

Wisdom School: The Dharma of Pleasure.
Audio: 08-Saturday Morning, Part I; First Hour.
TRT: 00:01:46
Speaker: Marc Gafni

>> MG: Here we go. So, we are at the beginning of -- we did an overture to our pleasure symphony. Then, we did the first movement of the symphony on addiction, eros and pseudo-eros yesterday morning, our first symphonic movement. And, then, we did the second movement of the symphony, on the seven voices of pleasure. And they actually turned out to -- how many? Nine. Because seven sometimes becomes nine. And the last three were the voice to the obligation to pleasure, the responsibility for your pleasure. Enlightened pleasure and evolutionary pleasure. Then, we began, in the 20-odd Principles of Pleasure, and we did the first two. That's where we are. Just a deep location, where we are.

We did a lot of things last night. Again, we didn't quite follow the plan. The plan was -- I said to Victoria, "We'll do like five minutes, save the voice and get downstairs." So, that worked really well. It was effective, perfectly on plan. It was just beautiful to be there last night. It was completely awesome. Really, everything we did was about comfort and pleasure. It was all the same.

Now, this morning, my comfort is Laurie's new shoes. There we go. Now, what I want to do is find with you -- we're going to do an independent, six minute overview, for a second. Not a recapitulation. Usually, in Wisdom School, we do a recapitulation, around this time, of everything we've done so far. But I realized this morning, as I thought about recapitulating, if we recapitulated, we're going to spend the morning recapitulating. So, what we're going to do now, as my son would say, [00:02:09*], you know, kids say "as if." As if we did a recapitulation. So, you ready? One-two-three. As if. So, we're now done with our recapitulation. It was short. Nice, huh? It was kind of sharp, clear, and don't you feel how things deepened? You really get a deeper sense of everything. It opened up the space, really beautiful.

So, let's add one more general overture, before we go back to the principles, which is really important, because we're going to work with this overture all day today. And today is a wild day. It's much wilder than you can image, we had some mischievous time -- Jeff, Shelly and I, in cooking up some things for today, yesterday and this morning. So, it's going to be like a whole journey day, with lots of pieces happening. And I want to just really invite you. Show up. It's going to be a great ride, into Dharma, into dance, into song. It's going to be a very different kind of day than yesterday, energetically. This day's going to go all the way until Sunday at noon. This is an elongated day. So, here's the overture.

So, overture. You know that famous question that Einstein asked? I'm sure you've heard it, when I say it. "Do we live in a friendly universe?" It shows up sometimes on NPR, when you get stuck on NPR and get knocked off the pop station. I prefer the pop station. I hate NPR, but give me pop music any day. Do you like pop music? Yeah, me too. NPR -- why do people listen to NPR? But you just say that you do, but you shouldn't listen to it, because it's unbelievably boring. It's all the same people, saying the same thing, all the time. But, if you had to be stuck on NPR, you'll hear about 16 times a week, someone will say, something like, "Do you know what Einstein said, is it a friendly universe?" They ask that all the time. Does anyone hear ever listen to NPR? No. Okay, let's talk about something else.

So, the better question is, "Is it a sane universe?" Is the universe sane? It's really an internal question, that you actually ask yourself, sometimes. If you're in life, and it all kind of makes sense, but, then, you

run into such absurdity. And one of key, gorgeous fragrances of pleasure is that pleasure reminds us that the universe is both friendly and sane. And I really want to invite everyone to that. Even if you just look outside for a second, at the gorgeousness of the day today. You look outside, and you say, “Oh my God, it’s gorgeous.” And you see the difference between yesterday and today. Yesterday was a beautiful day, but the beauty was hidden. To look here, it’s kind of obvious, in your face. “It’s gorgeous out there.” And what does is, it actually downloads into your very cells a sense of a universe that’s actually loving, friendly and sane. You actually feel that pleasure. So, that pleasure isn’t a cognitive pleasure. There’s no cognitive relationship between it being beautiful outside and the universe being sane and friendly. But something in the esthetics of the pleasure reminds you or is an indication of what they call in Kabbalah “reshimu.” Reshimu -- **Young*** used that word, the word Imago, that Harville borrowed that word from Young and Imago means “an image of,” and the Hebrew word is reshimu, which means “a trace of.” It’s a trace of -- the world is filled with divinity. And, then, there’s kind of a withdrawal of divinity, to allow room for world. That’s called in Kabbalah, [00:06:11*]. Instead of there being a movement forward, a creative movement forward, there’s a movement backwards. You’ve got to actually withdraw [00:06:23*], to allow room for world. Much like a parent who loves their child has to withdraw to allow room for the child, even if the child chooses against the parent. That’s [00:06:23*]. It’s very beautiful, and it’s a core structure of the cosmos.

If you were running a company, running a few thousand people in your company, you’ve got seven key people working for you, you’ve got to run them carefully. Then, you’ve got to, somehow, withdraw and create space for them, to emerge. And if you’re actually micromanaging, what will happen is you’ll actually shut down their creativity. They’ll stop being creative. Mackey always says to me, that the biggest secret of Whole Foods is an utterly decentralized leadership system, where, basically, everyone in the store is in some sense empowered -- incentivized, but also empowered. So, just a simple, wonderful example. On Christmas, a couple of years ago, in the Whole Foods Store near Nevada, the cash registers went down. So, the store managers made an instant decision. It was Christmas Eve, what do you decide? It’s to give everyone food for free. His decision. So, for one hour, after the cash registers got fixed, everyone got food for free. John said, in any other store system, the guy would have gotten fired. It’s Christmas Eve, you’re giving away food for free? They promoted the guy and made a huge deal out of his creative decision. They got about 5 million dollars, John estimates, of free advertising, for the story, all over America, and there’s no way they could have ever bought that advertising. So, it did more for Whole Foods and their sales in the region than anything else could have done.

It’s a wonderful story. But it’s about actually empowering creativity. So, you have to withdraw, to allow space. You have to withdraw. So, the parent withdraws, to allow space for the child to choose, even if the child chooses against the parent. And the problem, of course, is that the parent’s withdrawn, and there’s an empty space. In the world, when the Divine Force withdraws to allow room for choice, even when that choice is against alignment with the Divine, with the good, the true and the beautiful, as Plato said it, you also get horror. We all know that. A hundred million people died in that horror, in the last century. It’s a big deal.

So, how do you find -- and I just want you to hear the formulation of the question -- how do you find God? Or how do you find the good, the true and the beautiful? Plato's formulation but Plato called it a visible, sensible God, in a world in which the Divine had to withdraw, to allow space for the world. Do you get the paradox? So, all of Kabbalah is about that paradox. The whole point is that the infinite has to withdraw, to allow room for the finite to be present. Well, then, can you be expected to find the Infinite and the finite, if the whole point is, the Infinite had to withdraw, to allow room for the finite. We're so used to glossing over that paradox, in our New Age aphorisms, that we forget that this is at the core of reality. This is the core absurdity in reality. On the one hand, [00:09:27*], it's all Divine. It's all God. On the other hand, the Divine has to withdraw, to allow world, to allow space, for the world to emerge. So, we should spend, really, a Wisdom School on this. In terms of the mystic's path, this is the core of the holy conversation.

But for now, let's just share one image. So, what the Kabbalists talk about *reshimu*, and in *reshimu*, is that [00:09:59*], traces are left. Rumors of angels remain. Remember Peter Berger, that wrote a book? Whenever we mention a book -- there's a rule in Wisdom School, if you haven't been here. If I mention it, we've read it. Remember Peter Berger's book, *A Rumor of Angels*. *Rumors of Angels* means that there's traces of the Divine left in the world. There's traces. There's rumors of Angels, and you can find your way back, through the traces. So, pleasure is one of those traces. Isn't that beautiful? Pleasure is a place; it's a *reshimu*. It's not a cognitive structure of Divinity. It's a trace of Divinity. It's kind of like *Hansel and Gretel*, the yellow brick road. They're bread crumbs. Then, they take you home. You can follow them home.

So, that's what pleasure is. Pleasure is breadcrumbs that you can follow home. So, it's like, "Wow." It's a whole other way to understand pleasure. So, these breadcrumbs that you can follow home, these traces of Divinity, these *reshimu* -- there was a journal called the *Imago Journal*, which Harville Hendricks and Helen borrowed the name of their method from. Which, by the way, Harville and Helen really, really did together. Poor Harville got into a lot of trouble, because in the late '70's, you could actually talk to your wife about a lot of things, and then, write a book and put your name on it. That was still possible. But by the time the mid-80's came around, Helen said, "What the fuck?" And, then, they wrote the next 11 books together. But Harville and Helen really did this together. It really was a deep function of their wonderful, wild collaboration. And they, by the way, have a wonderful model, and I've told them that I talk about their relationship model a little bit these days, because I like it. It's really interesting. So, they're always challenging each other, all the time and pretty dramatically. They're not, "Oh, sweet Harville," They're in each other's face, challenging each other all the time. You can be in the room, and they'll have an argument, no problem. They're doing their thing. That's their creativity. They've found a way to do that, in a really beautiful way. I just want to give a blessing to their couplehood. They're people who have really worked it. They really walk their talk. They've walked a hard walk, not an easy walk, and they've stayed in.

So, that image of pleasure is a trace of Divinity. So, what pleasure does is it reminds you that the world is friendly, good and sane. Wow. That's a big deal. Now, we're going to get to, tomorrow morning, the

relationship between pleasure and art. That's the part we're going to talk about tomorrow morning. But just hold that. So, the fact that nipples exist in the world; the fact that there's sunshine; the fact that there are aesthetic colors; the fact that skin lives in the world; the fact that there's dimension and depth. Just all the levels of beauty are -- here's the way you can experience it, and that's going to be core to our practice today, is the experience of being caressed by the Divine Lover. That's the first person experience. The actual first person -- not a conceptual frame. This is a non-conceptual idea. It's a direct, unmediated experience of realization, is that in pleasure, I actually experience myself as being caressed by the Beloved, by the Lover, by Source. That's the actual experience.

Therefore, the practice of pleasure, throughout today, has to be that practice. It's not, "Oh, did I experience pleasure?" Big deal. "Oh, I had an experience of pleasure." You can have an experience of pleasure, which is cut off from source. So, the practice is -- and I'm going to give you a phrase from Tantric Kabbalah, "Ein Hadin Nimitak Ela Be'shorsho." That's for the four people in the room, who would die if they didn't have that. There would be anxiety for the next hour. So, that was for you. Whoever they are; they know who they are. Ein Hadin Nimitake Ela Be-Shorsho, which means the contraction is only sweetened at the root. It's a beautiful statement. The contraction of life -- the contraction of being a separate self -- is only sweetened [00:14:54*] -- sweetened, which is always, if you remember, old Wisdom School people, Level Three, is always sweetness is at the root. Meaning, what you do is you actually go into the root and at the root, you find Source. What that means is, you follow the pleasure back to its source. That's what Heather was referring to yesterday, when we talked about some of the mystical practices.

And, as you experience the pleasure -- but, then, in your mind/body -- much like in classical Tantra of certain Eastern forms, you move the energy of orgasm up your spine, instead of releasing it. So, that's a practical practice, to move it up the spine and, then, down the center, to the perineum and, then, up again. It's a beautiful practice. So, there's a practice of following pleasure back to its root, back to its source. So, you don't just experience the pleasure. This is going to core to our whole day. You actually experience the pleasure and, then, you follow it to source.

So, when you say, you follow it to source, you're going to wait for instructions on how to do this, because they don't really exist. It's like when you're doing yoga, and the teacher says, "Move your shoulder blades down." What does that mean? How do you move your shoulder blades down? "Move your spine up." How do you do that? "Adjust your perineum." How do you do that? I'm going to assume a lot of people here do yoga -- yoga people here? So, if you do yoga, there's actually a way that you can actually roll your shoulder blades down. You learn how to do that. You learn how to work with the body. So, there's a way that you actually listen to the words; you follow the pleasure to the Source. And you actually keep your attention on pleasure, but you follow it to Source.

We're going to get back to that when we practice, but that's an overture that, actually, we didn't do yesterday, but it's actually really important. Because it actually changes our understanding of pleasure. Pleasure is a trace of the Divine. It's a rumor of angels. It's a fragrance of the Lotus flower. It's not the flower; it's the fragrance of. And we can follow it back to Source. It is the crumbs which bring us back

home. So, that's our pleasure framework. So, good.

So, now, let's take a breath for a second. Any questions on that? Any questions, thoughts or comments, before we go on, from anyone? I just want to sit in it, which is totally great.

>> I was just thinking, sometimes, you get to places that are just awful. I can think of a place in Kosovo, where there's a whole street full of garbage, and people were living around it. It smelled awful, and the energy just felt awful. You get from some very industrialized places in the U.S. that just feel really vacant. I've generally been a person who's very good enjoying things. Certainly, we understand that the world is beautiful. I'm just interested in, how do you --

>> MG: So, just frame the question. Give the question one more frame, and this will be my request for today. Everyone frame your question directly, in terms of pleasure. Because I want to stay really close to pleasure Dharma. So, I completely got what I want. Just do the practice of framing it, in terms of pleasure. So give it to me again. Hit me again, sister.

>> If you're in a place that looks awful, smells awful and just has a vacant feeling, how would you sit in that and appreciate the pleasure of it?

>> MG: Yeah, how do you find the pleasure in it? Great. Awesome. So, I want to pick up on one word that you used the first time. I was hoping you'd use it the second time, and you did. Did anyone catch the word? It was a key word, there. Anyone catch the key word? "Vacant." Everyone catch that? That was the word, and there's always a word, someplace, and you've got to look for that word. That's rhetoric, or that's the core of, what's the word that's opening up the space? So, "vacant" is the empty space. Just kind of follow the Holy of Holies. Vacant is -- that word is in the space now. It's "vacant." That's the Divine vacated reality and, then, needed to breathe into it, again.

So, what do you do, when you meet moments of vacancy? What do you do in the vacancy? So, first, you plant trees. I mean, the first thing you do is you create beauty, which is why, one of the key things that you need to do, in a war-torn area, is to replant trees. One of the first things we do in Israel, when there's a tragedy, we plant trees. You actually plant beauty. That's one. Two, one of the tragedies and the pains of a war-torn area, is that, in a street filled with garbage, you often don't have a place where you can find your way, which you pointed to very beautifully. So, the respond is, of course, to plant trees. But what do you do if you're in some place where you can't plant trees, which, wonderfully, no one in this room is, on an ongoing basis, but much of the world is.

So, what do you do? [00:20:22*] asked that question. I don't want to go too far down this route, but let's just spend a minute on it. He says, "What do you do when you meet the [00:20:32]?" It means you meet the vacated space. He has a Torah, and we've only, in a certain sense at Wisdom School, we've gotten so deep, but we've only scratched the surface. So, this is one of the most beautiful Dharmas in the world, which I'm not going to share with you now. I'll just point to it. And it's a Dharma by [00:20:58*] and a Torah which is called, in [The Initiates*], it's called Torah 64. It's the 64th teaching in his book, [00:21:07*]. He never wrote anything. Everything came from, what I would call in modern terms, recordings and transcriptions. He never wrote a thing. He was incapable of writing. He was a

fountain, and it was painful for him to write, which I'm empathetic to. It's painful for me. Who wants to sit down and write for a month. Let's just be in the world. But his student, Nathan, actually wrote and transcribed, and everything we have from [00:21:36*] is from Nathan, which is a beautiful story. He talks about that [00:21:45*], the Divine withdrawal, he says, "What do you do when you meet the emptiness, and there's no trace? You can't find your way through. So, he says, [00:21:53*]. He says, "You have to be silent on this vacantness. You have to be silent on this question." What does he mean? What he means is you've got to go inside, that you actually have to go, actually into interior space.

If you're actually living in a space like that -- which is not your reality, but I want to talk to that meta-question that you bring to the room, beautifully. What you have to do is, is you have to go into interior space. You have to not really on pleasure externally. You have to find and develop your interior space. And if you really spend time on the inside -- which is utterly critical, through meditation, through chant. But you actually spend time, not just chant once in awhile. You have to spend time to lose yourself in chant. And you develop a rich internal world. To live in this world, without a rich interior space, is to live in an illusion. And actually, there's what we call the "Perennial Philosophy." And that Perennial Philosophy is very simple. Spirit is real, one. This is my formulation or summation of the Perennial Philosophy, one of the basic principles of reality. One, Spirit is real. Two, the place to find spirit is on the inside. Three, you'll always fall away from Spirit, because you'll always meet the vacancy. Four, there's a way back. Five, the way back is through practice, which brings you inside. Six, when you practice and find your way inside, you're liberated from unnecessary suffering. Seven, you, then, become a Bodhisattva and activate yourself, of the good, the true and the beautiful in the world. Those seven principles, which I mentioned quickly and which are, again, the seven of the whole Wisdom School, but those seven principles are, basically, the best integration of the shared depth structures/spiritual truths of all the great Traditions, that we've only gathered together, in the last 40 years.

And they always involve, in Step Three, meeting the vacancy, which you bring so beautifully into the space. The way you meet it is, when you go inside the practice. That's the way inside. That's always the way inside. There's no other way inside. There's actually no other way in. So, practice is utterly, radically essential.

What I say to people, when I'm working with addiction -- over the last five, six, seven years, I forayed into that world. I'm now foraying into it more seriously. Before, we did a bunch of groups at a treatment center that Laurie's developed in Malibu. But what I say, when I talk right to that gorgeous, holy population is that there's basically two choices -- addiction or practice. Those are the two choices. Addiction or practice. There are no other two choices, and practice opens the space. Did everyone get that? It's so beautiful. It's really beautiful. I have to resist the temptation to talk about this, now, for the next hour, because there's so much to say about this, and it's so important. So, we'll forcefully hold it there. Thank you so much for bringing that into the space. Does that hold a little bit of your inquiry?

>> It is for me, visiting, but not for --

>> MG: No, no, no. You didn't catch it. Catch it again. This was for the people there. This wasn't for

you, visiting. No, no, no. Stay with me again. I wasn't addressing you visiting. If you live there, the way through is not through physical beauty on the outside. It's developing interiority. This is precisely for the people there. Now, track it again. You didn't track it. It's totally beautiful. You're awesome. Just stay with me. This is for the people there, who are stuck here. That's precisely who I'm addressing. The way you do it, if you're there, is you develop an interior world. And your interior world is so rich and so powerful.

There's a book written about the Holocaust, by a person who was almost my mentor. We never met. His son and I were very close. His son gave me free reign to his apartment, after he died. I had an old, bad addictive habit of writing and not publishing Doctorates. I did it on five different thinkers, and I wrote what I wanted to write, then got bored with it and moved to the next thing. So, my thesis advisor, Moshe Idel, who is the reigning Kabbalist in world, told me that the point of writing is to get the Doctorate, which I never figured out. So, this guy, Eliezer Berkovits, was one of the great thinkers and one of the people that I entered into. He wrote a book, which you should absolutely read, called *With God, in Hell*. It's about exactly your question. It's not about the person visiting. It's about the person stuck there. He talks about the response of the Hasidic community to Auschwitz. And it's like [gasp]. What do you do, when you're not in Kosovo? You're in Auschwitz, which is a whole different level of reality, which makes Kosovo look like Heaven. How do you walk through? But, so, you walk through by being able to develop and live in interior space. What the Hasidic community was able to do in Auschwitz, is the one of the greatest testaments of human spirit, from the beginning of time. It's shocking in it's gorgeousness. Berkovits, who was a urbane, sophisticated, modern rationalist, begins to hear these reports, and he's blown away by them. Because he's always rebelled. The Hasidic community has been anachronistic and backwards, and it's just stunning. So, that's what it's about. Good? You with me? That's where it is. Yeah, Laurie? Stay with pleasure, here.

>> If you're a disagreement with your lover. It seems like a war, until you actually follow it down. And at the root of the thing, what you find is a desire for connection and closeness.

>> MG: That's a beautiful example of tracing it to its source. You trace it to its source, and you find, at the source of it, is this pleasurable yearning for connection. Fantastic.

So, that's beautiful, and it's so important you brought that space in. So, a deep bow and thank you, because that bring us to the pleasure of interiority, which we'll talk about today. It's critical, and if everyone caught those seven pieces of the Perennial Philosophy, just to know those, by itself, is like "Wow." Those are the seven pieces of agreed-upon Wisdom. Every great tradition, integrated together. So, I want to see a little ecstasy, sister. Give me a little ecstasy. You okay? Good. I got a smile.

Ready? Here we go. Drum roll. Let's go. We're good. Are you going to rely on everyone else to do the drum roll for you. That was not a drum roll. I don't know what that was, but it was pathetic. Let's try that again. Drum roll. Let's go. Yes. Good morning. Here we go.

Principle One. We're just going to review Principle One and Two, just for a second. We're going to go all through the twenty. Ready?

So, One is, pleasure is a skill. One example of the skill would be to know the Three Stations of Pleasure, which we won't review, but you remember them from yesterday. And Number Two would be the capacity, the skill to receive the pleasure. So, receiving would be an expression, learning how to receive an expression of that skill. We'll come back to receiving. But the first Principle is pleasure is a skill.

Second Principle -- we need a drum roll after every Principle. If we had wine here, we would drink a little [00:30:13*] after each one. Which wouldn't be good for addiction, but hey. Principle Two is the opposite of pain is not pleasure; the opposite of pain is comfort. Knowing the distinction between pleasure and comfort itself, is Principle Two. Drum roll. Okay. The drum roll is getting a little weaker.

Principle Three. Principle Three is -- this is a big one. Principle Three is delayed gratification increases pleasure. Now, Principle Three is unbelievable important, because we think delayed gratification is a moral principle, and we're kind of used to it. But, actually, it's a Pleasure Principle. I want to introduce something here, which is very wild and very subtle. It won't be completely clear until tomorrow, but it blows the charts out of everything we think about Spirit and ethics. Which is all ethics are ultimately rooted in pleasure. That's a very strange and unlikely idea. But, actually, we view eudaimonia, daimon or hedon, meaning pleasure, as being opposites. That's a classical Greek etymon. These are opposites. There's daimon, there's real meaning. And there's a hedonist, that you met at a party, who says, "I'm doing pleasure."

But, actually, in a new, reconstructed ethic -- because what we're engaging here is, what I call, a reconstructive project. We finished all the deconstructions of post [00:32:04*]. And, now, we need to reconstruct Spirit. So, the essence of our Wisdom School in the center, located here, at Shalom, is to reconstruct -- we're engaged in a reconstructive project. So, we need to rework the source code. So, here's a reworking of the source code: all ethics are rooted in pleasure. You can actually derive from the nature of pleasure every ethical principle. Because every ethical principle actually is a Pleasure Principle. And the notion that pleasure somehow overrides ethics, and, therefore, is dangerous, is only true at one level of consciousness. That's a legitimate and important level of consciousness at certain moments in life and at certain stages of history. But, ultimately, in an enlightened, awake consciousness, ethical principles are actually Pleasure Principles. We're putting this in the space. That's a big thing in the space. We'll come back to it.

So, when we say delayed gratification is a Pleasure Principle, that's a big deal. We're used to thinking about, "Oh, delayed gratification. That's core to ethics. You need to learn how to delay gratification." No. Delayed gratification is a Pleasure Principle. Delayed gratification always increases pleasure. What happens when someone skips foreplay? "No time for that." So, does pleasure go up or down? It goes down. Why? Because I haven't learned to delay gratification. The dance of delayed gratification, whether it's in Spirit, foreplay -- or whether it's in a slow crowd or whether it's in sexuality/foreplay. Both of them actually create this delayed gratification, which actually increases the pleasure. So, that realization is a very, very big deal. It's the difference between a binge -- bingeing, in the eating disorder world or bingeing in our own little eating disorder personality that lives in us. Bingeing is the inability to

delay gratification. Delaying gratification is a Pleasure Principle. What it does is it inserts a wedge of awareness. You insert a wedge of awareness between yourself and the pleasure. By inserting that wedge of awareness, the entire pleasure increases and develops.

So, Principle Three is delayed gratification increases pleasure. Delayed gratification is a Pleasure Principle. It's not an ethical principle. The ethical principle derives from the Pleasure Principle. Another word to say it is life is easy, if you do it the hard way. That's a nice way to say it. Life is easy, if you do it the hard way. Life is hard if you do it the easy way. It's true. Life's really hard if you do it the easy way. That's the Principle. So, delayed gratification is a Pleasure Principle. So, if you forget everything we did this weekend, just remember that -- life's easy if you do it the hard way. It's really powerful. So, that is the Third Principle.

And, of course, remember, we talked about the Garden of Eden yesterday? So, in the mystical tradition, this apple -- this proverbial, mystical apple -- so, the apple was going to be available to be eaten as soon as Sabbath began, at the end of the sixth day. Adam and Eve, in the mystical story -- those proverbial mystical figures -- eat the apple three hours before the Sabbath, meaning they can't wait. And, so, the image of original sin, in its holy form, is the inability to stay and wait in the emptiness. It's very beautiful. So, it's the inability to wait.

So, what happens when you're waiting? So, I want to ask everyone to do a quick, flash exercise. It's not an exercise. It's called a flash exercise, a cash exercise. Write down, right now, a time when you were waiting for someone, and they didn't show up. Just trace -- you can either do it in writing, or do it in your mind. It's better to write it, if you can. If you're not in a writing mode, just receive in your mind. Trace your emotions during the waiting. Just take two minutes. You were waiting for someone, and they didn't show up. It's someone important to you. And, actually, watch what happens, internally, in that emptiness of waiting. And it's gorgeous. It's a gorgeous meditation. Take it away. Two minutes.

[00:39:01]

Anyone want to share? Show of hands? Take it away. Let's give her our complete, total, energetic attention. We're with her.

>> It's the looking forward to joy and the ecstasy from that, in the process of waiting, it's like an internal fight, in a way. The joy gets eaten by the doubt or by the disappointment. It's a fight between staying present or getting eaten by the emotions.

>> MG: In the waiting. Everyone get that? Give us one more, just to kind of feel it. Take it away. Everyone, put your name in the room, again.

>> Rose. Worried, impatient, curious, "Oh, no, not that shit again." Not important, angry, shut down.

>> MG: Right. So, I think we got the voices in the room. So, the waiting thing is a big deal. And we could do, really, several hours just working with this, with this issue. In an old book from twenty years ago, I did an entire chapter on the experience of waiting. I wrote it, because as I was writing the book, I was going out with someone, from twenty years ago, named [00:40:36*], and we made up to meet at

the Nachman Prayer Center, on Friday night. Nachman of Breslov in Jerusalem have a little, ecstatic prayer place that's not advertised, but you know where to find it. I didn't know there were two of them in Jerusalem. So, I showed up at one. She showed up at the other. We were at that complex point in the relationship, where I wasn't sure if we were going to get together or not, whether we were going to get engaged or not. Her parents were the heads of the PAG Society in Jerusalem. Some of you are familiar with PAG. Tom knows about PAG. PAG was a society in Jerusalem. I don't really know if it exists or not. It's called "Parents against Gafni." And they would meet. They would have little meetings, and, "He's dangerous; he's a heretic." So, her parents were head of the PAG Society in Jerusalem, at the time. So, we had to meet. It was a really, critical, important meeting, and she doesn't show up. I can, literally, locate that evening in my body, right now. "Where is she?" So, first, she's a little late. The first ten minutes, "Why is she a little late?" Then, a half hour goes by, and every thought goes through your mind. We finally met at midnight. She had, basically, gone home, because I wasn't there. She was completely happy to go to her parent's house and have dinner. I looked in every possible place. I thought she was in the hospital -- every possible scenario. As far as the waiting, I was like, "Oh my God. Waiting is a big deal."

And, as I did in those days, I thought, "Is there a genre of waiting stories in the world, someplace?" So, I looked where it was, and I realized there are actually three classical waiting stories, in Biblical Text, which was actually a genre that was unnoticed, what the experience of waiting is. Remember the golden calf? Famous story of the golden calf. Those of you who are into the Biblical piece, where the children of Israel were hanging out, and they're waiting for Moses to come down the mountain. So, it's always in that waiting place. That waiting place is a big place.

So, waiting is about the inability to delay gratification. "It's about to happen. I want it to happen now, and I can't wait." Being able to stay in the waiting is a big deal. To be able to find yourself in the waiting, actually increases pleasure, in every dimension. So, that ability to stay in the emptiness, to insert a wedge of awareness -- to actually stay in, even when I'm not there yet -- is huge. That's the transition point. That's Principle Three.

Principle Four. Okay, drum roll. Wake Up. Good morning, Vietnam. Drum roll, drum roll. Here we go, Principle Four. So, Principle Four is a really simple principle. The deeper and more refined the pleasure, the more skill you require to receive it. Everyone got that one? That's a big one. So, looking at pornography is relatively easy, to receive whatever pleasure there is or isn't in pornography. And whether there is or isn't is a big question. I'm generally anti, although it's a huge debate within feminism today. I think it's generally not helpful, not because it's degrading of women; it's degrading of women and men. It's degrading of everybody. But, whatever pleasure is available there -- there's obviously some sort of pseudo-eros in pornography. How do I know? What's the largest business in the web in the world? So, obviously, somebody is getting some pseudo-eros someplace. But it doesn't require an enormous amount of skill. You don't need to take a "Pornography Appreciation" course. You know what I mean? [laughter]. How am I going to appreciate that? I'm not sure. Let's look at the light, there. A new course on the web -- Pornography Appreciation. It just doesn't exist, to the best of my

knowledge.

But looking at a Monet -- it's actually, really "Wow," to really get that. It's a big deal. I was talking to a friend of mine, Android Jones. He's a wonderful, wonderful man with an unknown name who will become known. Do you guys know Alex Grey's work? Android is the new person in that spot, in the world. He's a great psychedelic painter, and I have, in my inner study circle, a whole bunch of key leaders in psychedelic art. We were all, actually, at Burning Man together and did a whole big show at a place called Fractal. So, there's a whole psychedelic art world emerging, very beautifully, in America, which is a mixture of practice and art. Android is in that. So, I spend hours, hours, hours at Burning Man, looking at Dali paintings, with Android. We spend hours and hours, just entering into Dali, which is a wild experience. I must admit that we had some help, in expanding the mind and imagination, to really appreciate Dali. But we just sat there, just, "What does Dali look like?" And, actually, the psychedelic painters are painting in a way, which demands an expanded state. It's like, "Wow."

So, the Fourth Principle is, the deeper and more refined the pleasure, the more skill you need to receive it, because you have to cultivate depth and discernment. Two words -- we have to cultivate depth and discernment.

Remember, here's our phrase in Principal Four: the opposite of the holy is not the unholy. The opposite of the holy is the superficial. We don't have time to expand this idea, but this is a big idea, in the Dharma: holiness equals depth. Those ideas are rhetorically equivalent. Holiness equals depth. So, the opposite of the holy is the superficial. So, we've got to cultivate depth and discernment.

Okay, you good? Just checking in. Principle Five -- the deeper the pleasure, also, the more effort and commitment it requires. It's interesting, but it's different than skill, although they're related, obviously. The more effort and commitment, even on a lot of levels, just simply, an expensive bottle of wine costs more. So, you need to work more, to earn more money, to buy it. The deeper the pleasure, the more effort and commitment it requires. Ready? Susan?

>> I just want to make the distinction between our perceptions, our experienced pleasure and something out there, that has an intrinsic level of pleasure that it has to offer us. I want to propose that my ability to experience pleasure is not some intrinsic quality and something not there.

>> MG: You've run us into a huge question in the world, which is too big for us to handle now. It's a beautiful, beautiful inquiry, which is, is there anything out there? Is it all in here? Who knows? In other words, when a lizard looks at a Monet, what happens? Right?

>> It tries to figure out if it's food.

>> MG: Right. In other words, one of the things we know, in consciousness, is that, actually, consciousness is interior. So, our experience of that piece of -- I guess, you could call it art. I'm just kidding. That was a joke. It's actually a completely gorgeous piece. I just like making fun of art. I do that with all of Laurie's most expensive paintings. So, whoever made that art, I'm sure that it's gorgeous, it was just a joke.

So, in other words, the point is, if I can't recognize that as art, the problem is not in the art. The problem is in me. In other words, I haven't cultivated the interiority to recognize. A lizard needs to evolve. So, the split between "in there" and "out here," in my sense of things, is probably a fallacious split. It's probably all in here. Take it one more step; take it to the next step.

>> Actually, the more simple thing what I was trying to say was, it seems that all these Principles are going back to the first Principle, it's a skill.

>> MG: You could understand these as being all dimensions of the skill. So, if you'd like to, just in terms of numbering, like to have a "1" and, then, have "1A, 1B, 1C, 1D," I'm good.

>> I want to say from my experience, I appreciate pleasure more from the very same thing, the more I apply these Principles.

>> MG: Nice. Thank you. Beautiful. So, you actually point to something really important. So, we'll hold both of them. We're good? Okay. Drum roll. Good. Now, you notice, in every drum roll, a certain amount of people have to make a decision, "Am I willing to put my pen down, to do the drum roll?" I'm just watching that decision happening. That's moral laziness. Put your fucking pen down, do the fucking drum roll, pick the fucking pen back up. Okay? Enlightenment is always happening, right there. Just watch that internal decision. Seven people really struggled with that. So, I just want to point to that. I'm with you in that struggle, but it's not hard. Pleasure requires effort. Here, we go.

Principle Six. So, Principal six is every pleasure has a price. Every pleasure has a price. Now, from this moment on -- we're going to do about ten Principles that we're not going to give examples for, and you're going to want examples for them. So, we're specifically not going to give examples, but all of them, will become clear, as we do the levels. In other words, when we do the levels, all the Principles will become clear. So, I'm just going to lay out the Principles, which is why we said yesterday, they're going to go fairly rapidly down.

So, every pleasure has a price, in different levels of pleasure. Which means, that every pleasure has its own currency of payment. Part of the pleasure skill is to know which currency to use in which country. If you're traveling Europe, we use francs. We use [00:51:34*], whenever you're in that country, and we use marks when you're in that country. And to know which currency to use. The Euro is not working today. We're pre-Euro, and there's no way to create a European common market for pleasure. You can't create a Euro. It's every pleasure has its own price, and you've got to identify the level of payment, the currency, you need to get that pleasure. And we're going to have very, very clear -- all of this. All of this is an essential part of Unique Self recovery. Every principle is really core to that process. So, the Sixth Principle is every pleasure has a price, and you need to know the currency of payment available for each pleasure.

Principle Seven -- drum roll -- is there's no exchange rate, between pleasures. That's a big one. So, the currency for Level One -- currency that will buy you all of Level One, won't buy you any of Level Two. That's really important. There's different prices of admission. So, let's say we have six Levels of Pleasure. All of Level One, all of the currency for Level One won't buy you any of Level Two. All of

Level Two won't buy you any of Level Three. All of Level Three won't buy you any of Level Four. All of Level Four won't buy you any of Level Five. And all of Level Five won't buy you any of Level Six. Now, what's beginning to happen, is as you hear this -- we want to hear this -- we're in practice. We're in Reality Consideration. If you allow this in, this begins to, actually, retrain. It's a retraining of our brain pathways and pleasure. We're going to rethink the whole map, piece by piece. Peter?

>> I just want to have an example.

>> MG: Right. Exactly. This is the exactly the place where an intelligent person says, "Give me an example," which we will totally get -- promise. So, that's Principle Seven. A little delayed gratification.

Drum roll. So, Principle Eight is that every pleasure has its own form of counterfeit or its form of pseudo-pleasure. There's a pseudo version of that pleasure. It looks like it, seems to taste like it, sounds like it, but it's not it. You have to always watch for the counterfeit of a level of pleasure. It's like every currency has its counterfeit. Every level of pleasure has its counterfeit. And, again, an example would be good, here and will be provided at the appropriate time.

Drum roll. Principle Nine. We on Nine? We good? Principle Nine -- the deeper and more evolved the pleasure, the harder it is to discern counterfeit. So, as you go up levels of pleasure, the counterfeit gets more and more subtle, harder and harder to discern. Okay? That's Principle Nine. The deeper and more evolved the pleasure, the more subtle the counterfeit gets. So, in other words, it's the difference between a cheap, back room counterfeiter and a very sophisticated, big operation of counterfeit. Got it?

Drum roll. If anyone is missing in the room and goes away, we lose the room. So, everybody, just kind of stay in. Stay in, so we can be in the room together.

Principle Ten. Principle Ten is big. Principle Ten is the deeper and more evolved the pleasure, not only the harder it is to discern the counterfeit, but Principle Ten is, the more damaging the counterfeit is. So, in other words, a counterfeit at Level One is not helpful, but you can deal. Level Two, less helpful and a little more damaging. Level Three starts to be really damaging, and it gets worse and worse. So, the more evolved the pleasure, the more damaging the counterfeit is. Okay? Let's wait until everyone's got it. Take it slow. That's Principle Ten.

Drum roll. Principle 11. Principle 11 is all levels of pleasure are legitimate. That's a really important one, because they're all valid. Although they're all valid, there is, also, a hierarchy of pleasures. Some are more important than others. Having said that, no one can dominate the system. You can do an intellectual, spiritual history of thought in practice and see the different spiritual or political systems try to claim that one pleasure was the pleasure and some other pleasure was, essentially, illegitimate. So, actually, you could do a history of thought and actually see that people denied this Principle, this very Principle and tried to create not just a hierarchy but a dominator hierarchy. A dominator hierarchy, not a holistic hierarchy.

That particular pleasure, that's a dominator hierarchy, as opposed to a natural, holistic hierarchy. A dominator hierarchy, in which one pleasure reigns, and, then, disqualifies the essential validity of all

the other pleasures. So, the Principle is all levels of pleasure are legitimate and valid, in and of themselves, one -- that's the core of the Principle. That's 11 -- 11A is there's a natural hierarchy of pleasures. However, 11b is there's not a dominator hierarchy, in which one reigns and, then, disqualifies the others. So, that's Principle 11. Let's take a couple of seconds. Ready?

Drum roll. Principle 12. This also requires an example, and we'll get to it -- so, I just want to honor that desire, which I share with you. If you miss a level of pleasure, all the rest are affected. They're all affected. So, even though each level of pleasure is independently valid, and every level of pleasure is legitimate, in and of itself, none the less, if you miss a level -- let's say you're missing Level One; Level Two won't work as well. If you're missing Two, One won't work as well. If you're missing One and Two, Three won't work. If you have only Three, Four is going to be a problem. So, any attempt to get rid of one of the levels, actually, you lose, not only that level. You actually change the quality of the experience of all the levels.

Every one of these Principles is going to become crystal clear, in the levels. But, now, we're setting up the Principles, so, we are, as Kai said correctly, we're engaging the pleasure of delayed gratification. Thank you.

So, again, that's Principle 12.

Whenever you're ready, let's drum roll it. Principle 13 is the Goldilocks Principle. The Goldilocks Principle is, not too hot; not too cold. Just right. So, you need just the right balance between pleasures. But just the right balance between pleasures just doesn't exist "out there." There's not an objective, just the right balance between pleasures. In your unique configuration of beingness, you need to know, in your life, what's the right balance between pleasures? We've got to balance them. When you get it just right, they all work. So, Principle 13 is the precise balance between pleasures, and, in general, Wisdom is in balance. It's balance, the right balance.

[00:01:09]

Wisdom School: The Dharma of Pleasure.
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TRT: 00:01:46
Speaker: Marc Gafni