

- I won't go through the whole thing - is that history is a weight upon us that we cannot escape.

00:49.32

The historical- we are hostages to history. We cannot avoid the consequences of our collective karma and we all collectively pay the price for our collective karmic actions.

00:50.01

There's much more that I would like to say, but I just had my time notice.

EVAN THOMPSON

00:50.06

Thank you very much.

APPLAUSE

Our next respondent is Gareth Sparham. He was a Buddhist monk for many years - from 1973 to 2001 - and now teaches Tibetan language at the University of Michigan.

GARETH SPARHAM

00:50.32

Ok and thank you very much to the organizers for organizing this conference and- Again, thank you very much to the organizers for organizing this

conference and in particular, for including me amongst the distinguished speakers and panelists.

00:50.56

I'm particularly happy to have been approached to say something about ethics or about morality. And perhaps if I might begin with a slight history of myself coming here. And that history is one of a great deal of uncertainty about the morality of it. About being associated with it. In other words, I come here not feeling it self-evident that we're engaged in a morally supportable act.

00:51.35

And I'm very pleased to have seen some suggestions in the comments of some of the earlier participants. I'm thinking perhaps more of the tone of the notion that somehow there's something perhaps to be opposed. Even if it's framed in philosophical terms, epistemological terms - nevertheless, there's something to be opposed. I responded to that.

00:52.10 I- somehow I sort of came to it that yes, that is something that one wants to keep in mind. It's not self-evident that we are engaged, either individually or as a collective, as a group here, in a moral act.

00:52.28 In an act which is, if it were to be looked at by others later on when they look at what we're doing in a sober fashion, as a an act which is good, beneficial or at least not harming. And in particular, I responded to Thubten Jinpa's comments that in particular to give a voice to another.

00:52.53 Not another in some small, little sense, but another as much as we are another to some other talking, perhaps, to some of the ideas which are starting to come out here in this ethics panel. So, I begin with that.

00:53.14 And I'm very pleased indeed to- having come here to feel that, you know, I'm really pleased to

have come here and I do feel that it'll be judged as a decent act. And there's some form to it.

There's some form to it. First, Owen's - how do you say - choice of a particular text to begin with. And to take seriously a text not from our own traditions, but from another tradition.

00:53.52

And to critique it, no problem, but to take it seriously - I found that as a form, it's good. Second, that in this situation that we find ourselves, we have opposition. And hence, we have people who are opposing - in inverted commas, opposing - who are together attempting to somehow deal with that reality. And so, the form of it therefore, makes me feel at ease.

00:54.30

Perhaps, I'll just read a few of the comments I made and then what I want to do in the rest of the time that I have here is take Jay's remarks as a point of departure, just to try to put across how- how to say- an integrated ethics is

very inherent in the whole, let's say, project, which is called Buddhism.

00:54.58

I'll just read a few remarks. I say that my worry initially was because I was participating in a colonialism of knowledge. Marching into the knowledge of another culture to expropriate it and call it my own, just leaving destruction in my wake.

00:55.16

But, as I said, participating over these days here in this very material, lofty hall - and there's something I think special about the actual venue in which it's happening. It could happen in another place - it would not necessarily be so moral. But here, why? Because this is not the sort of thing that happens in this kind of place.

00:55.39

And hence, that itself makes me feel more at ease about what I'm doing. And second, I like the thought of that goddess that Dr. Thurman

introduced us to. I really do feel that the presence of Sophia or Alma Mater, Pragnya – call her what you will – here, is a good sign. So, I also– that also makes me feel a little bit at ease.

00:56.13

If I might talk about myself for a moment, I also couldn't see why I personally would be invited to speak on morality. I don't see anything particularly in myself. In fact, I would say if you look at my earlier history perhaps I would not be arrested, but it would not be, I think, a particularly exemplary history.

00:56.35

So, on that level, I don't think that's why I was invited. (Off-mic conversation). Yes, exactly. So I think, and indeed no doubt, the reason I was invited was because I did a little work on ethics, on morality. And it was published a few months ago and since my publisher's here I do want to sort of put in a pitch for it, if I might.

00:57.05

So, this is a book on tantric ethics and out of that work that I did, I'd like to focus in on one particular part of the presentation and it will inform the remarks that I make in the time that remains to me.

00:57.27

So, here there are three terms, if you will - let's just call them terms. They do have Sanskrit names, but we don't need to bother ourselves with them. Now, these three terms together present an ethics.

00:57.52

And I'd like to try to put across here how they fit together and I think it's a very real contribution which meets back to a lot of the issues that have been coming up about first person narratives, about mind and reality and certainly, the larger questions, I think, which - the larger issue which was there when this conference was put together, such that a panel -

even the last panel - was framed in the language of ethics.

00:58.30

So, if I just say- Now, the first heading under which I want to talk about ethics here. I'm going to talk about the three of them to try to get at them because they are kind of difficult to get at in terms of the technologies which are appropriate to each and the domain of the technologies.

00:58.51

And, obviously, I'm using technologies in a pretty wide sense, but I hope it will be understandable. So, I'd say that in- for the first morality, the technology of meditation- and don't forget that this is ethics. In other words, this is- what we're talking about what would come under the heading of morality here, and so, first there's the technology of meditation and hence, it's for an individual. It's not for a society.

00:59.24

Meditation and the technology of meditation- I use the word technology because it's to be used by a person in order to get to a particular effect and it's not in some way inherent in the person. It is a technology. And so, the technology of meditation. And we've already seen that there's a great variety of technolo- have to say there are many techniques or there is much which constitutes the technique which I'm calling meditation here.

01:00.01

And what is this technology aiming at? The well-being of the person. And I think it's obvious how this is moral. First, going back to what Jay was saying that just to alleviate suffering anyway is moral and one's own suffering as much as anybody else's is important to alleviate.

01:00.27

But more than that, in a social sense because we're, I think, so habituated to thinking somehow of morality in social terms. It is also moral to apply the techniques or the technology of

meditation to make sure that one remains happy, balanced, in a deep state of well-being because first of all, if one's not those around one worry greatly about oneself.

01:00.59

One's mothers. I have to say mothers and fathers for their children, spouses for their others. And then in a slightly larger context, if you take a group, the- If a group is upset by a person who's not having well-being, that group gets out of balance. That itself can affect wider groups and so forth.

01:01.24

So, it is moral therefore - and I think the Buddhist texts understand it as moral, in that sense. It's not somehow- how to say- It's not as though in a Buddhist text that morality is one part of the discussion, meditation is another part of the discussion, epistemology another. No, it is unified and in this sense, to look after oneself by the utilization of meditational techniques is not just a moral act and you may or

may not do it, but if you wish to, indeed, be an ethical and moral person, one should take good care of oneself.

01:02.10

And that's not just the physical. Now, what about the technology? Are they only - because the physical-mental divide has come up again and again - no. Clearly, we all know that there are physical yogic postures. I even think that the medicine, as Thubten Jinpa and others were talking about, about-

01:02.31

TAPE END

MIND & REALITY

DAY TWO - TAPE 6 of 7 - PANEL ON ETHICS

TAPE START

GARETH SPARHAM

00:00.00 -if you wish to, indeed, be an ethical and moral person, one should take good care of oneself.

00:00.08 And that's not just the physical. Now, what about the technology? Are they only - because the physical-mental divide has come up again and again - no. Clearly, we all know that there are physical yogic postures. I even think that the medicine, as Thubten Jinpa and others were talking about, about-

*****START NEW MATERIAL*****

00:00.30 -psychiatry and the kinds of- how to say- technologies which are used for well-being, there's no reason these should not be included in meditational technology. But clearly, mainly, it

has to be Samadhi, it has to be the different technologies that we get from other cultures.

00:00.51

We- there's just not that much in this culture - the technology for personal well-being. It's not a particularly important thing here. It's just- doesn't seem to be important to people. And so, I think we have to look to other cultures to really discover that technology.

00:01.11

So, passing on from that- The domain, of course, then is the personal. It's not the social. That technology's domain is on each of us as an individual. Incidentally, if- in the tradition this would be called the morality of vows. There we are.

00:01.35

Sambara-sila. So, the two more moralities which have to be put in here in order to get a feeling for the integrated moralities- So, the second one is the one I think it's easiest for us to get to. This is the one we always think of as the domain

of the moral. In other words, society. The fact that some are hungry and that we have to apply techniques or technologies to alleviate that hunger.

00:02.05

All of the different technologies which we come up with in order to alleviate all of the problems in the world - as we call it. This is absolutely an integral part of any moral system. And it's obviously there in Buddhist literature when you look at it.

00:02.29

Now, what about the technologies? I think here, these are the technologies in particular that we associate with science. They're tremendously important and perhaps this is why the Dalai Lama is so positive about science and the role that it has to play.

00:02.47

So, I won't talk more about that. I think that's self-evident, but I'd like to finish with a far more complicated aspect of this morality. And I

hope you'll stay with me. I have a friend - Georges Dreyfus - I'm not sure if he accuses me or perhaps a better way to put it is praises me, I like to think, for uncommon views. So, anyway, please bear with me if my attempt to put across this aspect of a full presentation of morality is problematic.

00:03.26

First, the technology. So, the technology - if I use the traditional words - is prajna upaya, which is to say wisdom and method. Now, what does that leave us with? So, perhaps I might go back to the lady who is gracing the steps of this university and she does embody, she does embody wisdom and at the same time, she is an Alma Mater.

00:03.59

So, what is the Alma Mater? It is the University. And what is in the University? It is all knowledge, by definition, in that sense. And she both embodies it as a ground and as the knowledge of the ground. And in that sense, one can talk

about the feminine, if you will, or wisdom or prajna.

00:04.28

And these, don't forget, are the technologies, part of the technology for a third necessary part of a full explanation of morality. This is from the Bodhisattvabhumi, the Sila chapter. It's a basic- It's not the highest morality presented in the Buddhist texts, but it is a standard, well-known morality, which just is there.

00:04.53

It's a complex language in a sense, but still, it's just trying to formulate an ethical language. And I think it has something to give us. I have a few moments left, do I? Just a moment or two. So, what's the- That then is the ground or wisdom and it is not passive. It is not something you trample on.

00:05.17

It is not to be trampled on, but nevertheless - and I'll end with this remark - there is something else with it. And I think we all

respond to it exactly how we want to articulate it. I certainly could hear it in the wonderful presentation you were giving. Jay has referred to it.

00:05.41

It has many words, perhaps logos if you want a more common word. Bodhichitta is the word that the Dalai Lama would probably bring in. It's an active principle. How it relates in this- how to say- how it relates ethically is complex, but at the end of the day you do have a vision. People do come with a vision.

00:06.09

It may be small, it may be large, but at the end of the day you want a vision which does incorporate all in well-being and you need some way to get to it and these then are required for the final, perfect- how to say- well-being of all. Without that, you wouldn't have a full ethics.

00:06.31

So, those three then, together are a presentation of Buddhist ethics. And I'll leave it there.
Thank you.

EVAN THOMPSON

Thank you.

APPLAUSE

00:06.47

Our fourth and final respondent is Professor Robert Pollack, who is Professor of Biological Sciences, Lecture and Psychiatry at the Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, Adjunct Professor of Science and Religion at Union Theological Center- Seminary, excuse me, Adjunct Professor of Religion at Columbia University and Director of the Center for the Study of Science and Religion here at Columbia University. Thank you.

APPLAUSE

ROBERT POLLACK

00:07.18

Thank you. Jay comes to work on three continents. I come to work on four planets. I want to begin by thanking Jay Garfield for sending in his essay to the conference in time for me to have a chance