

November 4, 1965
Rev. S. Suzuki
Thursday morning lectures

When we practice our mind always follow our breathing. When we inhale, the air we take come inner world and when we exhale the air we exhale come to outer world. Inner world is limitless and outer world is also limitless. So our throat is like a swinging door. The air come in, comes out (like this...demonstrating a swinging door). So called 'I' is just swinging door which moves when we take inhaling and exhaling. And it moves...it just moves, you know...that's all what we do. So when we practice zazen there's nothing. No 'I' or no mind or no body, just a swinging door. We say 'inner world' or 'outer world' but this is one whole world. This is our practice. So when we practice zazen that which exists is the movement of the breathing but we are aware of the movement of the...our breathing. We should not be absent-minded. We should be always aware of the movement but to be aware of the movement does not mean to be aware of our self-nature. It is universal, or Buddha nature.

So to practice zazen is to be aware of Buddha nature. This kind of activity is very important because our understanding or interpretation of life is one-sided. Our understanding of life is always dualistic – I or you-- you and I, this and that, good and bad, but actually that is the awareness of the universal existence. 'You' means to be aware of universe in the form of you, and 'I' means to be aware of universe in form of I. You or I just swinging door. This kind of understanding is necessary....or this is not actually understanding...this is the true experience zen...true experience of life thru zen practice. So when you practice zazen, actually there is no idea of time or space. You

say, 'I sit...we start sitting at quarter to six, at this room.' We have idea of time, quarter to six, and in this room, the idea of space, but actually what we are doing is just sit and, you know, to be aware of universal activity. That is all. Next moment...this moment the swinging door will be like this (demonstrating) and next moment swinging door will be like this (demonstrating). One after another we repeat...each one of us repeat this activity. Here we have no idea of time or space. Time and space is one when the door, you know, swings like this (demonstrating). Here is...you may say this is time (one extremity of the swinging door) but at the same time this is space, so actually there is...it is not necessary to interpret, or to explain our life in the idea of time or space.

You say, "I must do something this afternoon." But actually there is no 'this afternoon'. We do things one after another. That's all. There is no such time 'this afternoon' or one o'clock or two o'clock, At one o'clock you will finish your lunch. To eat lunch is one o'clock. You will be some place but some place cannot be separated from one o'clock and some place is same. For someone who actually appreciate our life it is one, but when we become of our life we say, "I shouldn't have come to this place. It may be much better to go to some other place and have lunch. This place is not so good." Or you say, "This is bad, so I shouldn't do this", but actually you say "I should not do this", but you are doing...not-doing in this moment. So there's no choice for you. If time come, space will follow. So there's no choice for you. But when you separate idea of time and space you feel as if you have some choice, but actually you have to do something or you have to not-to-do something. Not-to-do something is also to...you are doing something. Just in your mind there is good and bad. Bad that you should not do and good that you should do. But bad means something not to do for zen student. Bad is something not-to-do is bad. So we should not say 'this is bad or good'. Instead of saying bad you should say not-to-do.

Not-to-do is bad. But if you think 'this is bad' it will create you some confusion. So in realm of religion, pure religion, there is no confusion of time and space or good and bad. All what we should is, just do something. Do something! Whatever it is, we should do something, including not-doing. So we should live on this moment. So when you sit we are concentrated on our breathing. We become a swinging door and we do something we should do, we must do. This is zen practice.

So in this practice there is no confusion. If you keep...if you establish this kind of life you have no confusion whatsoever. And the important thing is you must have...if you become...if you want to become purely one with the activity of inhaling and exhaling your mind should be pure and calm enough to follow the activity. If you think, 'I take breathing'. I is extra. There is no you to say I. This is enough. When your mind is pure and calm enough, there is no idea of I. We say, in Chinese...famous zen master Tozen said 'The blue mountain is father of white cloud. Blue mountain is father of while cloud. And white cloud is the son of blue mountain.' All day long they depend on each other. Without knowing...depending on each other, white cloud is always white cloud. Blue mountain is always blue mountain. This is pure, clear interpretation of life. There may be many things like white cloud – blue mountain. Man and woman, teacher and disciple- they are depending on each other, but white cloud should be white cloud. White cloud should not be bothered by blue mountain. Blue mountain should always be blue mountain. Blue mountain should not be bothered by white cloud. They are quite independent, but dependent. This is how we live and how we practice zazen. When we become ourselves, purely, in its true sense, we just become a swinging door and we are purely independent and dependent to everything. Without air, we cannot take breathing. Each one of us is in the midst of myriads of worlds. We are in the center of the world.

Always moment after moment we are the center of myriads of worlds. So we are quite dependent and independent. So, if you understand, or if you experience this kind of experience, you have absolute independence. You will not be bothered by anyone. So, when you practice zazen, your mind should be concentrated in your breathing and this kind of activity is the fundamental activity of the universal being. If so, how you should use your mind is quite clear. Without this experience, or this practice, it is impossible to attain the absolute freedom.