincarnation or whether it just kind of turned out that way by coincidence.

But, Groundhog Day, it's like you have to keep doing it over and over again until you get it perfect. At the very end, Bill Murray

you know, he's like a really nice person who

it's like

he's not selfish anymore. You know, he's like a selfless person. And until he attains that, he keeps getting he keeps

having to get like wake up with Sonny
and Cher on the clock radio.

You know, it's just never-ending.

Happens over and over again. You don't
know how many thousands of times he had
to go through it until finally he
becomes just this perfectly selfless
being.

At least by Hollywood standards. And
that's it.

Perfection of love and all that.

So, yeah, we're like the Matrix kind of.

Although, technically, even the people
who are outside of the Matrix are still
um you know, they're still in Samsara.

Because so long as you have like an
individual being and there's like a

variety of different things going on,
it's still Samsara.

So,

gosh, I guess I answered that one.

Man, it's like Samsara's like being
trapped in any movie, I guess.

Um with nothing outside of the movie or
else just other movies.

You know, all there is is just various
movies, something like that.

But even if you get out of the hotel
photo or out of the Matrix or out of the
movie, if you're still an individual
being once you get out, then you're
still just at a higher level of Samsara.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question.

Make after making sure we are recording.

Yeah, we should have been recording for uh more than 8 minutes now. That's good.

This next question is from Chrizaskas is. And Chrizaskas is says, "What was the Jain version of the five precepts?"

And I think I already answered that question

um just one or two Q&As ago.

Where the Jain version

um you know, it was the same as the Buddhist five precepts. Although, I don't think it was in the exact same order.

And

the fifth precept was different. In in

Buddhism, the fifth precept is taking alcohol and any intoxicant which causes you to become like stupid and careless.

Um

>> [clears throat]

>> the Jain version was it was sort of like a lightened

like a a minor version of what the monks had monks and nuns had to do, and it was with regard to personal property.

So,

um I don't think that the fifth precept for Jain lay people actually forbade personal property because it seems like Jains still own personal property in India.

Um and elsewhere. So, it's probably just like keeping personal property down to a minimum, which maybe could be interpreted very loosely, sort of like gathering up your treasures upon the earth among Christians, which still allows Jain lay people to become very wealthy.

I have heard that Jains in India tend to be like wealthy merchants, sort of like Ashkenazi Jews in Central and Eastern Europe back in the day.

Um

but with the Jains it was they had a reputation for honesty, and so people are more willing to do business with them, and so that's good for business,

they make more money.

But, the fifth precept has something to do with like minimizing personal property in [clears throat] some way, but um obviously it doesn't completely forbid personal property because Jains still have personal property.

Even monks probably at least have clothes that they wear.

Uh so, [sighs]

I guess I guess I answered that question.

And so, I'm just going to move on to Trezaskas' second question.

In Dīgha Nikāya number 11, in the lesser section on virtue, Buddha speaks about

some rules for monks. After listing sort of 10 precepts, he says, "He abstains from accepting uncooked grain, raw meat, women and girls, male and female slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, steeds, and mares." I mean, why would they say steeds instead of horses?

But [snorts] I I digress. Fields and property. And then Terasaka says it continues, "Is this rule of not accepting uncooked grain and raw meat for health issues or something else?"

Well, it's something else. But before I get to that part he points out that in Digha Nikaya 11 there is this um long list of things that monks don't

do. And that's the
the the first 11 suttas in the Digha
Nikaya. The first the first group of
suttas in the Digha Nikaya. I think it's
the first 11.

It is called the Sīlakhandha or the the
section on morality, the section on
moral rules. And all of them have this
same list.

So, the first 11 suttas
um maybe approximately all 11 suttas
have this long list of things that monks
don't do. And it's
it there's a lot of overlap with the
Vinaya.

But not entirely. Like in in this list

of things that monks don't do, there's like a list of games, you know, like like a the ancient Indian prototype version of chess. Monks don't play these games, but it's not technically against Vinaya, not that I recall. So, there's certain things that um it's it's kind of strange. It's like why would they have this stuff that monks aren't supposed to do, but it's not included in the rules of monastic discipline. It was like maybe they came from two different sources early on, something like that.

So, anyways, getting to the actual question

is the rule of not accepting uncooked

grain and raw meat for health issues or something else? Well, it's it's not against the rules of monastic discipline for a monk to handle raw meat. There is that strange rule of monastic discipline that says it is against the rules, it's a dukata offense, a minor offense for a monk to eat raw meat or drink raw blood unless he is possessed by some kind of demonic entity.

Then it's okay. So, it's not entirely forbidden for a monk to handle raw meat because if he's I mean just to be handling it, I mean there's no prohibition on that according to the

rules of monastic discipline and even eating it is okay if you are possessed by a deep some kind of demonic entity.

And I do recall there was I read the famous text by Dogen long, long ago when I was a college student. I don't remember the name of the the text. Dogen being one of the like the patriarchs of Zen Buddhism in Japan.

I think he was he's considered to be the founder of the Soto Zen sect or some such and he actually has a story in his book about some Zen [clears throat] monk who had these cravings for for raw meat and then I think it was Dogen himself like kind of looks through a crack in

the door to see this monk eating the meat and it wasn't the monk that was eating it, but there was like some little demon perched on his head that was eating it.

So, the raw meat

um

>> [snorts]

>> that

may just be a sort of like an ancient Indian cultural thing like even some kinds of of like locks, you know, it's sort of like pickled herring that's that's cooked through the acetic acid, you know, it's sort of chemicals cook it instead of heat that technically there

are some strict monks that would you know, they wouldn't eat like pickled herring, that kind of thing because technically it's still raw because [clears throat] it hasn't been cooked with heat.

So, I mean if you want to pick knits, you know, that's that's kind of an issue for monks. But, um getting to the to the raw, the uncooked grain, that actually is in the rules of monastic discipline. Um there is a list of things that monks are not allowed to touch. And uncooked grain is on the list. Also, there's weapons, musical instruments, um women,

even like the the personal effects of women, like frilly underpants, that kind of thing.

That monks aren't supposed to touch any of that stuff.

So, the reason why monks are not allowed to touch uncooked grain is partly because monks aren't allowed to cook their own food. They're not allowed to store their own food. So, what's the point of storing or even handling uncooked rice, which is mostly what it would have been?

I mean, if you can't store it, you can't cook it.

I mean,

So, I assume that's one is is to prevent monks from storing food for later. Just to make sure that they are completely at the mercy of the universe and at the mercy of the the generous laypeople who put food into their bowl every morning.

>> [snorts]

>> Uh so, that's that's the best best understanding of it that I have with regard to the uncooked grain. It's just to make sure monks don't start storing food for later and don't start um like cooking their own food. And maybe in the the *Sīlakhanda* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, that's also why it says monks shouldn't handle raw meat.

Because again, somebody's got to cook

it. You going to have to store it at least a little while.

So,

it's probably a similar reason why it's in the Sīlakhandha. Although, it they kind of diverge once you get into the actual rules of monastic discipline.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Master Po and

he asked this question that I could not even begin to understand very well. And so he restated the same question and I still don't understand it.

So Master Po, I mean it was regard to children dying and coming back and

having a different kind of near-death
experience than adults have and what is
their

their karmic volition that they
supposedly that supposedly makes up the
ego

and it's it's such a weird way of of
framing the question that I didn't
understand it then. I still don't
understand it very well. But he asked
the question. There is a question mark
in here and I guess maybe a little bit
of frustration cuz there's also an
exclamation point right after the
question mark.

Master Po says

children die and come back.

Near-death experience, yet do indeed
have a very different experience.

Where's their karma

in like scare quotes and volition that
make up the I {question mark}

{exclamation point}. So it's almost like
he's he's raising his voice asking this
question a second time in different
words. And then he says, "Since there is
no self

the I

and

I still do not fully understand

the karma and volition, although karma
technically is the same as volition,
that makes up the I

and

I mean it's it's this weird sort of an indirect cause and effect thing

where

I mean volition or karma certainly is um involved in cooking up the ego.

It's not all there is to it cuz there's also perceptions. I I mean, you can consider self viewed to be largely a matter of perception with the the karma just being like the momentum of these perceptions.

So, I mean,

again, I do not understand how children have a very different near-death experience. It has not been specified, at least not this time, and if it was

specified in the previous occasion, then it was some kind of link that wasn't labeled or described or anything, and I didn't click on the link. So, I'm still completely in the dark how children have a very different kind of near-death experience from adults.

And also, I'm not exactly sure what he's trying to get at with where is their karma that makes up the eye.

Where is the karma? I mean, karma technically doesn't even have a location. So, where is it?

I mean, if you if you consider time and space, especially, to be like artifacts of perception,

then, I mean, where [clears throat] is just kind of a meaningless question.

And I I'm not exactly sure what Master Po is thinking, you know, what he has in mind when he's referring to karma making the eye.

So, I mean, even dealing with like the karma of some hypothetical child, and their karma, most of their karma, doesn't even derive from this lifetime, it's derived from countless lifetimes, you know, we including countless times that they were adults.

And still there's the momentum of that, the momentum of their adult beliefs, the momentum of their childish beliefs, you know, even a little bit of momentum of

like their neonate or their prenatal beliefs. When they're still like uh an unborn baby.

And there's all this momentum of mental states

that I mean a lot of it is focused around just sort of like the self-identification.

Although like with an animal, they don't really have the same kind of self-reference

that that humans have. And so like a toddler, we're probably more along the lines of like an intelligent vertebrate, you know, like a non-human mammal than an actual adult.

But I mean in a child it's going to be all mixed up with all this other momentum from previous existences which may even include non-human existences and it's just all this subconscious stuff that you can't really say where it is.

You know, it's in the subconscious mind. I mean you wouldn't even locate it in the brain. In fact, Abhidhamma doesn't even think the brain is involved in thinking.

Well, that's what orthodox Theravada right there.

So I mean it's just really this vague weird kind of question that I it's very hard for me to to wrap my head around it

in the manner that it is asked,
especially when he doesn't really
elaborate on how or why children have a
very different near-death experience
from adults.

But I mean your karma isn't just from
this life. It's

it's it goes back, you know, just
into the unknown past.

So you've got karma from previous
existences as an adult. [clears throat]

So the karma wouldn't be all that
different between a child and an adult.

You know, it's adult karma that produces
the next child.

So

where is their karma? I mean what kind of a question is that? I mean, how would you locate karma?

You know, you give it like a latitude, longitude,

maybe an elevation above sea level?

I

I just don't get it. Where is their karma? Where is anyone's karma? Why single out children?

It's the subconscious mind. It's It's most of it is subconscious. I mean, some of your volitions are conscious, but that's just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

So, let's see here. I mean, is there anything else that I can

I can answer with regard to this question that I don't fully understand. Where is their karma and volition that make up the I?

I mean,

even [clears throat] demanding a location,

I mean, it just doesn't make sense to me.

Latitude, longitude,

altitude above or below sea level,

maybe put it into four dimensions with an exact time.

I mean, how do you how do you answer that question?

But really, the karma of a child is not

going to be all that different from the karma of an adult, especially at the deeper levels. At the surface level, sure.

But near-death experiences and all that are not entirely at the surface level.

So, again,

I mean, if Master Po wants to specify how children

child near-death experiences are very different from adult near-death

experiences, and why he's singling out children,

>> [clears throat]

>> because, you know, the karma is really not that different.

It's the adult karma that produces the

child.

And maybe uh

use a different term than where, because

I mean there is no spatial location.

Ah. [sighs]

Yeah, I'm

I kind of throw my hands on that one.

So, I'm just moving on to the next

question. This is from the Saboteur.

And the Saboteur says, "Would painful

karma be in any way alleviated by

spiritual practice?" And I think the

Saboteur is is beginning to specialize

in asking questions that I've already

answered within the just the past few

Q&A videos.

Because I'm pretty sure I have answered this one recently.

But, would painful karma be in any way alleviated by spiritual practice? Yes, in various ways.

Like

the example I've given from the suttas numerous times is where the Buddha compares a handful of salt with bad karma or akusala karma. And then he says, "I mean, if you take this handful of salt and pour it into a cup of of pure water, can you can you drink it?"

And the person he's asking says, "No, because it's too way too salty." But, if you take that same handful of salt and you pour it into a pool of pure water

and let it dissolve, then can you drink that water?" And the answer is yes, because the saltiness would might hardly even be noticed if you dilute it down with way more water.

And he compares that with like bad actions. Like if all you've done is bad actions, you know, if you just done lots and lots of bad and hardly any good, then the result is not going to be watered down much with any kind of alleviating effects. But, if you've done bad things and done even more good things, then there's going to be a lots of like good karma that's kind of alleviating the

bad. And I even gave an example just one or two Q&As ago about how, you You I kept biting into rocks in my food out in the middle of nowhere where there's no dentists and I was worried, you know, it's like what happens if I break a tooth biting into a rock in the middle of my food out here in the middle of nowhere.

But it didn't happen. What happened was I'm spending some time in one of the richest neighborhoods of Rangoon and some servant girl gives me some bean curry with a rock in it. I break three teeth biting into this one rock. So it finally did happen, but as it turns out that servant girl was the

servant girl of the dean and rector of
the Rangoon Dental College, the the
number one dentist in the entire
country, the dentist of the dictator.

And so

I just walked right across the street
and got my teeth fixed for free and uh
he just said, "From now on, you need any
dental help, just come right on over."

He had a little dentist shop right in
his house.

And so for years I had the same dentist
as the dictator.

So that would be

like spiritual practice alleviating some
of the painful karma just by adding some

good luck in with the bad luck.

But also spiritual practice increases your wisdom. So let's say, I mean akusala kamma reaches fruition. Akusala kamma vipaka arises in the form of unpleasant experiences, unpleasant sensation, unpleasant feelings.

And so

if you do spiritual practice, you become wiser, you're better at dealing with unpleasantness. You know, you feel pain in your body, you can just be mindful of it. You can just observe it with detachment to some degree.

Whereas a fool who hasn't been doing spiritual practice then I mean they're just going to be

more miserable than a sage under the same like physical circumstances simply because the sage has done spiritual practice that allows them some philosophical detachment from what's going on.

So, that would be another way that spiritual practice or good karma would alleviate like the fruition of bad karma. You know, it at least waters it down, makes it not so bad.

And there's probably other ways, too, but I'm going to move on to the next question.

This is from my Treya Buddha.

And my Treya Buddha says, "Can you do a response to Shri Acharyaji, a Vaishnavite Hare Krishna member?

If there is no self, then who is experiencing nirvana?"

He claims that Buddha did teach atman originally. And this Shri Acharyaji is an interesting fellow.

But, I didn't know he was a Hare Krishna. He's not really a Hare Krishna, is he? I mean, he seems to me with his Sanatana Dharma. You know, he doesn't like the term Hindu.

He prefers Sanatana Dharma. And so, I mean, he seems to have like some yoga, maybe even some Vedanta under his belt.

I don't think that he's just a Hare

Krishna.

They just chant, you know, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Hare Hari. You know, this kind of

I think there's more to him than that. I mean, there's a good chance he's a Vaishnavite.

But, yeah, the Hare Krishna part is uh it's a surprise to me if it is true. I'm not saying that my Treya Buddha is wrong.

But, I mean, if he is a Hare Krishna, that's that kind of complicates things.

But, back when I was a monk, there was a few people that told me that I was sort of like a Buddhist version of this

person.

Which, when I looked into him,

I I mean, to some degree, we were both,

you know, not as left-wing as most

teachers in the West. So, I mean, that

would be kind of, you know, this is sort

of being somewhat based to some degree,

I guess. I mean, that's really And plus,

we're we appear to be Western. He

doesn't look Indian.

So,

to some degree, there was a similarity

between me as a monk and him as a

a Swami or or whatever he whatever he

happens to be called technically.

An Acharya G.

Um but I mean, I have watched some of

his videos

and

um

I mean, he's he seems to be a good man.

He seems to have some wisdom.

So, I don't want to to badmouth him. I

don't want to indulge in any pishon of

lacha, but he is very dogmatic.

You know, he has no doubt whatsoever

that what he's teaching is true, even

though a lot of it he couldn't possibly

know that it's true. He just has faith

in his religion, which is what most

people have.

You know, it's like one of the reasons

why he is an effective teacher is he

shows no doubt whatsoever

that his what he's teaching is the one true religion, essentially.

And that that has a persuasive power on people. You know, it kind of adds to charisma or whatever and causes him to be a very believable kind of of teacher.

You know, if I mean, I didn't really adopt that route with regard to

Theravada Buddhism. You know, I I expressed skepticism plenty with regard to official doctrine, [clears throat] but this Sri Acharya G, he's just this is the way it is.

And

I mean, I really don't have a lot of use for that, but

some people do and that's fine. I'm sure he's a good person. He's got some wisdom.

I don't have anything bad I want to say about him, but he is very dogmatic.

So,

I mean, I watched the video that Maitreya Buddha had the link to, and he's talking about I mean, it's it's an argument that came up on my Discord server not long ago. It's like the the the Visuddhimagga, you know, the number one commentarial text in Theravada Buddhism is saying there is doing but no doer.

And I'm saying that if there's a doing,

I mean, there has to be a doer, too. But I'm not insisting that there's a doer. I'm just saying that the doer doesn't exist, and the doing also doesn't exist. You know, the noun represents something that isn't real. The verb also represents something that isn't ultimately real.

So,

I mean, the argument of Sri Acharya G is that, you know, it's like the doing is real, therefore there must be a doer.

And I mean, it seems like the premise that the doing is real is is like part of the problem.

If he really is a right Christian, that may account for why

you know, there's not more sort of Advaita Vedanta in his teachings, cuz Advaita Vedanta gets very close to Buddhism other [clears throat] than just Brahman. You know, the only reality is nirguna Brahman, which is like ultimate reality which has no discernible characteristics.

Which, I mean, if you're going to be reifying the absolute, that's about as subtle of a reification as you can get to.

You know, it's just infinite formless consciousness, but you can't even say that much because you can't say anything about it.

That's sort of the Advaita Vedanta approach to ultimate truth. Whereas in Buddhism, you might occasionally, especially in Theravada, you know, you might occasionally hint at it through like the state of of nibbana being blown out, That kind of thing.

But you as a general rule Buddhism avoids reification of the absolute because reification of the absolute, trying to explain the absolute, just drags it down into samsara. Anything described is samsaric.

And Sri Acharya Ji was actually bragging a little bit in the video about how he just kept debating this Tibetan lama, I think he was, a Tibetan Buddhist until

the Tibetan Buddhist says, "Okay, you're right. You're

I agree." And it may be that the Tibetan is just like

like placating him, you know, being conciliatory, saying, "Okay, yeah, you win." Just for the sake of not arguing.

Or it may be that this Tibetan is kind of

so esoteric, so to speak, in his Buddhism

that, you know, he's agreeing with stuff that early Buddhism at least would not agree with.

Also, I was looking through some of the comments and there was a considerable

amount of a considerable amount of
praise for Ken Wheeler, supposedly a
Buddhist authority who just is like this
champion for the idea that the Buddha
did teach a soul.

But the way Sri Acharya Ji is is
arguing, I mean, he seems to think that
if there's walking, there has to be some
real being who's walking, which would
mean he's I mean, he hasn't advanced as
far as Vedanta apparently.

In that he seems to be assuming there's
an ultimately real individual soul like
in Christianity.

So,

I guess

rather than just continue rambling about

Sri Acharya Ji

and Ken Wheeler

the world's leading authority on early Buddhism even though he really does not understand the Pali language very well and just butchers it when he tries to do a translation.

So, the actual question see, can you do a response? Okay, yes, the answer to that question is yes. And then the next question mark, if there is no self then who is experiencing Nirvana? Nobody.

In fact, Sri Acharya G even went farther. It's like, if nobody experiences Nirvana then Nirvana is meaningless. And I agree. Nirvana

literally is meaningless because meaning is samsara.

That's one thing that spiritual people even relatively advanced spiritual people, it's a trap they fall into including Sri Acharya G here apparently, is that you can't explain or describe ultimate reality in words because once it's in the form of words, it's samsaric.

>> [snorts]

>> So, if there is no self then who is experiencing Nirvana? Nobody experiences it. It's like Nirvana is like the blowing away of all the samsaric illusion.

I mean, you're just right down there in

reality.

And it's not divided up into parts. So, there's no being experiencing this ultimate reality. The being is illusory.

So, if there is no self then who is experiencing Nirvana? Nobody.

And Nirvana has no meaning because meaning is samsaric.

>> [snorts]

>> So, [clears throat]

>> [laughter]

>> I mean, meaning is just like it's like an idea that's supposed to represent something else. So, I mean, it's it's not even the thing itself. It's not the Kantian thing in itself.

It's just the thing as it seems at best.

So, you just get rid of all this thing
as it seems stuff.

And then all you've got left is reality.

>> [snorts]

>> Which has no meaning. It doesn't need a
meaning. Cuz meaning is samsaric.

And people that are just completely
locked into their head
just can't deal with that.

But, I mean, you can't really change
things in order to Well, I guess you
could, but it's best not to try to
change things in order to sort of pander
to the limitations of intellectuals.

So,

Śrī Acarya G, according to Maitreya

Buddha, claims that the Buddha did teach ātman or self or soul originally. Of course he does, cuz he wants to believe that his system is the one true system. Any system that disagrees with that or even explains things differently is necessarily wrong.

But how he came up with the idea that the Buddha did teach ātman originally, um

I think it's just sort of like grammatical stuff. Like the Buddha is talking about this person and that person even though ultimately they're not real.

But it's like, well, oh, why did he

refer to them that way, you know? It's things like that. I think he might have gotten a little more subtle.

But it was that kind of argument.

That the Buddha was necessarily using *vohāra desanā*, worldly speech, in order to communicate to beings in *samsara*.

And then that's considered to be a kind of proof

that *samsara* is real.

But even even like in Vedānta, you've got the concept of *māyā*,

which is illusion. You know, it's all an illusion.

So, I mean, if Śrī Acarya G really is a Hare Krishna, that would help to explain that part.

Ah, [sighs]

but yeah, I do not think the Buddha taught Atman originally. I mean, it is possible he didn't teach anatman either.

Like in the

the Atakavaga, which I consider to be one of the oldest Buddhist texts in existence,

the Buddha says, "No atta No anatta."

Actually, it's no atta no niratta.

Which

it's it's like a play on words. It's like a pun. You know, the wise man, the sage, has no atta and no niratta. And atta in in this sense, it's it's like a past participle for anything taken up.

And then niratta is a past participle for nirajadi, which means anything discarded. You know, so it's like the surface meaning of the these statements in the Atakavaga, you find it more than once, that when the a monk has no atta and no niratta, he has nothing taken up, nothing laid down.

You know, he doesn't have to acquire anything to become enlightened. He doesn't have to get rid of anything either.

Which is kind of paradoxical. But, also it's it's fairly obvious pun. Atta can mean self.

Niratta can mean no self. So, it could also be taken at another level with a

different somewhat different meaning
that for the sage there is no self and
no not self because both of them are
just ideas. They're just concepts.

It's all samsara. Once you get into the
level of ideas or thinking, symbols,
it's samsara. It is not You're not no
longer dealing with ultimate reality if
you ever were.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> So,

it I do not think that the Buddha did
teach a soul originally. Although, it is
possible that he didn't teach soul or
not soul.

>> [sighs]

>> You might as well I'll leave Ken Wheeler entirely out of this.

So, I hope I answered that question.

Cuz I'm moving on to the next one. This is from Romeo.

And this is kind of a slightly controversial one, I guess.

Romeo says, "Whether it's mandatory DEI training that employees are forced to take at work or messages spread via movies and other media, black Helen of Troy anyone?

The slogan diversity is our strength is constantly drummed into the minds of the citizenry of the US and throughout the West. From my limited knowledge of history, cultural diversity being a

strength is dubious.

Take for example the former Yugoslavia, which eventually splintered among ethnic lines. I'm wondering whether this idea that diversity is our strength is based on anything substantial or simply an empty slogan mindlessly parodied.

Based on your knowledge of history, which is quite impressive, is there any validity to the slogan diversity is our strength? If so, where has it worked in history? And if the notion of diversity being a strength is just a glib meaningless slogan, what is the ultimate purpose, the end game of those that promote it? Okay, so this is

Let's see. There's like three questions here, isn't there?

Three question marks. I got to

I got to separate these so that I can deal with them

in a proper order. Okay.

So, the first question

is there any validity to the slogan diversity is our strength?

Well,

yeah, there is some validity to the

slogan diversity is our strength. Like

especially with regard to diversity of

view, diversity of opinion. Because if

if you're living in a society that has

no diversity of opinion, and that would

might be the far right into the extent

of just completely conservative traditionalist and you know, anything outside of that is heresy. Burn them at the stake, that kind of stuff.

And then at the other end, you've got communism where you can't deviate from the party line or you're going to wind up in a gulag.

So, it's like the far right in extent of extreme traditionalism and the far left which is like extreme ideological communism.

I mean, both of those are without any kind of diversity of thought and neither one of them makes progress easily, which is why Marxist countries have to

essentially spy on non-Marxist countries
to get ideas.

And then even if the idea is true, if it
doesn't fit in with
Marxist ideology,
off to the gulag you go.

You know, the black Maria pulls in front
of your house in the middle of the
night, they bang on your door and you
disappear.

So,

there is

strength in diversity of opinions where
within

like some stability, some cultural
stability from at least people sharing
most of the same values. You know, at

least being on the same page with regard to

just

like standing represent standing for something. You know, everyone kind of shares enough of a world view that they can get along.

Then it's good to have a diversity of diversity of views, diversity of opinions within a certain stable like the the stability triangle.

I've been taking forklift training again lately, so I'm

I got the stability triangle on my mind.

So, yeah. I mean, it's good to have new ideas. Like like the ancient Romans

in the early Roman Republic, I mean they were very traditionalist in many respects, but nevertheless, if they came across an idea in some other culture that seemed like a good idea, like it was some military innovation that was effective in combat, they embraced that.

You know, they were relatively open-minded with regard to gods and goddesses, you know, the the Senate did clamp down on Isis worship or like Maenads, this kind of thing.

But still, you know, there was a a wide variety of of religious views, philosophies, and so forth. So like ancient Rome,

it was culturally diverse also, which sometimes was okay and sometimes wasn't. Like Alexandria was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the empire, and it was notorious for just rioting in the streets, you know, the city in flames over and over again.

But a certain amount of chaos actually helps to inspire genius. You know, like the Italian Renaissance would be another one of these cases of, you know, ethnic ethnically [clears throat] pretty similar, you know, there wasn't a whole lot of ethnic diversity, or even extremely large amount of cultural diversity,

but still there was like promotion of independent thought.

So that's like the main strength of diversity is diversity of thought within within reason.

Because at least everyone should be more or less in agreement on basic principles.

You know, like civic nationalism in the United States, you know, that sort of took the place of religion in America, whereas, you know, you have everyone believes in the Constitution, you know, they believe in individual liberty and equality under the law, equality of rights, equality of of opportunities, this kind of stuff.

But then there there's still

a lot of room

for like, you know, technological

innovations, artistic innovations, all

this kind of different kinds of, you

know, military innovations.

Intellectual innovations just within

this framework that's keeping things

more or less stable.

But I mean, the Roman Empire was

definitely multicultural.

So,

let's see. Yeah, so there is validity to

the slogan diversity is our strength

within reason, so long as the diversity

isn't so diverse that it just causes the

society to fragment into warring tribes. You know, there has to be some overall agreement that everybody has. You know, it's like two people are going to debate, there still has to be some kind of rules and agreements for them to have a debate even though they're disagreeing with each other. You know, there has to be sort of a common ground of agreement in order for the debate to have any meaning whatsoever.

So, let's see.

Romeo says, "Okay, if so, where has it worked in history?" And I did point out that like the Roman Empire especially was culturally diverse.

Um for the most part, the diverse

cultures kind of stayed in their own homelands.

You know, in the big cities, you have, you know, merchants and and the so on and so forth, soldiers coming from other cultures.

And you just had to be open-minded to some degree, have a certain amount of acceptance within reason.

But I mean, you couldn't be having people preaching against the emperor, you know, once you got the empire.

You know, you can't have, you know, open subversion, that kind of thing. I mean, the Roman government would clamp down on like political subversion pretty pretty

harshly.

>> [sighs]

>> But, I mean, you know, Elagabalus was emperor of Rome for a while. He's considered to be one of the the tyrants of Rome. He was apparently a transsexual. He was Syrian. He worshipped this meteoric black rock that fell out of the sky.

You know, he was very different from your your average Roman, especially your average Italian Roman.

But, I mean,

he didn't last very long, but still, I mean, it didn't cause the collapse of the empire.

Rome was already kind of in decline at

that point, I have to admit.

>> [clears throat]

>> So,

yeah, that kind of diversity has worked in history. I mean, even like a certain amount of diversity has worked in America, obviously. The United States of America,

you know, is relatively diverse and culturally diverse, you know, within the context of Western civilization. It wasn't till like 1965

that the floodgates were opened for people that weren't even of European ancestry just flooding into the country. And that has destabilized

the civic nationalism and constitutionalism of the United States and is is resulting in destabilization of just the fabric of the civilization itself.

>> [snorts]

>> In Renaissance Italy, again, it was ethnically very homogeneous, but at least there was like independence of thought going on. And I guess if you got people of different cultures, they're going to think differently, so that can help to bring in a certain amount of, you know, just intellectual or ideological diversity, but still there has to be some common

ground where everyone agrees you know with regard to basic principles human rights for example.

So,

I guess I kind of answered the first two questions. Let's move on to the third one from Romeo here.

And if the notion of diversity being a strength is just a glib meaningless slogan,

what is the ultimate purpose the end game of those that promote it? Well, I think that different promoters of diversity is our strength. You know, that most of them on the left

um the ultimate purpose differs from one

of them to the next. I mean some of them they really are just trying to take down Western civilization because they have more or less of a communistic idea of everyone being equal and obviously Western civilization has just excelled with regard to accomplishments just establishing you know new precedents and so forth. So, you can't really have some kind of equal homogeneous global world government so long as you got anyone that's standing out. There was some tyrant of Syracuse who I I can't remember if it was Plato or some other philosopher and you know he was showing how you stay in control

of your people you know as as like the a ruler and he he just show took him out into a like a wheat field and just had one of the servants just cut off all the the the heads of wheat that stuck up above the rest.

You know, you just got to keep everyone in this level of mediocrity standardized enforced mandatory mediocrity.

And I think to some degree some of these Davos people

might have that in mind with regard to just

overwhelming

the the nations of Western civilization with

third world barbarians,
so to speak.

But some of them really believe in it, I
guess. You know, they might just accept
the diversity um
the diversity is our strength idea at a
much broader level than I have accepted
it.

But

I mean

there a lot of people on the left are
ideologues. They prefer this seemingly
beautiful ideology to the ugly facts of
empirical reality. You know, they just
for some reason they can just tune out
reality and think that this ideology is
so nice. It's so utopian that it has to

be true and all we have to do is just like implement it at gunpoint if necessary and everything will be wonderful and it just doesn't work that way.

Ah.

>> [sighs]

>> So, let's see. I got to read this question one more time.

Just make sure that I've answered it. If the notion of diversity being a strength is just a glib meaningless slogan, then I don't I don't know. I mean, it has a core of truth to it.

What is the ultimate purpose, the end game of those who promote it? And I do

think that taking down Western civilization in order to sort of level the playing field of globalism is is a major part of that. Some of it is just genuine resentment against white people because they can't accept that Western civilization really is greater than other civilizations have been and so they just say, "Well, they're just villains who have used brute force, you know, they're just violent barbarians who have you know, spread their language and you know, their their technology, their politics all over the world, religion, you name it.

So,

a certain resentment against successful people

is part of it. Just a desire to just level the the global playing field to make it make people more docile, easier to control.

Uh,

there's probably other reasons, too.

But, I think those are the some of the major ones.

And I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question.

That's what I'm going to do.

This is from [clears throat] Rui.

And Rui says, "Can you recall moments

during your anchorite days in which
there was only the scene in the scene,
the felt and the felt, etc.? Not sure if
I've asked this one before.

[clears throat] That being the case,
apologies." Okay, so he's asking me if
during my practice as a monk, did I
really was able to implement the
instructions to Bahiya in the Bahiya
Sutta given by the Buddha standing in
town to Bahiya, the the the non-Buddhist
ascetic.

In In In the scene, there will be only
the scene. In the heard, there will be
only the heard. In the felt, there will
be only the felt. In the mentally
sensed, there will be only the mentally

sensed. Thus should you train yourself.

Which is

I mean, you're at the level of as close as possible to bare sensation without any kind of like mental commentary, mental like attribution of meaning to that.

And And

I don't think I ever I'm not I don't think I ever did it perfectly. I mean, it's it's something that you're you're trying to cultivate.

But, that was one of the the main ways that I would do walking meditation.

I remember a lot of the time just, you know, central Burma. You're out there at

night. It pretty much has to be a full moon night or a night with enough light that you could see like vipers and scorpions and that sort of thing that you might step on.

But, I just do walking meditation just not thinking, just just kind of being aware of the sensorium as doing when when doing walking meditation, not interpreting what I'm seeing, not interpreting what I'm hearing. No interpretation, or at least that's what you're trying for.

You know, you're just trying to be at the level of bare sensation as much as you can in order to you know, just prevent your mind just

running off in the samsaric commentary.

So, yeah, I practiced it a lot. I never fully mastered it.

But, even meditation, I mean, that's largely the kind of meditation that I was doing when sitting cross-legged also, especially after my first 10 years or so,

when I finally started getting into deeper levels of meditation.

That I mean, even when you're meditating, like this the the breathing, you know, you're doing anapana. That I never [clears throat] really liked breathing in, breathing out, breathing in, breathing out. It was just more just

observing the sensation of touch out of
the air passing the nostrils, and then
that's it. It's just the felt There's
only the felt. You're not interpreting
that.

You know, you're not following the air
in and out, anything like that. I mean,
it's just

you just

direct your attention to something
that's going on, and then just are aware
of that without any kind of commentary
or interpretation.

So, yeah, I practiced it a lot.

And sometimes even

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean, even nowadays, this you're like

in an industrial environment, there's
all this stuff going on. Just every once
in a while you just
it just becomes like this
the stimuli
that you're not even really
interpreting.

You know, it's it's just sort of your
you're kind of returning to the center,
so to speak, to use new age-y kind of
language.

Just sort of centering yourself
to some degree.

But yeah, I mean, that is really like
the essence
of Buddhist practice from my point of

view.

It's just getting to that level or getting as close to that level as you can. And so, I did it plenty.

Not perfectly, but I was trying to cultivate it.

>> [snorts]

>> So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Athena Sigil.

And Athena Sigil says, "Is your lady and new wife a Buddhist, too?" To some degree, she has interest in it.

Although,

um sometimes, if I'm being just too idealistically Buddhist for her tastes, then she'll consider that I'm just naive

and that I'm not good at functioning in the real world.

But,

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> yeah, she's sort of like a a fellow traveler, I guess. I mean, she has told people that she's a Buddhist.

And that's nice. And, you know, to some degree she is. Although, if it really comes down to um

I don't know.

I don't know how to say it.

But, I mean, sometimes, she just starts thinking that it's just like this idealistic

theory that doesn't really apply to

reality very well.

And I really think that it applies to reality better than worldly, secular kinds of ways of dealing with things.

So, [snorts]

yeah, kind of. I mean, my father considered himself to be a Buddhist, also, although he was more of like an animist than anything else.

So,

if you consider yourself to be a Buddhist, and there was there was some

>> [clears throat]

>> there was some Buddhist Congress or something

many years ago at this point, where they were trying to actually define what a

Buddhist is, and the best they could come up with was anyone who considers themselves to be a Buddhist is a Buddhist.

So, if that's the case, and she considers herself to be a Buddhist, then yes.

Although certain teachings of Buddhism I take very seriously, she doesn't take as seriously.

I'm just going to move on to the next question before I get into trouble.

This next one is from RFS.

And RFS says,

"Any plans to move the Discord group to Telegram due to the Discord ID

verification policy?"

Well, I haven't really considered that.

I mean, the the new Discord ID

verification policy hasn't really

touched me yet that I'm aware of.

It hasn't influenced me at all. I mean,

I've

encountered none of it thus far. There's

been no change in that regard

for me.

And so, probably not unless they start

getting like Orwellian,

then maybe.

But at present, yeah, there's

no plans. No plans whatsoever to move

the Discord group to Telegram

because it just

there has been no change

from my point of view in the actual
functioning of Discord.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Fred.

And Fred says,

"The way I see it, all his sutras he's I
think he's referring to the Buddha here.

I'll start over. Fred says, "The way I
see it, all the Buddha's sutras must be
from mundane speech, so logic seems to
it being only a path guidance
question mark.

Even the first sermon doesn't present
anything mind-blowing, in my opinion."

Okay, well, Fred, sometimes he asks

questions you're not exactly sure if
he's expecting an answer.

Um, but there is a question mark here,
so

I'm I'm giving him the benefit of the
doubt here.

Um, I I would address the last part
first. He says, "Even the first sermon
doesn't present anything mind-blowing,
in my opinion." Yeah, well, I mean,
you're probably used to it. You're used
to Buddhism. It might be a little more
mind-blowing if you've never
[clears throat] heard of Dhamma before.
You're You're some sort of ascetic, you
know, it's like the first sermon was
delivered to five hardcore ascetics,

where the Buddha is teaching the middle path and the four noble truths. And the four noble truths are especially the first three are relatively mind-blowing. I mean, if if you've never been exposed to them before, if you're already used to it, then maybe not. It might not seem so mind-blowing. But, I mean, the very first time you're exposed to it, especially if you're really striving wholeheartedly, like the five ascetic colleagues of the Buddha were, then yeah, it might be relatively mind-blowing for him. And of course, if you're a fully enlightened Buddha, you may be able to just intuitively

tell people exactly what they need to hear. And so, you know, his first sermon may have just been exactly what they needed to hear, even though it might not seem particularly earth-shaking to somebody else.

Well, let's get back to the actual question here,

which

um

has some

odd grammar to it that causes me to not fully understand it.

He says, "The way I see it, all his sutras must be from mundane speech.

So, logic seems to it being only a path guidance.

Um

>> [snorts]

>> I don't I don't understand that. Logic I mean the first part I understand.

All his suitors must be from mundane speech. Yeah, that's wohada days. And I already mentioned that. You know, you have to use the language of the world in order to communicate to beings in the world.

So, logic seems to it being only a path guidance.

That part mystifies me. I mean logic would also be mundane. So, I mean logic isn't super mundane.

You know, logic is just part of worldly

speech.

Which makes worldly speech a little more effective in certain ways, better at weeding out [_] that kind of thing.

Seems to it being only a path guidance.

That part I don't understand.

Sometimes I get asked questions that I mean especially recently

where I just cannot figure out what the question is.

Right there in front of me and I do not understand it.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> So, I mean if you do ask questions

I I ask you please I mean just for

starters try to spell things correctly

and and use proper punctuation so forth
because I have some minor OCD with
regard to that and I might be like have
this compulsive urge to like fix it.

But also just imagine someone who isn't
you reading that question.

You know, just kind of imagine yourself
reading that question for the first time
and would you understand your own
question?

Because some people are asking questions
it's like

I mean they kind of they they apparently
know what they're asking. They I mean
they understand their question, but it's
sort of like my mother, especially when

she was getting older, she would I mean,
she's she'd write me letters when I was
a monk in Burma. I'd get a letter from
her saying talking about how she did
this or or he said that, and she never
says who she or he was.

You know, it's like she just assumes
that that you can fill in the blanks the
way she can fill in the blanks, and it
just doesn't work that way.

The whole Burmese language is that way.
It's kind of like a lazy language with
lots of blanks. You know, this you just
kind of a lot of assumptions where you
just assume the other person will
understand what you're saying,
so you don't completely flesh out the

statement.

You know, because Burmese people tend to think more alike than like Western people do.

So, I mean, it's sometimes a Burmese person would ask me, "How long has it been?"

And I'd say, "How long has what been?"

And they say, "Yes."

And I get and I'll say like, "How long has what been?"

And they'll say, "Yes."

And it's like

it's it's

what do you do?

Guess? And then they just giggle at you

because you answered the question completely differently from the way a Burmese person would answer it.

So,

yeah.

Logic is only a path guidance. I really don't know what that means.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fred's second question.

Which is as follows. How can you stop rebirth if you still have bodily needs?

And then in capital letters, food, clothing, shelter. And then back in small letters again, the list goes on.

Question mark.

So, I mean, what does food, clothing, and shelter having have to do with

stopping rebirth? It's like if you still have bodily needs. But see, this is this is one of the things that I've tried to explain so many times, and a lot of people who are just kind of locked into an intellectual understanding of things, they just

I mean, it just doesn't work.

It's like

>> [clears throat]

>> How How do I even start with this?

You have bodily needs, food, clothing, shelter.

Might as well throw in medicine for the sick to get the four requisites.

Um I mean, how does that stop you

from becoming enlightened?

The Buddha had bodily needs,
food, clothing, shelter, medicine for
the sick, and he became enlightened. I
mean, it's Enlightenment is a matter of
mental states, at least at the worldly
level.

Ah, man.

Some of these Some questions is is
I'm not exactly sure how to answer them.
How can you stop rebirth if you stop
bodily Well, bodily needs are not the
same as desires and preferences and
delusion. I mean, so long as you insist
that the bodily needs are real,
then you're in the realm of delusion
because ultimately, bodily needs don't

ultimately exist. They conditionally
exist

in accordance with dependent co-arising
in a samsaric

like quasi world, a pseudo reality.

It's virtual reality. So, you've got
virtual bodily needs.

Your virtual body needs virtual food,
virtual clothing, and virtual shelter.

But, when you transcend that,
when you realize that it's all just
virtual, it's not ultimately real,
then I mean, within the the illusion,
the virtual body still needs virtual
food, etc.

But, I mean, you're just not identified

with that anymore.

So, it's transcending

the system rather than eradicating it.

And that's that's one thing that's

it it's very common. I mean, I used to

do this as a like a junior monk, for

example. You have to eradicate the

defilements.

But, it's like once you fully realize

that the defilements aren't ultimately

real,

then there's no longer any need to

eradicate them.

It just becomes irrelevant.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> let's just kind of wrestle and chew on

this a little more.

How can you stop rebirth if you still have bodily needs?

Yeah, I mean, you don't still have bodily needs at one level because it's not ultimately real. And rebirth isn't ultimately real, either.

I mean, so it's not even really a matter of stopping rebirth. It's just like going beyond it, so that it just the whole samsaric system becomes irrelevant.

But, let's just let's just try and get stay within the realm stay within the scope of orthodox Theravada.

Let's just let's be orthodox here for a

few minutes.

So, you have bodily needs, but a bodily need is not the same as craving for food, craving for clothing, craving for shelter. See, that's where the problem comes in. Second Noble Truth, all suffering is caused by desire. All suffering is not caused by bodily needs, it's caused by craving.

So, your body needs food.

I mean, that's

that's not suffering. That's not like clinging to rebirth or or clinging to samsara any such thing. It's when you start craving food, when you have attachment for food, which is different. That's when you get stuck in samsara.

And that's that's just a straightforward orthodox explanation, which I probably should have started with and and been content with that instead of getting off into something else.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Philalethese.

Philalethese says, is it possible to be a good Buddhist and an artist or fiction writer? And I don't mean a monk artist who just makes religious writings, art forms, and traditional motifs.

I think it is possible. I think damn near anything is possible.

So, I think it's possible to be a good Buddhist and an artist or fiction writer. Um,

especially if you mean

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean, your art doesn't have to be like traditional religious art, but still it can be uplifting. Or even something like Jackson Pollock, who just splattered paint onto a canvas and deliberately tried not to have any meaning whatsoever. I mean, that could actually be helpful to some degree from a Buddhist point of view because you look at this thing your mind wants to interpret it, wants to attribute meaning to it, and it's just kind of stymied. I

mean, it gets to the meaning of this painting by Jackson Pollock, you know, this color scheme and the balance and everything, but still I mean, it's reducing the amount of meaning that is polluting your mind at that moment.

You know, any kind of uplifting, you know, the good guy even like Charles Dickens.

I mean, Charles Dickens was a worldly kind of diluted guy.

But, I mean, at least the good guy always wins. That's very reliable in Charles Dickens. The good guy wins, the bad guy loses. You know, everyone gets

what they deserve mostly. Every once in a while, you know, you might have some tragic loss, you know, what was his name?

Uh, the the the slightly [—] guy in Nicholas Nickleby.

Snape? Was that his name? No, not Snape.

It was something like Snape. You know, he he dies, but in a way it was kind of necessary for him to die because he had this crush on Nicholas's sister and it was never meant to be and, you know, etc. etc.

But, I mean

so long as

it's like uplifting, you know, it's like you cause the person to to be a little

less

>> [clears throat]

>> a d- a little less attached and and a little less delusional.

Sure.

It's something that this

you know, like really great art should have like an uplifting effect. Great architecture also, you know.

So,

yeah, I think that it is possible to be a good Buddhist and an artist or fiction writer.

Even though

it's kind of borderline from a really orthodox ancient Indian early Buddhist

point of view.

So,

I think I'm just going to move on to Phil Atheist's second question.

Ever read Kierkegaard's Either/Or? Feels kind of relevant to your philosophical interests as it carefully dissects what belief even is and makes sense of it in the context of human life. No, I haven't read any Kierkegaard. I've read about Kierkegaard.

Um, and I've read Nyanaponika, like the letters of Nyanaponika, who was an excentric an eccentric intellectual British bhikkhu who was ordained back in like 1950 in Ceylon.

And he was very much into

existentialism. He was always talking about existentialism in his letters, and Kierkegaard was a kind of proto-existentialist.

Kierkegaard technically wasn't an existentialist, but you know, he was bringing up ideas that became like core ideas to like the mid-20th century existentialists.

So, I've [clears throat] I've read about Kierkegaard. I know that he was more or less of a of a existentialist, even though I'm pretty sure he was also a Christian.

So,

let's see.

Yeah, it feels kind of relevant relevant to your philosophical interest as it carefully dissects what belief even is.

Yeah, there was some back and forth on on that just today and yesterday on the Discord server. What is belief? You know, what's what's the difference between belief and faith? What's the difference between belief and knowledge?

>> [snorts]

>> That kind of thing. But, I think belief is perception. I think that belief is just built into perception.

And so, you just have like this stray image of something arises in your mind, there's already belief there.

But, the the belief is very much

strengthened if you hook it up into an interlocking pattern that where it's all mutually supporting and and like stabilizing, then it the belief gets way deeper.

But, even just some random stray image that arises already has a certain amount of belief built into that.

And belief is delusion.

Belief is thinking that you know something that you don't really know.

And since faith is a kind of belief for the most part, you know, set aside something like St. John of the Cross's dark faith, but as a general rule, faith, what most people consider to be

faith, is believing in something which from my point of view is delusional.

I've never really had a whole lot of faith. You know, to some degree, and I mean, you have to have a working hypothesis.

So, for me, working hypotheses take the place of faith as much as possible.

You know, a working hypothesis, you don't have to believe that it's true.

You're just

assuming, because you've got to assume something in this world,

that it seems like it could work, and so you give it a shot.

Working hypothesis, I think, is

preferable to actual faith.

But,

I'm sure a lot of Christians, even a lot of Buddhists, would disagree with that statement.

I'm pretty sure, and I I I mentioned this in the Discord server, that I'm pretty sure that it's in the Epistles of Paul in the New Testament, where Paul admits that all this stuff he's insisting on, he doesn't really know.

Because then it would be knowledge, and not faith. Somehow, faith is even better than knowledge.

Apparently.

But, faith is ultimately delusional,
because you think you know something
that you don't really know.

>> [snorts]

>> So, yeah, I probably I'm never going to
read Kierkegaard. It's just

I don't read much many books anymore.

I'm not alone in a cave and not

distracted, so that I could read just
the densest, thickest, most boring book
imaginable, like Hegel's Phenomenology
of Spirit,

and just expect to make it to the end of
the book.

I've got

F. H. Bradley's Principles of Logic on
that bookcase back there. I've I've been

meaning to read that for decades at this point.

I probably will never read it, cuz it's so dense, and you know, there's so many convenient distractions

in the worldly life, especially when there's internet now, that I'd rather just acquire my information in in like short articles.

So, yeah, I haven't read any Kierkegaard, although I have read about Kierkegaard. And that's about as far as it gets.

So, I'm just going to move on to Philaletheist's third question.

He says, "Are you ever met with any

anxieties with regard to the question of personal legacy, whether procreative, creative, or any other kind? And since I'm assuming the answer is no, how do you get to that level where you no longer yearn there of?" Well, yeah, the answer is pretty much no. I mean, I don't have any anxieties with regard to the question of personal legacy. You know, I haven't had fathered any children that I'm aware of.

Um

whether I become like famous after I die,

I mean,

it doesn't really matter. Partly just

because I don't consider this samsaric world to be real. You know, it's just kind of a dream that hopefully you wake up from.

So, it's like before I wake up from the dream, I mean, am I worried about, you know, whether I'm going to become famous to the people left behind in the dream after I wake up?

In in a way, it's just like your world, the world that you're creating, just kind of poofs out of existence when you die, anyway.

So, I mean, it's it's never really struck me as anything important. You know, like some people worry like they

don't want to be naked when they die,
you know, or or like they want to like
delete files from their computer before
they die, you know,
they don't want someone to see their
porn collection or whatever. But for me,
it's like, I'm going to be dead. What
difference does it make?

I mean, it's just Yeah, for some reason,
it's just

>> [clears throat]

>> I've never really been concerned with
that sort of thing. I really don't care
if I die naked,
for example.

Uh

I mean, I can I can do these videos with

just messy hair and just being all scruffy and disheveled and just it it kind of [clears throat] bothers my wife sometimes.

But

like just yesterday she wanted me to come along with her to to somewhere and I was wearing like this Alex Jones InfoWars t-shirt and she's trying to get me to change my t-shirt. It's like you want No, I'm not going to be catering to to the the preferences of strangers.

So I really don't care. I mean it's it's like any anything of importance you're going to take with you. The only thing

you take with you is your karma anyway.

So I mean I don't know. It doesn't really matter.

Let's see.

Let's see.

But I guess part of the question is how do you get to that level where you no longer yearn there of? Well, I think I was pretty much always at that level. I mean even as a kid.

I mean, I wasn't worried about what was going to happen after I die.

You know, after me the deluge.

I don't remember the original French for that.

So yeah, for in my case it is just like a

personality quirk. I was just born that way.

I guess.

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Siddhartha Gautama Buddha.

And Siddhartha Gautama Buddha asks

Thomas strange questions. Maybe he knows something that I don't. He says, "What would you do if you go to prison?

Would you practice Dharma inside there?"

And that's going to depend on the prison. I remember Mahatma Gandhi spent time in prison and he he used to refer to prison as his ashram.

Because you know, you're just alone in a

cell. You know, monasteries have cells.

Prisons also have cells.

So there is a certain similarity there.

But it would um

what I do in prison would depend on just

the environment. Am I in solitary

confinement? Could I even request

solitary confinement? In that case, I

mean, if you could request solitary

confinement, there'd be like a heavy

vibe associated with the place cuz you

might have some mass murderer in the

cell next to you.

Even though you can't speak with them or

anything, I mean, there's still that

kind of like this subliminal empathic

telepathic vibe thing going on.

But

>> [clears throat]

>> Yeah, I mean,

so long as

I was able to

As long as you don't have people like
throwing pee on me from the other cell
or that kind of thing, then I mean, even
then, I mean, you don't I mean, there's
going to be some self-discipline and
that sort of thing. There's going to be
some kind of Dharma practice.

I mean, there's any situation you can do
some kind of Dharma practice. Just
exercise patience, for example.

Just have few desires, which would make

sense if you're in prison.

If you're living in prison, you should have as few desires as possible, I suppose.

You You don't want to just be craving ice cream all the time when you don't get any.

>> [sighs]

>> So, yeah, I mean, to the extent that I was able, I would practice Dharma in prison, but it would depend a lot on what the environment was like. You know, am I Am I going to be in the same cell with with murderers or am I going to be like relatively alone or am I going to be like bunking with some mild-mannered guy who

committed insurance fraud.

You know, it's It's It's going to depend a lot on the circumstances. All prisons are not the same.

So, I'm just going to move on to Siddhartha Gautama's next question.

Uh let's [sighs and clears throat] see here.

In the Mahila Mukha Jataka, where the Buddha, while still a Bodhisattva, resolves the problem of an elephant that had been corrupted and instilled with murderous instincts after being exposed to the speech of some thieves who were hiding in the stable, similar to what Plato says in his book The Republic that

speeches form behavior. Should we prohibit or how should we deal with discourses that are directly accuse law and harmful to others if we were able to do

do something? Words can shape or distort the collective mind and therefore their restriction is sometimes justified and I think this clashes with notions notions such as free speech.

Okay, well I never did read the Mahila Mukha Jataka. I was never really all that interested in Jataka stories just because, you know, they're obviously late. You know, a lot of them are just non-Buddhist stories with some Buddhism added, that kind of thing. I

mean, it could be interesting just for learning about ancient Indian culture and so forth, although the Dhammapada commentary is better for that in my opinion.

But you got the problem of an elephant that had been corrupted and instilled with murderous instincts after being exposed to the speech of some thieves.

I mean, this is attributing human intelligence and understanding of human speech to an elephant, which yeah, I mean, that's a little bit sus in my opinion.

Um,

so let's [clears throat] just let's just

disregard that part.

So should we prohibit or how should we deal with discourses that are directly accuse law and harmful to others? Well, I mean, stuff that's clearly harmful to others, you know, then that's already illegal in the United States. You know, it's like the classic example is yelling fire in a crowded theater. You know, that's illegal. Or else, you know, it's like get him, you know, in like promoting violence.

That kind of thing is already illegal.

But I mean, once you start changing once you start making laws like that prohibit saying anything unpatriotic,

saying anything racist, that sort of thing, saying anything that offends a minority group or a member of a minority group, then that those laws can be um abused.

You know, it's like who's going to be in in power and even though you might have some, you know, relatively wise political faction making laws against certain kinds of speech, they might get, you know, ousted in the next election. Then you've got like Marxists taking over who's just going to completely abuse that. So, you're better off with a certain amount of chaos due to freedom of speech

than regimenting what people are allowed to say because inevitably it's going to be abused.

It's going to turn into tyranny.

It is

a slippery slope. I hate that term. It came to mind. But, you know, it's like a lot of the moral degeneracy, like the decadence in Western culture is due to like ideas of freedom of speech, you know, like

you know, female impersonators reading stories to toddlers in libraries, gay pride parades with all sorts of indecent exposure going on. It's all or just like TV shows, TV series like degenerating from like I Dream of Jeannie where

where Barbara Eden wasn't even allowed to show her belly button in the first season of the show because it was considered too risqué. Elvis Presley when he was on the Ed Sullivan Show back in black and white in the '50s, they wouldn't show him from the from the waist down because it was considered too risqué the way he was swiveling his hips and so forth when he was singing, that kind of thing. Um maybe I mean the some of that is okay.

You know, it's it's best if it's just culturally enforced, which is the way it used to be, but now you got like Game of

Thrones and just like
practically pornography
on

television that anybody can watch as
long as they pay for it.

Uh

So, yeah, I mean there's a certain
amount of debate that should go on on
where you draw the line with regard to
freedom of speech, but you're better off
erring on the side of too much freedom
than not enough freedom, it seems to me.

Unless you want like a more of a
regimented, more or less fascistic
society, you know, like
maybe some periods in in the Roman
Republic or Empire could could qualify

for that where, you know, everyone has to be really on the same page, but still there has to be, like I was mentioning earlier, some freedom of thought, some freedom of expression. You don't want to be so traditionalist or so ideological that any deviation from what everyone else is believing is punished.

So, gosh. [snorts]

Yeah, I do think a certain amount of just chaos

is better than just having everything regimented and controlled.

Especially when the wrong people get into power and start regimenting and controlling in a way that is just

Orwellian.

So, yeah, better to have too much freedom than not enough, in my opinion.

Let's see.

Did I answer the question?

Should we prohibit or how should we deal with discourses that are directly accusal and harmful to others? You know, like

heavy metal music that praises Satan and this kind of thing. That was an issue back in the '80s. I remember that.

Um

Yeah, I mean, to have

I mean, it's it's really tricky. I mean, how do you deal with it? I mean, the

ancient Romans had the the position of
censor

where, you know, he was

he was like

um you know, he had the power to

overthrow a law or some such that really
was undermining

the you know, the

I don't know, moral purity of the of the
nation, that kind of thing.

Ironically, the emperors just sort of
inherited that position of censor along
with a number of other positions, like
Pontifex Maximus.

But, yeah, I mean,

one thing to bear in mind is that

I mean, some sorrow is always going to be [__] up.

Humans are [__] up. Any society created by humans is going to be [__] up. There's always going to be stuff going wrong.

So,

I mean, maybe you could be very philosophical and just accept the the cycle of history. You know, strong men make good times, good times make weak men, weak men make bad times, bad times make strong men. It's just this in that just accept it as a kind of inevitable cycle.

You know, and right now we're in the good times make weak men phase. We

hardly even touched the the weak men
make bad times phase yet
this time around.

But I don't think that there really is
any way to stop that. Maybe there is.
Some kind of hard reset.

But still, I mean you can't have just
too much

like restraint on the people
because like I was mentioning before,
there's going to be no ideological
diversity, no forwards motion really.

Plus I mean people should to some degree
have the right to be foolish and make
their own mistakes.

It's just that you should have a society

that very much endorses a certain order
and certain ideals, that kind of thing.

But once you

like put that in the the power or the
control of the government

then it's going to be abused.

It's just

I mean you're never going to fix

samsara. Samsara's always going to be

messed up. So long as it is

created by messed up humans

it's going to be messed up.

And so I think it is better to err on

the side of too much freedom than not

enough.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Huey Cher.

And Huey Cher says, I have a question on reincarnation and timeline. Is it possible for people who die in 2026 to be reborn in 1875, meaning time is not linear. The soul in quotes, can be reborn in any point of the timeline according to their karma, which also means tomorrow happened before. Anyway, congratulations on your wedding.

Well, congratulations Thank you for the congratulations.

See me now.

Maybe I shouldn't have wasn't necessary to read that part, but it's it's been done.

So, my father used to believe that. And
my father used to hope that he'd be
reborn in the Stone Age. You know, he
was just

he was just cut out

and he was constitutionally he was cut
out to be some sort of like shaman
warrior in a Stone Age tribe. Just he
Like I said before, he was more
animistic than anything else.

And that's just that's he would have
been happiest in you know, just being
like a warrior {slash} shaman
in some Stone Age tribe.

But

um

time would have to be different, I

think, in order for it to work that way because, you know, from the Buddhist point of view, 1875 has already happened. So, if you're going to be reborn into 1875, you've already been reborn into 1875.

Um

Huh, I mean, it's possible. I assume it's possible. And also, I mean, there's more than one 1875.

You know, it's I I I do think that there isn't just one version of Samsara.

That it is possible just get reborn like sideways into a kind of alternate timeline, alternate reality, or whatever.

So,

I'm not going to rule out the possibility of it. I can't really insist one way or the other cuz I don't know for sure exactly how it works.

But I do think that it is possible even though there's a good chance it doesn't usually work that way just because people have this time and space categories, you know, Kant Kant called them categories, sort of built in so that we just are obedient to these self-imposed limitations that we have created.

But you know, it is a good question. I mean, can can you be reborn into the past?

Um and I won't say that it I think it's probably possible, which means it probably happens, but I would guess that it's not the norm.

What I mean

is I do think that there are like parallel universes, so to speak. The mult- the What is it?

The many worlds hypothesis. You know, I mean, my whole point of view, my my theory of everything is the uncarved block of marble, as I have harped away at many times. So, I mean, within the context of the block of marble, it should be possible. It might be a different 1875 than the historical one

behind us. See, that's the thing. You know, it could be like this alternate 1875 you're being reborn into.

I think that might [clears throat] be more likely

than

you know,

just being reborn and becoming your own grandfather or something.

My father believed that I was a re- a re- reincarnation of his grandfather, but whether it's possible for

um me to be reborn as my own grandfather after this,

I mean,

it might have to be like a different version of reality. You know, you're

you're going sideways instead of
forwards or backwards in time.

>> [clears throat]

>> But, again, I really can't
can't answer the question with certainty
one way or the other other than I I
assume it is possible,
even if it is not the norm.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from
Andre A or Andrea. I'm not exactly sure.
It's Andre and then a capital A with no
space.

Andre A

or Andrea. You decide.

And whatever this person's name is,

this person asks if all beings are
illusory, their actions will be illusory
as well. Is it still It is still hard to
me to understand how an illusion could
produce true results.

Are the consequences also illusory? Yes.

It's all

It's It's [clears throat] the matrix.

It's a dream.

So, yeah. I mean, it's

the the doer is illusory. The

The action done is also illusory. The

consequences of the action done are also
illusory.

The only reality is nirvana.

The only reality is is just the absolute
itself.

Which is not divided up into parts.

At least not like as I mean

potentially it could be, which is what

creates the 10,000 things of samsara,

but

>> [clears throat]

>> Gosh, trying to explain this stuff. I'm

trying It's not easy sometimes.

So, are the consequences also illusory?

The answer is a very simple yes.

So, let's just move on to

the person's second question.

He's The person says

I once saw a Dzogchen teacher saying

that an awakened being is free to do

whatever he wants, even killing,

slandering, cheating, dot dot dot. It is total freedom and awakening or enlightenment has nothing to do with being good. Emotions, good or bad, are fluctuations of the mind, and the purpose is to stay immovable, steady.

That is why there is a strong emphasis in developing meta or bodhicitta, sort of moral training. And then the actual question is Sounds like that, an awakened being is almost like a psychopath. What is your view? No, I wouldn't say that an enlightened being is like a psychopath. A psychopath is a person who It's [clears throat] like they have no empathy.

At least not at the conscious level. A

psychopath would be a person with lots of subconscious [—] going on that this like very tightly self-contained ego is oblivious to.

That's why they don't have much of a conscience. They don't have much of a moral sense. They got like no empathy.

They don't feel a connection with other beings really. At least that's my understanding. Not being a psychopath, I really can't say for sure, but that is the impression I get.

Whereas an enlightened being, if they're fully enlightened, they might not even [clears throat] have a subconscious mind anymore. It might be all conscious at

that point.

And they're going definitely have empathy. You know, there's going to be connection. There I mean, it's like Pink Floyd's wall is down if you're a fully enlightened being.

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean, you're no longer separated by Pink Floyd's wall from the rest of everybody else. There's no longer this differentiation of I and not I.

You know, it's it's just all you know, it's just the full spectrum is is there.

So, it's very different from a psychopath who is in a way a kind of spiritual [_]

Because they're they're just completely contained within this hardened ego with like this shell around it. And so, they're completely cut off even from their own subconscious mind.

In my opinion, that's that's the impression I get.

But getting back to the freedom, I mean, yeah, I mean, I used to take issue with this myself where you read in the in the Pali Suttas that, for example, an enlightened being or even a sotapanna cannot tell a lie. They just can't. It's impossible.

And I mean, that's not freedom. That's not liberation.

At least I mean, it's it's seems more likely that they'd be like Jordan Peterson said long ago back when he was still relatively based.

He said, "You should be able to be a monster and then not be one."

Not that you should be unable to be a monster. It's just that you're able, but you just aren't a monster.

And that would come closer to what the sage is doing, seems to me.

So,

let's see. [clears throat] I mean, there there's so many ways of I mean, again, we're we're trying to discuss what's going on with an enlightened being when

they've just gone off the scale.

Anything you say about it is going to be invalid.

But, like I I've said many times on these Q&A videos, Ram Dass used to say about his teacher, Neem Karoli Baba, whose picture is right up there on top of the bookcase,

Ram Dass said about him that the the the more you get to know him, the more you realize that there's really nobody there. He's just a mirror shining your own karma back at you.

So, yeah, I mean,

>> [clears throat]

>> an enlightened being, I mean, they're no

longer like an individual person. They might appear that way to an unenlightened observer, but subjectively, if that even makes any sense anymore, they're no longer this individual person who's separate from everything else.

And Neem Karoli Baba up there, he used to do stuff that, according to Theravada Buddhism, a fully enlightened being or even a particularly wise one would not do. I mean, he'd just be like roaring at people and like laughing and crying and like hitting people with fruit, you know, throwing fruit at people, punching them. He'd just He'd be doing all this weird stuff that like the stereotypical

Buddhist sage

would not and even could not do.

So, that's one like a a dogmatic

Theravadan would say, "Well, there you go.

Neem Karoli Baba couldn't have been enlightened. He couldn't even been all that wise. He was a Hindu with a wrong view."

But, I mean, that could just be the the dogmatic limitations of said devout dogmatic Buddhists.

So,

I think that a fully enlightened being they're still capable of doing some of this stuff, but it's

it's like

let's let's just go with St. John of the Cross and his his description of the Catholic enlightened being, the person who has reached the stage of perfection.

Which shouldn't exist. You know, it's

like you read the Bible and no one is

worthy. You know, the only way you get

into heaven is through divine grace and

all that. But, according to St. John of

the Cross, the the mystical doctor of

the Catholic Church,

that you [clears throat] can reach the

stage of perfection where you have

mortified your own self-will. And so,

because you're no longer motivated by

your own self-will, you are motivated by

the will of God. You become just like this empty vessel of divinity. You're like God's puppet.

And so, you just do what God wants wants you to do, which is sort of like what Ram Dass is saying about Neem Karoli Baba, where there's nobody there. It's just a mirror reflecting your own karma back at you.

In which case, I mean, it might be possible for an enlightened being to do things

that Theravada Buddhism would say they can't possibly do. They just can't. Even though they're liberated, they're completely free, they couldn't even tell

a lie. Even if I mean, they can't they
can't even want to tell a lie.

So, it is kind of tricky. I mean, part
of the trick is just trying to reconcile
some samsara with

figuring out what an enlightened being
is going to be like. It's just It's an
exercise in futility. Futility of
futilities, all is futile.

So, let's see here.

Um

total freedom and awakening. I mean, one
way I mean, one of the ways that you
become enlightened,
theoretically,
is you no longer have any ill will. I
mean, you no longer have any biases or

anything like that. So,

>> [clears throat]

>> even if you're able

to still kill somebody as an enlightened

being, you just won't want to.

I mean, it wouldn't be motivated by ill

will.

I mean, you wouldn't do anything if

you're enlightened that's clearly

motivated by unenlightened mental

states, like murderous rage, for

example.

Uh

These Dzogchen teachers, they're they're

tend to be rather

hm

unorthodox.

Tibetan Buddhists, I mean, it's sort of like the game where you're whispering a certain statement into the ear of the person next to you, and then they whisper it to the person next to them, and you go down the line until you get to the end, and it's very different from what the first person was whispering.

That's kind of happened to Tibetan Buddhism, also Japanese Buddhism to some degree. It's like at the end of the line, and it's it's mutated quite a lot from the original teachings.

Although, Dzogchen does still have this nucleus of really advanced wisdom to it. Seems to me, anyway.

Uh [sighs]

Yeah, but it it says even in the the old like the early Theravada Buddhist text that the bhikkhu leaves behind good and evil. He's not trying to cultivate good or evil.

Cuz that's still samsara.

You know, that's still karma.

So, you just go beyond good and evil.

But, that doesn't mean that you're like a Nietzschean superman, just this ruthless exploiter of others or anything like that.

I mean, you're no longer going to have an ego. You're no longer going to have selfish desires. You're no longer going

to have You're no longer going to be motivated by hatred, ill will, murderous rage, anything like that.

>> [clears throat]

>> But, you may be reflecting a person's own karma back at them, which may mean that you're going to cause them a certain amount of discomfort or unhappiness through your words or actions. And even the Buddha was able to do that. I mean, he'd shame people sometimes, you know.

So,

yeah, I really do not think that enlightened beings are enslaved to the rules laid down upon them by certain books.

But, on the other hand, I really don't think that they're just going to become psychopaths, mass murderers, or anything like that. They just do not have what is required to be like some sort of murderous criminal.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question, also from Andre A or Andrea.

>> [clears throat]

>> This is kind of a simple one. I appreciate this one.

The person asks,

"An awakened being awakens in the illusion or from the illusion. These are quite different things." And yeah, you

awaken from the illusion. The illusion just gets transcended.

So, I mean, to some degree, you have the enlightened being in the illusion, but that's mainly

with regard to people that are still stuck in the illusion. They're going to within the context of their own dream, they're going to be dreaming of this enlightened being there.

You know, that's how unenlightened Buddhists see the Buddha, for example.

But, yeah, I mean, [clears throat] they're just waking up from samsara.

So, that's

that's being awakened from the illusion.

At the very least, they'd be appear to

be like doing lucid dreaming.

Where they're still kind of in the illusion, but no longer like deceived by it.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Ethiopian Fake Tig, who always spells the Buddha b u d d a h.

And Ethiopian Fake Tig says,

"We once talked about how the Buddha would encourage everyone to ordain and remain if it was possible, but since there are still many beings that aren't enlightened and reincarnation is real, sort of,

isn't not having kids blocking the

beings from being born and ever learning dhamma? You [clears throat] also said one of the reasons you should respect your parents in Buddhism is cuz they gave birth to you and being born as a human is a valuable thing, but if there are no longer human beings, how can there be dhamma since you said monks are asked if they are human before ordination leading me to believe non-human entities cannot be ordained."

Well, [clears throat]

non-human entities would have their own realms where there would be different ways of being spiritual.

So, there is that. I mean, you don't want to just completely enslave yourself

to an ancient Indian cultural
interpretation of how reality works and
the 31 planes of existence and all that.

It's very

uh what do you call it? Like the a

Newtonian understanding of time and

space, which

I do not think is uh

particularly reliable.

But let's get up to the main question

here.

Um, do you think that not having kids is

blocking people from being born and

learning Dharma? That's an argument that

it has been used. I've I've come across

this argument a number of times before

that by not having kids, you're blocking, you know, there's like these beings that are like in this ghost realm because they they can't don't have a suitable womb to be to be reborn into, you know, this kind of thing.

And I'm doubtful of that. This universe is infinite.

So, I mean, it's not like some samsara is limited to this one planet Earth.

There are an infinite number of worlds out there. An infinite number of Earths, even.

So,

you just move sideways through probability, boom. So, I don't think

that there's any long waiting list.

Unless people are just kind of limited, you know, it's like they've got these unintentionally self-imposed limitations that require them to be reborn into this version of reality or some such. Maybe then their own karma would also be that they're not going to they're going to be delayed.

You know, it's their own They're not going to be stuck in some ghost realm unless it's their karma to be stuck in a ghost realm.

So, yeah, I really don't think that that is a consideration that needs to be taken too seriously

that you're like damning souls to some sort of purgatory by not having kids and allowing them to be reborn as your own children.

I mean, it all Everything happens the way it's supposed to happen.

And if they can't get reborn in this world, let's say maybe this world gets blown up somehow, then they're going to move on to another one.

So,

yeah, and and with regard to the Buddha saying that you should respect your parents, it wasn't just because being born as a human is a valuable thing. You should respect your parents because they're the ones who took care of you

when you couldn't take care of yourself
when you were little. They created your
body and so forth in this world, and so
you should have some appreciation and
may

maybe some gratitude for that.

So, let's see here.

Yeah, I do not think that

um

not having kids is blocking the beings
from being born and ever learning Dhamma
because if it's their karma to be born
and learn Dhamma, they'll be born and
learn Dhamma. And if it's their karma to
be like on some waiting list in some
limbo, then that's what's going to

happen.

And if it's it's what happens to you is the fruition of your own karma.

It's not like there's [clears throat] some scarcity of of wombs that's [_] up the way karma works.

So, I'm just going to move on to

Ethiopian Fake Tigger's next question.

He says, "Around Q&A 19 or so, which was some time ago,

you talked about how the Buddha is equal to any other arahant, and you go on to cite Abhidhamma to back those claims.

But, I also remember you saying how not reading Abhidhamma is actually better cuz if you know it, you would have to un-know it since it corrupts the real

teachings. So, can you perhaps cite another sutta and not the Abhidhamma to show how the Buddha and his other fully enlightened arahants are equal in wisdom?"

Well, yeah, I mean, I was just using Abhidhamma as a way of n- just using orthodox Buddhist doctrine itself to make to help me make my point that a fully enlightened Buddha is really no wiser than any arahant.

Because

if you're I mean, according to

Abhidharma, wisdom is the same as Amoha.

Panna and Amoha are synonyms. Amoha just

means no delusion. So, if you have zero delusion,

you've maxed out on wisdom. And so, a Buddha has zero delusion. Even a dry visioned arahant who doesn't even have psychic powers also has zero delusion.

Wisdom is the same. So, then the difference would be that the Buddha maybe is like more intelligent, which is different from wisdom.

You know, he's got charisma. He's got originality, a kind of spiritual, maybe intellectual genius that then makes him more effective.

But still, with regard to wisdom alone, you got zero delusion, zero delusion.

So, let's see. What's the actual Can you

perhaps cite another sutta and not the Abhidharma to show how the Buddha and his other fully enlightened arahants are equal in wisdom?

Well, I mean,

the Buddha himself [clears throat] is called an arahant. Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa. And there are a few suttas that refer to an enlightened being as Buddha. I mean, Buddha just means awakened.

I do not think that originally the Buddha or Buddha was different from any other enlightened being. He was the first one who started the tradition. But I don't think that there really is some

sort of vast

chasm between a Samma Sambuddha and just a lowly arahant.

>> [snorts]

>> That was just sort of

cooked up later on with glorification of

the founder of the religion, which

happens in most religions. I mean, look

what happened to Jesus of Nazareth. He

got turned into God almighty.

And Mahayana Buddhists turn Buddha into

into some kind of capital G God also.

So,

yeah, I'm not exactly sure what the best

sutra would be

in which

the Buddha is like denying that he has

anything more than other fully enlightened being would have. I mean, I'm sure it's in there that, you know, it's like the goals of enlightenment were the same I mean, it's like what you attain, what the Buddha attained is essentially the same as what any other fully enlightened being would attain. Except maybe some fully enlightened beings wouldn't get so many psychic powers, that kind of thing. That'd be like the main difference.

And there are sutras, I don't recall the names of them. There are sutras where I mean, the Buddha is saying that I mean, this is what happens when you become

enlightened, and it's it's not a
different enlightenment for the Buddha
than for any other enlightened being.

So,

I mean, going with tradition, the Buddha
is

like

qualitatively

better or higher than ordinary arahants
simply because you know, he has purified
his his paramis, the 10 paramis. You
know, he he perfected them. And that's
not really not even found in the oldest
texts. The whole 10 paramis and how the
Buddha has to purify, has to perfect all
of them before he becomes a
sammāsambuddha and all that. That's just

later developments with regard to devotionalism and glorification of the founder of the religion.

So,

yeah, I mean there are suttas that could do the job, but I do not recall the names of them. I mean, I have come across suttas that do pretty clearly imply that you're either enlightened or you're not enlightened.

I mean, that's the older texts are like that. I mean, the Buddha himself is like he's just saying, you know, I became enlightened, you can become enlightened, too, if you do this, this, and this that will increase your odds of becoming

enlightened.

But really, just the glorification of a samyaksambuddha into almost God or in with ma- some Mahayana Buddhists, it really is just literally capital G God under a different name. Like like a a Roman emperor couldn't be called a king, but he was still an imperator. You know, it's kind of like that in Mahayana Buddhism. They're not going to call Buddha capital G God, but I mean, he's better than God.

So, yeah, I mean, if you if you study the texts, you have some good idea of how to separate wheat from chaff or sheep from goats.

You know, you read GC Pande's Studies in

the Origins of Buddhism, which gives some fairly good guidelines for seeing what is more likely to be an old and closer to original text and what is later to be just a later addition with, you know, all sorts of fairy tale elements and that kind of thing added. Hyper-systematization, that kind of thing.

Uh

But yeah, since I cannot really cite any particular sutta because I didn't really do my homework for answering this question, I think I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is also from Ethiopian Fake Tag.

He said, "Early in the Q&A you said you might make another video about your life in the various caves of Burma. Can you perhaps tell us what it was like to live in a cave and to sleep during the day due to the heat, as you mentioned, and how all that was bearable to you as a junior monk?

Well,

I mean, my father was a macho tough guy. You know, he taught us as kids how to go camping with no tent.

You know, it's just you just sleep under the open sky. You You'd bring like some cheap little tarp just in case it rains. You could string up a tarp and not get rained on.

Um you [clears throat] know, he had sayings like a little pain never hurt anyone. You know, he was just this macho tough guy and with regard to camping skills and so forth, he just instilled in me a kind of aesthetic ideal before I ever became a monk.

So, that was one reason why it was bearable. Plus just the ideal, you know, I want to be like this heroic ascetic.

You know, you read the the suttas of the Sutta Nipata, where the monks were just these tough heroes. And you want to be like that. You know, it's like that's your ideal. That's your role model. So, that makes it easier, too, to

endure these hardships because there's like this heroic theme involved.

And it's just like a spiritual duty. And it's a spiritual duty that I took upon myself because I admired that. I You know, I I I like that. I wanted to be like that.

So, that part I've answered.

See, what was it like to live in a cave and to sleep during the day due to the heat? Well, I lived in several different caves. The first cave I spent one night in Thailand, which probably doesn't count. It was

kind of more of a hole in the ground than a cave anyway. You know, it kind of went down at like a 45° angle and and

had like a an

>> [clears throat]

>> a turn and then you kept going down at a 45° angle until you got to this flat gravel at the bottom.

And it was infested with rats and mosquitoes, and

there was like a whip-tail scorpion on the wall that I didn't want to have anything to do with.

And it was

I didn't get much sleep that night. I still had wool robes from living in America at the time.

And I was just like, you know, I had to I mean, the monk I was with told me,

"You got to cover yourself from head to toe, otherwise the rats are going to bite you."

Which was true. I had rats crawling on me that night, chewing on my bowl bag, chewing up my sandals.

So, I had these rat-chewed sandals up until I went to India and they got stolen. Why anyone would want to steal like size 13 flip-flops that are all chewed up by rats, I have no idea.

So, then after that, I lived in Mandalay Gu, which was just a like a cube lined with like

like bricks and

plaster, you know, it was like concrete cube that was like

8 ft by 8 ft by 8 ft. And it was, you know, 15 to 20° Fahrenheit cooler than what was going on outside during the hot season. But still, when it's 100° or like 120° outside, you know, it's still like 100 to 105° inside.

But still, it was better.

And let's see, after that, I lived in uh the Thebate There was a cave near Thebate Ain Doya. The original Thebate Ain Doya city I had to lived in. And that was just it was this huge granite boulder or block. It was bigger than just a boulder. I mean, it was like 20 ft high. Just a huge granite you know, just piece of rock sitting there. And

there was like a notch at the bottom of it. You know, at the entrance, it was maybe 8 ft high, and then it sloped back to 0 ft high at the back.

And that was the cave, you know, it was just like this

this sloping notch. And when it would rain, the rain would just kind of go down the the face of the rock, and then kind of due to the adhesive properties of water, I guess, it would go in a ways before it would drip. And so, there'd be like drippy areas. You had to know which areas were dry and which weren't.

And for a while, I was sharing the cave with some kind of land crab, which is pretty cool.

Um

but I only spent a few weeks there. And then the next cave I lived in was the main one I lived in, which was at uh uh Won Bow, [clears throat]

Won Bow Forest, Won Bow Forest

Monastery, or Won Bow Wildlife Refuge

Monastery, Won Bow Ba Met Doi Jaung.

And I I I One re- place that I've lived longer than any other place was that cave in northwestern Burma. And it was a deluxe cave, especially after I modified it.

But, it went in like 50 ft. It was dug into the side of a hill.

And it went in like 50 ft. There were

See, one, two, three, four rooms.

Although, only the end room was livable because

in the in the cave, you've got like this cell, the circulation of air, that just kind of flows in along the floor of this this long corridor, like 40-ft long corridor, where I could do walking meditation.

And then it would kind of turn around and go out along the top.

But, the side rooms just didn't get much air circulation. They were really stuffy, and they were mainly just used for storage. But, the main room at the end was like the altar room. There was a big altar there.

And I did most of my living there.

And still, it was It was fairly hot. I

All year round, it averaged out to like

84° Fahrenheit, summer and winter, day

and night. That was sort of like the

average temperature always at that

place. You know, the well water also was

about 84° Fahrenheit, just because

you know, just you average out day and

night or summer and winter and 84° F was

just like

the mean temperature.

And so you get deep enough into the

ground or deep down enough in the well

and it just averages out to 84° all the

time.

But still in the hot weather, it could get really stuffy, especially right at the time of day like in the evening when the outside temperature was also 84 and so the the air circulation almost stopped. When there's a temperature differentiation a differential outside, it would cause like a an air circulation cell inside the cave. But when you get to the point where the temperature inside and outside were the same, the air circulation would almost stop and it would get really stuffy and uncomfortable.

>> [clears throat]

>> Well, a lot of the time in the really

hot weather, I'd just be sleeping naked
spread-eagle on a concrete floor with
like a piece of wood for a pillow and it
wasn't because I was trying to be
ascetic or austere. It was just that was
the most comfortable way to sleep is
just flat on your back on a concrete
floor with a piece of wood for a pillow.
And then even then sometimes the the
concrete would start heating up, I'd
start sweating. Next thing I knew I'm
lying in a puddle of my own sweat. I
just had to get up and move to a like a
fresh cool spot
on on the cement floor and the the piece
of wood, I mean, it just didn't soak up

sweat as badly as a cloth pillow would.

Cloth pillow would would be like a a gym

sock within a within a couple days.

And then I also spent some time

let's see. There was another cave down

below after old U

uh

Unnandia died. He was bitten by a cobra

and died. I had to keep an eye on the

lower monastery, mainly to keep the guy

teenagers from hunting the the semi-wild

red jungle fowl or wild chickens around

the monastery. So, I moved down to a

lower lower cave to keep an eye on that

until I wound up getting really sick and

had to spend

um the rains retreat in Rangoon.

And then there was uh
one Let's see. One shot oat man
at the northern boundary of Alaungdaw
Kathapa National Park. I spent about 3
years in that cave. I guess it's I guess
it would be called a cave. Really, it
was just this huge overhanging rock
ledge. It was about
30 or 40 ft high. It went in about 30 or
40 ft. And then it was like 90 or 100 ft
wide. So, it was just sort of like this
crescent-shaped cave.

Um

>> [clears throat]

>> and just kind of an overhanging rock
ledge. It was There was a waterfall that

would come over the top of it during the rainy season and just the spray over the over the centuries caused like the inner parts to collapse and just made like this hollow place underneath the waterfall. That's That's where I lived for about 3 years.

And that I mean

they all had their good points and their bad points. One of the bad points of that that overhanging rock ledge was during the hot season it would just fill up with various species of wasps. You know, there was just tens of thousands of these really stingy kind of reddish-orange paper wasps all along the

back wall. That was

that was a challenge.

Um also that that overhanging rock ledge was supposedly haunted by some sort of like terrestrial deity that a lot of people were afraid of. They wouldn't come near that cave. But it that particular deity didn't bother me at all.

The mosquitoes bothered me. The the horseflies bothered me.

But uh and the temperature bothered me sometimes.

But uh the os sound of the terrestrial deity didn't bother me.

But

I mean sleeping during the day,
sometimes it'd be so hot that you you
just couldn't sleep.

But sleeping during the day was it
didn't make sense. It was
when it's so hot that you really can't
do anything else.

It's best just to lie there motionless
and do your meditation and other
activities at night. You get up early in
the morning, go for alms round, try to
leave early enough so that you're back
before the sun gets high enough that
you're drenched in sweat.

And then you eat your meal and you do
the water things, you know, wash your
bowl,

um

>> [clears throat]

>> brush your teeth, that kind of thing.

And it depends on the weather, you know, when you're going to take a shower. It also depends on whether you have like a bathhouse to bathe in. Cuz if you have to wear your lower robe when you take a shower or take a bath, then you got to take a bath earlier in the day.

And then you just get covered with sweat by the end of the day. But if you have a bathhouse or some other way of taking a bath naked, then you can just go in there and take the bath in the evening to wipe off to you know, to rinse off

the day's accumulation of sweat and grease.

Well, let's see here. Did I answer enough of this question? Can you perhaps tell us what it was like to live in a cave and to sleep during the day?

Yeah, I mean I think I've I've done a fair amount of explaining.

You know, I've I've I've never really been a sociable sort of person. So solitude has always been easy. I've throughout most of my life, aside from the company of a beautiful woman, I've tended to prefer [clears throat] solitude.

And I'm still pretty much that way. I mean I'm just not really a particularly

sociable person. It's It's not like I'm autistic and just completely like inept in social settings. I can function in social settings fine. It's just that as a general rule, I prefer just being alone.

Or with a beautiful woman that that loves me, that kind of thing.

So,

let's see. Not nothing to do with the question though, apparently, or just the living in solitude part.

Yeah, I mean

just do it yourself. You know what it's like. You know what I'm saying? I think there's probably lots of caves in

Ethiopia. I assume that there were a lot of sort of desert father type early Christian monks type people that lived in caves in Ethiopia. You might be able to find one of those places.

Make ropes or baskets to earn a living.

>> [clears throat and cough]

>> But I think I'm going to move on to the next question here.

And [snorts] the next question is from Cole.

And Cole says,

"Why is listening to or playing music so strongly discouraged and even forbidden for monks in Theravada Buddhism?" Yeah, I mentioned uh earlier on that um there's a list of 10 things that monks

aren't even allowed to touch, and one of them is musical instruments.

You're not even allowed to pick up a guitar, much less play it.

So, why is listening to or playing music so strongly discouraged

for monks in Theravada Buddhism? Mainly because it's wallowing in sensuality.

You got to bear in mind that Theravada Buddhism, or Buddhism itself, arose in like the Ganges Valley of like Iron Age India, you know, 5th century BCE.

And there was already a cultural tradition well established by the time of the Buddha's Buddha's existence there,

where it's just like a this

uh like an etiquette for ascetics. And

one of the main things is you do not

wallow in sensuality. You do not have

sexual

behavior.

You don't listen to music. You don't try

to make your food taste better.

You know, it's just anything that smacks

of wallowing in sensuality, just any

kind of luxury is forbidden. Partly

because of the ancient Indian culture in

which Buddhism arose. That that was

already well established, probably had

been established since prehistoric times

in like the Indus Valley civilization.

So, playing music is just an unnecessary

indulgence in sensuality that helps to keep you anchored in samsara.

Going with the ancient Indian interpretation of these things.

So, that would be the main reason. And that's a good reason of why Buddhism doesn't have very good music.

Theravada Buddhist music tends not to be all that great.

And I'm just going to move on to Cole's next question.

He says, "Can music be enjoyed without causing craving or clinging?"

Well, I mean

depends on how subtle you want to go, I suppose. But really enjoying music would

already be kind of wallowing in
sensuality. So,

I mean, to what extent can you wallow in
sensuality without causing craving or
clinging?

You know, it's

Buddhist ethics occur I mean they deal
with extreme subtleties.

So, what like your average normie would
consider hate, for example, is

I mean, that's just like a really crude
obvious example of hate from a Buddhist
point of view because even just the
slightest

like aversion

would be considered hate

from the Buddhist point of view. Or just

the slightest attraction is still loba
or greed.

You know, it's just it can be

microscopic,

you know, from a psychological point of

view. You know, it can just be the

tiniest subconscious little bit of like

attraction or aversion and already

you've got loba or dosa.

So, can music be enjoyed without causing

craving or clinging? And in all

likelihood, to the extent that you're

enjoying it,

to that same extent you're causing at

least microscopic little additions to

your store of craving or clinging.

I mean, it's it's kind of hard to enjoy something without at least clinging to it while it's happening. You know, that's part of the enjoyment, I guess. So, you can listen to music without causing craving or clinging by just in the heard there is only the heard. You're not stringing together the melodies or appreciating any of the the lyrics or any of that. You're just in the heard there's only this auditory stimuli going on.

But, that's not really enjoying the music. It's it's kind of like deconstructing it so that you're not enjoying it.

So, I mean, I won't just flat-out insist

that it's impossible to enjoy music
without causing craving or clinging,
but

it's it just seems almost by definition
that to the extent that you are enjoying
it, to that same extent you are
wallowing in sensuality.

You know, you're indulging in sensual
pleasure like householders who enjoy
pleasures of the senses,
which especially for a bhikkhu is
kind of a no-no.

But, I mean, for a layperson, you don't
have to go so microscopic with the
ethics.

Uh it's not against the the rules, not

against the five precepts for a layperson to listen to music and enjoy it and be into it. Maybe even tap his foot or hum along.

Take eight precepts, you shouldn't even do that.

Because

unnecessary wallowing in sensuality, indulgence in sensual pleasures should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Listening to music is nowhere near to what is a necessity, except for maybe a few really musically oriented people out there.

So, I mean it's it's relatively straightforward from an ancient Indian spiritual point of view.

It might seem kind of alien to you know, a modern Westerner who's been living in good times because of the strong strong men that lived before them.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is the last question. In fact, somebody asked this question just shortly before I started recording this video. This is from 0 who doesn't ask a whole lot of questions.

He says, "Doggy Dharma, can animals benefit from listening to Dharma talks? I used to play them for my cat."

And I mean, I have told the story of the

frog god. You know, you got this frog who just happens to be within earshot of the Buddha when the Buddha is delivering a discourse and the frog doesn't understand what the Buddha's saying, but just the like the vibe of the higher consciousness and the soothing tones of the Buddha's voice cause the frog to just kind of be in this expanded mental state. You know, it's just sitting there wrapped.

You know, R A P T, just hearing the Buddha's voice and just sort of being uplifted by the the higher consciousness around him. When a shepherd just kind of walks up and not even seeing the frog, sets his crook down, his shepherd's

crook, and squishes the frog's head and kills it instantly. He didn't do it on purpose, you know, he didn't even look down to see the frog down there, but because the frog died in this exalted, relatively for a frog, exalted state of consciousness, he wound up going to heaven. I think it went to Tavatimsa heaven and became the frog god.

So, even going with orthodox Theravada Buddhism, some animals at least can benefit from listening to Dhamma talks. Then you've got the elephant mentioned by somebody else earlier on in a Jataka tale who was

like harmed by hearing thieves
talking violently, poisoning the poor
elephant's mind because somehow the
elephant understood what they were
talking about. Either that or he just
got sort of the opposite of the uplift,
you know, he got dragged downwards, this
elephant did, just from the like the the
lowered consciousness of these thieves.
Even though it's hard to believe that a
thief would be at a lower level of
consciousness than an elephant, but who
knows.

So,

animals, I think

animals can benefit from listening to

Dhamma talks, although almost certainly

they're not going to understand what's being said.

So, the main benefit they would get would be from just sort of like the the atmosphere of raised consciousness in their environment because there is a kind of empathic or telepathic connection between conscious beings, whether you're consciously aware of it or not.

So,

if this animal is just listening to a like a recording with no actual living people around with consciousness could be uplifted by it, they might not receive any benefit at all.

But, if the animal's in the presence of the the wise teacher who's delivering the Dhamma talk, or at least, even if it's like on YouTube or something, the the dog or the cat or whatever animal it is is in the presence of people who are being uplifted by what they're hearing, then the animal, even though it can't understand what is being said in the Dhamma talk, it's just going to pick up on the like the the uplift in consciousness around it just through osmosis, like psychic osmosis, and that could uplift the animal.

And that's apparently what happened with the frog.

And so

yeah, I I would say that animals can benefit from listening to Dhamma talks, although it's not the Dhamma talk itself that is benefiting them. It's just the the the raised consciousness of the beings around them who can understand the Dhamma talk or just the raised consciousness itself is benefiting them because they are partaking of that because of this empathic connection that all conscious beings have.

At least that's my take on it.

And that's it. I've I've done answered all the questions far as I can tell unless I forgot one.

So like I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, if you have any questions you think maybe I can answer, especially with regard to Buddhism, early Buddhism, Theravada, Dhamma, Dharma philosophy, that kind of stuff, or just what it's like living in Burma, that kind of stuff, too, then yeah, feel free to ask and um no more than three questions per person per episode. Please like and subscribe if you have not done so already. Look at the URL links below the video and uh see how that you can link [clears throat] to stuff, including the advertisements for my books on Amazon. And aside from that, just uh be happy

and stuff.

You know what I'm saying?

Okay, then.

Here we are one more time.

>> [snorts]

>> Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 199.

I am your host Panyo Boss

and I'm pretty sure 199 is a prime
number. I didn't bother to try to factor
it out. But I'm guessing it's a prime
number. So let's just go with that.

Just accept [clears throat] it as a
matter of faith if you will.

And here I sit on a Sunday afternoon in
upstate South Carolina. It's well up
into the 90s outside. That's Fahrenheit,
not Celsius.

Or centigrade or whatever it's called nowadays.

And it rained. It was like a thunderstorm just a few minutes ago. So it's like totally steamy and sticky today. Even with ceiling fans going fast, air conditioning turned on, somehow it still manages to be sticky.

And so I'm sitting here in my What is it? My bathrobe? I was trying to come up with a classier name for it. My dressing gown, my smoking jacket.

And uh my sweetheart talked me out of wearing a baseball cap. I haven't taken a shower yet today. It's better on sticky days to

wait until later after it stops being so sticky. You know what I'm saying?

But I was going to wear a hat, baseball cap in this case. This is kind of a nostalgic hat for me because Vari-Bend is the brand of a kind of machine that I'm never going to run ever again, which is kind of sad, but things change.

I've also got the Majamac fez on standby because there is a question that addresses Majamac to some degree. But hell, I can even wear this hat if I I to.

See?

This is one thing I can do as a layperson that I could not do as a

monk is wear a hat.

Because it's against the rules of monastic discipline for a monk to wear a hat. In fact, you know, the stocking caps, the beanies that some of the strict monks wear, especially in the west when the weather gets cold, still against the rules of monastic discipline.

If the weather gets cold, a monk is allowed to cover his head with his robe so long as he's not in public or [clears throat] to like maybe fold up his sitting cloth and use that.

But hats and caps and turbans and so

forth are verboten

according to the rules of monastic

discipline. And I forgot to introduce

you, but this is my beverage.

So,

I'm taking a gamble here by drinking hot

coffee on an already hot day, something

I could not do in Burma. Like central

Burma during the hot season,

if I drank a cup of coffee, I'd be

sweating for half an hour.

It's just the way it goes.

Here it may only be 5 minutes.

So,

>> [snorts]

>> let's see, anything else?

I guess

the next Q&A

>> [clears throat]

>> inshallah is going to be number 200,
which is not prime at all, but it's kind
of a

significant number, I guess, because
it's 200. It's got two zeros.

So, I may do a live stream

um

>> [clears throat]

>> next weekend or whenever the next Q&A
comes out.

Uh

but I'm probably not going to like set
up like an advance notice.

So,

probably around 2:00 p.m. on Sunday if
you want a live stream of a Q&A, there's
a good chance that
around 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, I'll
suddenly appear with no advance warning
other than the advance warning you are
receiving at this moment.

So,

I guess I should just uh
wait into this after a little bit more
ado

because I'm just explaining that I'm I'm
in our bedroom right now. I'm not in the
usual studio with the fish tank and
everything.

And it's not because

my goldring danios

apparently have some kind of disease and are dying off one by one.

It's not because of that. It's just because it's sort of like a

uh um a bargaining thing with my wife

that I'm going to get the studio on

number 200. So, I just voluntarily moved into the bedroom cuz she's busy running around doing stuff.

And so,

without any [snorts] further ado for real this time,

let's move on. Oh, a little more ado.

I completely deleted my like microphone software and re-uploaded it. So, I hope the audio sounds better this time. I

really do. If it doesn't,

I'm not sure exactly what I'm going to do next.

Uh fiddle ineptly with the

the like the

I don't know.

So, let's uh let's wait into this cuz

there's kind of a kind of a a large

number of questions, including some

questions from people who have never

asked questions before, at least not

under the name that they included this

time.

So, this is from Master Po. And before I

even get into his questions,

he left a comment. It's kind of strange

that he watches these Q&A videos. I think he was Whiteash Piper before he was Master Po. And he said in a comment under the previous Q&A video on YouTube, he doesn't believe in karma of any kind.

So I said, well, according to Theravada Buddhism, karma is the same as volition. So if you don't believe in karma of any kind, you don't believe in volition either. So then he kind of starts backpedaling a little bit and says he doesn't believe in karma as a kind of moral retribution kind of a deal.

But

>> [clears throat]

>> that's just a kind of interpretation

people give to it that it can have that as a kind of side effect, but that's really not what karma is.

It's not some moral [clears throat] law of the universe, anything like that. I mean, it kind of can be [clears throat] worked out that way. I mean, it can have effects

along those lines that can be interpreted that way, but karma is essentially, as I keep saying on these Q&A videos, the momentum of your mental states.

It's like habit energy. Whenever you act through force of habit, that is a very superficial obvious manifestation of

karma.

But we don't need to get real
metaphysical because that's not one of
the questions.

Master Po's first question
is something that I'm really not an
authority on.

He says, how can we tell the difference
between a podling and a normie?

And I didn't bother to look up the Urban
Dictionary to see what a podling is. I'm
sure it wouldn't be in Webster.

But I assume a podling is a person who's
going along with the whole World
Economic Forum stuff

everyone's going to live in a pod,
they're not going to own any personal

property, they're going to eat bugs, and they're going to be happy.

So I assume that's what a podling would be, someone who's at least willing to move into the pod and start eating bugs if they are told to do so by the authorities who, of course, are only looking for the welfare of the many in all this.

So, [gasps]

I mean a normie is just someone who's blue-pilled.

So, a podling would be a certain kind of normie, I think. I mean, some podlies some podlings might be so nutty that they wouldn't even fit into the normie

category. They'd be on the fringe
somewhere.

But, a podling is just someone who is
willing

to do what the government tells them to
do, including moving into a pod and
eating bugs and not owning anything and
maybe even being happy, you know, Brave
New World was a relatively happy place
in the the Huxley novel.

Much happier than 1984. And that really
is pretty much what the the globalist
elite are striving for. It's something
much more along the lines of Brave New
World than 1984.

You know, you just get people
you know, it's using more of the carrot

than the stick

in controlling people. You know, just
appeal to their superficiality,
their worldly desires and all that.

Reward them for

>> [clears throat]

>> behaving like they're supposed to and
you use the the stick or the punishment
kind of behind [clears throat] the
scenes or you just get the whole group
to like

gang up on someone who refuses to
conform, that kind of thing.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> So, a normie is just anyone who goes
along with the mainstream, who thinks

that their culture's interpretation of reality, their worldview is correct without question. They just follow along.

That would be a normie. And different cultures have different kinds of normies. Like a Burmese villager, for the most part, is a normie in accordance with Burmese village culture.

>> [sighs]

>> But, they're not really podlings cuz they have

no concept of pods and they probably only eat bugs every once in a while.

Burmese people do eat bugs sometimes.

I've eaten my fair share of bugs when I was in Burma.

Not like real bugs. I mean, not like members of the insect order Hemiptera, but insects in general.

So,

let's see here. How can we tell the difference between a podling and a normie? I mean, there's going to be some overlap. Some normies in the west will be podlings also. So, I mean, there's no clear-cut

distinction between a normie and a non-normie or a podling and a non-podling. I guess podling and non-podling, just the people willing to move into the pod and start eating bugs and so forth. That would be a podling, I

guess.

But a normie would just be anyone who just follows along with the mainstream and believes in it.

Who thinks that this is reality.

Hat and all.

So, yeah, I mean, it's

some Some podlings are normies, some normies are podlings, but some podlings are just so nutty that they wouldn't even classify as as normies. And and many normies are just following

[clears throat] along with some other status quo and have no concept of pods.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question, also from Master Poe.

Can you discuss the Simsapā Sūtra? Well,

I guess it'd be the Sūta. And I'm pretty sure I know what he's talking about. I didn't bother to look it up, but there is a famous Sūta where the Buddha is sitting with a retinue of monks on the ground outside, I assume, and they're [clears throat] in a Simsapā grove.

Simsapā is a is a kind of tree. I don't remember what species of tree it is going with western botany.

But it's a common kind of tree in India, North India. I think they have Simsapā trees in Burma, also.

So, anyways, the Buddha's sitting in this grove of Simsapa trees and he >> [clears throat]

>> holds like a handful of dead leaves that I don't think he plucked them off a tree, that'd be against the rules for a monk, but he just picks up a handful of dead leaves that, you know, this they're falling out of the trees and he says that what I'm teaching you is, you know, can be compared to this handful of leaves in my hand, whereas all the knowledge that I could teach is like all the tree all the Simsapa leaves in this entire grove.

So,

the implication is that the Buddha's only teaching what is essential. It's like, according to orthodox tradition, the Buddha was functionally omniscient.

You know, he could know anything he wanted to know.

But, he was mainly interested in teaching people about, you know, the four noble truths, you know, the unease and the end of unease. You know, like the Alagaddupama Sutta. So, the Buddha says, "I I teach two things, dukkha and the end of dukkha."

So, getting off into weird metaphysical tangents

or talking about what's going on in other countries, which presumably he could have done, talking about what's going on on other planets, which presumably

a go according to the hypothesis
he could have done, but what's the
point? I mean, how's that going to help
anyone to transcend samsara?

To free themselves from the bonds of
desire and suffering and delusion and
all that.

So,

he's being pragmatic. He just teaches
what

he thinks will be helpful. And I I don't
remember if it's in the Simsapa Sutta or
whatever whatever the Sutta is called.

But, he does say somewhere

maybe it's in that Sutta that there's a
lot of things he could tell them that he
knows that would just cause like alarm

and dread and wavering of doubt and all sorts of things in them. So, of course, he has to keep his mouth shut about that, too.

He's got to use kind of normie language or at least a refined spiritual normie language that was common parlance among like veteran ascetics in Iron Age northern India.

You know, he can he has to use that kind of worldly language, worldly desana.

But

I mean, you can't really explain the highest Dhamma

in words and even try to get close to really explaining it like thoroughly or

properly. You'd have to like deviate so far from the ordinary person's experience, including the ordinary ascetic's experience, that you're just going to like cause confusion and doubt and all sorts of things.

So, the Buddha just taught what was essential, what was important to know in order to become enlightened or at least to increase your odds of becoming enlightened. And the rest of it, I mean, you want to become omniscient, you can learn that stuff, too.

So,

I hope I didn't describe the wrong sutta cuz I'm moving on to the next question.

This [clears throat] is from Romeo.

So, Romeo says, "I realize that this is pretty basic for you and most of your viewers, but can you please break down the concepts of dualism versus non-dualism in as simple and comprehensive a way as possible?" And I did consider a few times like actually doing homework for this and like planning out my answer in advance. But in a way, that's kind of cheating. So, I'm just going to I'm just going to take a run at it here. First of all, there's more than one way of interpreting dualism. Like philosophical dualism, at least in some circles,

refers to a dualism of mind and matter.

That mind and matter are both ultimately real, but they are qualitatively different.

And Theravada Buddhism does an even more elaborate version of this,

but that's not what I'm talking about and probably not what Romeo is talking about. Like Advaita Vedanta, like non-dualist Vedanta, isn't referring just to the differentiation of mind and matter.

I think, like René Descartes, was one of these kind of philosophical dualists who considered mind and matter to be ultimately real and different from each other. So, you got at least two ultimate

realities, mind and matter.

But, as I say, that's really not the kind of dualism or non-dualism that I'm referring to when I refer to non-dualism. Um mostly non-dualism it's I mean, you could call it the non-dualism of subject and object.

But, the way I generally look at it, it goes back to Hegel's first um you know, his trilogy of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in his logic, which is pure being is the like the first thesis, pure being.

Then the antithesis, pure non-being.

So, according to Hegel, the the thesis and the antithesis just merge into each

other because neither one of them has any determinate content, any like distinguishable features.

So, they're I mean, they're essentially the same and throughout the rest of Hegel's logic, he just accepts it as given that like infinity and nothing are the same.

So,

he has to come up with the synthesis.

And the synthesis is like contrast.

There has to be contrast for there to be any kind of multiplicity in this world, for there to be any differentiation of this from that.

And that's really what dualism is for me, is the contrast. At the very least,

if you perceive something, there has to be that something, plus there has to be like the background, like figure and ground. That is like the the primordial dualism. I think that's would be more primordial than the differentiation of subject and object.

So, yeah, that's that's how I would define non-dualism

is the elimination of contrast in one's attempts to understand reality.

That to to eliminate multiplicity, which multiplicity relies upon perception. It is an artifact of perception. Like I've said before, in order to have differences, like even the difference

between figure and ground, there has to be contrast, which requires relations.

So, the two main relations are same as and different from. There are other relations that can be thrown in, but those are like the two basic ones, same as and different from.

Whatever you are considering to be the it or the that, that's all same as, and everything that isn't included in that is different from.

And that same as and different from is not found outside in the empirical universe. It is subjective.

Like a chemist, I've said this many times, a chemist can analyze a sample of matter and break it down into its

component parts. He's never going to isolate, he's never going to single out pure different from or pure same as.

That's just like a concept. It's a perception.

And so, the whole 10,000 things that the myriad things of samsara, as the Dow teaching puts it, it's it's produced by dualism. It's produced by sort of perceptual multiplicity, artificial multiplicity.

And then the famous the famous statement in the Dow teaching is from the Dow came the one, from the one came the two, which is the inception of dualism, and from the two came the 10,000 things.

Once you got dualism, it's off to the races.

You create samsara.

At least you create the world, {quote} {unquote}.

So,

that's I mean, he wants [clears throat] me to to do this. Romeo here wants me to explain it as simply as possible. And so, if I just keep elaborating, it's going to come less simple, isn't it?

But that's pretty much the basics right there.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. And the next questions are from Fred, and those of you who read

the comments know that Fred just kind of like

like peppers the comments, the comment section of YouTube, with various pithy kind of comments, some of which

maybe are legit questions, and some of which are just like rhetorical,

some are just observations,

and it's hard to tell

whether Fred is really asking a question that is

in which he is expecting an answer, or for which he is expecting an answer.

But he has asked four questions

under the previous Q&A,

which is transgressive,

and his name is going on a list.

>> [sighs]

>> But one of the questions is really simple to answer.

Um so, I might just indulge Fred. I I reserve the right to break my own rules.

And I also reserve the right to punish severely anyone for any reason whatsoever.

I mean, I don't necessarily exercise that right, but I reserve it.

So, Fred says, "What's the penalty for a monk smoking cannabis?" And somebody in the comments pointed out that I've answered this question before.

That cannabis or bhanga, as it is called in Pali, nothing to do with the the the

English word bong, which at first I
thought that would be kind of an easy
[clears throat] thing to follow. It's
like

still in in India

that

cannabis can be called bhang, like b h a
n g.

But apparently bong, the word bong, like
a water pipe for smoking marijuana
mostly,

um

it comes from some Thai word that means
like a bamboo tube.

I don't know.

Maybe.

Maybe it's just a conspiracy.

But the penalty for a smoke monk smoking
smoking can a monk smoking cannabis. So,
it is allowable as a medicine. Cannabis
is allowable according to the rules of
monastic discipline to be used
medicinally. And as the the comment
replier said to Fred in the comments,
that monks are allowed also to have a
pipe for inhaling medicinal fumes, if
you will.

But

uh the the commentaries, [clears throat]
like

Buddhaghosa, really did not know how
cannabis was supposed to be used. I
think the only example of cannabis being

used in the commentaries medicinally is that a monk is supposed to just roll in it and it and it induces sweating. Which seems like a like a wild guess for some from somebody who was really clueless and didn't know.

I've never heard of anybody rolling in cannabis to induce sweating.

It seems like just the like the energetic [clears throat]

rolling around might induce the sweat more than having any cannabis there.

But it does say that a monk is allowed to use a pipe

for inhaling medicinal fumes.

So the question is is it medicinal or

not? That would be the main thing. So
like some people would just throw
cannabis into the fifth precept for lay
people

that just any intoxicant
you know, aside from you know, the the
politically correct ones, you know, the
acceptable ones like caffeine
or even nicotine like in Thailand.

That you know, it's just
fifth precept just rules that out.

Although of course monks don't
necessarily follow the five precepts
according to the the Patimokkha rules,
it just strictly says alcohol.

So it's

What is it? Majjapana [clears throat]

is the word used in in the the rule of monastic discipline and not the fifth precept, which is intoxicating drink literally.

So

it is extremely likely that [laughter] people were smoking marijuana in northern India

for a for a very long time. You know, the Indo-Europeans

apparently like the Indo-Aryans who

invaded probably were already smoking

the stuff. Scythians, I've read some

wild stuff about Scythians like when a

Scythian chief would die

they would build a kind of proto-pagoda

for him, but then when they would mourn they'd be like cutting off pieces of ear and just sitting in tents, they have like a bale of cannabis burning in the middle of them. So, they'd probably just get just blasted out of their minds.

And they were

culturally and to some degree

genetically related to the Indo-Aryans, you know, so the northern India Indians of the Buddhist time.

Especially the upper classes at the time.

So, [sighs and snorts]

the penalty for a monk smoking cannabis, according to my interpretation, which is an interpretation I came up with as a

monk, is if it's for medicinal purposes, which theoretically could even be caused to like, you know, reduce stress, that kind of thing. You're all stressed out, you you

you smoke some cannabis to help you calm down, even that might be allowable. But if you're doing it for fun, you're doing it for

recreational purposes,

then it would be a dukkaṭa offense for taking a medicinal substance without there being a medical need.

And so, as a monk, I considered it to be kind of a borderline case where a monk is smoking cannabis for spiritual

reasons. You know, it's sort of like taking ayahuasca or or psychedelics.

That can have a legit spiritual benefit for some people under some circumstances.

So, that would be kind of

I mean,

you'd have to be very lawyerish, I think, to really justify that.

But at worst, it's a minor offense for taking a medicinal substance without a medical need for it.

And I'm just going to move on to Fred's second question, which I'm going to skip over pretty quickly because he asked a transgressive four questions.

Shame.

He says, "Do baby boys play with their willies?"

Why he wants to know this?

Who knows?

But I can say that some do because I have actually seen a baby boy, maybe 1-year-old, still not even toddler yet, you know, not walking yet or speaking, that yeah, he was like humping the floor and stuff.

His mama As soon as she noticed it, she like hurried over and picked him up and carried him into another room.

So, those kind of instincts are they're already intact in a newborn baby boy.

They found that baby boys, you know,
even little baby boys prefer pretty
babysitters to ugly babysitters. They've
done studies on all this kind of stuff.
So, like sexual urges and so forth,
they're still undeveloped, but they're
still kind of in a nascent state even in
in baby boys.

But that was the question I was just
going to kind of skip over.

So, let's just move on to the next one.

From Fred.

He says, "Is the pursuit of happiness
with a woman folly?"

Well,

I think it often is,
but not necessarily.

For example,

you you're a normie. Let's say you're a
Burmese subsistence farmer,
and you just do not have a spiritual
calling.

You know, you're just not ripe for
renouncing the world and striving for
enlightenment. So, you're going to
become a subsistence farmer. You're
probably going to settle down with a
nice girl, raise a family, farm your
fields, and rely on your children to
support you when you get old.

And

>> [gasps]

>> I mean,

you can still pursue happiness.

I mean, there's nothing necessarily wrong with that so long as you it's not like pathological.

You know, it's just natural you want to be happy, and you want to increase your odds of living a life at ease.

And so, there would be a certain amount of wisdom involved in choosing the right girl.

You want a woman who's going to be like helpful to you, even spiritually. Like um

>> [clears throat]

>> there's a saying in Burma that if you're going to get married, marry a village girl.

You know, it's like sit a city boy
should look for a village girl to marry
because the city girls, you know,
they're superficial and worldly. They
don't have the grounding in Dhamma that
a lot of village girls have. And the
most virtuous people I've ever lived
among were Burmese villagers, especially
in certain areas of Burma.

So, if you can find a woman who's wiser
than you

or at least equally wise who can give
you good advice

you know, that kind of thing

then it could be helpful, especially if
you're just not ready to renounce the

world and go alone like the horn of a rhinoceros.

I mean, you could say it's all folly if, you know, if you're not fully enlightened. You know, it's all foolishness. It's all moha or delusion. So, yeah, in that case, you could say the pursuit of happiness with or without a woman would be folly.

But

I mean, it's not necessarily a bad thing and for a lot of men, it is beneficial to them. I mean, a lot of guys, they're like party animals, irresponsible you know, just no furniture in their apartment. You know, they don't own their a home, you know, they're just

renting and everything. And then, they
hook up with a woman
and and maybe like start having kids and
all of a sudden they have this sense of
responsibility. Like I need to be a good
husband and a good father. And so, it
just turns their life around.

That happened to my brother once. He
accidentally got a woman pregnant and he
just like accepted the responsibility of
taking care of that child and the woman.

And I mean, he was very irresponsible
beforehand and it just turned him
around.

He became a responsible person all of a
sudden.

So, that kind of stuff happens, too.

But just stay out of the danger zone,
you know, redheads, strippers, anyone
named Tiffany.

You want to avoid those.

At least uh long term.

So, let's just move on to the next
question here.

Also from Fred.

Transgressive fourth question.

Once he realizes he's on that list,
he he may uh well, he shouldn't regret
it because regret is is always bad
karma, but we'll just leave that aside.

So, Fred's transgressive fourth
question. Most people think karma is
retribution, so doesn't Angulimala case

prove his this theory wrong?

No. I mean,

most people think karma is retribution

and sometimes even in text, I think

Bhikkhu Bodhi refers to karmic

retribution

as a Pali translation of English

translation of something in Pali. I

don't remember what word he's

translating as retribution.

But I mean, it can work that way, you

know, to some extent there is a like

breeds like or for every action there's

an equal and opposite reaction kind of

stuff. I mean, that's kind of built into

the system, you know, sort of cosmic

balance. There's a kind of equilibrium as any system seeks equilibrium. So, you've got any kind of imbalance pushing too far in one direction, there's going to be pushing back the other way.

But that's really not what karma is.

Karma, as I've said before, I said it already today,

you know, it's the momentum of your mental states. It is

usually translated as volition. You

know, there's the famous text that that equates karma comma with chetana. And

chetana usually is translated as

volition, although I think there may be other words that are better.

Just like will or even urge. You know,

it's like the motive force of your
mental states.

So, yeah, Angulimala, he did get he did
get beaten up a lot. He got rocks thrown
at him and everything. But, the thing is
Angulimala, when he became enlightened,
freed himself

from samsara. I mean, he was still
apparently

in samsara until his body died,
but still

I mean,

it's like karma

How do How do I How do I even say this?

It's like going with orthodox

the orthodox interpretation. Once you

become enlightened, you're no longer
making more karma. This like your past
karma still will have its effects,
but

you you freed yourself from it. And
[laughter]

in Angulimala's case, I mean, he was
literally a serial killer.

You know, he killed lots of people. He
tried to kill the Buddha and then the
Buddha kind of converted him
and inspired him to you know, like
stop being a serial killer.

>> [laughter]

>> There's a chapter in a book called uh
let's see, How Buddhism Began by uh

>> [clears throat]

>> he used to be president of the Pali Text Society, William No, Richard Gombrich.

He has an entire chapter on was

Angulimala

uh like a a Kali cultist. You know, that he was still spiritual. It's just that he had some weird tantric way of practicing it up until he met the Buddha.

So, that's possible. I mean, Angulimala, even according to orthodox tradition, he had a deep spiritual root. It's just that he got led astray somehow. You know, he had he had a combination of good and bad karma.

Sort of like my father. I mean, he

wasn't like Angulimala. He wasn't a serial killer. He had killed people before as a soldier in World War II.

But, he was like

like karmically, he was like a bull in a china shop. He had lots of good karma, also lots of bad karma.

So, Angulimala would be a more exaggerated case of that, I think.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean, karma can be viewed as retribution, although it's not any kind of conscious purpose behind karma. It's just that's just the way it works out a lot of the time.

But, Angulimala's case doesn't really prove that theory wrong. You know, he

still had lots of problems after he became enlightened. It's just that he was pretty much immune to Dukkha at that point. At least to the mental mental unease.

So, I mean, even according to orthodox tradition,

um I mean, your good and bad I mean, you don't have to have absolutely pure karma, just no bad karma at all in order to become enlightened. This other groups like the Jains believe that. You have to exhaust all your karma in order to become enlightened. The Buddhists don't teach that. You can still have bad karma in your past. Maha Moggallana, he still

had the karma of just being literally beaten to a pulp. He was murdered at the end of his life, even though he was not only fully enlightened being, but he was one of the Buddha's two chief disciples. Still, he had this bad karma from a past life,

and it worked itself out according to tradition.

So, let's see here.

I guess I sort of answered that one. I'm just going to move on to the next one.

This is from Clefy.

And Clefi says, "Buddhism for the 21st century, four noble truths, five precepts, Heart Sutra. What do you think about this structure? Would you add

anything?" Well, of course I would add something. I mean, what kind of Buddhism is that? You got four noble truths, five precepts, and the Heart Sutra that is a Mahayana text. It's not even Theravada.

So, there'd be zero

like Pali texts in Buddhism for the 21st century.

I don't think that's a good idea at all.

So, just going with like the orthodox

Theravadan

interpretation of things, the most

important part of Dhamma

is the rules of monastic discipline.

It's vinaya.

Um like according to the legends, when

Buddhism gradually disappears from this world, when Dhamma disappears from this world, the last thing to disappear will be the four parajika rules.

So, long as you still have the four parajika rules, you still have Dhamma in this world. But when those disappear, Dhamma disappears, and then all you can have is pacceka Buddhas after that until the next Buddha comes along and starts the wheel of Dhamma turning again.

So,

yeah, I mean, you definitely have to have the rules of monastic discipline in the 21st century, and might as well keep all of them.

No point in saying, "Well, these ones

are obsolete. Let's get rid of those."

And then you have some other saying,

"Well, these ones are cause

microaggressions. We need to get rid rid

of those, too." And the next thing you

know,

you you got something that's just silly.

So,

yeah, four noble truths would have to be

in there. Some interpretation of

dependent co-arising ought to be in

there because there are texts that say

that is just essential to Dhamma, even

though almost nobody understands it.

Heart Sutra, I mean,

I I like the Heart Sutra as Mahayana

Buddhist texts go, it is a good one.

But still the Atikawaga, I think would be more important than the Heart Sutra.

The Atikawaga is the largest fragment of archaic Buddhism still in existence in my opinion.

So,

Buddhism for the 21st century,

I mean, why change it? Just because it went from 1999 to 2000?

Why change Buddhism because of that?

Because the the culture has changed?

Well, Theravada hasn't really changed all that much

since 25 centuries ago.

Well,

close to 25 centuries ago.

Uh I'm starting to feel like Sticks
Hexenhammer with this hat on though.
It's it's kind of somewhat resembles a
pirate hat.

And if any of you know Sticks
Hexenhammer 666, tell him to get his
tooth fixed for for all that's holy.
I mean, it's just awful. I bet he loses
at least as many viewers
by just having this snaggle snaggle
tooth just broken stump of a tooth up
front than he gets from the pirate hat
or just being drunk all the time,
wearing
clothes with holes in them, hiding out
in some apartment in New York City from

the police.

But getting back to Cleve Heat's question,

uh Buddhism for the 21st century, I

don't see why I mean, changing

[clears throat] a religion

to fit a degenerate

society or culture

is suicidal.

It It destroys the religion.

>> [snorts]

>> So,

you're better off having

uh like a conservative religious

tradition that stubbornly refuses to

change so long as so long as it has at

least a few followers than to turn it

into something super popular by just like mutilating it and mutating it and turning into something that the founder of the religion himself would not approve of.

So, that all applies to any religion, not just Buddhism, Christianity, too.

>> [sighs]

>> I mean, some religions there are kind of syncretistic or they kind of evolve over time without like an original founder necessarily. Judaism is like that.

Hinduism is like that where there's not just one founder.

But, it's just sort of like a a joint venture, like a team effort over

centuries.

Then,

yeah, it it would make more sense to at least make new additions without necessarily getting rid of any of the old stuff.

Unless you just want to make a new religion out of it.

So, yeah, I mean, I'm I'm conservative in that regard. With regard to religion, I'm fairly conservative. So,

yeah, I wouldn't I wouldn't necessarily change anything just because it went from 1999 to 2000.

Or just because Dhamma went from Buddhist Asia to scientific America. Semi-Christian scientific America.

Oh, and I really hope that
you know, we are recording, but I really
hope that the microphone is working
better now because I did just delete my
my software for like video editing with
the the audio filters and everything in
it and uploaded an updated version,
which I hope is working.

But you can't really expect me to do
like real sound checks just to make
sure. That's just That's crazy talk.

So, let's see here. Yeah, I guess I kind
of answered Clefi's question. I mean,
there's What aspects of Buddhism for the
21st century should be more emphasized?

[clears throat]

Well, I mean, mindfulness has really taken off in the West. It's taught in hospitals now.

So, there definitely should be some mindfulness.

Um you know, Satipatthana Sutta?

Maybe Maha Satipatthana Sutta, which explains the Four Noble Truths?

>> [sighs]

>> Ah.

Yeah, I mean, emphasis on mindfulness and emphasis on not clinging to views. I mean, that would be helpful for a lot of people just to have it as an ideal. You know, the horizon that you use to steady yourself because there are so many people, including so many Theravada

Buddhists, who are just vehemently
adhere to some point of view,
which might not even be a Buddhist point
of view.

And it's just
you can't really talk to them. So, that
would be another
thing that I would emphasize in 21st
century Buddhism, especially in the
West,
is like the whole Attakavagga theme.
Don't believe anything. Don't cling to
any point of view
cuz it's all delusional anyway.
I mean, you have to be working with
hypotheses just in order to function.

But still don't cling to them. Hold them in an open hand instead of a clenched fist.

So, I wouldn't add Well, I wouldn't add anything really.

Um but I would

I mean, you could decide what needs more emphasis in a different culture.

So, mindfulness and just not clinging to views. I mean, especially if if the people on X would get that idea that you shouldn't be clinging to views, you'd have a lot fewer just fanatical rage bait [__] posters on sites like X.

Some of them are just

um like cynics, you know, they're just

shitposting for the sake of getting clicks from rage bait and all that.

But a lot of them they'd probably really believe that, for example, Carmelo Anthony is innocent because he was black and the person he killed was white.

>> [sighs]

>> But we don't need to get into that, even though I just did.

So let's just move on to the next question.

This is from Q Andrew.

This is kind of interesting question.

Q Andrew asks, "Does the word shaman have any etymological connection to samana, or do they sound similar only by

coincidence? And I have read that the word shaman does come from like the Sanskrit word sramana."

So what happened, according to the theory I read,

is Buddhism made its way onto like the Tibetan Plateau and into Mongolia, where you have

a renunciant in Pali is called a samana.

In Sanskrit it's a sramana, where which also is like the basis for the word ashram.

But when it gets out into places like Mongolia that are kind of, you know, outlandish, so to speak, the the Buddhism is getting more and more incorporated with

like local shamanism, you know, like witch doctor kind of stuff.

And so the witch doctor would start being called a kind of sramana or shaman. And this spread into like Siberia.

And I think that's where the word shaman originally comes from is like Siberian tribes, Asian Siberian tribes, not, you know, Russian-speaking Russians necessarily, but, you know, sort of uh I don't know.

Distant relatives to the people who crossed the Bering Land Bridge into North America and became American Indians.

And like Eskimos.

So, I have read that there that the word shaman is derived from the Sanskrit word shramana,

which has the Pali cognate of samana,

which I usually translate as philosopher

in my translations, you know, like

brahmana. Oh, like see, shramana

brahmana would be philosophers and

priests. You know, it just kind of

it kind of comes out smoothly that way.

So, let's see.

>> [sighs]

>> I guess I answered that question. Time to move on to the next one.

This is from RFS.

And this is a practical question that's

relatively easy to answer.

RFS says, "How would you stay dry and avoid getting mildewy robes during the rainy season?"

Well,

um

I guess like I could start with the way they would do it like at a a meditation center in Rangoon where they have electricity, if some of the monks would just take an electric iron for ironing clothes, and even though you don't have a clothes dryer, you got a hot iron, you iron your robe, and just the heat will dry it out.

So, if you've got access to electricity,

you can use that kind of iron. Um I mean, out in the villages, they also have irons for ironing clothes, but the way they work is it's like definitely pre-Industrial Revolution stuff where it's the iron, you know, has the handle, it's got the flat kind of boat-shaped bottom, but on top there's this hollow place where you put in like coals, you know, like embers from a fire, and that heats it up, and then you can iron it that way, but I've never really heard of monks using those out in the forest monasteries.

Um I have heard of in a forest monastery, I had I knew this monk who made this contraption. I tried making

one myself. It's sort of like a teepee made of bamboo poles, and then you have like a little stand in the middle where you light candles, and then you kind of wrap your robe around the teepee, and the heat from the candle will very gradually semi-dry out the robe.

But I didn't use it didn't use that method much anyway. Didn't really [clears throat] work very well, in my opinion. It kind of worked, better than nothing.

But as a general rule, I think the way monks traditionally, like forest monks, like ascetic forest monks, traditionally deal with wet robes, is you just wear

them wet, and your body heat dries them out. Or another way you can do it is just cover yourself with it at night, use it as a kind of blanket, and over the course of the night, your body heat will dry it out. And you you feel kind of cold and wet and icky, but you're supposed to be an ascetic and not be such a whining baby about it.

So just do it.

Even my my washcloth,

>> [clears throat]

>> I would have to put it on top of my head. That's the only way it would dry out during the rainy season.

You know, you got like this little washcloth, which is enough if you shave

your head, [laughter]

that's enough to dry yourself off after
you take a shower or take a bath. You
just put it on top of your head,
body heat dries it out.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean, a monk should only have one
set of robes anyway.

And if you do use the blanket method,
you can have a dry robe over the top of
you with the wet one over the top of
that, and the body heat will still
percolate through and dry it out that
way.

But sometimes the only way to dry out a
wet robe is just wear it wet, and your

body heat will dry it out.

And if you think that would make me too cold and icky, then you're not being very ascetic or austere, are you?

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Rui.

>> [gasps]

>> And Rui says, quite like the expression samsaric commentary,

do you think it still plagues the stream enterer? And

this [clears throat] is kind of a situation that comes up occasionally where

just as a theme of my talks,

I will say that, for example, I don't

really believe the 12 Nidana theory of dependent co-arising originated with the Buddha himself.

Or in this case, I really do not believe that the four stages of Arya-hood originated with the Buddha himself.

And it's like people just kind of were locked in to orthodox Theravada, assume that I'm completely orthodox in every respect, and then ask these questions that to me are just academic.

You know, it's like how do how do I answer this question when I don't even think that the stream enterer as described in the texts is real.

So, in my opinion, a stream enterer or a

sotapanna, as they are called in Pali, originally just meant a new convert to Buddhism.

And then they got turned into superhuman beings later on, just like first jhana, which is just elementary correct meditation, got turned into a superhuman mental state by later commentators or later monks, because they didn't really understand it.

For example, the four stages of Arya-hood are mentioned nowhere [clears throat] in the Samannaphala Sutta, which the whole sutta, which is considered to be quite old, is the Buddha describing the benefits of living

the monks life. And he starts with just
you get more respect and so forth and
works his way all the way up to
enlightenment. Those four stages aren't
aren't mentioned at all.

Which is kind of a
a glaring absence.

So,

um

let's just go with orthodoxy. Sometimes
I have to answer the same question
twice. I have to give like the orthodox
Theravada Buddhist answer and then I
give my own best answer
if I do not agree with what orthodox
tradition says, which does happen

sometimes.

So, going with orthodox tradition
that a certain kind of samsaric
commentary would still

I mean a sotapanna could still have it.

I mean he wouldn't be like egotistical
about it because he would have already
um pretty much transcended the idea of
of ataditti.

But still he'd be thinking.

And just thinking about all kinds of
stuff possibly.

You know, hear a dog barking instead of
just hearing hearing just auditory
sensation that you're you're focusing
your attention on.

Even a sotapanna might be wondering

whose dog is that? It's being really noisy.

Hope it's not in our backyard.

That kind of thing.

And if

a stream enterer is just a new convert, then of course a new convert is likely to still have samsaric commentary going on.

So,

yeah, a stream enterer would have wiser samsaric commentary going on. I mean going with the orthodox tradition.

But still, I mean he's not just sitting there and in mental silence all the time.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from MFiles.

And MFiles

um had me watch a short YouTube video about, let's see,

it was about

nature being conscious and animism and people taking psychedelics getting more insight into this and becoming more animistic. And this guy was apparently a botanist, like a scientist.

So, MFiles says,

>> [snorts]

>> "Why the Buddha ignored plants as sentient beings and the possibility of a rebirth in this state?"

Uh and [clears throat] then he's just

got some commentary here that doesn't really affect the question as far as I can tell. Still talking about plants or better about gardens, I work as a gardener and I think it falls under the category of wrong livelihood. I have to spread poisons on the soil and on plants, dig in the dirt, and all those things that kill beings and destroy their shelters. According to Tibetan Buddhists, this is even worse. They say I am messing with nagas and this is very serious.

Very in capital letters with an exclamation point after serious. I'm not proud of that, but so far there is no

new job on the horizon.

Okay, so let's get back to the the
question with the has the question mark.

Why the Buddha ignored plants as
sentient beings and the possibility of a
rebirth in this state? Well, he didn't
completely ignore plants as sentient
beings. That in the rules of monastic
discipline

um

>> [clears throat]

>> it is stated that plants are considered
to be ekindriya jiva or one facultied
life. Like [snorts] the average human,
according to Orthodox

Theravada Buddhism, has six faculties.

[laughter]

Let's see if I can remember. You got seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, tactile sensation, and mind.

So, according to ancient Indian spiritual culture, plants have only one faculty, which is the the faculty of touch.

So, that would account for like sensitive plants that you know, their their leaves will close up when you touch them or like a Venus flytrap or something that they have like a sense of touch.

So,

in that sense that I mean they're they're just like borderline sentient.

There were Jains who considered even fire to be sort of like proto-sentient, like a kind of very primitive living being,

which does have a certain amount of intelligence to it because fire is kind of similar to life in a number ways. It needs oxygen to breathe, it needs food or fuel, you know, it grows, it moves, this kind of thing.

But, actual organic life is more structured. You know, the the exothermic reaction, the oxidation reaction that both fire and living beings are employing and it's essentially the same kind of of oxidation reaction. You take, you know, some sort of carbohydrate and

turn it into heat and carbon dioxide,
you know, this kind of thing.

Combine [clears throat] carbon with
oxygen, you get carbon dioxide and heat.

It's just that life I mean is way more
structured and it it sort of like
goes through that oxidation reaction in
steps that are sort of moderated or
conditioned by enzymes, which then is
able to extract chemical energy from
this reaction.

But, getting back to MFiles' question,
I mean the Buddha didn't really ignore
plants as sentient beings,

um

but there isn't really mention that I

can recall the possibility of being reborn as a plant. And yeah, I mean it's it's not really even in the 31 planes of existence. So, there is that. It's just not really sentient, even though it does have the faculty of touch. So, it's sort of like borderline, like proto-sentient, pre-sentient, but still kind of getting close.

And the video that N files had me watch indicates that plants have some kind of intelligence, you know, like a vine, like a pea vine, if it's, you know, it's it's tendrils want to wrap around something to hold help hold up the plant, and it's kind of doing this, which can be explained chemically, you

know, like photochemically, you know,
the sun and whatever, you know, it's
there's special enzymes and so forth
that cause this to happen. But, the vine
will start reaching towards a pole
that it doesn't even really know it
couldn't really know it's there just
through the sensation of touch. And so,
scientists are trying to explain how the
vine knows the pole is there because the
tendrils are kind of moving in that
direction even before it touches it.

But,

there

>> [clears throat]

>> one possibility that is being ignored.

My father firmly believed in this, too.

He was Back when I was a kid, he was

telling me about studies that were done

with hooking up lie detector

hooking up like a lie detector machinery

to a plant, like a house plant.

And

>> [clears throat]

>> you know, it's like one one of the tests

that my father told me about is you got

two house plants side by side. One's got

the lie detector stuff hooked up to it.

And then some scientist walks in and

just shreds the other plant. And then

the first plant has the lie detector

stuff hooked up to it register some kind

of shock, abnormalities in the readings.

Then, they'll have that [clears throat]
same

plant hooked up to the same kind of lie
detector stuff,

and one person will walk into the room,
the plant's normal. Another person walks
into the room, the plant's normal. Then
the person who shredded the plant next
to it walks into the room and it starts
registering shock again.

So,

scientists [clears throat] and my father
seem to

um

ignore the possibility

that that plant could just be acting as

a kind of antenna for the expectations of the scientists. That like their own expectations, using what could be called parapsychological or paranormal means, are actually influencing the outcome of the experiment.

Like someone on the Discord server was saying that ants show like self-awareness.

And

I mean, that's another case of in my opinion, it's possible. I'm not insisting,

>> [laughter]

>> but I think it is possible that it's just the the scientists are studying these ants. The ants are

passing a test that even a gorillas fail sometimes of of like seeing a spot and on their face and looking into a mirror or they look into a mirror and see a spot on their face and know that it's their own face and so they try and wipe it off. That test has been done on on many species of animals and relatively few pass it.

Chimpanzees pass it. I think orangutans pass it. I think bottlenose dolphins pass it. But, most animals, you know, you anesthetize them, put a spot on their face, wake them up, put them in front of a mirror, they'll look into the mirror, see a like an image of

themselves with a spot on their face and they won't try to get the spot off their own face cuz they don't make the connection. They don't know that that is a reflection of themselves.

>> [sighs]

[clears throat]

>> So,

this person that was on Discord said that even ants can pass that test.

And so,

I'm I put it out there as a hypothesis that these scientists are through psychic means or whatever are subtly influencing the results of the test so that some very simple life form, relatively speaking, like a like a house

plant or a pea vine or an ant, can actually be influenced by the beliefs of the scientist because we are creating our own reality anyway.

Otherwise, with regard to ants, you might say that they have a kind of complex group mind that is way more sentient than an individual ant. And you can see the same thing with plants. You know, it's like some people have said that forests, you know, it may be that each tree in a forest is sort of like a neuron and the whole thing it has like this group consciousness.

Especially there are some trees that just like you can have an entire grove

of the like clones of the same tree that are connected at the root level. I can't remember what kind of tree it is, like aspens or something can do that.

So, it could be

that you just have like this higher level of consciousness through a kind of group effort.

But an individual pea vine, I would guess that probably there's some like electro-chemical explanation for it that does not necessarily include sentience.

But

I've said it many times. I consider the entire universe to be conscious.

That the entire universe is a manifestation of consciousness. Even a

hydrogen atom would have like the
tiniest primordial spark of
consciousness. You I mean, it doesn't
think. It doesn't have ideas. Doesn't
have any sense organs.

So, it doesn't have mental states, but
still that consciousness is there which
physicists call energy. I think that
could be like a a Copernican revolution
in science if somebody is able to come
up with some Einstein-like

$E = MC^2$ sort of equation that
equates consciousness with energy.

So,

let's see. Why the Buddha ignored plants
as sentient beings and the possibility

of rebirth in this state. Theravada I mean, he didn't ignore plants as sentient beings. Apparently, he just did not consider them to be sentient beings regardless of the YouTube video.

That I mean, they have like a simple kind of consciousness. They might be in a sense more conscious or more aware than a brick, but still they haven't reached the level of full sentience yet.

Any more than like a bacterium has.

Even though like a single-celled organism, they have no nervous system whatsoever, but still they can act in seemingly intelligent ways, you know, moving towards light or away from light

or towards a food towards a food source
or or away from some kind of danger,
that kind of thing.

But like the the electronic door at the
grocery store that opens for you when
you get close to it. I mean, that's not
really sentient. And there's somebody at
the door,

and I don't know if my wife is even
aware of this fact. Just a second.

Dee, who is at the door?

Oh.

She's in the backyard completely
clueless.

So,

let's see. Okay, so this first question

I think I've answered. Why the Buddha ignored plants as sentient beings and the possibility of rebirth in this state. Yeah, it's not definitely not on the 31 planes of existence.

Uh

golly.

Okay. So,

M files second question. So, this is

This second question actually is more

closely related to what MFiles was

saying about being a gardener and having

to like use pesticides and dig the

ground and kill small creatures and so

forth.

Um I wouldn't really worry about messing with nagas.

I mean, I don't think you're going to have microscopic nagas. You know, they don't like the embryonic form of a naga or the larval form is not like a toad worm.

And my eye is kind of burning, so I got to wipe it with the drape.

The curtain, if you will.

Okay.

Ah. [sighs]

So,

are there any ways to mitigate the karma of being a gardener using insecticides and so forth?

Hmm, maybe I should use the inside liner where it's not as

as smooth and slippery.

And may actually wipe the grease.

Now, my wife is waving at me through the window.

Oh, okay.

She's showing me cucumbers. The neighbors are giving us free cucumbers.

I assume that's what she was doing with the cucumbers.

Just showing them to me. Not insinuating anything.

So, let's see here.

Okay, so MFiles

mentioned sort of

some of the ethical

complications of being a gardener. And

that's one reason why monks aren't

allowed to grow their own food because of these very reasons. I mean, a monk isn't even allowed to damage a a living plant. So,

I mean, one reason why monks aren't allowed to damage a living plant is because in ancient northern India, it was believed that plants are ekindriya jiva. They have like a kind of proto-sentience to them.

No perceptions, they're not thinking, but still there is like this consciousness there.

Huh.

>> [sighs]

>> So, let's see here.

It's doesn't really
qualify as wrong livelihood. At least
it's not on the standard list of I mean,
farming, especially if you're just
farming plants.

I mean,

in the Buddha's time, the society was
largely agrarian. You know, most people,
just like in rural Burma today, most
people are subsistence farmers. And so,
I mean, you can't have the Buddha just
tell everybody, "You got all got wrong
livelihood. You better just knock it
off."

People got to eat.

So,

>> [sighs]

>> Buddhism kind of tossed a bone to the subsistence farmers and kind of gave them the nod to continue subsistence farming, seems to me. Even though, I mean, back then you didn't really have pesticides.

You know, you might have farmers out there

um

I don't know, picking bugs off their their plants or something, but I mean, they didn't have real like

uh what's

I keep wanting to to mention the name of Roundup. They didn't have Roundup yet.

They still dug the ground, but they

weren't digging the ground in order to cut worms in half.

You know, so I mean, that's that's not really an ethical problem. So long as you're doing something accidentally, it's not deliberate, and so you're not making bad karma by doing it.

So, I mean, if you want to mitigate the the karma, what what unskillful karma you are getting by being a gardener, you know, uh of all, be mindful. I mean, that's the panacea. That's the It cures all ills, mindfulness does.

Because

as I keep saying over and over and over, the mechanical action of a deed is

ethically neutral. There is no positive or negative to just a mechanical deed, just mechanical actions. What creates the karma, what determines whether what you do is skillful or unskillful, ethical or unethical, is your mental states.

So, so long as you're being mindful, then your mental states are going to be neutral.

>> [clears throat and snorts]

[sighs]

>> So, I mean, that's that's one of the first things you can do.

I mean, it is it's going to attenuate your karma anyway.

But, I mean, also so long as you don't
have any ill will
towards

like the insects that you are killing,
then I mean, that that definitely
mitigates the karma also. You're not
motivated by hatred or desire to kill
enemies, anything like that.

So,

the the

the bad karma,

the unskillfulness, the ethical

unskillfulness of gardening is

relatively minor, it seems to me. So

long as you're not killing rats,

something like that. When you're getting

up into like killing

large animals,

then

>> [clears throat]

>> yeah, I mean, it gets worse.

But still,

um I mean, just using insecticides

and digging the ground, that kind of

thing, it's it's fairly minor

uh akusala karma that you would be

acquiring um even if you're not being

particularly mindful. But the more

mindful you are, the less of that karma

you are acquiring.

Uh cuz mindfulness just kind of cuts

through the the the psychic momentum,

the momentum of your mental states. You

know, you're slowing the mental states
way down by not just chasing after like
chains of association.

Some sorry commentary.

So,

yeah, the main way to mitigate the karma
is observe your own mind, be mindful,
and do your gardening maybe with a
certain like positive mental states,
appreciation for the the beautiful
weather.

You know, appreciation for the the
plants or I mean I don't know if you're
growing flowers or veggies or what.

But, you know, a certain gratitude, that
kind of thing, and not so much aversion
for plants or even aversion for your own

act of using insecticides. Don't be
against your own againstness, that just
adds to the againstness.

I think I'm just going to move on to the
next question. Also from M Files.

He says, "Do you think that soldiers,
butchers, [_] porn stars, and
gardeners can be serious Buddha Dharma
practitioners?"

And yeah, yeah, they can be serious.

For example, I mean just with regard to
soldiers,

um anyone who is familiar with Zen

Buddhism is probably familiar with the

Mumon Kan.

And there's like an extra

um an extra case, extra chapter added
towards the end of the Mumon Kan that is
by a like a a sword master, like a
samurai sword master who also was
skillful in Zen.

So,

yeah, I mean you can have like

s- uh

Zen sword masters, for example.

Butchers,

um

well, I guess butchers nowadays aren't

actually killing anything, although

traditionally

butchers are also the person that kills

the animal out in before they cut it up

into pieces.

I mean, you have in the Zhuangzi, I think it is. Zhuangzi.

Um you know, there's the the Daoist butcher who never has to sharpen his knives because he's just in totally in harmony with the way. You know, he's he's in harmony with the flow of things and the the blade of the knife just goes through exactly where it's supposed to go and he never needs to sharpen his knives.

Um Mahayana Buddhism says that some prostitutes are bodhisattvas.

And I mean

see, one of the last people to offer the Buddha a meal was uh Amrapali, who was a

high-class prostitute. You know, she was sort of like a the ancient Indian version of a hetaera.

You know, she was a

an expensive prostitute who offered the Buddha one of his last meals and then she uh

didn't stay being a prostitute, but uh I guess the Buddha inspired her to live a more dharmic life and so she became a nun and eventually became enlightened.

But then there's Angulimala, who was a serious serial killer who also became enlightened.

Um porn stars? I I knew one guy who was a a serious Tibetan practitioner who had previously been in porn movies.

I I'd I would assume that if you're going to be a serious Buddha Dharma practitioner, in most cases you're going to re-evaluate your lifestyle and adopt a more dharmic kind of lifestyle, unless you just

have little choice in the matter.

You know, like a [__] who's like uh like a slave.

You know, she has no choice in the in the matter. She has to be a prostitute.

You know, maybe she was sold by her parents to a brothel when she was a child. That happens in certain parts of this world. Or in the past, you just had slave girls who just had to do their

master's bidding, no matter how naughty
that bidding was. Now, somebody like
that, or

uh suddenly I got this idea. Like, if
you read Dostoevsky's Crime and
Punishment, one of his great masterpiece
novels,

um the most Christ-like person in the
entire novel is Sonya the prostitute.

>> [snorts]

>> But, she was doing that because she had
not much education, she couldn't really
get a normal job. Her parents
[clears throat] were dead or dying.

And she had these two child brother and
sister, you know, they had this this
brother and sister. She had someone had

to support them to keep them starving.
So, she it was illegal in 19th century
Russia, so she went and got the yellow
card of a prostitute and was
supporting her family that way.

Um

selflessly kind of taking a hit for the
team.

So, I mean, as

a serious Buddha Dharma practitioner,
you know, they may be in some weird
position

where,

you know, just being like saint-like
virtue is just not an option.

Another another

um example that came up is

um

Gene Wolfe's masterpiece, the the Book
of the New Sun,

>> [clears throat]

>> where the Conciliator, who's like the
Messiah for this civilization, he saves
the world, uh he starts off as a
torturer. He was born into it. It's like
pregnant women who are going to be
tortured by this guild of torturers.

Um they're allowed to have the child
before they get tortured to death. And
then the child, if he's a boy, gets just
initiated into the guild of torturers.

That's how they replace themselves.

So, he started off as a torturer and

then later on

he becomes like the Messiah.

But, that's just kind of a fiction, you know, kind of a fantasy, I suppose. But, there is some wisdom to that. I mean, the the representative of the human race should represent the entirety of the human race, you know, the full spectrum. From saintliness to the opposite of saintliness.

So, do you do I think that soldiers, butchers, [—] porn stars, and gardeners can be serious Buddha Dharma practitioners?

Although most of them aren't, I think it is possible. Damn near anything is

possible.

So, yeah, I do think it is possible.

But, especially the porn stars, I think they might choose a different livelihood once that they've made up their mind to be a serious Buddha Dharma practitioner.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> Some of the Buddha's like

lay supporters were soldiers.

You can't become a monk if you're a soldier. You got to get discharged, you know, you have to get your honorable discharge or whatever before you can become a monk.

But, still.

Let's see here. Let's just move on to the next question, shall we?

This is from PSA.

And I do hope that the sound quality is better in this video. I really do.

PSA says, "Is it wrong that the World Cup is upon us and I'm not excited?" No, it's not wrong at all. It's just soccer. I mean, why do people get so worked up over soccer? You can have a 3-hour-long game. The final score is zero to zero. It's just silly.

Yeah, I'm not excited, either.

So, let's just move on to PSI's PSA's second question.

Do you ever do any visualizations during your meditation? And I always avoided visualizations in my meditation. It's

just more thinking.

So, maybe

um if you're meditating on the 32 parts
of the body, which I've done a little
bit

as a monk, you might want to visualize
the body parts as you're going through
the list.

Or if you're meditating upon death,
you know, it's like the closest I came
to visualizations during meditation, I
think, that I can think of at present,
anyway, is, you know, I'd have a I had a
skull, a human skull. Also had a human
skeleton
with its own skull

that I would just have sitting around

the cave, and then you just look at it and you just remind yourself, as that is, so will I become. As I am, so was that. You know, that sort of thing. It's It's a visualization, but it's a visualization where you're looking at something with your eyes open.

Visualizing with my eyes closed is just more

It's just more thinking. It's just more of what you're trying to reduce when you're meditating, it seems to me, at least if you're beyond like the elementary kindergarten level of meditation.

It may be that some meditation masters

still use visualizations of a sort, you know, like Catholic saints who are contemplative monks or nuns who are visualizing various scenes in the life of Jesus or something.

>> [sighs]

>> But yeah, it's it's not really it's not really heavily emphasized in Theravada Buddhism.

I mean, if you're doing kasina meditation according to the instructions in the Visuddhimagga, you know, you meditate on the red circle until you can see it with your eyes closed, and then you're like expanding and contracting and and sort of, you know, modifying the circle.

But,

um my wife is right outside the window,
and she's walking around doing stuff,
and it's kind of distracting me. I've
got wife dar.

Let's see.

Do you ever do any visualizations during
your meditation? Yeah, it's it's just
something I've never really liked. Just
like I've never liked guided meditations
either. Somebody telling me what to
think, I've just never really liked
that.

So,

yeah. [clears throat] Especially lately,
no. In my eyes, now now it's the other

eye that's burning.

I've got this condition.

I've got like a

seborrheic skin type. I've got oily

skin, and my eyelid oil, if it gets into

like the corner of my eye, it starts to

burn. Especially if I haven't like taken

a shower all day, or it's just hot and

sweaty, it happens especially later on

in the day.

So, that's what's happening.

Let's see. Okay, so I already answered

that. Let's move on to PSA's third

question. Is speaking hyperbolically a

violation of sammā vācā?

It depends on the circumstances,

I think. Hyperbolically means

exaggerating, essentially.

So, if you're exaggerating,

I mean, are you deliberately trying to

deceive someone through the

exaggeration? Then, if so, you're lying.

Um if you're exaggerating what a a piece

of [__] somebody is

behind their back,

um for the sake of causing someone to

dislike them even more by sort of

exaggerating the case against them, that

would be pīsuṇāvācā, and of course, that

would be wrong speech, also.

Or, if you're exaggerating someone's

shittiness to their face, that would be

parusavācā, like abusive speech.

You know, you're doing it deliberately
to make them feel bad,
then that would also be that kind of
exaggeration also would classify as
wrong speech. But, if you're just
telling a story and
just with confused mindfulness,
you exaggerate something,
which people do
sometimes,
then it wouldn't technically qualify as
some of as
um
musa lana or wrong speech.

But, it depends on your mental states.
And then really anything you do with
negative mental states is going to be

negative. Anything you do with positive mental states is going to be positive.

So, [cough and clears throat]

I mean, I guess you could

exaggerate positively

and still be kind of lying.

So, I guess there's that. You know, it's

like some some co-worker asks, "Do you

like my new hairstyle?" And it looks

ridiculous, but you don't want to sit

tell them it looks ridiculous. You say,

"Oh, it looks nice."

I mean, that's

looks real nice, you know, you

you just exaggerate, you know.

Then,

yeah, I mean, that could still qualify
as lying, even though it's a white lie.
But, just exaggerating
like in a joke or if you're not really
trying to deceive anybody, just
you got confused mindfulness and it's
just this natural human impulse to
exaggerate. You're not even fully aware
you're exaggerating till maybe you're
like almost finished with the sentence,
you know, you're aware of it as it's
coming out your mouth. Just Hey, wait a
minute, that's not exactly true. Then,
technically that would not qualify
as [snorts]
lying or any other kind of wrong speech.
And now I'm going to move on to the next

question. This is from Julia.

And Julia says,

or unless maybe it's Yulia. Maybe she comes from a country where J is pronounced like Y.

Julia or Yulia

says I would like to ask your opinion on the texts below.

And the first is a Kabbalistic text.

It's Kabbalah. Kabbalah.

And the quote is

quote perceiving and the perceived are realized in union, but there is no point at which they become at which they come together. They were never apart in the first place. This realization emerges

intellectually, but cannot live as mere idea. It must wear the body of the turmoil. The open mirror-like nature of the absolute is its lifeblood, and it dwells through the confusion of our struggle and theoretical approximations. Nothing stops. It lives in everything, and consciousness must turn from nothing.

Okay.

Do you And then Yulia asked the question, do you consider there is convergence between this and the teachings of Buddha?

Well, when you get into like mysticism um you're getting more into certain schools of Mahayana than in Theravada.

Um

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean there's sort of like a proto Madhyamaka or proto-Mahayana that's found in very ancient texts like the Atikavaka, but the Atikavaka isn't going to be this verbose and like intellectual in describing something.

The The Atikavaka just tries to keep it at a minimum

because it's trying to tell you just stop thinking, stop believing stuff.

But with the guy I mean this is surprisingly wise coming from Kabbalah.

Especially the first two sentences perceiving and the perceived are

realized in union, but there is no point at which they came together. They were never apart in the first place. That could come right out of a Mahayana Buddhist text.

But the thing with I've never really been much impressed by Kabbalah, partly because it's just too flowery. There's too much thinking involved in trying to transcend thinking.

There's just way too like uh like the tree of Sephiroth and those those vessels that are broken or turned upside down or whatever the hell. It's just so complicated. It I mean it's just it starts straying into the realm of gobbledygook, in my opinion.

That there are I mean if you are
interested in mysticism, unless maybe
you're an Orthodox Jew, there are better
systems for getting to the heart of it,
it seems to me.

So,

um

I mean the the whole rest of it after
the two sentences I quoted, it starts
it's getting really like complicated and
convoluted and
speaking in like poetic terms, it must
wear the body of the turmoil, this kind
of stuff.

Um

maybe in Mahayana poetry,

Theravada is way drier than this, more no-nonsense than this in most respects.

I mean, by no-nonsense, I just mean just kind of stripping away the the unnecessary

like convolutions and you know, flowery embellishments and so forth.

Uh [sighs]

the open mirror-like nature of the absolute is its lifeblood.

Yeah, I mean

you can say that this is in a way it's kind of like a flowery, verbose approximation

of some relatively advanced Buddhist mysticism.

So, I mean it's it's surprisingly good

for my opinion. I mean from Kabbalah.

Cuz I I mean I mean it doesn't surprise me too much that there are these kind of statements to be found in there. It's just there's so many other statements that just muddy the waters it seems to me that you would be better off following a different approach at mysticism. For example, in Buddhism.

But it may work really well for some people that just think a lot. It may be helpful for them.

Especially if they're Jewish.

So, I guess I'll just move on to Julia's or Yulia's second question.

These are the words of a Tibetan tantric master from the 12th century.

Quote, we practice illusory practices in an illusory way in order to reach illusory enlightenment and liberate all illusory beings from illusory suffering.

Unquote. And I like that. That's I like that. That's nice.

But Yulia here or Julia continues, I think this is similar to the question you answered about illusory consequences of illusory actions. I have to admit that I have some issues when I think about it. Sometimes I feel like what is the point of all this?

For what for what is worth. Illusion illusion illusion, why practice? I know

it is silly, but sometimes I feel that maybe it is better just to lie down and wait for the termination. So weary of this kind of shall I say game. Your thoughts, please. I would like to hear your words about this.

Well,

so long as we are stuck in the illusion, then

I mean it's better to be in heaven than in hell. So long as you're still stuck in the matrix or in the illusion, you're better off living in an an illusory heaven realm than an illusory hell realm. You're better off having illusory bliss than illusory torment

until you get free from all of it.

So, that's really the point of it. I

mean, it's you say if it's all illusory,

what's the point? Is I mean, the point

is we're stuck in the illusion right

now. And so, we have to free ourselves

from the illusion, even though there's

ultimately no us. But still,

I mean, so long as you are stuck and

wallowing in the illusion, then it seems

pretty damn real, doesn't it?

So, until you transcend the illusion,

you best I mean, you're probably better

off I mean, ultimately it doesn't matter

whether you go to heaven or hell.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter to the

universe at large whether you're good or

bad,

whether you're wise or foolish. But I mean, so long as you are stuck in that illusion, then it seems pretty damn real. And so, you're better off going with goodness than badness.

Because badness is sort of like self-destructive and toxic, at least within the realm of the illusion.

But that's where you're stuck.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean, you can dismiss everything as an illusion, but so long as you're still stuck in the illusion and wallowing in it, then dismissing it doesn't work.

But ultimately, you have to transcend the illusion if you want to be free.

Or if you just I mean, it's not even you who's going to be free. I mean, it the whole thing is a paradox. And Mahayana Buddhism really plays up the paradox.

You know, it's like we're striving for enlightenment, even though there's nobody who becomes enlightened. Nothing really changes.

But at least you're free from it. I mean, it might still be there, the illusion,

but at least you're not like wallowing in it and stuck in it.

If that makes any sense.

But if so long as you're stuck in

illusion, the main point is to get yourself unstuck.

It seems to me unless I mean if you're just a worldly normie kind of person and you don't mind being stuck in the world, you don't mind the whole roller coaster ride of ecstasy and misery and being healthy sometimes and being sick sometimes and feeling agony sometimes and feeling ecstasy sometimes. I mean if you're fine with that, then you really don't have much incentive to try to transcend it. But once you start seeing that really there's there's always dukkha involved. There's always this unease involved even

when you're happy.

You know, it's just this restless dissatisfaction just moving you on from one moment to the next.

Then I mean once you start really seeing that like through a kind of microscope magnifying glass, you're just paying attention to it, just noticing it, then the illusion doesn't seem so good anymore.

You know, once you realize that there is a higher truth beyond the matrix, then there's a lot of people who just can't be satisfied with the matrix anymore.

And even though it won't be you who is

freed from it cuz you are part of the
illusion, still just being freed from
what you think you are or I mean
language just breaks it down at this
point which is one reason why it's hard
to understand. Language just can't deal
with it. Anything that's out of the
matrix, words can't touch it.

But it's better than this.

Okay. That was some thoughts.

>> [clears throat]

>> So I'm just going to move on to Julia or
Yulia's third question.

Okay.

>> [clears throat]

>> Do the Theravada

No, let's see. Does the Theravada tradition share the same view of Mahayana Buddhism regarding no difference between samsara and nirvana? Like Nagarjuna explains, there is no distinction whatsoever between samsara and nirvana.

Unquote.

In Tibetan Buddhism, there are many prayers beseeching Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to help ones eliminating the darkness of the mind that sees distinction between Buddhas and sentient beings, samsara and nirvana. Well, we have kind of a Nagarjuna question. So, since I've been wearing hats in this video,

I might as well put on the Majama Fez.

See.

Fez-o-rama is really

the answer to all your fez needs.

And they're not paying me. They're not sponsoring this video at all.

Fez-o-rama.com.

Okay.

>> [clears throat]

>> So, the main question here, I'm going to turn this "do" into "does" cuz it's better English.

Okay. Does the Theravada tradition share the same view of Mahayana Buddhism regarding no difference between samsara and nirvana? And the answer to that is

no.

And this is another one of those

questions where

to some degree, I have to adopt two

different points of view and answer two

different answer the same question twice

because my understanding of the case is

different from orthodox Theravada

tradition. In orthodox Theravada

tradition,

you've got Abhidharma. And Abhidharma,

I mean, the Abhidharma scholars, bless

their hearts,

have got nirvana and samsara at the same

level of reality.

That you've got

>> [clears throat]

>> four ultimate realities.

Two of these ultimate realities are divided up into parts and into various sub-realities. But, you got basically four ultimate realities. You've got mind, you've got matter, [clears throat] you've got mental states, which is different from mind, and then you've got Nirvana or Nibbana.

And so Nibbana ultimately isn't isn't any more real than earth's element or like wrong view, perception, um even even perception and wrong view are considered to be different from each other.

Nose sensitivity,

Nirvana or Nibbana is no more real than nose sensitivity. And it's just how did they come up with this stuff? I think it's partly just they were intellectually locked into a two-dimensional plane for understanding reality and describing it. So they couldn't have Nibbana at a higher level because they just didn't have higher levels.

That's my best guess at why the Abhidhamma scholars have Nibbana as no more real than nose sensitivity.

You know, the sense of smell.

Or water element.

Or whatever.

The space between two atoms is ultimately real, no no less ultimately real than Nibbana itself. And that's one reason why Westerners capable of critical thought really have very little use for Abhidhamma.

I mean, it's good to at least be literate in what your tradition teaches, so that you at least you'll know what it is you're rejecting.

But yeah, Abhidhamma is most Western monks, probably 70%, just have no use for it at all. And it pretty obviously wasn't taught by the Buddha. So you got Theravada tradition, and then you've got what the Buddha

actually taught, and they're not exactly the same.

So,

uh Julia or Julius says, "Nagarjuna explains, quote, there is no distinction whatsoever between samsara and nirvana.

And I can accept that. That's one way that I am not an orthodox Theravada Buddhist. It's one of the ways in which I

accept Mahayana philosophy in this regard more than Theravada orthodox Theravada.

And so, the the

One example I give repeatedly is the coffee cup.

Maybe this would qualify more as a mug

than a cup.

Let's just call it a cup, shall we?

So, what is Is this a cup or is this
porcelain?

Well, it's both, isn't it?

Porcelain is the substance of it.

Cup is the form of it. You take away the
cup,

the porcelain is gone. You take away the
porcelain, the cup is gone.

They're exactly the same even though cup
and porcelain are not synonyms. So, it
violates the laws of thought like the
Aristotelian laws of thought cuz this is
A and not A simultaneously.

It's porcelain and cup at the same time

even though porcelain and cup are not synonymous.

So,

that's how I understand samsara and nirvana.

That [clears throat] samsara is the essence of reality, whereas samsara is like

constructed forms or perceived forms.

So, you know, it's like another example I give is water and waves. And usually I use that analogy not with nirvana and samsara but with consciousness and mental states.

That consciousness is like water and mental states like perceptions and volitions are like waves on the surface

of the water.

But you could say the same thing about nirvana and samsara. And it's in a way it's the same thing because

I mean, there have been there are suttas out there that imply that Nirvana is infinite formless consciousness.

And mental states are just like waves on the surface of this infinite formless consciousness. So, it's formless, but still you have perception or delusion creating these differences. And so, this aspect is you know, it takes this form, that aspect takes that form. It's it's it's really hard to explain.

Human languages just were not developed for this kind of thing. Human languages were developed for saying what you want to have for dinner.

You know, telling somebody that you know, there's

there's game to be hunted over in the other valley, that it might rain tomorrow.

That kind of thing. But when you're trying to talk about ultimate reality, which words can't even touch, it's an exercise in futility. It can be quite frustrating.

>> [gasps]

>> But I can accept the idea that there is no distinction whatsoever between

Samsara and Nirvana. You get rid of distinctions and it just all merges into into the same sameness anyway, the same this.

But Samsara is like perceived forms of Nirvana.

The pure ultimate like porcelain would be different from this cup, but still.

The porcelain itself I mean, just getting avoiding just setting aside molecular structure or whatever, porcelain is just a formless concept.

You know, it could be it could adopt any form.

Pure consciousness is also just kind of

a it's formless.

And like mental states would be like distinct forms of that consciousness.

And so, in a way you could say that the objects of the world are like distinct forms, artificially created illusory forms of the essence of nirvana.

Or God.

You know, like a lot of pantheistic types would just consider, you know, all the 10,000 things of samsara to just be various manifestations of God.

Or the absolute with a capital A.

So, it I I see it like that. I do not consider nirvana to be just some distinct ultimate reality on this list of I mean, ultimately you divide up all

the ultimate realities. If I remember correctly, Abhidharma has 128 ultimate realities.

With nirvana just being one of them. And I just cannot buy that at all. I got no use for that whatsoever.

So, I mean, it's like essence and form.

Essence would correspond to

consciousness or to nirvana, nibbana.

Form would correspond to mental states

or just the multiplicity of the world.

And that's really what the multiplicity

of the world is. It is an artifact of perception.

It's an artifact of mental states.

So, it's the same difference.

Mind and mental states or nirvana and samsara, it's really the same.

The same distinction. Same difference.

So.

Yeah, I do think that Mahayana Buddhism, one advantage of Mahayana Buddhism is that that it arose centuries after the earlier schools of Buddhism did.

And

philosophy and logic had become more sophisticated so that people were able to think at more than one level of reality at the same time.

There's just different levels that

um and then there's a kind of a

rudimentary understanding of that in

Theravada, but it it did not benefit the

Abhidharma scholars much at all.

>> [sighs]

>> So, it may be a one advantage of West I mean, it may be one influence

um

on Buddhism from the West. I mean, there's some people that say that Mahayana Buddhism was largely um due to Greeks living in Northwestern India converting to Buddhism and like injecting Greek ideas into Buddhism.

That there are some people who theorize that that helped to cause Mahayana Buddhism to arise and it also may have brought like formal logic and more intellectual philosophical

sophistication

into the Ganges Valley in ancient times,

which also may have helped um

Mahayana Buddhist philosophy and also

like Vedanta to be as sophisticated as

it did become.

So, I'm I am kind of sorry that the

Greeks kind of influenced Mahayana

Buddhism,

but that's just the way it is. There's

no need to be sorry.

>> [snorts]

>> And I think I've answered that question.

So, I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from

Churzangazis.

And Churzangazis says, "Can you switch

lineages or tradition

you were ordained in? I mean, legally without any trouble from other monks?"

It depends on lineages and traditions. I mean, to switch from like a major tradition like Theravada to Mahayana or vice versa, you know, from the Zen to Pure Land or something, I mean, you may have to be reordained for that.

Um I mean, certainly uh a Mahayana monk wants to become a Theravada monk, he's going to have to do like an official um Theravada Buddhist ordination. And I guess they don't need the fez anymore, even though it really is a nice fez.

Ah,

just fell to the ground.

Okay.

Hey, that's kind of nice. Put the fez on top of the cowboy hat. It's like a whole new effect.

It's kind of nice. I got to put this on for a second.

It's kind of It turns into sort of like a a pilgrim hat, Solomon Kane or something.

Ah.

But anyways, yeah, a Mahayana Buddhist wanting to be or wanting to become a Theravada monk, he'd have to be reordained and he would be like a new monk with zero seniority on his um ordination [clears throat] day.

Um within like Theravada,
then you've got different lineages and
traditions and it depends on
it depends on the situation. Like in
Thailand, notoriously, you've got two
main sects of Theravada Buddhism, like
monastic ordination traditions. You've
got the Dhammayut and you've got the
Mahanikai. Mahanikai is most monks in
Thailand. Dhammayut is like a stricter,
more elite kind of of of tradition. And
the Dhammayut consider only Dhammayut
monks to be real monks. They say that
the ordination tradition of the
Mahanikai and presumably like Burmese
traditions and so forth, they're not

like unbroken. And so, any monks
ordained in a tradition outside of
Dhammayut isn't even really ordained.

And so,

with regard to that situation, um if
you're not a Dhammayut monk, you want to
live in a Dammajut monastery, you'd have
to be reordained and then they just
count your ordination from day one.

Then you'd just be a new monk,
regardless of how many years you were a
monk before that.

In Burma, you've got kind of the same
situation with Let's see, what is it?

Ah, [sighs] man. You got the Shwegyin
and Sudhamma. So, the two main sects
are Shwegyin and Sudhamma cuz S is

pronounced like TH in Burma. Thudhamma.

And so, most monks are Thudhamma. You've

also got Shwegyin. There's There's a

bunch of other minor schools

um, including the original Mon tradi-

Mon tradition on which Dammajut was

based. I don't know whether the Dammajut

monks in Thailand would consider this

members of this sect in in Mon State in

Burma to be really ordained or not.

I don't know. I never bothered to ask a

Dammajut monk this question.

But,

in in Burma, there isn't this

exclusiveness. You know, the Shwegyin

monks, they're not saying nobody else is

a real monk except us.

So,

you can have Thudhamma monks move into a Shwegyin monastery and conform to the any differences between Thudhamma and Shwegyin and for the most part, they'll be accepted at at the monastery because they're they're still bhikkhus.

So, if you want to start following Shwegyin tradition, you can move to a Shwegyin monastery, start following the tradition, you won't have to be reordained. There might be a few uppity kind of Shwegyin monasteries where they don't want to accept Thudhamma monks because Thudhamma monks, not that they're not real monks, mostly, it's

just that they have a reputation for being sloppier than Shwegyin. Although, some Shwegyin monks, including possibly the most famous Shwegyin monk in Burma, is just corrupt as all get out.

You know, there's some naughty Shwe Gyin monks out there.

So, yeah, I mean, and then you get into like sub sects within the sects or like ordained in the Pa-Auk tradition, I want to go to a Mahasi tradition monastery. No problem, none whatsoever. So, when you get down into like meditation traditions, Mogo tradition, Shwe U Min tradition, Mahasi

tradition, Shwe U Min being like a a
branch of Mahasi, Pa-Auk tradition,
Bengu tradition, Ledi tradition, just
there's all these Sunlun tradition,
there's all these meditation traditions
in Burma, and I mean, you can just go
from one to the other, you know, just go
meditation center hopping if you want
to. Um that's really not a problem.

So, the main problems would be if you're
going from Mahayana like Zen to

Theravada or Theravada to Pure Land or
something like that, Pure Land to like

Nyingma Tibetan tradition, something
like that, you may have to be

reordained. They would not consider you
to be like legally ordained within the

like the
the requirements of the tradition. Like
Theravada Buddhism, in order to be
considered to be an ordained Theravada
Buddhist monk, you have to go through
the Pali ordination ceremony in
accordance with the rules of monastic
discipline. If you got ordained in some
other tradition that doesn't follow
like Theravada Buddhist Vinaya,
then it is is considered invalid,
which is one reason why the claims that
these Taiwanese or Korean nuns are
sufficient to like revive the the the
order of Theravada Buddhist nuns,
I don't buy it because I consider

unlikely that these East Asian nuns would be ordained in a ceremony that would be considered valid in accordance with the Theravada Buddhist rules of monastic discipline.

They'd have to be reordained, and they can't be reordained because the Theravada Buddhist order of nuns went extinct hundreds of years ago.

>> [sighs]

>> But

Yeah, so I mean minor changes just from one meditation tradition to another or maybe even from one sect within Theravada to another unless it's Thudong unless it's Dhammayut in Thailand.

Dhammayut in Thailand is just stands

alone because they're the only ones that say only we are real monks and nobody else is.

But aside from those those

exceptions, then just going from like one

like sub sect of Theravada to another or one

one meditation tradition to another, completely fine, no problem.

Okay.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Seal of Action Cpad Z 0 9. He's got some ethical thought experiments going on with these his three questions.

So,

>> [clears throat]

>> Seal of Action Cpad Z 0 9 says, "What is the correct response to someone grabbing your chick's ass while you are walking together in public, especially if they dude are walking in a group with other dudes

who look dangerous and willing to do over stupid [__]

Seems you should step in, but these days you never know cuz the other person might have a gun or knife and are just trying to find an excuse to kill someone. Also, being violent doesn't seem very Buddhist and the chick might dump you eventually anyways.

As it's unlikely relationships will be forever in this day and age, especially if you have this attitude. Just saying. But he continues, so you get injured for no reason.

No reason, nothing happens for no reason.

Unless maybe at a quantum level.

But See of Action C by Z 9 continues, seems like the best modern solution might just be to dump the girlfriend at that point. But that sounds like the Sharia solution of punishing her for something some man did.

Okay.

Let's scroll up to the top of this

little essay question. You're walking down the sidewalk with your girlfriend and some gang of hoodlums comes up and starts like grabbing her ass or making vulgar obscene comments regarding her, thereby demeaning her dignity and besmirching her honor and so forth. What should you do as her consort, her companion?

Well, I mean it's going to depend a lot on the situation.

I mean, if

I mean, as a general rule, you should avoid taking your date to a place like this where stuff like this is likely to happen. Don't go don't take your girl on a first date to a biker bar, for

example.

Unless you're a biker and she's a biker chick, then it might be okay.

But as a general rule, you want to kind of steer your new date, your girlfriend away from

hoodlums

or gangs or whatever.

I mean, some place like Paris or who knows, Detroit or something, it might not be very likely, in which case you might be better off just inviting her over to your house and cooking her dinner or something.

But, sometimes it's just inevitable. You and your girl maybe walking down the

street, and it may be that some group of hoodlums who aren't supposed to be there just show up and start behaving very inappropriately, which would be, to some degree, a fruition of your own karma.

But, that's neither here nor there, is it?

So, I mean, you have to have situational awareness. I mean, there is no just stereotyped cookbook answer to this question. You have to like feel out the situation in the midst of it.

I mean, there's some things you could say

that might not be very inflammatory, but at the very least,

you know, you can say something

that is sticking up for your girl
without necessarily provoking them to
all gang up on you and beat you to a
pulp.

So,

just tell them, you know, "I appreciate
you leave my woman alone."

Just in no no uncertain terms.

You know, I mean, you can feel into it
intuitively to know if there's a
likelihood that that's going to have
some beneficial effect. I mean, some
guys, they're just so much in
traditional honor mode
that, I mean, they'll just take on that
group if necessary, knowing they're

going to take a beating. My father was like that. He would fight somebody even though

he knew that he was likely going to take a beating.

And just just to show them he wasn't afraid of them. But then, you've got the woman who's there with [clears throat] you, who doesn't want to stand there watching you get beaten up. So, that's a consideration, too. She probably doesn't want you to get beaten up either.

You You she doesn't I mean, she might be flattered that you're going to, you know, tell this guy to just leave my woman alone.

Just angrily, maybe even rush over to

him and grab grab his arm and like
shoving him away, that kind of thing. I
mean, in some cases that may work.

Then again, I mean, if you're in
[clears throat] a situation where you
you're going to you are responsible for
defending another person

like like a woman

who might become your wife someday, your
actual wife, your children, then I mean,
you cannot just be a Buddhist saint
about it. You may have to like
indulge in a little concealed carry
yourself.

So, I mean, if you're likely to be in a
situation like that, then

possible I mean, if you're not in
America, [clears throat] you may not
have a second amendment that allows you
to defend yourself
or your loved ones.

But in America, I mean

hell, there's

so many people carrying guns in South
Carolina

>> [laughter]

>> including devout Christians. I've had

I've had one ordained minister telling

me with a relish. I mean, he's

practically smacking his lips about he's

going to

really mess up anyone who breaks into

his house.

They got pump shotguns and stuff.

But I mean, you you really don't want to
just start a bloodbath
unnecessarily.

So, I mean

it's going to depend a lot on the
situation.

>> [sighs]

>> But I mean, just kind of
cowering

I mean, that's

I mean, that's just kind of unmanly, you
know? I mean, to say that it's unmanly
might just be
it might just seem cringe to
post-modernists.

But still, I mean

a man it's his duty to defend his woman,
to defend his children.

And I mean, if someone's going to take
the beating, it's better that he takes
the beating than than like the person
that it's his duty to protect.

So, I mean, let's say you got some
hoodlum, you know, he's got some other
guys kind of egging him on, kind of
standing to the side there, and one of
them just walks up and grabs your
woman's ass.

Then

I mean, you got to do something.

You really I mean, just pretending like
you didn't notice.

I mean, there's a good chance that's going to end your relationship at the very least.

And then, of course, those guys are going to know that you're you're just some cowardly [—] or whatever.

So,

I mean, sometimes

it's it's

the correct thing to do to risk taking a beating.

And if you say, "Well, just dump her because you're she's probably not going to be with you for very long anyway." I mean, that's you've pretty much already given up. You might as well just remain

an incel at that stage.

Or voluntarily become an incel. I guess he wouldn't be an incel if it's voluntary.

A volcel.

But, yeah, I mean, if you take Buddhist ethics very seriously, then you're probably better off just staying celibate anyway.

>> [snorts]

>> Unless you're willing to you know, like be the tragic hero, sacrifice your own virtue for the sake of protecting somebody else.

I mean, at the very least, if you're going to tangle with that gang, you know, you tell her to take off.

>> [laughter]

>> Call 911, you know, do something while you are in the process of trying to hold your own against this gang of thugs.

>> [sighs]

>> But, yeah, a man does have of responsibilities, even though in most parts of the Western world those responsibilities are being like illegalized. Even self-defense.

I mean, it was like

I remember years ago seeing an seeing a an article of I think it was in New Hampshire of all places that someone

was being assaulted. He pulled out a pocket knife and stabbed him in the thigh while they're just beating the [_] out of him. He got arrested for assault because he should have just run away.

But

yeah,

really. I mean, Western civilization is in the process of being castrated. It really is. And some countries have already been thoroughly castrated.

I mean, they won't even defend themselves.

They're just eunuchs at this point.

The overwhelming majority of the normies following the mainstream.

Unfortunately, America has not yet been fully castrated.

And so, you may have to fight. It's like What's that that song?

What was it? I can't remember his name.

I mean, I wasn't really into country music, but sometimes you have to fight to be a man.

You know? So, is Becky crying?

Came home and some gang of guys had abused his girl and

he just

goes goes after them. I mean, you got to

In In a case like that I mean, it's just a matter of

honor

that you're going to do something.

Even if you get your ass kicked.

Better to get your ass kicked trying to

like stand up for someone who looks to

you for protection

than just like put your tail between

your legs.

Cower.

You Sometimes it's it's just better to

get beaten up or killed than to just be

a craven coward.

Uh,

and a lot of people, a lot of a lot of

cowardly timid kind of people will just

use ethics as a justification

for being cowards.

But,

what can you say?

But, again, in answer to this question,
I mean, you really need to just feel out
the situation and respond
like what's the word? Spontaneously.

I mean, you can't have this
pre-programmed
like answer to the question.

You know, just like written down on on
recipe cards that you carry around. I
mean, it doesn't work that way.

And I forgot to put a paper umbrella
into this. I'm sorry.

Uh.

So, let's see here. So, I guess I
answered that question, although the

next two questions are similar.

Seal of Action C Pot Zinus says, "I was thinking of the recent Chud the Builder case where he went around calling people, especially black people, the N-word, and if they reacted, he would pepper spray them. People think it's freedom of speech, but if someone went around calling your wife, parents, or kids slurs, every normal person would want to defend them and might even react with violence. Why do you think many people might think it's bad if we react to being insulted, but it's open season if someone they love is insulted?"

Well, I mean, to to take an insult of

yourself with equanimity is one thing,
but if someone's insulting your wife or
your children or your parents,

>> [snorts]

>> that's something else.

You know, it's many cases where, you
know, you can say what you want about
me, but you go after my family, I'm
coming after you. That kind of thing.

That's honorable. That's completely
understandable within a samsaric
context.

I mean, if you're a Buddhist saint, then
you're just going to accept everything.

Just forgive them in your heart, you
know. Love those that curse you, you

know, or bless those that curse you.

Love your enemies and all that.

Which is more Christian than Buddhist,
but still that's one similarity of
Christianity and Buddhism.

So,

let's see. What's the

What's the actual question here?

People think it's freedom of speech, but
if someone went around calling your
wife, parents, or kids slurs, every
normal person would want to defend them
and might even react with violence.

Yeah, at the very least just tell them
your mama did a shitty job of teaching
you manners.

Why do you think many people might think

it's bad if we react to being insulted,
but it's open season if someone they
love is insulted? Yeah, I mean,
because you can't impose your moral
principles onto other people.

And you have to consider their feelings.

And also, you have to consider your duty
as a man to protect your wife and
children or the woman that you are
happening that you happen to be mating
with

or just any child's defense of its
parents.

>> [snorts]

>> I mean, it's it's it's a different
situation.

I mean, you can be humble and just let
insults roll off your back like water
off of a duck's back,
but still
you

To defend your family, to defend those
that you have a duty to protect, it it's
just a different situation, it seems to
me.

Which is one reason why monks break
family ties, don't have wives and
children to take care of, that kind of
thing. It frees you from this kind of
worldly obligation.

As a man to protect those who look to
you for protection.

And it's weird how

the left especially they say you know
words are violence you know it's like
someone just even inadvertently
performs a microaggression
just says something in with no hostility
at all you get offended by that and you
can just have them punished
which is
rather extreme
but I don't think Seal of Action Cee Paz
Zuno has really had that in mind here.
Why do you think many people might think
it's bad if we react to being insulted
but it's open season if someone they
love is insulted. Yeah it's I think I've
already covered that that it's you can't

really impose your own

moral standards

upon somebody else. They have their own

moral standards and you also have an

obligation to protect others. You don't

necessarily have an obligation to

protect yourself.

You know it's sort of like killing.

I mean you don't have the right to

terminate somebody else's life without

their consent especially but you could

it could be argued that someone might

have the right to terminate their own

life under certain circumstances.

You know the the disgraced soldier

falling on his sword in ancient Rome

that kind of thing.

Or you know the samurai
the honorable seppuku kind of a thing.
Maybe.

But you can't just impose that on
somebody else.

If you don't want the duty to protect
others you shouldn't put yourself in a
position where you have the duty to
protect others.

And in in which case [clears throat] you
just become like a a celibate
renunciant.

I guess I answered that question.

Yeah.

So, why do some people think that
you shouldn't [clears throat] react if

you are insulted, but you should,
nevertheless,
retaliate if someone you love is
insulted. Yeah, I think I I think I've
already answered that question as well
as I am able.

So, let's just move on to the next
question, then.

>> [clears throat]

>> This is something more into territory
with which I'm familiar, because I
really have never been in a public
situation where the woman I was with was
just grossly insulted.

You know, nobody grabbed her ass. Nobody
grabbed her anything.

So,

I was I was fortunate. Partly, we could say karma.

Anyways,

Seal of Action C

got her ass grabbed by someone or insulted, would male monks have to sit back, or are they supposed to defend her honor?

I remember hearing you can't be a monk if you're under 20, because you might not be able to handle the abuse, but I don't know how that extends to the nuns physically and mentally. Well, first of all, nuns have different rules than monks do, and they are forbidden from living in

dangerous places. Like, a a nun is nuns
aren't allowed to live in the forest.

So, that's one reason why the order of
nuns went extinct hundreds of years ago
is at times of persecution, you could
have like solitary hermit monks living
out in the woods, but it was just
against the rules for nuns to be
solitary forest hermits, just because
there's lots of bad men out there.

And like a nun is not allowed to travel
alone, this kind of thing.

And it was mainly for their own
protection.

You know, it's sort of minimize the the
odds of them being in a dangerous
situation like like Seal Action Cpad Z

net was mentioning. But, let's say a Buddhist nun did get her ass grabbed by someone or insulted. Um yeah, the male monks

they're not required to respond and they shouldn't respond. You know, it's in a case like ordained monks and nuns it's not a matter of imposing your spiritual or ethical principles upon somebody else. It's just that it's universal. Everyone, the nun, all the monks accept that you don't retaliate against wrongdoers through violence or whatever. I mean, the monk might peacefully you know, advise the man to keep his

hands to himself, that sort of thing.

But, there wouldn't be any fighting going on.

So,

yeah, I mean, in a case like that, it's just universally held ethical principles where everyone agrees you're not supposed to retaliate against people who insult you.

So, it'd be different from

>> [clears throat]

>> you know, a man's wife being insulted than if a nun is insulted in front of monks who see the insult happening. But, in that case,

it's universal moral [clears throat]

principles that are governing the

situation and the monk can peacefully,
you know, suggest to the guy to keep his
hands to himself or whatever.

But,

I mean, [clears throat] what else are
you going to do?

I mean, you could do the same thing if
somebody touches your wife if you're
like a very peaceful sort of person.

Peacefully suggest that he keep his
hands to himself, that kind of thing.

And even if you there's a gang of people
watching, even then, they might at at
have respect for the fact that you stood
up against them in a peaceful
non-provoking way.

But, yeah, it's like the monks should try to help her, you know, if if guys are ganging up on her, the monks can go in and try and save her, that kind of thing.

But,

you know, it [snorts] should just be just the bare minimum required the bare minimum of aggression required to save the nun. I don't think monks will just stand there and watch a nun get assaulted, for example.

I mean, some might.

But,

>> [clears throat]

>> I don't think it would be considered inappropriate for monks to at least try

to pull her away from the guys that are assaulting her.

Even if they take a beating in the process.

So,

I hope I answered those questions. I mean, they are kind of tricky questions, especially the first two.

But,

we do what we can.

The next question is from Erin.

And Erin says, "What is the karma of someone who cuts their grass every single day, turning the entire yard into a putting green on a golf course,

sometimes cutting it twice a day if it grows over 1 cm high?"

And again,

the karma of someone does not depend primarily on their physical actions, but on their mental states.

We used to have a guy who lived like this right across the street from us.

And his yard

I mean, he was this kind of person where he would mow his

mow his lawn

every day, maybe twice a day, and he'd

have all these machines Half of his

garage was full of these lawn care

machines, and he'd be like going going

over the the lawn with this machine that

would be poking holes to aerate the soil. He'd be scattering sand on it sometimes. It made it look bad for a few days, but then it would come back all nice and looking like the top of a pool table pretty much.

We got another neighbor that's like that, too, who's very Christian. And that's for me, that's that kind of complicates the situation because Christians are supposed to live be in the world but not of the world.

You know, and it's like, how can you have this obsessive concern with the perfection of your lawn and not be of the world?

Friendship with the world is enmity with God, sayeth the New Testament. And how is it that mowing your lawn once or even twice a day

just

like obsessed with the perfection of your yard?

I mean, how is that not friendship with the world? I mean, it may be in the mind of some devout Christian that he's just offering it all up to God, you know, sort of like in the Bhagavad Gita, where he just wants this perfect yard as a kind of offering to the Lord.

You know, maybe some Vaishnavite Hindus are like that.

You know, it's it's one of the teachings

of the Bhagavad Gita, you know, whatever you do, just offer it up to God. So, I mean, in a case like that, it wouldn't be so bad.

But if you just

I I don't I don't even I can't really comprehend fully the mentality of

someone cuz I mean, I'm I don't want to

I resist cutting

mowing the grass more than twice a week.

We got this kind of grass, it'll start

like going to seed in less than a week

after you mow it sometimes if it's been

raining good. And even then, it's like

mowing the lawn once a week is is like

my maximum. It just seems absurd

to mow it more than that, even if it doesn't look all that great for a day or two before I mow it.

I just don't care. You know, really uh as people go, I think I am abnormally callous to the opinions of others. I mean, I have situational awareness and a fair amount of empathy.

So, I mean, I don't just you know, callously insult people, that sort of thing.

At least I don't try to.

But,

I mean, I can't really comprehend why anyone would want to make their lawn as perfect as humanly possible. I mean, what what difference does it make? I

mean, it's just little grass plants growing in your front yard.

In front of the house, you got grass in front of the house, so what?

I mean, personally, I wouldn't mind if you just replace it all with moss that never needs mowed, or just even like set up like a Zen rock garden. Our front yard isn't very big.

Then you'd have grass coming up through the rocks and stuff. They'd have to be attended to though.

Might have to get out there with a rake and rake the gravel sometimes.

Maybe the the HOA wouldn't like Zen rock gardens instead of grass, who knows.

But, the karma of someone who cuts their grass every single day, or even twice a day,

um it's depends on their mental states.

And seriously, I cannot comprehend the mental states of someone who is like this.

I mean, it's kind of ironic now that the guy who lived right across the street from us, who had I mean, he was just obsessed. He'd be out there taking pictures of his lawn and posting it on Facebook.

That he moved out, and now the people that moved in, their grass is like this high, and it's all seeds.

I mean, that guy, he'd be dying inside

if he saw what his lawn has turned into.

The guy who used to live there.

But, I mean, it is theoretically

possible you could have some kind of

blameless mental states, you know, like

the the person who's devoutly religious

and offering the perfection of their

lawn up to God as a kind of sacrifice or

something. That would be

blameless, it seems to me. I mean, it

wouldn't be akusala karma. It wouldn't

be like unskillful karma necessarily.

Not very much of it anyway. But the

person who is just like

obsessed with having the best lawn in

the neighborhood and looking down on

other people for having weeds,
dandelions in their yard. Look at that
[__] loser with a dandelions in his
yard. This kind of stuff. I mean, it's I
don't see anything really positive from
that other than maybe just the the
self-discipline
of doing the lawn maintenance ritual
every day.

Yeah, it's it's something that I really
cannot comprehend. I do not understand
the mentality of the neighbor who just
wants [clears throat] just an absolutely
pristine, flawless yard.

And it's just they're I mean, you can
almost

I mean, it's not difficult to imagine

you know, a brown spot appears in their lawn. Just like the the turmoil they're undergoing from seeing that.

I mean, it's it just doesn't I'm like the opposite end of the spectrum. I mean, I don't let weeds get knee-high or anything. But I mean, it's I just do not like gauge my worth as a human by the quality of my yard.

Whether you know, whether how how mowed the grass happens to be. That kind of thing.

So, it's it's something that I can't really relate to.

But it it does depend on the mental states.

And [clears throat] so, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Ethiopian fake tig.

And Ethiopian fake tig says, "Once talked You once talked about how your sweetheart called you autistic after you tried to explain how cathode rays work or something. Do you think the Buddha could have also had autism may?

Question mark. They say autistic people are less likely to be religious and if they do engage, they do it in systematic ways and Buddhism is very very unique in the sense that it's an atheistic religion.

Well,

my sweetheart has called me autistic a

few times. In fact, she called me autistic just the other day when I told her we we we got a new car recently and we just got the license the new license plate in the mail to replace the paper temporary one.

And I was telling her and then she she actually liked the the license plate number, but I said, you know, I like this I used to have this Toyota pickup back in the '80s. The the the license plate number was GT6790 and it's like she just flat out accused me of being autistic for remembering my license plate number from the 1980s.

Um

but I do think that

>> [clears throat]

>> How where do I go from here?

Um because partly because

my sweetheart considers me to be

autistic.

I took a test online. You know, I mean

you just look up autism tests, you know,

and there's autism centers or whatever

that put out these tests that you can

test to see how autistic you are. I took

the test. I wasn't even close to

autistic.

Nowhere near to being um like

um clinically significant. So,

according to this test that I took, I'm

not autistic and one reason why I'm not

autistic is autistic people seem to be kind of closed off and are not very empathetic or good at picking up on social cues.

And

I'm I'm

I think I'm more empathetic than most people. I mean, I can just pick up on changes of vibe in the air. Like if someone starts feeling uncomfortable, that kind of thing, I pick up on it pretty quickly and easily.

So, that kind of situational awareness and kind of feeling into the feelings of other people, even though I might not particularly love the human race all

that much all the time, still it's there.

And so, just being intelligent and remembering obscure stuff. Like for example,

the diagnostic feature of the Teleost order Allopiformes is as follows.

The second pharyngeal branchial is elongated posterolaterally, extending away from the third pharyngeal branchial. The uncinata process of the third epibranchial is in contact with the fourth pharyngeal branchial.

I learned that in ichthyology class back in like 1985.

And I still remember it. But, that doesn't mean that I'm autistic.

The order [clears throat] Allopiformes,
by the way,
includes the
California lizardfish.

So, I'm not really autistic. I'm just
like intelligent with regard to
remembering stuff, like scientific names
or maybe license plate numbers.

I promptly [clears throat] forget most
locker combinations I've ever had.

I I don't even remember my my wife's
phone number. I mean, it's it's just
just in the phone.

You know, so it's it's right there. You
don't even need to to do any mnemonic or
anything to memorize it. So, I'm not

perfect. It's not like I'm a memorist or anything.

But, I'm apparently not particularly autistic, either. It's just that I remember weird stuff, and she considers that to be autistic.

Plus, I'm just kind of eccentric in certain ways. I'm not like a normie. I don't kind of behave like normal people do sometimes. So, she considers that to be autistic, but really it's it's just kind of there's some other explanation for it, I think. I don't really think that I'm particularly autistic. I mean, maybe at the low end of the spectrum or something.

But anyways, that that's not really the

question, is it?

See, do you think the Buddha could have also had autism autism may? And no, I don't. I don't think the Buddha was autistic.

Um

partly because autism it's it includes a certain like being like introverted and sort of clueless with regard to certain subtle cues. And I think the Buddha was extremely sensitive to certain things. I mean, he could just feel into the feelings of another person or just look at them and, you know, kind of know where they were at karmically, know the best way of helping them, know

what they needed to hear, what they
needed not to hear, that kind of thing.
That's really not particularly autistic.

So,

let's see. Do I think the Buddha could
have also been

autist had been autistic? I don't think
the Buddha was autistic. I mean, he was
unusual, so that would make him kind of
eccentric in a certain way. I mean,
[clears throat] he certainly wasn't
following along with the mainstream of
normies.

But I don't I think there's better ways
of explaining it than autism.

>> [sighs]

>> But if he was autistic, then

maybe being autistic has its advantages.

Okay, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake tick's second question.

He says, "It said [clears throat] an Arya is born in some heaven realm, but anyone who isn't enlightened doesn't remember their past lives. So, do all people who aren't fully enlightened just live in a heaven realm for an incalculable eon to get reborn again into human beings, and then depending on their karma, maybe get fully enlightened if they manage to find a Dhamma. Or you also once said it's easier to get enlightened in a heaven realm, so beings in heaven do practice Buddhism?

Question mark. Well, there's a lot of stuff I should probably address in here. So, some Aryas are born in some heaven realms. You know, like an Anagami is born in the pure abodes, accessible only to Anagamis.

So, there is that.

But,

>> [clears throat]

>> like a Sotapanna would be reborn as a human, or could

very possibly be reborn as a human, and an Arahant, who is an Arya, isn't reborn at all.

So, some Aryas may be reborn into heaven realms.

Okay, so I addressed that part.

Let's see.

>> [clears throat]

>> And he says, "But anyone who isn't enlightened doesn't remember their past lives." That's not true, either.

So, I mean, people who aren't enlightened can still remember their past lives. My father claims to have remembered a number of his past lives. And he did that through hypnotic past life regressions, and it's just a psychic power you can get where you can remember your past lives without hypnotic regressions.

You don't have to be an Arya. Just You just have to Going with orthodox

Theravada, you have to have Jhana, which then has kind of opened the door to certain psychic powers that most people don't have, including remembering your past lives.

So,

so that's not necessarily true, either.

So then he says, "So do all people who aren't fully enlightened just live in a heaven realm

for an incalculable eon to get reborn again human beings and then depending on their karma, maybe get fully enlightened if they manage to find Dhamma. Well, when you're in heaven, then you're a deva, and then you have certain psychic powers that ordinary humans don't have.

For example, clairvoyance. The word for clairvoyance is dibba cakkhu or the divine eye because it's implying that gods, small g gods in heaven realms, are just

get this by default.

Or dibba sota, the divine ear, clairaudience.

Apparently,

gods like in Tavatimsa heaven,

small g gods,

they just they're born with this.

So,

most gods, if if you go with like the

Pali texts, you read about the the devas

in the Pali texts, they they tend to

recall their past life as a human.

You know, like when Bahiya in the Bahiya

Sutta starts thinking maybe he's

enlightened, and then some deva that

used to be a kinsman of his comes to

him, apparently knows that

they they knew each other in a previous

life,

and comes and tells him, "No, you're not

enlightened, but, you know, the Buddha

in, you know, the Ganges Valley over way

to hell over to the to the east, he is

he is fully enlightened."

Then,

I mean, that's a case of a god

apparently

remembering his past lives.

Or at least one past life in which he
and and Bahiya were were kinsmen.

Relatives, if you will.

So, okay, so that part is also
inaccurate, kind of.

So, this Where's the actual question?

>> [cough and clears throat]

>> Or you also once said it's easier to get
enlightened in a heaven realm. No, I
maybe like if like for an anagami, they
they inevitably become enlightened in a
heaven realm because they don't return
to earth, you know, they just stay in
the pure abodes until they become
enlightened. But according to orthodox
Theravada, the perfect that you know,

the best realm to be in if you want to practice Dhamma is the human realm because in the heaven realms things are so nice, people are not inspired to reach out for something better.

You know, everything they want they get.

You know, you just feel like chocolate ice cream, it just appears in your mouth. This kind of stuff.

And in the animal realms, the other lower realms, hell realms and so forth, they're pretty much in survival mode or else they're just too ignorant to even think about Dhamma. So, in a human existence is like the perfect balance or as close to the perfect balance as you're going to find in the 31 planes of

existence where there's enough dukkha,
you know, enough suffering that they're
inspired to reach out for something
better. They're they're you know, to
strive for the end of suffering, but
also they're in a high enough realm that
they are able to hear Dhamma, they have
the intellect to understand Dhamma when
they hear it, that sort of thing.

They're not just stuck in survival mode
or at least many humans aren't.

So, I mean, this question is is like
like a string of inaccuracies, I'm sorry
to say.

>> [clears throat]

>> I mean, there is some accuracy in here.

So, I mean, what's the actual question?

So, beings in heaven do practice

Buddhism? I guess that's the question.

That's So, it would be the last words of
this paragraph. Beings in heaven do

practice Buddhism? Question mark. And it
wouldn't surprise me at all. I mean, you
do have

deities according to orthodox tradition
that are ariyas, you know, Sakka king of
gods

who was a reformed version of Indra

who was like the the tribal deity of

like the the Indo-Aryan invaders

of you know the Indian subcontinent 15
centuries before the common era.

Approximately, you know, he got

reformed, became an became an Arya.

Changed his name to Sakya for some reason.

Um

Let's see.

Beings in heaven can practice Buddhism.

Although, I mean it it does strike me that I mean I am a little bit skeptical of the orthodox claim that you're better off being a human than a god because humans are more likely to be inspired to practice Dharma.

Because I think one way you get into heaven is through wisdom and virtue. So, it would seem to me that most small g gods and goddesses, most Devas and Devis

are wiser and more virtuous than we are.

So, why wouldn't they practice Dharma if they're wiser than us?

So, I would guess that there's all kinds of Devas and some of them don't give a damn about Dharma and some of them do.

And the some that do might be very advanced. It's like the pure abodes is a clear example of even within orthodox tradition, you've got deities who are destined for enlightenment.

So,

yeah, I would guess that being some beings in heaven do practice Buddhism.

Not all of them do, just like all humans don't practice Buddhism.

So,

I guess I answered that question, sort of.

And so, I'm moving on to the very last question.

Man, we've been going for over two out two and a half hours, too.

And I hope the audio is is acceptable.

Last question

from Ethiopian fake tig and from anyone else. If you were to meet Bhikkhu Bodhi or any of the other libtard Buddhist, would you confront them about how they are poisoning the real teachings? Well, I was put into one of these situations before just

not an extremely long time ago.

Maybe around 2017

or 18.

I did meet Ajahn Brahm in Indonesia.

And we were hanging out quite a lot
um together.

I mean, we weren't sleeping in the same
quarters, but I mean, we were seeing
each other pretty much every day.

And

I just didn't have it in me to to
confront him with regard to his
unilateral, you know, taking upon
himself the authority of Gautama Buddha
and just declaring the Bhikkhuni Sangha
revived.

You know, I was I was tempted. I

considered it a few times. You know, I I didn't even want to argue with him. He's a senior monk. And I just, you know, we were both guests the same place. And I just did not want to just like provoke a confrontation with him.

I disagree with him on a lot of things and I just it just did not seem appropriate at the time under the circumstances to just start calling him out on what could be interpreted as [—]

Um it probably be the same with Bhikkhu Bodhi. I mean, there is, like I said before, a certain empathy, a certain just being

able to pick up on, you know,
discomfort in other people sometimes,
you know, under certain circumstances.
Like if I'm doing something or saying
something that other people don't like,
I kind of pick up on it and you have to
take that into consideration. And so
even if I were to meet Bhikkhu Bodhi,
who is just like
a progressive leftist wearing monk's
robes.

A good translator. [clears throat]

I mean, he doesn't seem to meditate
much, if at all, but I mean, he's a good
translator.

Um I don't think I would be much
inclined to just confront him, start

accusing him of of messing up Western
Dhamma, that kind of stuff.

Partly just out of consideration he's a
senior monk, you know, I don't want to
pick fights with senior monks.

Whether I'm a a junior monk or a
layperson, it's you're just probably
better off not doing it unless they're
just an absolute crook.

There are a few famous monks that aren't
so much

libtards

as Ethiopian Fake Dave puts it, but are
just like corrupt monks that are a
disgrace to the robes they're wearing
because, you know, they're just

flouting

the just the the principles of Buddhist
monasticism.

You know, it's it's they're just like
wearing robes in order to make more
money, this kind of stuff.

Um even then I might not confront them.

I'm just like avoid them. Like there was
one famous monk in Burma
who I mean, he's very famous, one of the
most famous monks in Burma, at least at
the time I was living there.

And

man, if he were to come to my monastery,
I used to, you know, sometimes people
would suggest we should invite him to
this monastery. And I you know, I would

I would not be encouraging at all. And if he did show up, there's a good chance I would have just avoided him and and not come out of my cave to even give him the time of day, that kind of thing.

But just to call him out to his face, I mean,

nothing good could come of that just because, you know, in Burma, he's one of the most famous monks in the country.

I'm just some

guest in the country. I'm some foreign barbarian.

>> [clears throat]

>> So, I mean, it would inevitably be interpreted that I was just being this

barbarian and insulting this this great famous Seattle or something.

So,

let's see. The whole question here, once again, if you were to meet Bhikkhu Bodhi or any of the other libtard Buddhists, would you confront them about how they are poisoning the real teachings? Under certain circumstances, let's say that I got set up with some debate on YouTube or something, then yeah, I mean, that might be my my responsibility to call them out as part of the debate, that kind of thing.

But,

>> [clears throat]

>> just to meet them

politely,

you know, for nondescript reasons, you know, you just happen to be at the same place at the same time or whatever, probably I would not be aggressively confrontational, unless I had good reason to be aggressively confrontational.

I mean, there was one time I met a guy in California, and

this guy [clears throat] he he took himself very seriously. I met him just that one time.

And

he he would introduce himself as one of

the world's leading authorities on
Burma.

Apparently, [clears throat]

you know, like not taking into account
all the Burmese people

who know Burma better than he does. You
know, he didn't even speak Burmese, but,
you know, he would kind of

>> [clears throat]

>> boastfully talk about how, you know, the
US government uses him as a consultant
with regard to Burmese matters and so
forth, and he takes himself very
seriously, not much of a sense of humor.

And then he started talking about
monks that he knew that were just
exemplary good monks. There's one that

was collecting donations for, like, the Rohingyas or something. There was one who ran an orphanage and there was another one who was doing something else. I think he There was one who was actually photographed at the White House with George W. Bush. That I think he was like a a refugee from Burma because of the the the military government's crackdown on protesting monks or something. So, he was involved in protest and so forth. And these three just excellent monks that he was holding up as examples of good monks. I mean, not a single one of them I mean, he didn't mention any kind of

monastic virtue or meditation or actually following Dhamma. You know, it was all these worldly kind of leftist sort of or not even leftist, but just like charitable things and protesting against governments and this kind of thing.

And I pointed out, it's like, they might be good people, but they don't sound like good monks because they're not doing what monks are supposed to do, which is practice Dhamma.

You know, one of them's running an orphanage, another one is like famous for protesting, and you know, it's like they're not doing what monks are

supposed to do according to the text.

And this guy got so angry at me. He just got up and I mean, first he was trying to to argue a little bit, but I'm saying they're they might be good people, but I mean, they're not doing what monks are supposed to do according to the text themselves. And he seemed to think that like modern like progressive ideals should take the place of these old outdated notions of what a monk is supposed to do.

And finally, he just I mean, he just didn't know how to deal with with me disagreeing with him and he just stormed out of the house.

I mean, he was he was like white with I mean, he wasn't like yelling or anything, but he was obviously extremely upset just because I was challenging his judgment on what makes a good monk.

And according to him, being a good monk doesn't necessarily require following like Dhamma like monastic duties like meditation and and not handling money and this kind of stuff.

So, I mean it has happened at least in that case. He was a

He wasn't a a monk-libtard,

but he was

a Buddhist, I guess.

And in a case like that, I mean if it just arises spontaneously like that,

somebody says something that strikes me
as just outrageously incorrect,
I might speak up.

Although Bhikkhu Bodhi or not Bhikkhu
Bodhi, but Ajahn Brahm was doing that in
Indonesia. He's encouraging people to
support the bhikkhunis. And you know,
it's like I'm wanting to like raise my
hand. You know, it's like, "What
bhikkhunis? They became extinct."

Uh,

>> [clears throat]

>> but I didn't do it.

Uh,

>> [sighs]

>> so let's see. Is there anything else to

be said here?

No, I think I'd probably just hold my
tongue unless

it was somebody else was provoking it.

So, that's it. I'm done.

Uh,

>> [sighs]

>> as I should always say at the beginning
and pretty much never do, do you have
any questions you think I can answer
regarding Dhamma

philosophy, that kind of stuff? Feel

free to ask no more than three questions
per person per episode, please.

Check my URL links below if you are so
inclined. Like and subscribe if you have
not done so already, and be happy.

Okay.

I think I might be streaming.

This is weird. It's not going to
officially start until 2:00 though.

Let's see here. What we got going here?

Okay.

I would appreciate it if someone would
uh

type something in the chat just so I'll
know that something's going on.

So far, nothing.

[clears throat]

Oh, okay. Maitreya Buddha has greeted
me, so that's a good sign.

All right.

[clears throat]

This is a little tricky. Okay.

Let's see.

I won't start answering questions until 2:00. In fact, I won't even even greet anybody till 2:00.

Just uh sip on my beverage.

[cough and clears throat]

Hot coffee on a hot day may be a bad idea.

Okay.

Okay.

Maitreya Buddha

says, "Will you be answering questions from the comments of your last uploaded video?" Yeah. Yeah. This

This I've done This is like my third live stream that I've ever done, so I'm

[clears throat] still not used to it yet.

But,

as a general rule, I'll be answering questions from submitted questions over the past week, and then every once in a while, I'll be looking at the chat and seeing if there's any more questions in the chat.

Is what I plan on doing.

[clears throat]

But, I guess before the show officially starts, I should put the paper umbrella back into the coffee, just so people don't think that I'm an uncultured barbarian.

Okay.

Says 1:59.

Better an hour early than a minute late and all that, but I'm just going to wait until 2:00 cuz that's what I said I was going to do.

We're going to start this at 2:00 p.m.

Those of you who aren't watching this live, you don't have to worry about any of this. You don't have to adjust your settings, anything like that.

But, this is the

[clears throat]

question answer

episode 200 live stream. I think the last live stream was at 100, which seems like it was only like 8 months ago, but

it had to have been longer than 8 months ago.

Okay, 20 seconds.

The excitement is almost unbearable.

10 seconds.

There should be like that that thing like you clap it at the beginning of filming or something.

Okay, action.

Hello and welcome to question and answer episode number 200

live stream edition. I'm your host Panyo Bossah. This is your co-host, my beverage.

And as I have already said,

it may be a mistake to drink hot coffee

on a hot day in South Carolina,
but what the hell? No gut, no glory.

[clears throat]

And I guess the way I'm going to have to
do this is after I'm finished, then I
can go in and edit, put in a thumbnail,
put in the list of questions and all
that. And also, like take
like download this video so that I can
then upload it onto other platforms,
including, well, I mean, pretty much all
of the other platforms are less
censorious, but we don't have to get
into that.

So,

let's see. Any uh
any updates?

Well, last week I mentioned that my
my uh gold ring danios were starting to
die,

which I mean, like three or four of them
died. I still have like a little school
of like five of them in my aquarium. And
then, like 3 days ago, I start noticing
little baby danios.

So, whether the die-off and like they're
like mating and reproducing has
something to do with it, I don't know.

Lot of animals have it way worse than
people do, where you have sex once and
then you just die, like a salmon.

[clears throat]

But, fortunately, I don't have salmon in

my my aquarium.

So, I guess what I should do, oh,

somebody

Proto Pseudo Monk.

Holy cow, this is a surprise. So, I

guess he's he's become a Hindu.

If he's worshipping cows now.

Okay.

So, I guess I should start answering

questions, cuz that's what I'm here for,

right? Know what I'm saying?

First question is from the Saboteur.

And the Saboteur watches me on BitChute,

so he's not going to be able to avail

himself of the luxury of seeing this on

YouTube live.

That Although, I think it's not 100%

live, because there's like a a delay,
I've noticed.

So, who knows? Who knows what the delay
is for? Maybe it's just it takes that
long for the electricity to go through
all the little wires and stuff.

Okay. First question is from the
Saboteur.

And the Saboteur says, "In Q&A 199, you
stated that regret is bad karma, but
surely regret is also a sign of
spiritual maturity or should we not feel
sorry for harming other beings?

Okay, well, I mean I've said it more
than once. I said it I mean this it's
something that I harp away at at times.

And I got to keep an eye on

keep an eye on the the chat here.

Okay. Yeah, I am taking questions from

the chat. Um although

mainly I'm going to be answering the

questions that were submitted

over the past week and then every once

in a while I'll be looking at the chat

and answering questions from that, too.

[snorts]

At least that is the plan.

But everything is impermanent subject to

change.

Okay.

So,

yeah, I mean I have said I remember

years ago, not too many years ago, like

maybe 7 years ago,

I was living in California and teaching
the children of Burmese immigrant
Buddhists about Buddhism.

And I would tell them I was like if you
only know one thing about Buddhism, the
most important thing you should know is
that desire is the cause of all
suffering.

Second noble truth.

But if there's another thing that you
know about Buddhism, that's all you
know, the second most important thing to
know is that a guilty conscience,
remorse, regret
always

more bad than good. You make bad karma.

It is an unskillful, unwholesome mental state to feel guilty, like have a guilty conscience, have remorse of conscience.

Againbite of inwit

for those of you who have read a lot of James Joyce.

So,

regret is not really a sign of spiritual maturity. It's a sign I mean it's a sign that you have some kind of spiritual awareness maybe. It's It's a sign that at least you are capable of acknowledging when you've done something wrong.

But, just because people feel this stuff doesn't mean that it's good. I mean,

like

all the emotions that people have have some sort of survival value. That's why we have it evolved into our ancestors, you know, like greed.

You have greed, you're more likely to survive in times of of like scarcity, that kind of thing.

Or lust, you know, you have lust, you're more likely to reproduce your DNA sequences and not become an evolutionary dead end, all that kind of stuff. So, maybe regret

has some kind of survival value for cave people.

But,

once you get into
a higher level of spiritual maturity,
then you don't need the greed to get
what you need. You don't need regret to
get you to stop doing bad things. You
can just acknowledge that you did
something wrong. You can resolve to try
harder in future not to do it again.
It doesn't require any regret or remorse
whatsoever to acknowledge you did
something wrong and to resolve to do
better in future.

The regret is like friction against the
way things are. It's like desiring that
the past had been different. And no
amount of desiring the past had been
different is going to cause the the past

to be different.

I mean, the past is is behind us. It's already been done.

Just the best you can do if you fall down and just get back up and continue moving forward and be more careful not to trip next time.

So, um

there's this question here, should we not feel sorry for harming other beings?

You can feel compassion,

which is kind of kind of like feeling

sorry in a way,

but wishing that you hadn't done it

is [snorts] pointless. It is just a

pointless, futile

generation of dukkha.

It just makes things worse. So, again, you harm some other being accidentally or even on purpose, and then you realize, well, it would have been better if I hadn't done that, and so you can do what you can to make amends if that is possible, and you can resolve to try to do better in future.

In fact, um something resembling confession in Theravada Buddhism, um exists where you can confess a fault or a misdeed to some respected spiritual person for the sake of helping you to do better in future. Just I acknowledge I did this wrong, I did this act, I acknowledge

that it is wrong, and I'm telling you to help me to do better next time.

That's all fine, they can all have positive mental states, but like any kind of negative mental state is going to be essentially bad karma, including remorse over having, you know, blown up that busload of nuns and orphans.

So, yeah, I mean, regret is not necessarily a sign of spiritual maturity,

um but at [clears throat] least it indicates an awareness of a knowledge of right and wrong. But then again, it's like the knowledge of right and wrong was what caused Adam and Eve to fall

from grace and get kicked out of the
Garden of Eden, right?

So,

a sign of spiritual maturity
is not struggling against the way things
are. Just accepting the way things are,
including accepting the fact that 3
weeks ago you did something that caused
a lot of suffering, and you acknowledge
that and you resolve to do better in
future.

And I need to uh

keep an eye

on

Let's see. Maybe I'm going to have to
rearrange things a little bit just so I
can see the chat.

[clears throat]

Okay.

So, we got a few people here. Let's see.

Question one from Proto Sudo Monk, are you taking questions in the chat? Now, I won't count that as a question.

Okay.

Fred, does car- karma have memory?

Uh

that's it's kind of a weird question.

Does karma have memory? I mean,

[clears throat] it has momentum, and momentum is a kind of memory. You know, it's like a pool ball rolling across the pool table. In a way, because it has momentum, that's a kind of memory of it

getting hit by the pool the pool pool
cue or by another ball to start it
moving. You know, it's it's momentum.

I guess uh using Newtonian language, an
object in motion tends to remain in
motion unless acted upon by some other
force.

So, that's kind of the way karma works.
So, it's it's sort of a kind of memory
because it's momentum.

You know, it's in a way it's sort of
remembers the motive force that got it
going because it's still going.

But, it's you wouldn't say that it's
like a conscious memory [clears throat]
in the sense of remembering who your
first grade teacher was, anything like

that.

So, let's see

Our proto pseudo monks asking questions.

Okay.

He says, Q1.

Question number one.

Should I finish my master's degree or
become a monk now?

I cannot endure six months more of this
insanity. My mind seeks the unshakeable
peace of Nibana.

Well, I mean, if you cannot endure six
more months of this insanity, that
pretty much answers your own question.

Maybe you're just sort of

of two [clears throat] minds on whether

you ought to endure six more months of that insanity, which is why you asked the questions. This question in particular.

Um I'm not even sure what the master's degree is in.

Uh I remember

there was an American monk who came to Burma, ordained in the same tradition as me.

And

[clears throat]

he sought me out because I was kind of legendary in the Taungpulu tradition, you know, the the strict monk who, you know, is roughing it in caves and all that. So, he sought me out in Burma.

Um it was like Christmas day and I had malaria really bad. That was the first time I had malaria. And I was hospitalized. I mean, [clears throat] it's almost immediately upon him coming to see me, they just had to load me into the jeep and take me into town to a hospital.

But the thing is um he eventually dropped out of the monkhood and it was just like this kind of explosion. You know, it was just some sort of he was under such stress that it built up to the point where he just like catapulted himself very spectacularly out of the Sangha.

And he he would write me letters
occasionally.

And um

he [clears throat] was saying that uh he
still was fully

he has

he fully intended to renounce the world
again and to strive for Nibbana in this
very life. But first, he wanted to get a
degree in Buddhist studies from Oxford
University in England
under Richard Gombrich.

Richard Gombrich is going to be his
mentor.

And

I kept telling him, "If you really want
to become enlightened in this life,

then

you're better off going to a meditation master in a forest somewhere than going to Richard Gombrich, who isn't even a Buddhist in Oxford."

But I mean, he just didn't see it that way. But eventually, he did. I think he ran out of money and couldn't afford to keep going to Oxford, and he did reordain. I think he's in robes right now. Last I heard, he was in robes right now. So,

I mean, if you're just getting a degree that's not even going to really be helping you. I mean, if you if you fully

intend to renounce the world and strive for enlightenment, at the very least, if you get a degree, it should it it should at least be kind of helping you in that direction. I mean, if you're just getting a degree in accounting or I don't know, like finance, that kind of stuff, it's not going to be of any help at all after you renounce the world, probably. I mean, you can pick up certain things, you know, certain like my degree in biology actually has helped me as a monk or as a Buddhist. It's just helping to understand why beings behave the way they do.

It's very helpful.

Of course, sometimes my degree in biology would be kind of sidetracking me a little bit. I did a lot of really fascinating studies of like the evolution of Hymenopteran insects, you know, like ants, bees, and wasps, because in the tropics, you have more diversity of Hymenopteran insects and so you can just see like the most primitive wasps that just kind of lay an egg on a caterpillar and fly away. And then you got a little bit more advanced ones that insert the egg into the caterpillar. And then you got more advanced ones that paralyze the caterpillar and bury it

underground. And then you've got the more advanced ones that are making like these elaborate nests like the potter wasps. And then they're like camouflaging it because there's other species of wasp that are parasitic and will and will burrow in and steal what's inside.

And so it's just just seeing the the sort of the the gradation of like the really primitive ones up to like the very relatively complex social wasps that have like a group like a you know like a hive kind of a thing. I mean that was fascinating. It didn't didn't necessarily help me as a monk.

[sighs]

But I mean like a degree in medicine or something. I mean that could be helpful. Like administering first aid in in some remote jungle area. It could be it could be helpful. Knowing how to stay healthy for example.

So let's see.

Should I finish my master's degree or become a monk now?

Well, I mean

I don't know all the details. I mean if you really are firmly persuaded you're going to be a monk and renounce the world, then I guess an academic degree isn't really necessary. I mean it's not

even necessary for monks to have monastic degrees.

I mean you want to come to Burma and strive to become an Agga Maha Pandita or something, you know, some ecclesiastical title

like bestowed upon you by the government. Even that doesn't really help. In fact, in Burma

certain titled monks like Dhammasariya's which which sort of like a at least a bachelor's degree in Buddhistic studies in Burma, like in the the monastic university system, Demostria is like one of the the first big titles that you can get. And they have a reputation for just like wanting to be famous and just being

famous as Dhamma teachers and not really practicing all that much, not following the rules monastic discipline, that sort of thing.

And Ajahn Chah had this famous saying that

people who start off like intellectually studying Dhamma, he's mainly referring to scholar monks, usually don't get very far in Dhamma just because they're like intellectualizing everything instead of just living the life spontaneously.

So, I mean, with regard to whether you should finish your master's degree or not, I mean, that's up to you. I see

he's got a a master of science in
artificial intelligence.

Well,

I mean, that could theoretically be
helpful in understanding

like

natural intelligence,

but

um I mean, if you really are fully
intended on just renouncing the world, I
mean, consider the example of Bahiya in
the Bahiya Sutta, one of my favorite
Suttas,

where as soon as he realizes he's not
enlightened, but there is a being who is
called enlightened, you know, hundreds
of miles away, he just immediately just

packs up and just takes off. I mean,
he's he doesn't want to waste any time.
When he finally gets to Savatthi or
wherever it was that the Buddha was at
the time,
you know, he asks, "Where is the Buddha?
I need to talk to him." And they say,
"Well, he's going for alms in town right
now. He'll be back in a little while.
You just make yourself comfortable, wait
here." And he just won't have it. And
so, I got to talk to him as soon as
possible. I don't know when I'm going to
die. I don't know how long I'm going to
be here, how much time I've got to learn
this essential Dhamma. So, he goes into

town. He hunts down the Buddha going for alms. He asks the Buddha in the street, "Teach me Dhamma." And the Buddha says, "Now is not an appropriate time. It's not convenient. I'm walking for alms right now." And then Bahiya just insists saying, "I don't know how much time I've got in this world. I need it now." So, finally the Buddha teaches him Dhamma. Bahiya becomes enlightened upon hearing this really like concentrated Dhamma talk that lasts only a few seconds. And then shortly after that, he gets trampled by a cow. And so, it was he did right in that case, I guess, in not wanting to postpone learning Dhamma any more than

necessary.

And I guess since there's people submitting stuff in the chat, that means that this is actually working. We're actually live right now. Uh close to live. Slight delay of a few seconds.

So, let's see here. Trzaskus is he's uh struggling to spell his name correctly there. Let's see.

Answer that question.

See.

Okay.

Is monogamy more virtuous than open relationships or polyamory for a Buddhist layperson or meditator?

Man.

Okay. Yeah, monogamy is if so celibacy

is best for me strictly Theravada

Buddhist point of view. If you can't be
celibate,

then there's a famous saying in the text

where the Buddha says, "If you can

renounce the world and live the holy

life, by all means do so. If you can't

renounce the world and live the holy

life, then at the very least you should

avoid sexual intercourse as though

avoiding falling into a deep pit with

glowing coals at the bottom. But if even

that is too much, at the very very

least, stay away stay away from the

wives of other men.

So,

there is that. But, I do think that

monogamy, I mean,

it [clears throat] reduces the number of

like

uh digressions from celibacy down to one

part one other person.

So, yeah, I think it's fairly common

sense that monogamy would be considered

more virtuous

than open relationships or polyamory.

Although,

in the Buddha's time, polygamy was

socially acceptable, legal, and all

that. Kings had harems at the time. The

Buddha himself, before he renounced the

world, apparently had a harem of beautiful dancing girls and all that. But, he wasn't [clears throat] in he wasn't committing adultery in the sense of like all this all of his slave girls were like his property. That kind of thing. I think he did only have one wife according to tradition. And maybe he was just virtuous even before he renounced the world and just kind of watched the beautiful dancing girls dance and then didn't lay a hand on them. But, that would be abnormal, I think. But, the Buddha was an abnormal person in certain ways, certain very good, valuable ways.

Uh

okay.

So, yeah, with regard to that question, is monogamy more virtuous than open relationships or polyamory? Uh yeah, monogamy would be more virtuous virtuous than open relationships, especially if you're messing around with the wives of other men, even if the other man is sort of a [__] sitting in the [__] chair wanting to watch or whatever, still it's it's sexual misconduct. And also like promiscuous sex is also Kamesutra.

Okay.

So, and and just going with reality,

open relationships and polyamory tend to be unstable and tend not to last very long. You know, it's just sort of a an explosion waiting to happen.

So, let's see here.

[clears throat]

Man, I'm just I'm just going to the chat and answering questions and uh we'll eventually get to the usual list.

Maybe I should uh get back to the Saboteur and finish this answer his second question before I do any more from the chat.

So, the Saboteur says, "Some criminals in prison have stated they don't care what they've done. Does that make them

closer to being Buddhist?"

Mm, not necessarily. It just makes them

closer to being sociopaths,

I guess. Let's see. I got to

got to do this. See, I've got to monkey

with my

um

[clears throat]

What am I doing here?

I've got different windows.

And I'm trying to

trying to figure this out.

Huh.

All right. I think I'm I think I'm

getting it.

Okay. Yeah, see,

I've got like three different windows.

I've got like the the OSB, is that what it's called?

Yeah, OBS. I got the OBS. I've got

YouTube. And then I've got the list that has the usual questions on it. And then I can't see all three at the same time, so I've got to like juggle around a lot.

Okay. So, let's get back to the

Saboteur's second question. Some

criminals in prison have stated they

don't care what they've done. Does that make them closer to being Buddhist?

Um maybe a few of them.

I mean,

[laughter and sighs]

in certain ways maybe where they're at

least they're not clinging to remorse.

You know, so I mean that would be good from a Buddhist point of view, but for the most part being a sociopath is taking you farther away from Buddhism than closer to the Buddhism because

I mean

in Buddhism, you should have moral scruples. You should have a conscience.

It's just that the conscience should take effect before you do the misdeed and prevent you from doing it.

Once I mean, that hasn't happened, you know, the fail-safe of moral scruples hasn't successfully operated and you just go ahead and do the misdeed, then

having like retroactive remorse or
scruples of conscience,
it doesn't help anything. It just makes
things worse overall.

So,

um these criminals in prison that

I mean, they they don't feel remorse and
they didn't feel any kind of moral
scruples before they were doing the
deed. They wanted to do it. Then, I
mean, they're just sociopaths or a lot
of them are, you know, they're just kind
of

so closed off that they're insensitive
to other beings. You know, their heart
chakra isn't open going with with yogic
new age kind of language. You know, they

just they're just closed off. They're just completely encased in this shell of like Pink Floyd's wall.

And that's why they don't feel any kind of remorse cuz they're just completely like self-referential

and they don't even have a window in Pink Floyd's wall that allows them to kind of feel in to what other other beings are feeling. They just feel their own feelings, they don't give a [__] about what anyone else is feeling.

They're not even exposed to it really.

Or, you know, it has no effect on them other than maybe they get a rush from somebody like screaming or whatever.

So,

yeah, it's

just because they don't feel remorse.

You know, they don't they might not feel

fear either like a some sociopathic

tough guy who just loves fighting and

getting into trouble,

he might be courageous also.

But, that doesn't mean I mean, just

courage in itself can be considered a

kind of virtue. Lack of remorse from

Buddhist point anyway can be seen as a

kind of virtue, but that doesn't mean

that overall they're closer to the

Buddhist ideal.

[snorts]

So, I'll look at the chat again.

Oh my.

Okay.

Let's see.

Question.

Could you try and this is Maximin.

Maximin asks, could you try and explain the process of beaming meta from your own experience?

Beaming meta. Well, I was never really into meta meditation. I've done it.

Um

you know, like a lot of times um I mean, let's see. How how should I how should I rephrase?

Um I've never really made like a central practice of meta meditation. It didn't

really work for me. Meta has to be spontaneous in my case.

But, like if you're a an ordained Buddhist monk at a lot of monasteries, you're just taught like before you go for alms round, it's like Sun the gas, Sun the gamma, upon you seek in the PR Jan my Jan my Jabazi, where you kind of chant this blessing to the people of the village, you know, just may they all be well and happy. That kind of stuff.

Yeah, I I could do that. That's no problem. And you know, a lot of the time you just genuinely feel it. It's not just blah blah blah coming out your mouth.

Uh but beaming meta

um

gosh

I mean

it's not really like you're shooting

meta like from a ray gun. It's it's

mainly you just

you're like focusing your attention on a

certain being or a certain like

category of beings. You know, all males,

all females, all beings in higher

realms, all beings in lower realms, this

kind of thing or you know, sending meta

in the northern direction, the southern

direction, you know, the east and the

west, up and down, intermediate

directions. You know, there's all this

kind of formula cookbook kind of
instructions for sending meta that you
can find in the texts.

Um I really didn't do that a whole lot
other than you know, like morning
chanting at a monastery where you know,
that's just part of the you know part of
the the the schedule. What is it? What's
I can't uh the program. Part of the
program.

So, I would do that.

Um but I mean, if you are genuinely
sending meta to somebody, there is
something going on. At least it can
really be going on.

I remember one time my preceptor
didn't like me very much. Mainly because

he was very Burmese and I was not particularly Burmese at all. And I was seen as kind of a loose cannon. Every once in a while, he he liked me because I was like conservative in my practice. And you know, it's like I remember one time U Pandita came to the monastery. Mahasi U Pandita, the famous Mahasi U Pandita came to the monastery and almost every monk at the monastery except me went to the Seattle and asked for permission to go and study Mahasi method meditation and I didn't and so he praised me at that time because I was like the only monk at the monastery that didn't want to go off and

start practicing Mahasi method.

But

as a general rule he didn't like me.

And then one day I remember I was walking around outside and I just felt like this glow in my heart. You know, I just felt really good for some reason.

And I found out that in the the shrine room of the of the main monastery building at that exact time my Seattle was leading a meta meditation like instruction to a group of people there and he was sending meta apparently and I caught some of it. So it was like I could really feel it [snorts] happening when it was happening and there are lots of cases of for example,

there's a a Burmese monk named U Ottomasara or Ottomasara, I can't remember which it was. Ottomasara, I think, who taught this meta meditation technique and there was this woman that was having trouble with her boss that started following the technique and shortly after she was sending meta to this troublesome troublemaker boss he just came to her and just sincerely apologized and asked her forgiveness.

And I mean it could just be a coincidence. A lot of skeptics would say it's just coincidental, but still there are a lot of cases of that kind of thing where really sending meta does have like

a like a noticeable effect.

[snorts]

But beaming meta is

I mean it's it's largely just an

artifact of perception, you know, it's

it's kind of imagination in a

[clears throat] way.

But still if you're sending meta to some

particular being

and they they can catch it. I mean, it

can have an effect.

But I'm really not an authority on

loving-kindness meditation.

Okay.

Let's see here.

Okay, Trzaska's is

asked the question and we're going to

make sure that they didn't ask questions
and you guys got to
self-police yourself
where if you've already asked three
questions or
already asked questions in comments
under YouTube videos or on the Discord
server or whatever, then keep that in
mind because still four questions is
transgressive. You'll wind up on a list
and it it could be very
unpleasant
for somebody.

Okay, so Trzaska's has asked question
here, "When you were meditating, did you
ever feel as if sensation of anger and

similar emotions were kind of heavy?

I mean, almost physical weight."

Um

Well, as a general rule if I was meditating, I wouldn't feel anger very much except maybe like you're you're sitting there like in a cave meditating and then a mosquito starts whining around your head and then it like lands like on your temple and bites but it doesn't find a a vein that suits it. It's like a fussy mosquito. So then it starts whining around a little more and then lands on your shoulder and starts biting you there but again, it just doesn't find a blood vessel that suits it. So then it like like flies up and

whines around and then starts biting you like on the knuckle or something. And yeah, I could feel like irritation, maybe a certain amount of intense hatred for that mosquito.

Um yes, I mean, it's definitely you feel something. I mean, I don't know if I've ever made a conscious connection between anger and like actual weight. But, yeah, I mean, there it's like something there that is

in in a way it's kind of weighing you down. It's kind of obscuring your clarity, that kind of thing.

So, I got to make sure I'm seeing the question here. I'm going to be doing

more squinting and like showing my nostrils and stuff in this one because the I can expand the type on the main list, so it's you know 42 point or whatever, but on the YouTube chat thing, it's it's pretty small.

Sensation of anger and similar emotions were kind of heavy, mean almost physical weight. Well, it's it's more a matter of, you know, you're you're in a state of clarity, just sort of equanimity, and then you start feeling some emotional feeling, anger, irritation, lust, you know, whatever it is, and it's like something wasn't there and then something is there, and it's you know, it it's obviously has a kind of

psychic mass to it. So, I mean, you could sort of cons- I mean, it to some people especially it can feel like a certain heaviness or weight, you know, it's like you got your mind is all light, and then it's just kind of gets burdened by a certain mental states. Yeah, I mean, I could I can understand how people could feel it that way. I mean, I've never really made a connection, wow, this irritation feels heavy. But, I mean, you can interpret it that way. And I don't know if this is going to be

lagging

or not. I don't know what the quality of this video is going to be.

Hopefully, the the sound issues at least have been fixed.

Um, let's see here.

Keep scrolling a little bit here.

Chester runaway. Have you heard of people meeting and talking to individuals that are later revealed to have been already dead by that point? A full spirit materialization, if you will.

Um, I haven't run across somebody like that in person, but I have read about that sort of thing in books. Like a full body apparition.

Um,

it was I read a book about, you know, the the afterdeath experience or something like that. And it was like a person sitting on their couch, watching TV, reading a book or whatever. And all of a sudden, some friend of theirs just appears in the doorway. He looks very white and kind of dazed. And I think he might have had blood on his face or something. And he just kind of like stares at them and then just poofs out of existence. And then later, the person finds out that he had died just shortly before that that apparition occurred. So, yeah, I've

heard about that. I've read about it.

But, um,

let's see.

Yeah, I've I've read about it. You know, apparently it does happen to some people sometimes, but it hasn't happened to me.

I mean, I have seen a few apparitions in my life, but it wasn't anybody that I didn't know was dead. I see, it was

How's they do it?

Yeah, that that they were later revealed to be dead or something. I mean, maybe.

I mean, once in Burma, I saw a kind of apparition that at first I thought was a real person until I started thinking about it. And I started thinking, well, maybe there was nobody there. You know,

it's like

I've told the story before. I was down at the lower monastery getting a bucket of water. I'm walking back up to my cave with this 5-gallon full bucket of water on my shoulder. And because I was usually going barefoot, I'd have to look down to make sure you're not stepping on a scorpion or something or anything else that's icky. Cuz when you're barefoot, you got to be you got to be mindful of where you're walking. That's one of the advantages of going barefoot. It improves your mindfulness.

So, anyways, through my peripheral vision, I can see a young man come out

of of the the forest down the trail
or up the trail.

Um along the trail, and he comes out
into the clearing. And I could see even
though I was seeing him with my
peripheral vision, I was looking down
when he comes out. I mean, he was a
young man wearing a blue shirt. I
remember that.

And you know, black hair, like pretty
much everyone has in Burma. And as soon
as he saw me, he just took off like a
streak. He just took off running across
my field of view.

You know, I was maybe 30 ft away at
most. And went behind the congregation
hall. And I'm thinking, you know,

somebody at a monastery sees a monk and they take off running, they're probably a thief or up to no good. You know, they're they're they're killing chickens or something. So, I looked for him and there was just no sign of him anywhere. So, then I'm thinking, well, were there footprints? Because I mean, when he took off like a streak, just 30 less than 30 ft away from me, it made no sound whatsoever. There were no thumping of footprint, no like footsteps, anything like that. It was just completely silent when he just took off like a streak. And there was no there were no footprints, but it was hard ground. So,

I mean, there was that. I mean, it's theoretically it could have been a person who just ran very quietly, very fast.

But, when I told some some nice village ladies about what happened, one of them just she just had no doubt at all that it was her own uncle who had been ordained at that same monastery as a novice and

he was not a conscientious novice cuz he was still married. He had his wife living in that congregation hall with him. As a novice and a lot of people they didn't like that. You know, you got some novice at a monastery living with

his own wife in the congregation hall of the monastery and he wound up getting poisoned, apparently, and just dropped dead.

And so she just thought for sure it must have been him.

But so that that'd be like from my own personal experience about as close to that sort of thing as I've ever experienced.

But I'm I have read of cases where where, you know, they see somebody, they think it's their friend and then it wasn't until later they realized that their friend it was already dead at the time that they saw him.

So it can happen. I'm I'm relatively
extremely open-minded with regard to
acknowledging the possibility of things.

Because damn near anything is possible.

So, Cleve did not know the Q&A is live
today. Well, I did give fair warning in
199. Oh,

which reminds me 200 is not prime at
all.

200 that's $2 * 100$, so that's 2. That's
and then

another 2 when you get 50, another 2 you
get 25 and then it's $5 * 5$. So it's $2 * 2 * 2 * 5 * 5$, I guess.

Okay. Now that we've got that out of the
way,

let's see here.

Let's see here.

Is this live or Memorex?

God, that's an old one.

They don't have Memorex anymore.

God, let's see. I got to scroll down here.

Let's see.

Can see my true of Buddha goes by the who goes by the pseudonym of XXKilllaBGXX.

Being a soci- sociopath is contrary to meta. Yeah, yeah, I would agree with that. I mean, even like if you read Dostoevsky's The Idiot, which is at one level it's a parable of Christ and the devil struggling for the soul of the

sinner. And you've got Rogozhin who represents the devil. When he loves Nastasya, I mean, he he's just like he's just obsessed [clears throat] with owning her, like possessing her and controlling her. That is like sort of the the spiritually dead or spiritually comatose approach to love of another person is just like ownership and control. You know, it's it's not really caring about how they feel, anything like that.

So, yeah. But then, I shouldn't be too much uh just making comments on the on the chat here.

Let's see. We got

Oh.

Somebody

who uh

I don't I know who they are, but they don't go by that name, but I don't know if they want me to call them by any other name. So, they're just going to remain anonymous here.

And they're saying, "What would you say is your most dominant chakra? And also your favorite?"

Well, Ram I I I'm not into yoga very much.

Um I'm not really much into new age. So, I'm really not an authority on chakras.

But, Ram Dass used to say that most

normies, you know, most worldlings
only have three chakras open. That's the
the root chakra at the the base of the
penis, I guess, is um you know, the base
of the tailbone, let's say,
is just survival. That's root chakra.
Second chakra is sex.
Third chakra or second chakra is like a
little higher up than the root of your
tailbone. And then third chakra, which
is around your solar plexus, your
dantian,
if you're into Chinese medicine,
um that's like
um worldly power and status and so
forth. I I assume intellect would be in
there.

Um and then those are like the three that most people are mainly operating on. Fourth chakra is the heart chakra. That's like compassion, where you start actually acknowledging that there's another you, you know, behind that person's eyes. You know what I'm saying?

You know what I'm saying?

You know, it's like it's just kind of more you you're starting getting insight into the idea that everyone is is a kind of me.

You know, in a way it's like everyone's sharing the same consciousness. They just have different egos like claiming a certain territory as their own, that

kind of thing.

So, my most dominant chakra,
gosh, when I was younger it might have
been my second one, but that whatever is
like the intellect chakra, probably
number three.

Yeah, I mean, you get into like more
like knowledge-oriented chakras, you
know, as you get up into the head
region.

[clears throat]

Um

but

uh just being realistic and maybe kind
of humble or something and just assuming
that my main chakras at which I've been
operating are kind of the lower ones

like most people in this world, then
maybe third chakra, but it would be like
the intellect kind of third chakra and
not social status, that kind of thing,
cuz I was never really into social
status. I was I I I've I think I'm
abnormally callous to the opinions of
others, more so than most people. I
mean, I'm not this completely oblivious
to the opinions of others, especially
the the opinions of my sweetie that I
have to take seriously cuz
you know, we're like an us now.

But,

just a stranger's opinion of me, I mean,
I can I can go into public

just looking like a mess cuz I don't really give a damn what people think about it.

My sweetie on the other hand, you know, she's got to put on her makeup and stuff before she considers herself presentable to go out and just meet total strangers. Like at the grocery store or something.

So, my most dominant chakra, probably like

more of the intellectual. So, I would guess it'd be like the intellectual aspect of third chakra. When I was younger, there would be definite times, even a few times nowadays in my old age when second chakra, the second the sexual chakra kind of is in the

ascendant.

But, my favorite chakra, I guess that would have to be the the thousand petaled lotus on the the crown of the head, which is opens when you become fully enlightened.

I mean, that have to be my favorite just for the sake of principle.

Okay then.

So, let's see here.

Proto pseudo monk advises me to grow psilocybin mushrooms at home.

Yeah, I think uh

Yeah, I think it's

legal, at least the spores and that kind of thing is legal in the United States.

It's been legal since like the 1970s. I remember when I was a teenager where you could in High Times magazine, you could find kits where you could buy the spores and brown rice cuz they didn't want to be sending cow poop in the mail and that kind of thing. And you could grow psilocybin mushrooms in sterilized brown in a gallon jar or something.

So, yeah, I mean, that's an option, I suppose.

Let's see. Robert, I know you are a big St. John of the Cross fan. What writing by him would you recommend?

The Ascent of Mount Carmel is probably his main

like mystical text.

I mean, he's got Sayings of Light and Love or just they're like little proverbs for you know, spiritual advice, that kind of thing. Um some of his poetry, like I can't remember the name of it. It's like Stanzas Inspired by uh an experience of high contemplation, which is I mean, it's a profound poem. One of the most profound poems I've ever read.

But you want to know like his philosophy regarding how mysticism works and how best to practice, that kind of thing, just nuts and bolts of his philosophy and his ethics and how to

practice correctly,

[snorts]

you're probably better off with

La Subida del Monte Carmelo

or uh The Ascent of Mount Carmel.

Which reminds me, Carmelo, that's that's

a name famous in the news lately. I

don't wonder if it just they named him

that at random or did they really knew

that Carmelo was like Spanish for Mount

Carmel?

I don't know. And it doesn't even

matter.

So, yeah, The Ascent of Mount Carmel

would be the

you know, it's sort of like Nagarjuna

has the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā as like his

his magnum opus [clears throat] or just kind of like the central work for understanding his philosophy.

With St. John of the Cross, I'm pretty sure it would be The Ascent of Mount Carmel, La Subida del Monte Carmelo.

So, let's see.

Fred retracted a message.

Let's see. Now, suppose this live or Memorex? Yeah, it's got to be live because they don't do Memorex no more.

Um

David says, "In Is enlightenment a real thing? What proof have you accumulated that would make you think it is or isn't?" Well, enlightenment, full

enlightenment, I have expressed a certain amount of skepticism over the course of these videos as to whether full enlightenment even it means anything within the context of samsara. You know, it's sort of like being out of the matrix. Does that have any meaning within the context of the matrix itself?

Or there was the the the Dignaga school, the Yogacara logicians they were called sometimes. It was a medieval Indian school of Buddhist logic. And their classic example of a problematic premise, something that cannot be proven, is such and such being is fully

enlightened. You know, it's it's a
problematic premise and it's kind of
like a paradox
or an enigma, an enigma wrapped in a
paradox,
if you will.

So,

in Buddhism and other systems, it is
treated as a real thing. Even St. John
of the Cross had his stage of of
perfection, which surprised me reading
St. John of the Cross for the first
time.

Um and there are people much wiser than
I am, much more advanced than I am in
certain respects, who just Sure.

Yep, it's real.

But, you can't really prove it. I mean,
you can't really prove anything out
there.

You know, it's

philosophers like David Hume and Spinoza
mainly in the West

have hammered away at the idea that I
mean, a certain amount of skepticism is
necessary because anything outside the
the contents of your own mind, anything
supposedly out there in some external
universe,

I mean, you cannot be certain.

It could be an illusion.

You don't know.

So,

um I I'm going with the idea that

enlightenment

it is

about the best goal you could have if

you have a goal,

and there is some reality to it, even if

somehow you're

like perpetrating a paradox

by becoming enlightened while still

apparently moving around and making

noise in this

like illusory matrix samsara.

So, let's see. What proof have you

accumulated that would make you think it

is or isn't? Well, I mean, like I just

said, there is no proof. There never

never is a proof unless you manage to become fully enlightened. And even then, you're not that's no proof to anybody else. And I mean, it's not even really proof to yourself necessarily because there are a lot of people out there who think they're enlightened, but really aren't.

[sighs]

But, I mean, there have been so many beings like Ram Dass, you know, one of my first gurus in this life, despite the fact that he's he was born and raised Jewish, he was a switch-hitter, kind of bisexual.

But,

he was a

very like like most good teachers, he was really enthusiastic about what he was teaching, and he very much believed in it, and he had a um a guru,

Neem Karoli Baba up there on the altar, up on top of the bookcase,

who, if he was not fully enlightened, he was about as close as a person can get to being fully enlightened. I mean, he was

I mean, from my point of view, Neem Karoli Baba was some kind of spiritual Superman.

Ram Dass was humble, and he would he had this embarrassing tendency that I kind

of emulated for a long time, especially when I was a monk, of just blurting out the most embarrassing truths about himself.

But, I'm just uh kind of wandering [clears throat] all over the place here.

So, just getting back to David's question, is enlightenment a real thing?

Well,

[clears throat]

I mean, it's it's it's kind of like a a paradoxical trick question.

Because enlightenment should not exist in this world. You know, it's like when you become enlightened, you have transcended this world. You have escaped from the matrix.

So,

words apply really only to the matrix,
only to samsara. And so, you're already
dealing with a kind of paradox.

But, um

you know, Buddhism just takes it as a
given that there is such a thing as
enlightenment, that the founder of the
tradition, the Buddha, was enlightened.
That's what Buddha means.

That there have been many people since
the Buddha's time that have been
considered to be enlightened, Buddhists
and non-Buddhists.

Saint John of the Cross, completely
different tradition, just using

different assumptions, comes up to the same kind of conclusion. I mean, it's sort of like

um convergent evolution of Roman

Catholicism and like Eastern like Indian spirituality. That I mean, there may have been some kind of indirect, obscure connections between Roman Catholicism and and Indian spirituality.

But, um for the most part, Saint John of the Cross was probably largely oblivious to what was going on in ancient India.

And but nevertheless just through their own experiences,

they they come to strikingly similar, if not identical, conclusions with regard to enlightenment, how to become

enlightened, what it's like, etc.

So, that's a kind of triangulation that
lends credence

to a point of view. If you've got
somebody else with different assumptions
who was

coming to the same conclusions

just

from from like

a completely different position.

And it's it's like triangulation.

If that makes any sense.

So,

what proof have I accumulated that would
make you think it is or isn't? Well,

I've read a lot of Buddhist texts and

read a lot of spiritual
spiritual stuff like the biography of
Ramana Maharshi, this kind of stuff,
which
does strongly suggest that there is
something to the idea of enlightenment.

And

Uh

[sighs]

what's what should I say next?

Um I mean, you could just kind of

logically extrapolate

that there is

at least

like

possible the possibility of
enlightenment.

Not that you can't really prove that anyone really is or is not enlightened.

You know what I mean? You can't prove that Eckhart Tolle is or is not enlightened as far as I know.

Maybe if he just goes off the deep end and starts behaving in really outrageously bad ways, that could be considered fairly conclusive that he isn't fully enlightened.

But I don't see how you could prove that he is or Krishnamurti or Gautama Buddha himself, who lived 25 centuries ago. All we got really with regard to his life is legends, which presumably contain a lot of truth

but also a lot of untruth.

So, I hope I answered that question more or less. You know, it is it seems like a reasonable working hypothesis.

That's about the best I can best I can give you.

So, next question is from Avenity.

And Avenity says, if I she just Okay, there she is. Avenity says, "In Theravada Buddhism, it is more ethical to sterilize stray animals to reduce future suffering or to have them alone and let nature take its course.

Actually, this this situation has arisen a number of times when I was a monk in Burma, and sterilizing animals

is considered to be a bad thing. There's some story in the in the commentaries of Sariputta in a previous life like castrating an ox or something, and it messed up his karma in subsequent lives.

So,

from a Buddhist point of view, just standing back and letting the cats overpopulate

is is more ethical than having the the cats spayed and neutered and or neutered.

So, and from a Western point of view, I mean, there was really there's like a monastery attendant kind of trying to argue with the monks because there was

we had a lot of cats at this one
monastery in California, and I mean, it
was getting up to like 50 or 60 cats
just
all over the grounds.

You know, most of them were like feral,
you know, they wouldn't even let you get
close to them.

And she's trying to get them to
do something about this cat population
explosion, and the monks, I mean,
they're just following Buddhist ethics.

It's like,

"Not our problem, you know, it's like
that's on the cats.

And [clears throat] and like interfering
with the you know, the

sexuality of other beings in that way is just considered to be like unethical from a from a classical Buddhist point of view, at least classical Theravada Buddhist.

Uh okay.

And uh

the comments are are going faster than I can answer them.

Let's see here. No lag, sound good.

That's good. HD, no lag, dandy. Because I'm lagging when I'm watching myself sometimes there's a lag of as much as like 5 seconds.

Okay.

Fred says he won't ask any more

questions or he will be in the shite.

Yeah?

Okay.

Let's see.

Uh try and find questions here.

Okay, Chrzaszcz is can the way of thinking about oneself presented in the suttas be illustrated using the Monty Python line, you're all different, I'm not.

I don't understand this question. Maybe I should read it more slowly.

Can the way of thinking about oneself presented in the suttas? Oh, okay, I understand that better now. I mean, the way of thinking about oneself presented in the suttas, it depends on the sutta,

I guess.

But like in the Atakavagga, you
shouldn't be thinking about yourself at
all, really.

No self view, no

I mean mine, anything like that.

So,

could that be illustrated using the
Monty Python line, you're all different,
I'm not? Nope.

I don't think so.

Cuz you're not supposed to be thinking
about other people, either.

So, it's just uh

visual sensation, seeing, seeing,

hearing, hearing, in the seen only the

seen, in the heard only the heard. You know, you just kind of deconstruct the sensory data and don't like start populating the mind with all these like constructions.

That person, this person, all of it. You just kind of deconstruct everything down to sensory data and just function at that level as much as you can.

Which, yeah, I mean, you wouldn't be getting to the Monty Python level there.

So, let's just keep going here.

Let's see.

Uh Clefy

Clefy says,

"Some Mahayana Buddhists say that the Heart Sutra appeared in this world because Dharma was starting to become a religion instead of a raft across the other shore."

Thoughts?

Um

maybe. I mean, it happens in religious traditions.

Um you know, it happens at a small scale with regard to like a meditation tradition in Burma that you have like an enlightened or or even like an inspired very wise founder. And then, maybe his the first generation of his disciples also have got some real attainment. It's

it's relatively rare for them to surpass their teacher, but it can happen sometimes. I think maybe Shway U Min was wiser than his teacher, Mahasi Sayadaw. Um but then, by the time you get to like the third generation, it's it's definitely in decline and it's like clinging to sayings of the the original founder and not much originality, or if there is originality, it's just veering off into like a totally different tradition, this kind of thing.

So, that happens on a larger scale with regard to religious systems in general, like Buddhism, where um I mean, just within a few centuries, Buddhism is just becoming this extremely

elaborate scholastic system with
Abhidharma philosophies and just massive
commentarial traditions and so forth.

And it's just becoming dogmatic and all
this legendary,

you know, mythological stuff is getting
absorbed into the into the system with
people just accepting it as just gospel
truth.

And it it does kind of
deviate from the original teachings. And
then you have like a reform movement.

And it could be that like
some [clears throat]

some aspects of Mahayana philosophy, I
mean, I've said this before, Mahayana

Buddhism, some aspects of it were a kind of reform movement. You know, they're trying to get away from all this like Abhidharma scholasticism, this intellectualism superimposed on Dharma and get back to just, you know, emptiness and just meditation. Zen was kind of like that also.

So, yeah, I mean, in a way you could say that

the Heart Sutra appeared in this world because of Dharma was starting to become a religion instead of a raft across to the other shore. It wouldn't just be the Heart Sutra, it'd be like the whole Prajnaparamita

movement, you know, the Diamond Cutter

and many others

where they're just trying In a way it was a kind of reform movement where they're trying to get away from all this intellectual scholasticism of what the earlier schools had become and just get back to something more along the lines of the Atthakavagga of the Sutta Nipata where

you're not philosophizing. You're trying to get away from all that. You're trying to get away from all this intellectualism and just in the seen, only the seen, and the heard, only the heard.

No philosophy, no belief system,

anything like that.

And that has happened a number of times
in in the the course of the evolution of
Buddhism. I've I've said before that I
mean I've [clears throat] I've written
before also

that you know the Buddha just led his
followers to the edge of a cliff and he
just jumped off and then gradually you
have like these intellectual philosopher
types justifying and rationalizing why
it's good to back away from the edge of
that scary cliff edge.

And then after that you had Nagarjuna
leading the Buddhists right back to the
cliff edge again. And then after
Nagarjuna's time you had you know later

like Mahayana philosophers
philosophizing up a storm and just
essentially rationalizing and justifying
backing away from the cliff edge again.

[sighs]

So it happens and it's kind of a poetic
way of putting it but I could say that
there is an element of truth to that.

And I'm just going to uh
scroll down. Somebody's mentioning Pizza
Hut.

Pizza Hut? No.

I never I had my mind poisoned against
Pizza Hut. I'll never forgive Pizza Hut.
Because there used to be another chain
called Pizza Pizza Haven. You know got

[clears throat] a pizza craving? Go to
Pizza Haven. Pizza Haven is pizza
heaven. And they had better pizza than
Pizza Hut and then they got bought out
by Pizza Hut and all of a sudden the
crust is like spongy and greasy and the
the the sauce is like ketchup.

[__] Pizza Hut.

Let's see. Proto pseudo monk.

Question two. Why are you so convinced
there is such a thing enlightenment and
elegant paradoxical intellectual theory
direct experience yours and others
or both? So why am I so convinced
there is such a thing
enlightenment
and elegant paradoxical intellectual

theory?

And this I'm not 100% sure that I understand this question.

Gosh, and I'm just giving you guys fair warning. This could be like a 5-hour long Q&A because the the questions are multiplying faster than I can answer them.

So, let's see here.

Why am I so convinced there is such thing enlightenment? Well, I mean, I just said above that I'm not completely convinced. I mean, it's I said it is a very convenient working hypothesis, a reasonable working hypothesis. I think is the way I put it.

Um

But yeah, I mean, it's it's everything combined, you know, it's like all the data I've taken in over the course of my life has digested into a certain kind of skepticism, but it's it's like a skepticism over whether enlightenment really means anything in a samsaric context, which is the context we're functioning in right now. But enlightenment itself is just like the absolute, you know, it's like infinite formless consciousness. At least if you could give a name to it, it might be called that. I mean, that's there, and I think that it is possible to transcend the

illusion, even if the illusion appears still to be here in a sense.

I mean, you can just transcend that because we're not really separate from the absolute anyway. It's call it capital G God. I mean, we are not separate from God. God pervades the entire universe

using theistic language. And so, it's really not a leap

to come to the conclusion that some people can become fully aware of this fact,

regardless of whether, you know, they're unable to tell a lie or they have this or that quality or or characteristic

that's listed in the text as what
enlightened beings have to be like.

Just to be able to transcend the
illusion

and just be fully aware of like capital
R reality that is underlying it.

At some level.

And I think that is there's a good
chance of that and just my own
experiences,

my own reasonings, just what I have
encountered like in spiritual literature
and all that, it all goes into the
hopper

and

gets processed into my hypothesis
that enlightenment may be paradoxical,

but there is some truth to it.

Okay.

Master Paul Raman of my favorite

my

skipping in, my favorite Hindu. Yeah,

he's definitely he

you

you couldn't do better than Ramana

Maharshi.

Let's see.

Let's see it's the star.

Scrolling down looking for questions.

Let's see. I'm glad you're doing the

live one. Eventual muse. A lot of people

there are commenting that I just do they

do not normally ask questions at least

not under the names that they're
leaving

um

leaving comments.

How about whenever a prime number
episode makes that episode live count as
three questions?

Um yeah, the thing about live streams is
first of all, this is only like the
third one I've ever done and so

um I pretty much got it down now as to
how to actually set it up and do it and
be confident that it's actually running.

I remember it was like the first time I
tried it, I didn't even know that I was
live. I I apparently was live and it I
wasn't getting any indication that I

was, you know, there's no green light that lights up or anything. I just went out and and was talking to my woman, saying, "I I don't know if it's working."

Just leaving an empty chair here. But, it's gradually I'm getting it down, so who knows? Maybe I'll do another live stream for 250 or 300 or who knows?

I mean, it could just become more of a regular thing. I'm not sure.

Okay.

See.

You'll know just when you know, damn it.

And Fred, who is living on the other side of the planet, is saying goodnight.

Okay. Okay, Protoss Sudomax, formerly known as Cool Whip, I believe, says, "In general, how should one read the Pali Canon to help achieve Nibbana without falling into philosophizing, rationalizing, intellectual scholasticism? Reject Abhidhamma. What else?" Well, I mean, you start with the Attha Vagga. Maybe stuff like the Bahiya Sutta that are just not intellectual. I mean, you stay away from the dry, the Veda Suttas, like in the Majjhima Nikaya that are just dry question-and-answer, philosophizing, intellectual stuff. You know, you just kind of stay away from that. I mean,

mainly, if you just want to be practicing correctly, you just read the Suttas that tell you how to practice.

And that's really all you need. You don't need the philosophizing.

I mean, you might need a little bit of philosophizing, like you have some experience in your meditation, some kind of insight, and you want to know if that insight is like a valid insight or you're just kidding yourself, that kind of thing. You can get some guidance from the Suttas.

But, I mean, just the Attha Vagga itself is fairly good and not particularly philosophical or intellectual.

So,

if you want to read the Pali Canon to help achieve Nibbana without falling into philosophizing, I mean, you're going to have to do some weeding out of texts that are presumably later and more intellectual and scholastic and all that.

[sighs]

So, maybe read GC Pande's Studies in the Origins of Buddhism and like emphasize the texts that he considers to be very old, and that way you can let him do some of the work for you.

I mean, that would be one one aspect of an approach, anyway. Let's see. Berber Meditator.

Would Nirvana as Brahman-like reality be eternalist?

Um

Well,

if you're referring to something as eternal, then you're pretty much dragged it into some into a samsaric context.

And I mean, Nirvana as as a kind of Brahman-like ultimate reality

um

it's it's like infinite and formless, and so you can't nothing sticks to it.

No kind of label sticks to it. I mean, you can't you'd have to say that there's some kind of entity that lasts forever in order to have an eternalism.

And it's just devoid of entities.

So,

[snorts]

I mean, it's sort of like saying is
emptiness eternal?

I mean, kind of, but

I mean, it's just not within the context
of anything that you can stick labels
to.

It's just off the scale.

So, I mean, any ideas you have about
ultimate reality are going to be
invalid.

It's just nothing sticks to it.

Because I mean, you're we're dealing
within the realm of illusion and trying
to apply illusory explanations onto

reality and illusory explanations of non-illusory reality just doesn't work. So, let's see here.

Please, in the end, turn on that fan in the back. Yeah, it was on because it's sucking the hot air out of this room.

This This is the only room in the house that has a southern exposure, two windows with a southern exposure, and also we've got four fish tanks in here that are kind of help raise the temperature and the humidity. So, um just like a week ago, I had to haul that fan out of the attic and set it up here just to blow cold air. But, we do have a ceiling fan. The ceiling fan is

working. Here, I'll even turn it up just to

satisfy my viewing audience because I do consider your concerns.

So,

let's see here.

Okay.

More live streams will bring in new viewers, something to consider. I'm

I'm not even sure how that works. People just randomly clicking on the live stream button and saying, "Oh, here's somebody I've never heard of before."

Let's see how that is.

I guess some people do that.

Anyways, now I'm going back to the list, which have has been neglected sorely.

Next question is from Jeffrey.

And Jeffrey also mainly watches these
these videos on BitChute, and so he's
not going to

benefit from the live stream at all.

Poor Jeffrey.

I feel for you, Jeffrey.

And your question is,

"Could you tell us again the Buddha's

view on fortune tellers? Would that

pertain to modern astrology? As you

know, I think there is no credible

evidence to outer space being real. I

think the planets are lights projected

upon the dome. So, I find the basis of

astrology lacking. Do you find there are

any redeeming qualities to astrology?

So, this is actually

three questions.

Okay, I got to separate the questions now.

Because I'm I am that way. I'm I'm systematic.

Let's see.

It's my third chakra getting inflamed.

Okay. So, Jeffrey's first question, could you tell us again the Buddha's view on fortune tellers? And the Buddha discouraged fortune telling, especially monks should not be fortune tellers.

That's called tiracchana

tiracchana vijja or animal knowledge.

You know, it's just not really dharma or dhamma. You know, it's just some sort of worldly digression. It really doesn't help you to become enlightened. And so, fortune telling, which would include not only astrology, but also like palm reading, um like [clears throat] consulting spirit mediums. I guess I don't know if that would be fortune telling, but uh you know, just any kind of prognostication, looking into a crystal ball, you know, or using like a one of those pendulum thingies or a Ouija board, anything like that. They hadn't

invented Ouija boards yet, probably. But still, anything like that is animal knowledge. Monks shouldn't do it, and it's not particularly dharmic. So, even lay people probably would not be encouraged to do that kind of stuff.

Although, lay people have more options, you know, they can they can sing and dance if they want to.

So,

lay people, it's I don't think the text like strictly prohibit referring to fortune tellers, which is good news for the Burmese cuz the the Burmese are really into fortune tellers. If you ever like

climb all the way up to the top of

Mandalay Hill, which is it's this hill that's just covered with shrines and little pagodas and and stat- Buddha statues and everything. And you get up towards the top and the fortune tellers are predatory. I mean, you you just pretty much have to carry a stick to defend yourselves against all these fortune tellers trying to get you to to submit to them telling your fortune.

So,

Okay, so I answered that question. The Buddha's view on fortune tellers, first of all, monks certainly should not be doing any fortune telling. And although in Burma, there's quite a few monks that

will do zartats, which are like

astrological

readings on with regard to the your your
first birthday, the day you were born.

And it's usually scratched into like a a
little

um

palm leaf kind of a thing. And then

people put that on their altar for the

rest of their life, that the zarta that

this renowned fortune teller or

astrologer or monk

made on their behalf.

Um

Yeah, lots of palm reading. Monks do a
lot of palm reading.

Some some monks do, I should say. But

it's it's discouraged in the texts.

Monks shouldn't do it. So, the next

question from Jeffrey here, what

what would that pertain to modern

astrology? Yeah, I think it would. I

mean, certainly would be modern

astrology would be animal knowledge. In

fact, in the texts, I think it's even in

the Atika Loga, it says a monk shouldn't

even be worrying about Atarva Atarva

charms. So, that's like the fourth Veda

for Hindus is the Atarva Veda, which is

mainly just a collection of magic

spells.

So, you shouldn't be doing that kind of

stuff either. Magic, prognostication,

like uh spirit mediumship or channeling,
that kind of thing. It's all just
incidental. I mean, it's it it's not
Dharma.

It doesn't help you to become
enlightened, at least according to
traditional poly texts.

So, we move on to Jeffrey's third part
here.

As you know, I think there is no
credible evidence to outer space being
real. I mean, there is such thing as
parallax.

I mean, you might want to look into
parallax.

You know, it's like when the the Earth
is at one one end of its orbit, the the

relationships of the stars is slightly different than when the Earth is at the other end of its orbit, where there's like shifts due to parallax because they're not all at the same distance from the Earth.

But, we don't need to get into that.

Let's see.

What is the question here? Do you think there is any redeeming qualities to astrology? To the extent that maybe there is truth to it? I mean, my father used to say that he was very skeptical of astrology until he dated this astrologer who told him a lot of stuff about himself, but also a

lot of stuff about his parents because it would have taken, you know, a person of this character, you know, this kind of birth information, and a person with this kind of birth information to produce him. And then he he became somewhat of a believer after that.

Although, I do think astrology is a kind of gimmick. I wrote an entire essay on [laughter] this with regards to astrology and tarot cards and Ouija boards and also spiritual teachers because it seems that like tarot cards is a classic example of you know, there is no machine at the tarot card making company that instills it with prognosticative

powers.

That you just have these cards, you know, they're chemically, physically hardly any different from regular playing cards. In fact, regular playing cards evolved from tarot cards.

[clears throat]

And so, any prognosticative ability in those cards is coming from the person who is using the cards.

It's just a kind of um it's just a kind of gimmick for channeling their own innate powers. It's sort of like Mary Baker Eddy said this

about spirit mediums also that, you know, there are spirits in this world, but as a general rule, they got their own lives to live. They don't give a [—] about us.

So, what happens is you've got some bored housewife, for example, who cannot believe that she has this latent subconscious connection with higher truths, and so her subconscious imagination just cooks up some multi-dimensional being that she then channels through.

And that's kind of how tarot cards works. You know, it's just channeling it's used as a kind of crutch to get your latent psychic abilities up to the

surface.

And, you know, so spirit mediums, tarot cards, Ouija boards, um astrology, like a lot of astrologers, they just kind of go into a like a um you know, they they get all the information, they lay it out in front of them. I read about one one famous astrologer, one relatively successful one, she would just lay everything out, you know, she'd make draw up the chart and everything, and then she would just kind of go into like a trance to come up with the information, which makes it more likely that what she's really doing is

just channeling, sort of like with tarot cards, that, you know, her own like innate psychic abilities to come up with some some amount of valid information.

Wow.

Jeffrey.

Oh, no. Okay. I thought, man, was he in the was he in the chat? He only watches BitChute.

Okay.

But, this is a question I I I take off of the BitChute comments.

I almost tried [clears throat] to show up Jeffrey as some kind of hypocrite for watching YouTube.

So, [snorts]

yeah, I mean, the only redeeming qualities to astrology is it's just another gimmick

for

bringing latent psychic talents up to the surface for people that just cannot believe that they can come up with the information without using the gimmick as a kind of crutch.

That's about it. But, I'm skeptical of astrology because I'm a Leo, and we Leos are naturally skeptical.

So, I guess it's Let's look at the chat to see if anyone came up with anything else here.

Let's see.

See, Ponio, keep doing live streams.

Before you know it, you'll be the rogue

ex-monk and a special guest on

Nerdrotic's Friday Night Tights. The

Buddhist right-wing take on soulless

Hollywood. Yeah, I we could bash away at

the new Odyssey with the black Helen of

Troy. That would be fun.

Okay. Athena Sigils turning 60 on

Tuesday.

Woohoo.

Well, not really.

Damn. Well, I don't know what to

congratulate on that one because he took

it all back at the end.

All right. Okay, so no questions. Oh,

the eventual muse has a Father's Day question. And that reminds me, today, at the time of recording this, it is Father's Day. Happy Father's Day to all you fathers out there. I hope you enjoy your new tie.

Let's see. All right, I guess nowadays people don't wear ties, so probably fathers don't get ties on Father's Day anymore.

See, have you considered how important your father was in setting your very unusual direction in life. Yeah, that's that should be fairly obvious. Like anyone who reads my most recent book that's on for sale on Amazon in the URL

links below if I can manage to add them after this this live stream.

Yeah, like people have asked me about how I became a monk and the standard explanation usually starts off with well, I started off having a weird father.

So, yeah, he was like my first guru, I guess. An upa guru, not a sat guru, not like a manifestation of God, but you know, he was one of my first spiritual teachers. He was just a an intelligent, eccentric, very open-minded kind of person.

He also taught me like how to go camping, that kind of stuff, which helped me as a monk because my father

was a minimalist when it came to camping. Even when we were little kids, we often did not have a tent. You know, we would just bring a tarp just in case it rained, otherwise you're sleeping under the open sky, that kind of thing.

[clears throat]

We didn't

we didn't get any of that freeze-dried camping stuff, you know, we'd be just eating regular like instant mashed potatoes, that kind of thing.

So, let's see here.

I guess the question was down under here, eventual muse.

Yeah, have I considered how important

your father was in setting your very unusual direction? Yeah, many, many times.

So, let's just move on to the next question on the list here from Seal of Ax and Sipat Zidana.

And Seal of Ax and Sipat Zidana says, I came across a tradition from India called the Lingayats.

I guess that's how you pronounce it.

They are monotheistic worshipers of Shiva

as a formless being

and reject the caste system, the Vedas, astrology, temples, and other Brahmanic practices.

Apparently, there were many non-Vedic or

Puranic traditions of Shiva worshippers since it was a non-Vedic god and they considered those stories in the Puranas as just Vedic corruptions. And this specific sect of Shaivites were founded by a philosopher named Basava in the 12th century in South India. To this day, the community has been trying to be identified as separate from Hinduism within India due to rejecting many of its core teachings. And there is a lot of issues around this with their government rejecting this. Have you heard about this tradition and what are your thoughts on it? Um no, I I can't recall having heard of the

Lingayats

before before Seal of Action Cpad Zena
asked me about it.

Um

[clears throat]

so there is that. Um he does say that
Shiva was a non-Vedic god and that's
semi-true. I mean, in the Vedas, the god
that eventually became known as Shiva
um was Rudra, who was a storm god. And
according to Grock, who I consulted, it
was in the Yajurveda, I think. There's a
famous

um a famous hymn to Rudra that calls him
by many different names, including
Shiva. I do think Shiva is a Sanskrit
name. So, the name and also at least

some of his origination is Vedic.

But yet, the Lingayats reject the Vedas.

And that would I mean, in my opinion,

that would disqualify them from being

Hindus. It seems to me that in order to

be like a a real Hindu, like

of like a descendant of Vedic

Brahmanism, still within that same tr-

tradition historically,

um you'd have to accept the authority of

the Vedas, and that's why like Buddhism

and Jainism are not considered to be

real Hinduism because they are they do

not accept the authority of the four

Vedas or the three Vedas.

However many Vedas you want to count,

they do not acknowledge their
authenticity or their their authority.

So,

um

according to Grahak, I mean I mean
anyone who's familiar with the Indus
Valley civilization know that there are
seals

or showing a kind of Shiva-like
deity or Shiva-like figure who's sitting
in sitting cross-legged often with an
erect phallus.

He's got animals around him. I think he
might have horns sometimes. And it may
be that this deity
was preserved

outside of Vedic tradition for centuries

until finally it got resorbed certain
aspects of this proto-Shiva
got incorporated into the Vedic
Rudra-Shiva.

And I mean that is certainly a
possibility. Although according to Seal
of Action Seal of Vision now, the the
Lingayats
were founded by
someone in the 12th century in South
India. So, I mean that could be a whole
different whole different influence of
some deity being
incorporated into
like quasi-Hinduism
uh at least.

So, um there was a certain syncretism. I mean you start off with Rudra the storm god who's mentioned in the Rigveda. I mean he was not uh like a major god in the in the Rigveda, but he is mentioned in the Rigveda.

And then gradually he starts becoming more important and it may be that certain prehistoric Indus Valley elements of a different deity got incorporated into Rudra Shiva, which I mean that kind of thing happens a lot in religion.

And then like over time you're getting into medieval

like medieval times that

like

Shaivism was in South India and then it got modified by the influence of some South Indian non-Vedic deity.

That's possible, but

um

I mean this is really the first I've heard of it. So I'm just sort of um hypothesizing off the cuff, if you will.

Let's see. Monotheistic worshippers of Shiva.

Um I mean I mean if if they're they don't accept the Vedas and they don't consider themselves to be Hindus, I mean

still I mean Shiva itself is like a
Vedic name, I'm pretty sure.

And so I mean they're just kind of
adopting some Vedic deity
um as the ultimate God and then just
rejecting the system after that.

I mean some Christians are kind of like
that. They completely reject Judaism.

Some sects of Christianity I'm pretty
sure are like that, even though they
still have latched on to some version
some like evolved modified version of
the Jewish Yahweh. So I would assume
that this is [clears throat] kind of a
similar case in India.

So

uh

yeah, I mean that's that's really all my thoughts on on it. I really have never heard of it before. So I shouldn't say too much about it.

And so I'm just going to move on to Seal of Action and C Pod Zeta now the second question.

He says, "In Hinduism, Dharma is often used to mean duty, such as Arjuna's Dharma in the Mahabharata is his caste duty as a Kshatriya." Yeah, the Ashrama Dharma, I think it's called. Does Buddhism have this kind of usage of Dhamma as well?

Cuz as far as I know, it only I only remember seeing it means the Buddha's

teachings or Dhammas as in phenomena or things. Well, Dhamma has more meanings than that, like mental state can also be called Dhamma in pre- presumably later texts.

Um still in the suttas, but

I don't think that using Dhamma as mental state

um goes back to the earliest texts. And like the first verse of the Dhammapada, Mano-pubbaṅgama Dhamma, I don't think that Dhamma means mental state there, although that's how the commentary interprets it.

Um

it's it's kind of I do think that um if you read the texts, like

especially like the Dhammapada

commentary, where it's not it's it's

less

like strictly spiritual and getting more

into like the the social and cultural

aspects of India at the time that you

may come across Dhamma meaning like

civil law or like like the law as

enforced by the government. And

interestingly, in Burma, in the Burmese

language, Taya is the Burmese version of

the word Dhamma or Dharma, and it does

have the two meanings of

Dhamma and also law. Like a Tayathi G is

a judge.

Um so,

um in in Burma,

the same word means law and Dhamma as
like, you know, the Buddhist religion.

So, I assume that they got that from
like earlier Pali or Sanskrit tradition.

So,

and and I mean the Burmese they were
never particularly Hindu unlike
maybe the Thais or the Cambodians or the
Vietnamese.

So,

yeah, I do think there is a good chance.

I can't remember of any cases or
instances offhand, but I do think that
as a kind of

like non-religious term in ancient
India, dhamma did mean law.

And it just kind of got adopted as a spiritual term.

Um sort of like arahants,

the word arahant

in in like social settings, you know,

non-religious

Indian society, an arahant it was just

meant worthy one and it was like big

shots were called araha.

Maybe judges even, I don't know.

So,

in in the in the Buddhist text, you're

mainly seeing the the spiritual

applications of words, whereas though

some of those same words

outside of a spiritual context meant

something else. Like upadana, which is usually translated as clinging in to the to the normie ancient Indian villager of the Ganges Valley, upadana meant fuel like firewood.

Uptake.

So, just because you don't see a word used in like a non-Buddhist sense in Buddhist text doesn't mean that it wasn't used in a non-Buddhist sense at the same time or even before the Buddhists adopted it. I mean, Buddhism is relatively notorious for borrowing terms and giving them new Buddhist meanings.

So,

let's see. What's the actual question?

Does Buddhism have this kind of usage of Dharma as well?

Cuz as far as

as I know, I only remember seeing it

Buddhist teachings are Dharmas. Okay.

So, yeah, I I Buddhism does have um the usage of Dharma as law.

Um not so much as ca as duty, but it can mean law.

Um yeah, duty. I mean, you could interpret it that way sometimes under certain

I mean, certain usages. I mean, it it there's enough overlap or something where you could use it that way, but as

a general rule, like your duty, it's kind of your Dharma, you know, it's kind of like your philosophy of life. Because Dharma, like in the Atakawaga, does not necessarily mean Buddhist Dharma. It means any kind of like religious philosophy.

Religion and philosophy weren't really separate in those days.

So,

I hope I answered that question well now cuz I'm moving on to Seal of Action C by Zeno's third question before I start looking at looking for questions on the chat again.

Seal of Action C by Zeno says,

"Archaeologists have now found Buddhist

statues in both ancient Egypt and among the Vikings. So, it seems like Christianity and Islam wiped out Buddhism from India, Africa, Middle East, Central Asia, and Europe. Are Abrahamic religions the most evil force this world has ever seen on the overall amount damage done spiritually to humanity?"

Well, I would guess that they have found Buddha images like in Scandinavia probably because some Viking raider just picked it up as a souvenir. I doubt that the Vikings had any significant amount of Buddhism

practiced. You know, it's just like a lot of people nowadays they'll have a Buddha statue in their garden or something without being Buddhist.

Um they just think it looks cool or something.

So, it could be that some Viking raider just raided some Buddhist temple or something and that was his share of the booty and so he brought it home and set it up, but probably [clears throat] didn't know very much about Buddhism, I would guess.

With regard to Buddha statues in ancient Egypt, I would guess that it was mostly Indian immigrants like like merchants, traders, sailors, and so forth like

involved in the trade routes between um
Roman Egypt and India mostly sea routes
if you're going through through Egypt, I
would guess.

Um you know, down the Red Sea and then I
mean the the the Romans did have a kind
of proto um

Oh man, Suez Canal.

You know, it's but the Romans they just
dug a canal from the Nile River into the
Red Sea.

So,

um there were ships going from between
India and and Egypt and so you had
Indian sailors, Indian merchants, and so
forth maybe some Indian missionaries,

you know, Buddhist monks, and so forth coming to Alexandria, but I would guess it's largely the way it works in America now where you have you know, Asian Buddhist temples that are mainly for the the immigrant community and there's very little interaction between the Buddhists in the like these cultural center temples and just the people living in the neighborhood.

So, I would

I'm skeptical that Buddhism really had much of a foot in the door in ancient and medieval Europe. You know, there's like indirect like very subtle influences,

but

I don't think that it was really a significant presence in ancient and medieval Europe or Egypt.

So,

um that all leads to the question, are Abrahamic religions the most evil force this world has ever seen on the overall amount damage done spiritually to humanity? Um not really.

I mean, Abrahamic religions

um

they they do have spiritual

They they they do have some profound spiritual, especially Christianity.

You know, with regard to like the the
profounder aspects of Judaism, I would
assume that's largely esoteric, like
Kabbalah stuff that I really don't hear
much about.

You know, every once in a while you hear
about some some rab sage rabbi who is
like abnormally wise. I'm sure that
stuff happens. Probably in Islam also
you're going to have like profoundly
wise people that just happen to be born,
you know, already wise into an Islamic
culture. Islam is their only option for
with regard to religions, their only
realistic one. So, they become a wise
Muslim.

That that can happen.

But with regard to Christianity,

I mean,

we've already mentioned St. John of the Cross who may have been fully enlightened. He may have been an arhat.

There's lots of profundity in

Christianity. I mean, some of it was pretty much ganked from non-Christian traditions.

You know, like early Christianity is largely, you know, it's it's

heavily influenced by Greek philosophy apparently Platonism in particular.

Fact,

one person I know has the theory that the Jews got their idea of

monotheism from Plato.

So, I wouldn't say that Abrahamic religions are the most evil force this world has ever seen

on the overall amount of damage done spiritually to I mean, Marxism, even though it's it's much came onto the scene much later, even Marxism has a much more anti-spiritual

effect than say Christianity. Although Marxism and Christianity are both schismatic sects of Judaism.

Seems to me.

So, yeah, I wouldn't say that Abrahamic religions in general are the most evil force this world has ever seen because Christianity has introduced a lot of

goodness, too. It may be that the the good aspects and the bad aspects of Christianity have largely balanced out. But still, it's I don't think that Christianity is predominantly evil.

With regard to Judaism and and Islam,

I don't think that they are as profound with regard to their saints and sages, but that's partly just because I'm largely ignorant of the the greatest Jewish and Muslim saints and sages.

But I mean, Islam is a product of this Dark Age Arabia, and it's still pretty evident that that is still the case.

Not that Islam is entirely bad, it's
just the founder of Islam

I mean, among other things, he was like
a caravan bandit who became a warlord
and

you know, did all kinds of atrocities by
modern Western ethical standards.

Having people beheaded,
their wives and children sold into
slavery, this kind of stuff.

So,

yeah, I mean, Islam, especially,

um I would consider to have had a
largely deleterious effect on

world spirituality. You know, like

Muslims pretty much exterminated the

Buddhists in India, for example, just to

give one example. That was just a a huge
genocide that you
rarely hear about.

I've seen some estimates that they could
have killed as many as 30 million
people.

And they were bragging about it. They
thought it was great.

[__] idolaters.

So,

still, I mean,

the most evil force this world has ever
seen on the overall amount damage done
spiritually to humanity, I would not say
that Abrahamic religions would win that
prize.

I mean, in modern times, Marxism, maybe.
Um I mean, Islam has definitely had some
negative effects on the West, which are
still happening if you look at the news
in like the UK
or France
or other European nations lately.

But, I mean, what would be the most evil
force this world has ever seen on the
overall amount damage done spiritually
to humanity?

Gosh, I mean, that's a tough one. I
mean, I'd have to think about it, and
I'm not going to just sit here like
staring off into space for 5 minutes to
come up with a good answer.

So,

I have already answered the question by saying that I do not think Abrahamic religions, in general, are the most evil force this world has ever seen.

Christianity especially has a hell of a lot of profundity and wisdom and goodness to it. It's just that to some degree it's hobbled or you know, it's it's got the handicap of trying to

be as wise and good as possible within this relatively like absurd context of a Jewish rabbi who lived in the early Roman Empire being the creator of the universe. That kind of stuff. You know, it's just

it's starting off with these constraints that really prevent it from becoming as perfect of a spiritual system as say Theravada Buddhism.

Not that any system is really perfect, but you know, it's less it it it falls much shorter of the goal than does Theravada in my opinion largely due to these absurd assumptions that are essential to the whole religious point of view that you can't really get rid of easily.

Like the the Jewish carpenter turned miracle rabbi who is the creator of the universe.

Okay. So, that's enough of Seal of Action Cee Pad Zeedanuf for a week.

No disrespect intended.

And let's just look here.

Trazaskas says second thoughts on becoming a prepper. I'm not really a prepper. I mean

Yeah. Yeah, I don't I don't really consider myself to be a prepper. I do like having more food than necessary in the house especially

um stuff that is

you can store it for a long time like in cans.

We really don't have a a large supply of water. I mean, that's one of the first things you need if there's an emergency is you got to have a good supply of

drinking water. And I mean, if I've considered, you know, if there's like a zombie apocalypse or something and the water pressure fails, we might be having to drink water out of our fish pond. We got about 500 gallons of it in there.

So, that's that's okay.

But, I'm not really a prepper. At least, I don't consider myself to be one. My my wife

occasionally in the past would watch uh YouTube videos by this guy who really is a prepper. You know, I think his his channel's called something like Southern Prepper. I think he lives in South Carolina. And this guy, I mean he he

th- there's no way he could stop being a prepper as far as I know. Well, some kind of crisis just slamming him out of his own personality traits because it's like he's walking around in his yard and he's got like these concrete benches. You know, you you see benches in like parks and so forth. He's got these concrete benches in his yard and he's saying, "In the when in the event of the [__] hit the fan, you can just tip those benches over and hide behind them and use them as as a a place of shelter while you're shooting at your enemies." This kind of stuff.

I mean, that's that's the kind of
prepper I I consider to be a real
prepper.

I don't even know what I'm doing that
that is prepper-like, to tell you the
truth.

So,

let's see.

Uh

questions.

Let's see.

Okay.

All right.

So, no more questions, Sarah. So, I'm
just going to continue on the normal
list.

Oops.

Okay.

This next question is from Arpad, r p a
d, and it's another Shiva question.

Arpad

or r p a d

says, "Why is Shiva often, although not
always, depicted sitting in the easy
pose rather than full or half lotus?"

And then he sent he included a picture
in which Lord Shiva isn't even sitting
in the easy pose.

I mean, the easy pose, as I understand
it, also sometimes called the Burmese
position, is when you're sitting
cross-legged.

You Here, I'm going to make sure that

you guys can see this. I had I had the the screen covered with the the question list. The easy pose is you're sitting cross-legged with your both knees on the floor, and you just have like one lower leg in front of the other one, kind of like this. You don't have big toes sticking up like that cuz you're not orangutans. But, you know, so the easy pose would be kind of sitting with your legs like this. Whereas, um the way most people sit cross-legged in the West especially, and in the picture that Arpad sent me, it's like this. You You're sitting cross-legged like this with your knees kind of up in the air, like that, which is not really

sustainable.

You know, it's not a stable sitting position, especially if you're going to be sitting there meditating for an hour.

Cuz you're just balancing on your butt.

You know, cuz your knees aren't stabilizing you. They're up in the air.

Uh [sighs]

maybe that would also be considered an easy pose, but I don't think it's what in yoga would be called the easy pose.

Cuz in the easy pose, you still got both knees on the on the ground or on the floor. It's just you've got like one lower leg in front of the other one on the floor, not both knees up in the air

like that.

But, let's getting back Let's get back to the question here. Why is Shiva often shown in like a less than full or half lotus position? And I really don't know. It could be just the painter.

It It could be just you had some painter who was not familiar with yogic postures who who painted or sculpted Shiva in that position and then it just kind of went mainstream because of his reputation or whatever and then 100 years later nobody even knew why they were portraying Shiva sitting in a kind of a sloppy cross-legged position.

I mean he's a god, you know, and

according to the Shaivites he is the
supreme deity so he doesn't have to sit
in like any kind of orthodox yogic pose.
I mean it could be it's just kind of
demonstrating that Shiva is kind of like
Dionysian,

you know, he doesn't have to follow
rules if he doesn't want to, that kind
of thing. He doesn't need to, I mean
he's already perfect.

Following rules isn't going to make him
any better.

So it could be that, it could just be
some like I already said just some weird
you know
oversight on the part of some sculptor

or painter who had a high reputation and people just started imitating that without even thinking why.

So that's a possibility, too.

But I'm not 100% sure why some images of Shiva have him sitting in like a not particularly yogic cross-legged position.

Maybe if you ask a Hindu they might be able to answer the question.

But um yeah, I haven't really thought about it to tell you the truth. I never really noticed it because most it seems to me that most images of Shiva sitting in meditation he is fairly yogic. He's like the the yogic god, you know, he's the swami of the gods.

So anyways

[clears throat]

check and see if there's any more questions in the chat here.

Let's see.

Sometimes it's hard to tell. You got to just look for a question mark.

Like this one.

Let's see.

Srinivasa

Danand.

See, Srinivasa

Danand. Yeah, I don't think Srinivasa

Danand has asked question before.

He says, "If anything Christian

nationalism I more dangerous look at the

Trump situation.

Aren't lot of the Abrahamic faiths the ones that are at war and proselytize and call others pagans or non-believers?"

Well, I mean, the history of the world um I mean, it was wars all the time regardless of Abrahamic religions.

So,

um yeah, it's it's just that the Abrahamic follow- followers of Abrahamic religions are just continuing with the human tradition of waging wars and being violently aggressive.

And

uh I got to wipe my eyes again.

This happens sometimes. It happens quite

a lot.

Where my eyes start to burn because

apparently

eyelid grease is getting into my eye.

Okay.

So, aren't my most I guess, aren't most

of the Abrahamic faiths the ones that

are at war and proselytize and call

others pagans or non-believers?

Um well, I mean, Christians don't bother

to call people pagans and non-believers.

I think that's mostly a a Muslim thing

is call people infidels or

non-believers.

Um

See.

Yeah, I really don't I really don't see Christianity as more violent than say communism. I mean, if it's if it's sort of like a castrated feminized communism like is more in fashion nowadays, then

[clears throat]

sure, it's nonviolent, but it's sort of like suicidally nonviolent.

You know, it's

this kind of feminized emasculated

Marxism or neo-Marxism that has in so

much in vogue, especially among

college-educated white women,

um yeah, I mean it doesn't have a future really.

It's just setting up the society to be

overthrown.

But war certainly was is no monopoly of
Abrahamic religions.

Let's see here.

Yeah, people are going to good night and
say like Clefi is going to bed, but I
think Clefi is Lithuanian.

So, that makes sense.

Let's see.

Question marks, any more question marks?

See, what do you see? Angel, okay,
that's not a question.

Question, okay. Trinivasa

Danan is asking question.

If there is anything to Jesus or Buddha
or anyone, why does it not liberate you?

Those values falsify you and do not
apply to your life. Reason? It is
interpreted through thought, so useless.

Um I'm not exact I think he just
answered his own question. So, I think
it might have just been a rhetorical
question.

I mean, the first word is question.

And then he asks a question, and then
he just gives his own answer to the
question.

So, I'm not sure if he's expecting a
question. This is This is kind of a
uh

a difficult situation sometimes.

Especially with

with uh

what's his name?

Gosh. How can I forget his name? Fred.

Because I mean he just sometimes will just pepper comments with questions, some of which he apparently isn't even expecting an answer to. So, if there's anything to Jesus or Buddha or anyone, why does it not liberate you? Well, because you're still enlightened. Just because they're enlightened is they can't make you be enlightened. That's like a matter of your own wisdom and karma. And just because you come into the presence of a fully enlightened being,

I mean, that doesn't [clears throat]

mean that

that they're going to just like somehow magically enlighten you. I mean, some people it's sort of like the Dhammapada verse where, you know, the the fool in the presence of a wise person is like a spoon in the soup that doesn't taste the soup at all.

So, I mean there were fools who came into contact with the Buddha himself who just wandered away just thinking, "Man, he's clueless." Or whatever.

You know, they just don't get it.

Cuz they've got their own foolishness to contend with.

[sighs]

So, that's part of it.

That's a major part of it.

Anyways, let's get back to the the standard list here.

And this is This question is from Maitreya Buddha.

And Maitreya Buddha says,

"The Pali word for non-self is anatta.

The Japanese word for you is anata.

I don't know how to pronounce it correctly with a Japanese accent, but it's a n a t a. Could it be that anata is simply a word that for anyone that is not you, and modern Buddhists over complicated the term? I understand that Theravada Buddhism did not make it to

Japan in history, but I read that Japanese people did travel to Nalanda to study Buddhism before it was destroyed by Muslim invaders. From my understanding, Nalanda was the epicenter for both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Also, in the year 736, there was a South Indian Buddhist monk who went by the name of Bodhisena who traveled to Japan and taught Sanskrit and influenced the creation of the Katakana script, which is an exclusive script for foreign loan words. Okay, so most of that stuff towards the end um is not necessarily pertinent

to this question.

Which the main question here is, could it be that anatta, in quotes, is simply a word that for anyone that is not you and modern Buddhists overcomplicated the term. Well, first of all, the idea that the Japanese word for you is anatta has absolutely nothing at all to do with the Pali language. You know, it's just a total coincidence in all likelihood.

I mean, at the time that the word anatta was appearing in Buddhist texts, I mean, even though there may have been purely oral or not written down yet, Japan doesn't even exist yet. The Japanese

hadn't even migrated.

Um I don't know. When did When did the ethnic Japanese migrate in Japan from the mainland?

What?

Probably the Japanese language did not yet exist

um any more than like Old English a thousand years ago is completely not understandable to modern English speakers.

So, I mean,

the Japanese word for you being anatta has absolutely nothing to do with the meaning of anatta in Pali.

So, anatta in Pali is just the an, which means not, and atta, which means self or

without a self, not self, no self.

And it's fairly clear from the texts that the meaning is is pretty much there is no self. It doesn't mean that anatta originally meant someone that isn't your own self, but could be anybody else.

No, I don't think so.

So,

yeah, I mean the the Anatta Lakkhana Sutta, which is very ancient, you know, it's it's it's talking about Anatta meaning that nobody has a self. It's not just that you're using Anatta as a kind of pronoun meaning not me, it's you, but cuz it's not me.

Yeah, that's that seems even more complicated as a way of trying to interpret the term Anatta and in dragging in modern Japanese to, you know, somehow influence ancient Pali and so forth.

Yeah, it's it's it's just a coincidence in my opinion.

And no self,

I mean, Anatta literally means no self or not self.

And

it's just nobody has a self. I mean,

that's fairly clear even from the

Buddha's

traditionally his second discourse, the

Anatta Lakkhana Sutta.

So,

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says,

"There are so many non-Buddhist related subjects when I wonder I often wonder, what does Panya Bodhi think about this?

My questions for this week are about such a subject. I recently saw the Michael Jackson biopic movie. It covers his early life to the late 1980s, a few years before the child molestation allegations surfaced.

I honestly don't know what to make of Michael Jackson and the child molestation allegations made against

him. I mean, the guy did have an amusement park built on his property and hosted sleepovers with children. On the other hand, most of his accusers have been discredited and he was acquitted on all counts in a court of law. So, I ask you, was Michael Jackson a child molester or an emotionally stunted eccentric?

Aside from whether or not you think he was guilty or innocent, what is your overall opinion of Michael Jackson's music, talent, and cultural impact?

Okay, so I guess that's another question, isn't it? There's a whole completely different question mark there.

So, I got to separate them.

[clears throat]

All right.

So, asking about Michael Jackson.

See, the first question.

Was Michael Jackson a child molester or an emotionally stunted eccentric? Okay, well, I missed out on most of the whole Michael Jackson thing. I was a monk living in Burma at the time. I remember one time I came back to America briefly to visit my parents and my father watched CNN all the time. This is back when CNN was still some semblance of actual news and not just leftist propaganda.

And so, I I picked up a little bit on the Michael Jackson child molestation scandal or trial.

And

um one thing that stood out in my memory was that for some reason

there was an interview with Uri Geller, you know, the the famous

psychic guy, you know, who can like bend metal without touching it and all this, who was employed by the CIA for a while.

And Uri Geller or Udi Udi Geller

was saying that he was he had been continually warning Michael Jackson to to just knock it off with the kid stuff and all he'd get from Michael Jackson was like an uncomprehending stare.

So, I mean, going with that, it seems like Uri Geller

kind of picked up on something that was not right with Michael Jackson and his behavior towards kids and was warning him to stop.

Unless Uri Geller is just lying.

So, there is that. And I mean, you look at Michael Jackson. I mean, just setting aside his musical talent, he was a weird person. I mean, first of all, look what he did to himself. He started off as a black guy and then towards the end, he was sort of like a black-white, male-female, human-elf kind of a being. So, I mean, he wasn't entirely

like normal. I mean, obviously, he was an eccentric regardless of whether he was messing around inappropriately with with little kids.

So, I mean, he was he was weird.

You know, he had like

pet chimpanzee and like this Disneyland kind of place where he lived. He wanted to become a Jehovah's Witness, allegedly, and they wouldn't take him.

I mean,

so, I mean, there is that. He was just like this weird, eccentric person.

Partly because he was emotionally stunted because he didn't get to have a childhood because his his father was just working him since he was a toddler

practically. You know, he didn't really get to have like a normal childhood.

But then again,

um there's other factors involved.

Like

well, I mean, I don't I don't want to get into any kind of human biodiversity stuff anymore than necessary, but fame and you know, belonging to a certain ethnicity, often the fame has like a destructive

like effect on that person.

Bill Cosby is another example.

Bill Cosby's in prison right now, I'm pretty sure.

Which kind of reminds me of this

discussion I was having with my woman
last night

because if somebody does something wrong
she doesn't like them, doesn't want to
have anything to do with them, which is
understandable. But to me, I mean, when
I was a kid I had a number I had very
few records, you know, like 33 and a
third, you know, album records.

One of the only ones I owned was a Bill
Cosby record and it's like he's it's
like a comedy routine. He was like a
stand-up comic at one time. And I
listened to that record a hundred times
probably. You know, the chicken heart
that ate New York City, you know, it's
just it's it's been incorporated into my

personality and it's funny regardless of Bill Cosby drugging women and doing naughty things to them while they're unconscious. That record is still funny. Or like Woody Allen.

You know, despite the fact that at some point he started messing around with his ex

step foster daughter.

I mean

Love and Death is still one of my favorite movies. I mean, he's still it's still like an excellent movie.

So, in my case, I can kind of dissociate like Michael Jackson's music from the possibility that he was a child

molester, for example.

You know, I It's not like I'm going to say, you know, his music sucks because he was a bad person or something along those lines.

And my my wife, she's she she doesn't really separate that, you know, she sees the whole package and there's something about that package she doesn't like, she's not going to like the music or the movies or anything like that either.

So

I I just brought that up as an aside because there was this conversation that that last night about this very kind of subject.

Getting back to Michael Jackson, you

know, I mean he was weird. I mean and I really don't know. I have insufficient data to know whether he really was molesting children.

I just do not know.

But it doesn't really affect my like appreciation or lack of appreciation of his music.

When I was young and like Michael Jackson's Thriller came out, you'd go to any college party, you go to a kegger, they've all got to be playing Thriller. And I was like more of a rock and roller at the time. I had much more appreciation for Led Zeppelin than for Michael Jackson.

So, I mean I was kind of biased against Michael Jackson because he was more pop than rock and roll. But I mean every once in a while I'll be driving somewhere and then some Michael Jackson song will come up on the radio. And I mean he was [clears throat] a talented musician.

Definitely.

So, I have to acknowledge that he was a talented musician even though his genre of music wasn't my favorite.

Still I have to acknowledge, you know, he has got really good musicians playing in you know, supporting supporting the song and you know, the music writing and

that kind of thing.

You know, he was very accomplished as a musician. I think Frank Zappa prophesied at one point that Michael Jackson was eventually going to start composing classical music, but he wound up dying of a drug overdose before that ever happened.

[cough and clears throat]

So, with regard to the question was Michael Jackson a child molester or an emotionally stunted eccentric? Well, I mean he could be both. I mean the emotionally stunted eccentric part is pretty much of a given. That's pretty obvious.

I mean, he was just I mean, just considering all the plastic surgery stuff he had done to himself to make himself look like a kind of androgynous elf.

You know, I mean, why?

He he obviously [clears throat] had some kind of problems. And then, you know, just dying of a drug overdose, um even if he did it accidentally, I mean, the fact that he was just rendering himself blotto this with with some kind of rich person's drug. I can't remember the name of it. It's not something that's normally found on the street, I'm pretty

sure.

So, I mean, he was weird. You know, he was

you know, he had his issues, definitely, regardless of whether he molested children. And whether he did molest children or not, I just [clears throat] lack the evidence. I have insufficient data to form any kind of intelligent conclusion, to come to a conclusion on the subject. And that's the way it is with all kinds of stuff. You know, I'm just I read somewhere, I think it was a statement by Joseph Goldstein. I could be could be from somebody else that was saying that, you know, one of the

characteristics of wisdom is being comfortable with ambiguity and like ambivalence.

And that's just the world we live in. I mean, if you take David Hume and Spinoza seriously, where you cannot be sure about anything outside of your own mind, then I mean, you just have to have a certain skepticism and just a certain willingness to be okay with not knowing the answer.

And it could be my understanding of reality is so weird that it could be that there's just various versions of reality all equally valid or invalid.

Some of them have Michael Jackson really being a child molester, and some of them

don't.

Maybe Charlie Kirk was murdered by different people in various ways in these various versions of reality that are all kind of interconnected.

So,

yeah, I mean, I don't know. I probably never will know if Michael Jackson really did molest children.

And so, I'm just going to Oh, wait.

There's the other part of the question here. Aside from whether or not you think he was guilty or innocent, what is your overall opinion of Michael Jackson's music, talent, and cultural impact?

And

yeah, I've already mentioned that he was talented. He was clearly very talented.

And his music is good. I mean, within the the limitations of pop music.

Yeah, I mean, I have to admit, even though it's not really my style, you know, it's like

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen is like an excellent novel, even though I'm just really not into romance fiction.

But, I have to acknowledge I did read it and it's just extremely well-written novel.

But, it's just not my style. So, it's not on my list of favorite novels.

And it's the same way with Michael

Jackson's music. With regard to his cultural impact, it's interesting that I was at work last week and there was an African American American fellow who just brought up in in this meeting, he just asked, you know, "What do you Who do you think was more important culturally and musically, Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson?"

And

I mean, that's that's kind of hard to say. I mean, Elvis had more of a cult, so that after he died, you know, he's still doing he's still doing like concerts after his death just by, I don't know, just

hanging his his jacket on a on a wire. I think that was just a joke from Saturday Night Live where it's Elvis's coat doing concerts. You know, it's like all these theories of Elvis that was like taken up by aliens and is still alive and orbiting around the earth and all this. I mean, I don't think Michael Jackson generated that kind of hysteria.

But

I mean, Michael Jackson didn't do a lot of movies like Elvis did.

But

I mean, the cultural impact I'm not exactly sure. I mean, it would be some sort of pop cultural impact, I'm sure.

But

Yeah, I mean, he definitely made an impact, definitely. [clears throat]

And people are still willing to listen to his music. You know, it's like nobody watches reruns of The Cosby Show anymore. Nobody shows it anymore because Bill Cosby's reputation was destroyed after you know, what came to light.

Woody Allen probably a lot fewer people watch Woody Allen movies. But somehow Michael Jackson, mainly partly because he wasn't found guilty. You know, he he somehow survived the storm of the scandal and you can still play Michael Jackson's music on the radio.

Uh but you can't play Bill Cosby on TV

anymore. Especially like old episodes of Sesame Street. Yeah, you're not going to see that anymore.

And so I'm just going to look over at the chat, see if any new questions have arisen.

Let's see. Oh, okay.

Chester Runaway says, "What do you think of Virgin Mary apparitions? She seems to be the most active deity in the world. I myself have had an experience despite being non-Christian."

So, Virgin Mary apparitions.

Um well, for starters

a lot of apparitions are like especially like in medieval Catholic saints

would [clears throat] be like a symptom

of hysteria.

According to Sigmund Freud I mean, he's not an infallible oracle by any means, but still I think he was correct largely with regard to the causes of hysteria as just sort of repressed desires and fears and urges and so forth that you repress them. You don't act on your your urges or your desires and it doesn't make them go away. It just causes them to get pushed into the subconscious mind where they build up pressure until they start percolating up to the surface in the form of neurotic symptoms.

Like in this case, hysterical visions and hearing voices and so forth which

happen a lot to certain types of
medieval Catholic saints.

I mean, it could have happened to Paul
the Apostle on on the road to Damascus
when he had that that big vision that
made him go blind temporarily.

So, I mean, a lot of Virgin Mary
apparitions are largely

like a symptom

of very inhibited and neurotic and
hysterical Christians just seeing, you
know,

visions of the Virgin Mary, visions of
Christ, like images of heaven and hell,
this kind of stuff. It happened a lot.

So, I would assume a lot of it comes
from that.

But then, you have what in paganism is called an egregore which means if you have enough people fervently believing in the existence of a being, that faith or belief will actually cause a kind of quasi being to take existence.

And then it to some degree it like has its own agenda, its own urges, its own motivations and so forth. And so, it could be that so many people believing in the Virgin Mary like interceding, you know, she's that's like one of her main jobs is interceding between God and the average person that enough people believed in it that

she became a kind of egregore.

And so, you know, she can appear to

people

through a kind of quasi-autonomous

existence.

So, that's a possible That's a

possibility, too.

Plus, of course, everybody's crazy.

Everybody who isn't fully enlightened.

Um I wouldn't be too sure that she's the

most active deity in the world. I don't

think she appears much to like Burmese

Buddhist villagers.

[clears throat]

But, those would be my my main

my main best guesses.

You know, first of all, in in many

cases, maybe most cases, it's a sign of
like

hysteria just through

too much repression. You know, uh saints
are likely to be more hysterical than
the average guy who gets to just work
out his frustrations in various ways
rather than repressing them because he's
has this overwhelming urge to be
saintly.

But, then the egregore aspect also is a
possibility.

Okay.

So, Shrinivas

Danands is not asking a question, just
making comment. Much respect to the

your work. Not through listening, not through thinking, not through sacrifice, not through observance is what I was saying. Yeah, that's fine. That's good. It's all good.

Okay.

Let's see.

Oh, so Ohm is saying, "Is anyone else noticing a slight audio-visual sync issue?" Yeah, that's what I was I was bringing up earlier, and it comes and goes, apparently.

And I'm not exactly sure what that is, what the reason for it is. Maybe too many open tabs, although I did close a bunch of them.

Okay.

So, let's see here. So, we're not entirely live. When there's a When there's a lag, I'm not live.

But, I am alive.

And that's that's the the important thing I suppose.

So,

David says, "Nibbana, the act of being completely destroyed or obliterated, why would this be preferable to rebirth?"

Um

Well, [clears throat] I mean it's not really being completely destroyed or obliterated or what you would say is the only thing that is destroyed or

obliterated is delusion.

So, it's the delusion is is blown out.

Delusion and craving and suffering and
and this

samsara is blown out leaving only
ultimate reality behind.

Which like from a theistic point of view
is capital G God.

So, replacing your own limited life by
just merging with infinite infinity.

I mean that's that's kind of what it's
about and it if you're rebirth, I mean
if if you're like in samsara as an
unenlightened being, it's in a way it's
like eternal damnation because you're
never going to be fully satisfied or
happy.

But

I think the main point of answering your question is that nibbana is the blowing out of delusion and desire and suffering.

That's really all that is is destroyed.

I think it's in Eckhart [clears throat]

Tolle's first famous book,

he says, "Nothing that is real dies."

You know, it's just the illusion that that is subject to death.

Which is interesting.

Which is why I repeated it.

And I'm going to move on to the next question which is from Churzaskazis.

And Churzaskazis says,

"Is dying instead of your own child, for example by saving it from a burning building and dying in the fire, bad?

Intention was good, so karma has to be good." And this comes from a discussion that was going on on the Discord server about

[clears throat]

people like the ethics of self-deletion, and then it kind of

um

went off on not exactly a tangent, but the ethics of sacrificing your life for somebody else.

And so Chizaskas has asked this

question, "Is Is dying instead of your own child

bad?" And I mean, again, this is one of those questions where someone is asking is action X, you know, what is what is the moral

value of action X? What is the karma? Is it good karma or bad karma of performing physical action X? And as I say over and over and over again, physical actions are ethically neutral. It's the mental states accompanying your action that determine whether what you do is good or bad.

So,

one person dies rescuing their own child from a burning building, and it's good karma. Another person might do it in

such a way that there's some more bad karma involved, although saving the life of a child is always going to have some good karma involved in it, unless it's for some really horrible reason.

[sighs and gasps]

So, I mean,

for some reason, I'm reminded of a Jataka story. I think it might be in a Mahayana version of the Jatakas, where the the Bodhisattva Bodhisatta in Theravada Buddhism,

um he sees uh

a female tiger who is starving, and out of compassion for the tiger, he offers his own body I think he cuts himself to get enough blood going that

the tiger will be aroused from its near
death stupor

and eat him. So, he he like

sacrifices his own life to save this
tigress from starvation.

And I mean that's set up at least by
Mahayana Buddhists as an act of really
great virtue. And that also reminds me
of the Sasa Jataka that is in the Tera
Teravada

um

tradition

in which the Bodhisattva, the Buddha in
a previous existence, was a hare or
rabbit

who

was going to sacrifice his own life by throwing his body into a fire to cook it in order to offer alms food to a mendicant uh like an ascetic Brahmin.

So, I mean he was rewarded by Sakka, king of gods, for trying to kill himself to feed a mendicant Brahmin.

So, I mean it's not necessarily bad that you know I mean like sacrificing your own life for the benefit of somebody else.

I mean

I think that for the most part it would be a virtuous act, but it would depend largely on your own motives and your own mental states.

So,

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Master Po.

And Master Po I think some of this is largely rhetorical

that there was a a little bit of back and forth between me and Master Po. He was in in one comment under a YouTube video he says he doesn't believe in comma or karma in any way.

And then I said, "Well, in Buddhism karma is volition. So, if you don't believe in karma, you don't believe in volition."

And then I mentioned that he kind of backpedaled a little bit on that and

then he disagreed that he wasn't back pedaling and then he said he doesn't even believe in volition.

So, [clears throat]

I mean, from the ultimate point of view, fine. I don't think volition is ultimately real either.

But,

Master Po here says, "How can you have mental states and not be a self?"

In my opinion, we're all conscious beings having a idiosyncratic experience. Pretty simple. If you kill the mosquito or flea or person and there's only mental states and volition and no God, where does the return karma come from? So, that's another question.

There's There's questions here.

Numerous question marks and an Amazon person just dropped something off on our front porch causing the dogs to begin barking.

Okay.

So, we got to separate out all these question marks and I think some of them may be rhetorical.

Yeah, and this There's like four question marks, so

All right, first of all, how can you have mental states and not be a self?

And I point out to him, this is just begging the question. It's like, "How can a storm have snowflakes and not be a

self?"

You know, it's just like it's not the storm that has snowflakes. I mean, you don't like a snowstorm. How can a snowstorm

have have these snowflakes and not be a self?

I mean, it's a similar kind of question. So, I mean, it's just you're begging the question by assuming that there has to be some someone some being who owns these mental states. Just the the idea that the mental states arise through conditions without having any like moderating self being moderating them. I mean, it's it's not even considered to be an an option here.

So,

I mean, how can you have mental states and not be a self? I mean, you you can't the way he framed the question.

It's like there's already this you that has to have the the mental states.

But, it's not necessarily true. Like like uh Bertrand Russell says with regard to Rene Descartes in his history of Western philosophy, I think.

Maybe not his history of Western philosophy. But, he's critiquing Rene Descartes and his cogito ergo sum, you know, I think therefore I am. And Bertrand Russell was was pointing out that I mean,

I mean, he started off on the wrong foot from the very beginning.

I mean, he would have been more accurate just to say there are thoughts.

And I should have looked up the quote. I have it written down in my little monk notebook. But, I'm not going to not going to bother you with looking for it right now.

Finding the book and then searching through it to find the the quote by Bertrand Russell.

So, I mean, David Hume also famously he he shot down the idea that just because there are mental states does not mean that there has to be some self that is experiencing the mental states.

The mental states are themselves
conscious.

They contain their own experience.

So, anyways, Master Po continues. In my
opinion, we're all [clears throat]
conscious beings having having an
idiosyncratic experience. Pretty simple.

If you kill a mosquito or flea or person
and there's only mental states and
volition and no God, where does the
return karma come from?

And I mean, the return karma it's just
the momentum of your own mental states.
It's not like karma disappears and then
reappears when it's time to reach
fruition. It's always there.

It's just part of the the momentum that is driving your mind forwards through time.

So, let's see here.

Idiosyncratic experiences, yeah, that's that's seems to be fairly true. Although it's not ultimately real. I mean, that we're still dealing with samsara here and not ultimate reality.

I don't know if

um Master Po would put God and his alleged creation on the same level of reality.

That's kind of what the Abhidharma scholars did with Nirvana and samsara.

They just put them on same level of reality.

Anyways,

um let's just move on to Master Po's the third part of his group of questions here.

What's its determinant?

What or who makes the call? You kill the sentient being, there you two will suffer that.

Um

okay, [snorts] let's just separate let's just deal with that before moving on to the next part.

Um I mean, you yourself I mean, it's uh

[sighs]

it's so hard. Oh, he spelled sentient

wrong. I got to fix that.

I do appreciate it when people use correct spelling and grammar, but it's it's not necessarily going to happen because I mean, in some cases people are just like texting. Like my wife text me sometimes and it comes out like gibberish. I cannot I cannot comprehend. I cannot interpret what she's saying. But that's because she's it's like speed, you know, it's like I don't know. Autocorrect is changing the words or whatever. So, what's its determinant? I don't know what that means, so I'll skip that part. What or who makes the call? You kill the sentient being, there you will suffer

that. Yeah, nobody really makes the call other than your samsaric pseudo self to some degree at like a deep subconscious level, but it's like you are creating negativity

which is influencing the world you are generating for yourself. So, you're creating a more negative world where more

more negative stuff is likely to happen.

And then [snorts] he's got in a

near-death experience life review,

there's never anyone who mentioned

anything about eating animals, hunting,

killing mosquitoes. It's always how they

were treated or they treated other

humans and be our own judge. Okay, so the assumption here is that if an unenlightened person has a near-death experience while they're having the experience, they're not unenlightened and delusional anymore.

So, I mean I've I've read of near-death experience. One near-death experience where the a woman goes into the heaven realm and it's like prefab housing with like flower boxes in the front yards and this kind of stuff.

And

and like the Tibetan Book of the of of the Dead points out, when you're having these so presumably near-death experiences, although in the Tibetan

Book of the Dead it's just DE, death experiences, you should always be reminding yourself this is a creation of my imagination. This is not real.

So, you've got delusional people die, have a near-death experience, that near-death experience is also going to be delusional. It might be a somewhat more subtle level of delusion but still it's delusional.

But I'm interested in what happens if the near-death experience causes someone to become enlightened. And the case that I think of is John Wren Lewis. He was like this scientist who was an like a materialistic atheist up until he had

had near-death experience in Thailand. Somebody poisoned him, they were going to rob him, and he he almost died, but then came back, and it was he sort of like Eckhart Tolle. He had this experience during the near death experience that just like jolted him into a higher level of consciousness. And I didn't review before doing this video what kind of near death experience John Wren Lewis had, but that would be an interesting one because it presumably allegedly resulted in his enlightenment, and it can happen to some people. At least it resulted in him being at a higher level of consciousness afterwards.

But just because something happens in a near death experience, I mean, it's like the Tibetan Book of the Dead points out, it's just like a creation of your own imagination anyway.

It's not ultimately real.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Philaletheist.

Okay.

All right.

Proto Pseudo Monk went to bed, so presumably he's not in the Western Hemisphere, either.

Anyways, Philaletheist says,

"When I was listening to my answer last

episode,

I noticed it sounded like you were underwater. This made me think of a scenario where the Buddha comes back to life, and let's say you were sure it's the Buddha, and he tells you that if you let him shrink you to a reasonable size, and that you can get enough oxygen supplies and a wet suit, so that you can live in your aquarium for 1 year, and then you are guaranteed to become fully enlightened, do you do it?" And this is like one of the most bizarre thought experiments I've I've ever come across. Somebody asks me if the Buddha came to you and you could know for sure that it was the Buddha somehow,

you know,

[laughter]

accomplishing the impossible there,

and then

he he tells you that if he'll shrink you

down to the size of an aquarium fish

and give you a wet suit. I mean, why

doesn't he just let you breathe water? I

don't know.

Gives you you get a wet suit, so you're

living in an aquarium. Would you allow

yourself to be shrunk down to say 2 in,

3 in?

Live in an aquarium for a year and then

afterwards you'd be guaranteed a full

enlightenment?

I mean, first of all, I mean, it's it's like an impossibility because there's no way you can know for sure that it was the Buddha anyway. It's all an illusion anyway. At this level of reality, it's all illusory, even the Buddha standing in front of you.

So,

I mean, if I were still a monk or if I were single, the answer would be yes without hesitation. Just assuming that you can be sure that it really is the Buddha and that for sure that after you've been shrunk down to an an aquarium inhabitant and and live there for a year, after 1

year you become fully enlightened? I mean, that would be a practically a no-brainer. I mean, clearly I would have to do it.

But I'm married now, so I'd have to like consult with my wife. You know, I do have obligations to her now.

I don't know if she'd really want to be feeding me flakes and pellets and that kind of thing for an entire year with me just hanging out in an aquarium and then after that I become fully enlightened. I mean, after I became fully enlightened, I'd presumably get to become full size again. So, I mean, she wouldn't really be necessarily be losing

me as a husband.

I think Eckhart Tolle is married. Some of these beings who are to claim to be fully enlightened nowadays, you mean they're still

you know, they they still have a mate.

So, I mean, would she be willing to take care of me in my aquarium for a year and then have me become fully enlightened at the end? I'm not I'm not sure.

I'd have to consult with her. Just assuming that Gautama Buddha ever does appear to me and I can somehow know that it really is him.

But, I mean, if I were just on my own, still a monk or whatever, yeah, I I

would have to do it.

Okay.

So, next question is from Francois.

I deliberately mispronounce French names just just for your information.

Francois says,

"I am 47 and started practicing in 2011 by doing several Burmese style meditation retreats, Goenka, Upandita, and Pa Auk, and practicing these techniques daily in my lay life.

Recently, I stayed 5 months in two Ajahn Chah's monasteries in Thailand as a pa khao, white robe before novice. It was physically quite demanding with a lot of command communal chores and my

expectations in terms of meditation practice were not fulfilled and I felt I needed to quit and take a step back to reconsider my monastic ambitions. For aspiring monastics,

Ajahn Chah's system of training focus on physical chores and interactions with other monastics and not so much on meditation.

I have a strong faith in this training since it produced so many great Ajahns and the vinaya is followed strictly and common sense

is emphasized as the inevitable base to develop in higher stages, but I couldn't stop wondering if this training is

closer to the Buddhist teaching than the Burmese style training, which is more focused on formal sitting meditation, but sometimes produce practitioners that might be excellent meditators, but not so much well-rounded in wisdom. Any thoughts on that? In a few years, I might go try might go to Burma to try the Burmese style.

So, he's pointing out that the Ajahn Chah tradition and most Thai traditions really put more emphasis on like regimented activity rather than actual sitting meditation.

And that is one difference between Thai Buddhism and Burmese Buddhism, even

though they're both Theravada, Thai

Buddhism puts more emphasis on monastic discipline

and Dhutanga, you know, optional ascetic practices, where Burmese Buddhism puts more emphasis on scholarship and meditation.

And I mean, there's advantages and disadvantages to both sides. The Thais, they're less scholarly, they don't meditate as much as a general rule, but when you do have a meditation master arise, and there have been quite a few in Thailand, mainly, they they teach based on their own experience rather than on what the book says. In Burma, the the the

Sayadaws are complete dogmatists as a general rule, and if their own personal experiences disagree with the text, they will reject their the testimony of their own personal experience in favor of what the book says.

And so,

um the Thai Ajahns have the advantage of more experiential wisdom, um less dogmatism.

But also but on the other hand,

sometimes they'll just botch Buddhist philosophy. They'll get all kinds of stuff wrong. Like like even Ajahn

Ajahn Mun in his autobiography, he's talking about long dead Buddhas and long

dead arahants coming to visit him.

Um, apparently not knowing or caring that from or the point of view of orthodox Theravada, that just couldn't happen.

So, I mean, it seems to me that one thing you could do is

um

just try to adopt the better aspects of both traditions, Burmese and Thai.

Follow follow Vinaya strictly and do some intensive meditation practice.

I mean, that would be not even really a compromise. That's just taking the best of of both both traditions.

And I mean, the Ajahn Chah tradition has produced a lot of great Ajahns. It's also produced a lot of dropouts. I mean, I remember back in the 1990s, um the Ajahn Chah tradition had this It was like a a pandemic of of relatively senior, well-respected, renowned Ajahns, especially Western ones, just dropping out.

And so, it really reduced the Ajahn Chah tradition's ability to spread, which was I mean, it was kind of in demand at the time, but there was such a shortage of Ajahns because so many of them were disrobing that it it really set back the

Western Ajahn Chah tradition for years
as a result of that.

And

I mean, I I can't really say. I mean,
I I know Burmese Buddhism better than I
know Thai Buddhism and I know that there
are some very wise meditation masters in
the Burmese tradition.

I don't know if I would include Pa Auk
Sayadaw or even U Pandita among their
number. I mean they're they'd be kind of
I'd give them sort of a grade of B
with regard to that sort of thing.

Um somebody like Webu Sayadaw or Shwe U
Min Sayadaw might be a like
A-tier meditation masters.

So

[sighs]

what's the actual question?

That's what I need to do. I need to find the question mark in this kind of essay here.

Any thoughts on that? That's the only
That's the only question. So yeah, I mean if

Yeah, I mean you could go to Thailand it might be easier if the like the governmental situation there allows it to go to Burma because in Thailand you are regimented. Everyone has to dress the same, act the same, etc. Much more so than in Burma. So it might be that it is frowned upon for you even to start

you know, deviating

from

from like the regimented

procedure for that monastery. I mean to

some degree once you get five

five rainy seasons under your belt as a

monk, you can just go off alone.

Presumably in Thailand it's allowed.

In Burma certainly it's allowed.

In Burma the main problem is just

following Vinaya strictly because it's

very hard to find monasteries where

Vinaya is followed strictly except maybe

in the um like the Pa Auk tradition.

But the Pa Auk tradition is extremely

dogmatic with regard to

like

meditation like progress in meditation
and that sort of thing.

So

yeah, I would just

there's there's no there's nothing

against there's nothing preventing you

from just adopting

the best from both worlds.

You know, just take the strict

like monastic discipline of the Thai

traditions and throw in some

like a certain amount of learnedness

with regard to the texts

of the Burmese tradition and intensive

meditation practice, especially

mindfulness.

Mindfulness, I mean,

if you're being mindful as mindful as
you can at all times, that will
compensate for a lot of no formal
sitting practice.

So, yeah, that that would be my thoughts
on that.

Just find a place where you are I mean,
it doesn't matter whether it's in
Thailand or Burma so long as you are
able to have strict monastic discipline
and study the texts that to the to the
degree that's necessary to learn what
you need to know and
like intensive meditation.

Especially, it's good if you're at a
monastery or have a teacher who is

emphasizing

like constant sati sampajanna, just mindfulness of everyday activities, just maintaining mindfulness as well as you can because ultimately, that's probably more important than sitting cross-legged with your eyes closed.

Okay.

So, any more questions here?

Master Po,

let's see. Since you don't give two shits about what people think of you, do you use deodorant before going out? I'm pretty much on the same page too to a point. I do like being clean.

Um

sometimes I use deodorant.

But,

um

I mean mostly when I go out I'm going to work in like an industrial setting.

And usually I don't use deodorant, partly because it's like clean athletic kind of sweat. I mean I I bathe at least once a day as a general rule. Let's say on average once a day.

So,

yeah, my sweat is sort of like clean athletic sweat, not like sour, sick, or nervous kind of sweat. And it's not stink.

So, yeah, I mean that's just a matter of like I don't know, self-respect I

suppose more than being worried about
other people
smelling my stink.

I haven't had anybody complain about me
stinking.

So,

I do use deodorant sometimes.

But, not every day.

And I'm just going to move on. Oh, see.

Calabasin?

I don't know how to pronounce that name.

Says greetings from Spain. Yes.

Greetings. It's probably late at night
there or something or extremely early in
the morning.

[clears throat]

Okay.

Next question.

Ooh, we're down to the last questioner.

By golly, that happened fast, sort of.

PSA says, "When you first started these

Q&A's, did you ever imagine you would

make it to 200?" I wasn't even thinking

about it. Yeah, so I guess I didn't

imagine I would make it 200, but I mean

I didn't think that I wouldn't.

I didn't think that I would or wouldn't

really. I was just let's let's try doing

this and see how it goes.

That's pretty much as far as it as it

went.

So,

yeah, I didn't really imagine I would

make it to 200. I didn't consciously think

maybe someday I'll make it to 200 episodes.

But, it doesn't like really have me flabbergasted or gobsmacked or anything that it has happened this way.

And I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question.

Who would you like to thank for this great accomplishment? Myself, I guess.

Thanks, me.

Cuz I mean, it was mainly my doing. I mean,

other people contributed, definitely.

Like, you viewers. I mean, if it was I

was consistently getting no viewers, I probably would have stopped doing it long before now.

But, I mean, I like I like doing these Q&As. It's It's a kind of spiritual practice for me to some degree.

It's an ability for me to share what I've learned

or thought about

to some degree. You know, I consider this to be a public service, which is one reason why I don't try to monetize anything or charge money or anything.

I mean, it maybe eventually I'll allow super chats

if I ever figure out you know, what that what that implies.

But, it's it's really not my my purpose
doing these videos to become rich and
famous.

So, there's a good chance I'm going to
be a blue-collar worker
for making for paying the bills
up until I finally retire, maybe at the
age of 72.

And then after I'm 72, if I still have
the the mental abilities,
I might start
writing more.

Okay. So, last question, unless any
last-moment questions come up in the
chat.

From PSA, he says, "What meditation

method would you recommend to a person who comes to you telling you they've never meditated before?" Well, it would depend on the person. Like, for a lot of really worldly-minded people who don't know hardly anything about like Eastern spirituality or even Western spirituality. You know, they just want to see what it's like. You know, just there out of curiosity. I mean, a simple meditation advice would be sit down in front of a fish tank and just watch the fishes swim around.

Or just

if you've got a fireplace, start a fire in your fireplace and just sit there watching the fire. Just gaze into the

flames and let your mind just kind of go empty. This paying like attention, you know, wrapped attention to the flames. Something like that would be a simple, easy way for a beginner to practice meditation. I mean, even if they don't have a fireplace, you can light a candle, you can light a stick of incense and just watch the smoke rising. Just sit there and watch the smoke rise until the the incense is gone. And if you notice that your mind is straying away, just bring it back to that smoke. You know, something like that would be a relatively simple, elementary way of teaching meditation to somebody

without having to

get them into Anapana. I mean, that

would for someone who's more serious,

probably meditation of breathing would

be

like a good introduction to

like traditional Buddhist meditation.

So, if I was going to teach traditional

Buddhist meditation to somebody, then

Anapana would probably be the way to go.

And according to the Visuddhimagga,

Anapana is one of the best meditation

techniques for people who think too

much, which is most Westerners.

But for someone who really isn't trying

to get into Buddhism, but just wants to,

you know, know some elementary

meditation technique, I might advise them to watch a fish swimming around in its fish tank or watch a fire, you know, in your fireplace, a campfire, or watch a candle flame, or like incense smoke, that kind of thing.

So, I guess that's it.

Oh, wait, here's I got eventual muse asking a question. Since you are an everyday bather, was it difficult having few bathing opportunities in your cave-dwelling days? No, actually, especially when I was in Burma, I really had to bathe like once a day. I mean, I can I can go 2 days, but I mean, if I go 3 days, it

wasn't the smell, it's just that I have like a oily skin, you know, a seborrheic skin type, so like my chest, shoulders, neck, face, scalp, is I've got more like skin oils going on than most people do, I suppose. And if I go more than like 2 days, I start getting dermatitis. It's like As far as far as I can understand, it's like your skin oil is sitting there on the surface of your skin, and then gradually bacteria start to feed on it, and it's like the waste It's It's like the metabolic waste of the bacteria that is causing a kind of allergic reaction that just causes my skin to break out. Because I've noticed like isopropyl alcohol helps to make the the rash go

away, and also taking antibiotics prevents it from happening.

Um I wouldn't take antibiotics just for that, but at other times when I would be taking antibiotics, any kind of skin rash problem would also clear up. So, it seems to be a bacterial thing.

Uh um like

I remember I tried walking from Rangoon to Maymyo uh not Maymyo uh Nyaung-U, Burma, which is up in Mandalay Division. So, I I going to walk from from Rangoon division to Mandalay division, which was like three or 400 miles, I think.

And that was really pushing it because

if you're walking like that, you may not have a

a convenient place to bathe.

But when I was living in caves, I mean, there'd always be a well or a creek or a river somewhere within easy walking distance. I would have to find a place to stay where I would be able to bathe on a daily basis.

Sometimes it's necessary to bathe more than once a day.

Cuz it's I mean

the the furnace of central Burma in hot weather and the rainy season where it doesn't rain, you know, it's just humid and hot.

Instead of dry and hot,

then I mean, I would it was just a necessity that I would have to have a source of of bathing water.

I don't know, some place to take a bath every day.

And as it turns out, my attempted

[clears throat]

land migration from

southern Burma to central Burma didn't

work out very far because I made it

about 35 miles before I was essentially

arrested by the secret police and

immigration officials who then sent me

back to Rangoon because they were

concerned for my safety, which meant

really they were concerned for some

weird

westerner wandering around loose in a military dictatorship.

And uh so, I guess that's it.

It looks like we are done, although it also looks like we are lagged by 5 seconds or so.

And so, it was it was very nice hanging out with you guys.

If you have any questions you think I can answer, put them in the comments below this video or if you have access to the Discord server, you can put them in there.

And check out the links, the URL links below if I can figure out how to put them in there.

And uh like and subscribe if you've not
done so already.

And be happy.

And now I'm going to try and turn this
off.