

Bhante Vimalaramsi

TT: 0:0

BV: Tonight, the discourse is going to be sutta number ten, in The Middle Length Sayings, the Satipatthana Sutta, "The Foundations of Mindfulness." A lot of people use the Mahasatipatthana Sutta. This is basically the same thing, the Mahasatipatthana Sutta goes into a little bit more detail than this does, but this has all of the same things in it that the Mahasatipatthana Sutta has. The Mahasatipatthana Sutta is in the Digha Nikaya, the Long Discourses [of the Buddha]; this is in Majjhima Nikaya, The Middle Length Discourses [of the Buddha.]

MN: 1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country where there was a town of the Kurus named Kammasadhamma. There he addressed the monks thus: "Monks." - "Venerable sir." they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Monks, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of Nibbana - namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

3. "What are these four? Here, monks, a monk abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feeling as feeling, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

TT: 2:58

BV: What does "covetousness and grief for the world" mean? "I want it", "I don't want it." That's basically what it's talking about here. You're letting go of that mind that gets caught up in the story about liking and disliking this or that. Getting caught up in the story of when someone in your family dies, an unpleasant feeling arises and trying to squash that feeling and stop it from causing you so much pain.

In the early seventies, a man by the name of Steven Levine started bringing death out of the closet. Up until the seventies, nobody would talk about death, even though everybody experiences death one way or another, their family member dies, a friend dies something like that. And one of the things that he did was, he taught people to allow the grieving process to work. That means not resisting the pain, letting your heart just plunge wide open by the pain, and loving it anyway. Not resisting, not pushing away, not trying to control. By seeing that you are causing yourself immeasurable suffering, by thinking and pondering on the death of a loved one, and then not liking the feelings that arise because of that. And then trying to control your feelings with your thoughts, and we found out yesterday that that just doesn't work very well.

So letting go of the grief for the world and wanting to hold on to all of the good stuff and push away the bad stuff - that's what it's talking about here. Now, what does it mean to be ardent and fully aware? Aware of what? What your mind is doing in the present moment, how your mind [mind's attention] moves, being fully aware of body, of feeling, of consciousness, of mind, of mind objects.

Mindfulness is one of the trickier words in the English language because everybody is supposed to know what it means, and almost nobody can give you a real reasonable definition of it. So I'm going to give you the definition right now. It's the observation power of watching how your mind's [attention] moves, in the present moment. How does this relate to your being in a meditation retreat? Your mind is very nicely on your object of meditation, there can be joy, there can be happiness, there can be tranquility. And your observation power starts to fade. It's weak, and as soon as it slips off the object

of meditation, your mind is caught by a hindrance, one kind or another. So what do you do? You notice that your mind is not on your object of meditation, you let go of the thought, relax. You let go of that tight mental fist around that hindrance, and relax and then bring your mind's [attention] back to your object of meditation. The nature of the hindrances is, once they arise they're pretty strong. So your mind is going to go back to that. But now you start noticing how that [mind's attention] movement works. That's true mindfulness.

You notice with your strong observation power how your mind stays on the object of meditation without moving, and then you notice all of the different things that happen as your mind's [attention] goes away, as you become more familiar with the process, and see the little things that happen in your mind and in your body, and you become familiar with it, you're able to recognize these movements more clearly and more easily. And you're able to let go of the distraction more easily, and then relax, and then gently redirect your attention back to your object of meditation. So your mind's [attention] gets on your object of meditation and it stays there, but your mindfulness has been disturbed by the hindrance and the hindrance is still strong. You don't jump at the first little tiny movement of mind's [attention] and say: "Now I've got you and I'm going to stop. I'm going to stop this right now." You're putting too much energy into it, and that will cause more restlessness to arise.

It has to be a simple noticing, and if you don't see anything between your mind's [attention] being on your object of meditation and then the distraction, if you don't see anything in between that, that's fine. Let it go and relax, come back to your object of meditation. When it goes again, notice it, let go, relax, come back to your object of meditation. As you do that more, you start noticing other little things that happen right before your mind gets fully carried away, and you'll be able to say: "Ah, I see it, because of this tightness that arises in my body," or "My body has started to slump." Whatever. You'll notice a lot of different little things that occur. And it's a natural process.

As you notice more easily that your mind's [attention] carried away, you start expecting it to be carried away actually, because that's the nature of mind. You still know that you have attachment there, but as you start to see it more and more easily, you start to see it more and more quickly. And then you'll start to notice that your mind's [attention] is very still, very calm, and then it starts to wobble as your mindfulness weakens, as your observation power diminishes for whatever reason. And then it wobbles faster and faster and then it moves away.

Now, if your mindfulness and your observation is so clear and alert that you can see your mind's [attention] starting to do that, you let it go right then and relax, and your mind stays on your object of meditation. And it might do that a few times, and you see it each time and you let go and relax. And when that hindrance has lost a lot of energy, and it fades away, there's relief, and you go deeper into your meditation because you've sharpened that observation power so much more now, because your friend the hindrance came, and you allowed it to be there without getting caught in the story of it, and your friend goes away, your mindfulness and your observation power is much stronger and you go deeper in your meditation. That's how you progress in your meditation.

Now when you're looking at how your mind's [attention] goes away from your meditation and it's caught by a hindrance, and I don't care whether the hindrance is lust or hatred or sleepiness and dullness or restlessness or doubt. Whatever it is, you'll start to notice that dependent origination and the process of dependent origination is occurring. So, as you see that part of the process, you see that there're separate links happening ~, you see that there's six sense bases, mind being one of them, and contact and feeling and craving and clinging and becoming. You see that over and over again, you start to really go more deeply into your practice. You start to really understand that all of the times you've heard me mention dependent origination - this stuff is for real. It's not a concept. It's not a philosophy. This is a reality. This is how mind's [attention] moves. This is how mind's [attention] works. So your hindrances are absolutely a necessary part of your spiritual practice. And some

people will come to me and they say things like: "Ok, I'll watch the hindrances, but how long do I have to do it?" Long as it's there. Learn from your hindrances. They're your teacher. Where's your attachment? Caught up in that hindrance. You better believe it.

Why did that hindrance arise? Who cares? Do you have to analyze things when the hindrance arises? No. That's the Western disease. This is where a lot of people teaching meditation right now, are making mistakes, and there's an awful lot of people that are becoming more and more confused about what Buddhism really is and what it's teaching, because they don't go to the suttas and see for themselves whether what is being taught is what the teacher is saying, or is it some kind of fantasy that the teacher is working on.

Now

TT: 16:32

MN: (CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY)

(1. Mindfulness of Breathing)

4. "And how monks, does a monk abide contemplating the body as a body? Here a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short.'

BV: The key word is he "understands." He understands when you take the long breath, and when you take the short breath. You don't have to tell yourself it's a long breath. You don't try to force yourself to take a long breath. You know when your breath is long, you know when it is short. You know when it is coarse; you know when it is fine. You know when it is heavy; you know when it is light. This does not take any kind of manipulation by you at all; it's just noticing

when the breath is long and when it's not. What your breath is doing. Not controlling it.

MN: He trains thus:

BV: Now this is a little bit different than "he understands".

MN: "He trains himself thus"; 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body'. He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquilizing the bodily formation.'

BV: Now what is this talking about? You experience the entire body. If there's any tension or tightness, tranquilize it. Relax. Let go of the tension. If there's tension in your shoulders, let your shoulders down. If there's tension in your back, relax. If there's tension in your neck, relax. But also notice the tension and tightness caused by the movement of mind's [attention]. Now here it says you tranquilize your bodily formation on the in breath; you tranquilize you bodily formation on the out breath. So what does that mean? On the in breath, relax. You feel your entire body, if there's any tightness there, relax, but always notice there's a little tension and tightness in your head, in your mind and feel it open up and become calm.

S: ~

TT: 20:08

BV: No hurry in that. Right.

Now I'm teaching you loving kindness meditation, which is basically the same thing. Ok. The only real differences are: I tell you to smile more; be happy. Any movement of mind [s attention] away from your object of meditation, let go of that distraction, if it's thoughts, let go of the thoughts, relax. If it's thoughts and feelings, let go of the thoughts, relax, let go of the feeling, relax. Feel your mind expand, and take a little step down. Bring that mind[s attention] back to your object of meditation. Make a wish for your

friend's happiness, or yourself, relax. Anytime you see any tension starting to come up, relax. Stay with that feeling in your heart. Stay with the smile. Keep the smile always.

Why is that important? Because you can see when mind [s attention] moves and becomes hard, becomes tense, becomes tight. You can see it, because you know that at that time you're not smiling. All of a sudden you start taking everything seriously.

S: ~

BV: Two clowns. (Laughs) And that's a compliment. Whoo - I've never been called a clown before and been complimented by it. (Laughs)

TT: 22:45

MN: Just as a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands: 'I make a long turn'; or when making a short turn, understands: 'I make a short turn'; so too, breathing in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short'. He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquilizing the bodily formation.'

(INSIGHT)

5. "In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally.

BV: In other words when you're contemplating internally, you're seeing what your mind is doing and you are relaxing. There's a distraction, there's a sound, there's a sight, there's a smell, there's a

taste, there's a touch, there's a thought. That is called externally, because in order to see there has to be an external color and form, in order to hear there has to be a sound. That's the external contemplation. And both internally and externally means that's there contact and feeling and craving and clinging and becoming. But when you see that that contact and that feeling arise, if your mindfulness is sharp enough you let go before the craving arises, then there is no clinging and there is no becoming.

S: ~ internally and externally the same as mentality and materiality ~

BV: It is the same as mentality and materiality. Internally and externality mean exactly that.

TT: 26:00

MN: Or else he abides contemplating in the body its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of both arising and vanishing.

BV: I have some real problems with this. I haven't seen the Pali version of this part of the insight. People that practice vipassana make a very big deal about seeing impermanence and seeing the arising and passing away of all phenomena. But when you're watching how your mind works, you're seeing arising and passing away all the time. It's not that big a deal. It's not some major insight into the true nature of all things because you're seeing everything change all the time. So I have some real problems with this part, because I haven't seen the Pali to understand exactly what they're talking about.

MN: Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness.

BV: Here's another thing that, ah, there was a monk, he was a German monk, he lived in Sri Lanka, he went to Burma and practiced, I think, in nineteen-forty-nine. He wrote a book called "The

Heart of Buddhist Meditation.” His name was Venerable Nyanaponika. He started up the Pali Text Society.

In the understanding that he had, and wrote about in “The Heart of Buddhist Meditation”, he called “mindfulness” “bare attention.” Yes. And Bhikkhu Bodhi, who came along in the seventies, and in the eighties he started working with Nyanaponika because Nyanaponika was getting very old; Bhikkhu Bodhi became his student. So he picked up some of the same terminology. So he’s using “bare knowledge and mindfulness” in the same way that Nyanaponika was talking about it. But this is kind of a circus concept. When you see very deeply how your mind works and how it agrees with dependent origination, it’s not bare knowledge that you get, it’s deep, deep wisdom. Unshakable wisdom. No doubt. When you see exactly how dependent origination works, there’s not one person on this planet that can change your mind, because you’ve seen it for yourself. Nobody else can come up along side of you and say “Well that’s not how it works”, because you’ve seen exactly how it works, not once, not twice, not a thousand times, but many hundreds of thousand of times. And you know it so intimately that this is the way this process really does work, that no doubt will arise.

TT: 31:04

MN: And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. {...}

BV: When you abide independent, that means you’re seeing everything impersonally. You’re seeing everything as part of a process. It’s not that this comes up, and you’re holding on to it and taking this whole thing personally because then you’re caught in concept. When you see the reality of the process, but you see that there’s nobody home that controls it, it happens automatically by itself; that’s the way mind works. And it doesn’t just work that way for Asians, it works that way for everyone. Now the reason I say that, is because there’s an awful lot of people that think Buddhism, when it

comes to this country, should change, because we don't think like the Asians think. And we do. Every human being thinks in the same way. The process of dependent origination is universal! Every being, if their awareness is sharp enough, would be able to see dependent origination.

S: Culturally ~

BV: Of course it's exactly the same for every human being. And nothing upsets Americans more than to think that they could possibly even be wrong about this because: "Look at how culturally they're so different than we are, they don't think like we do. They don't get into their lust like we do. They don't get into their materialism like we do." But the process is still the same.

Ok, now the rest of this, it starts to go into the four postures, which is very much misunderstood. When I was in Burma practicing vipassana for a two year retreat, I would get up and I would start doing my walking meditation and my teacher said: "When you're standing, I want you to mentally note: 'Standing, standing, standing, standing, standing.'" And when you move your feet, I want you to mentally note: 'Walking, walking, walking, walking, walking.'" And when you sit down I want you to mentally note: 'Sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting.'" And when you lie down, I want you to mentally note: 'Lying down, lying down, lying down.'" I had some real problems with figuring out what in the world what that was supposed to mean. Now listen to this:

TT: 34:56

MN: (2. The Four Postures)

6. "Again, monks, when walking, a monk understands: 'I am walking'; when standing, he understands 'I am standing'; when sitting he understands: 'I am sitting'; when lying down, he understands: 'I am lying down'; or he understands accordingly however his body is disposed.

BV: Again, we come to that key word: "understand." Do you know you're sitting right now? Are you sure you're not standing? Give me a break. So I asked the teacher: "What in the world is that supposed to mean?" And he didn't give me any kind of an answer that was satisfactory at all. Just know that this is what you're doing.

Yeah.

S: ~~

BV: I find that hard to believe. Everybody that's walking, realizes that they're walking.

S: What if they walk into a pole?

BV: Well, but that doesn't matter, they're still walking, if they walk into a pole then they're standing or they're lying down.

S: ~

BV: But the whole point is, of the entire sutta, is to watch what your mind is doing in the present moment. Not what your body is doing in the present moment, necessarily. In a general way you know what your body is doing. You know when you're walking from here to there. You know when you're standing still. But you don't have to make a big deal out of it.

MN: { }

8. "Again, monks, a monk is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning, who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

{ }

TT: 38:01

BV: Full awareness of what? What your mind is doing in the present moment, how your mind [’s attention] gets caught by craving and clinging and [at that time] you’re a thousand miles away, you don’t know that you bend your arm out or bring it back. You don’t know that you’re eating, because you’re thinking about something else, you don’t know when you’re driving a car, you don’t even know when you’re talking, because your mind can be a long ways away. Now, what do we do about that? With whatever activity you are doing, I’m telling you, you need to stay on your object of meditation. I don’t care what you’re doing. When you notice that your mind is not on your object of meditation, please, let go of the thought, let go of the feeling, relax. Feel that tightness and feel the expansion as you relax and let go of that tightness in your head. Notice, that every time you do that there’s a little step down and there’s a clarity there that you can’t experience in any other way. And bring that clarity back to your object of meditation. And feel that radiation in your heart; make a wish that helps that feeling. Surround your heart with yourself or with your spiritual friend.

With all the activities that you’re doing, I don’t care if you’re urinating or defecating. What are you thinking about? Rubbish thoughts, this or that, not really paying attention to the tension and tightness in your body, in your mind. Not paying attention to how that craving arose, how the clinging arose, and how you get into your habitual tendencies of thinking about and becoming more and more. Now, when people are practicing vipassana, they are told that you have to pay attention to your body. Well, if you’re reaching forward, you have to know that you’re reaching, and you do it very, very slowly, and when you do that, you get, you’re able to see little tiny movements. And it’s stop and start, stop and start, stop and start. Every time there’s that stop, there’s a little gap and that’s called intention. So when,

S: ~?

BV: “Intention.” So your intention is most important with every little movement of your hand as you bring your arm out. How is that going

to help you with your daily activities to move like that? How would you ever get anything done? When you're watching your body move in such an acute manner you're not watching what your mind is doing at that time. You're not seeing craving arise, you're not seeing feeling arise, you're not seeing contact of any kind. You're not seeing the clinging, you're not seeing the becoming, the habitual tendencies. You're just focused on this one object of meditation at that moment. That is one pointed concentration, even though it's called moment to moment concentration, it is still a form of one pointed concentration. Why? Because your mind is focused on the movement and you're not watching what mind[']s attention] does. You're not being fully aware. Fully aware means aware of what your body is doing and what your mind is doing. You're trying to sharpen your observation power, so that you see everything that occurs as part of dependent origination.

Oh, one of my students in the last retreat in New Mexico, when she was in college, which was many years ago now, more than thirty, she took calculus. And she was really into math and then she branched off and became a medical doctor. She hasn't thought about calculus in thirty-five years, and she was sitting, and she realized that the teaching that comes from the suttas is part of the theorem, and she put it all together according to calculus, and it works.

S: ~

TT: 44:18

BV: A beautiful mind. Really amazing. So when you act in full awareness when you're walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent, when you're eating, when you're going to the bathroom, when you're washing your body, when you're putting your clothes on, when you're moving your arm back and forth, and you're watching how your mind works, you are being fully aware of the process of dependent origination. It becomes more and more apparent as you go deeper in your meditation, of course. At first you don't see much in the way of dependent origination, but as I keep pounding it at you, you'll start to notice it more and more.

Ok, then we get into the foulness of the body. Now this particular meditation was developed by the Buddha for monks that really had a problem with sensual desire. So he said, and this includes sexual desire, so he said: "Well, why don't you start contemplating what this body is made up of? All these little parts." Sounds like dependent origination all over again, only done with the body. "And see if there's anything that is beautiful and lovely, with this body" And he said:

MN: (4. Foulness ---The Bodily Parts)

10. ... a monk reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails,

BV: Finger nails, toe nails.

MN: teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, contents of the stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.'

BV: How does that make your mind feel now?

S: not good ~

TT: 48:00

BV: Now this particular meditation is, if you have lust in your mind, and you turn somebody's body inside out, and you start reflecting that: "Hey, you got some great kidneys there! What a liver! Oh I can't wait to get close to the feces, or the bile, or the phlegm, or the pus!" Now as you start to contemplating that person's body that way all of a sudden then it's not such an appealing thing. When you have strong sensual desire, the way to put your mind back into balance is just the opposite, and that is aversion. Now, you have to do it in a balanced way. One time, the Buddha, he had a bunch of monks that were really into this, so he taught them this meditation, and then he

went off on a three month retreat. And he came back and he said: "Where's all the monks at now?" And they said: "Well, they've been doing this meditation so much they've become so revolted by their body that they're giving all of their possessions away and committing suicide." And the Buddha said: "Well guys, let's not get carried away with this stuff. Don't do that any more. Do it just to get balance in your mind."

So you see the reason that there were so many people that were into sensual pleasures during the time of the Buddha was because they were in the heavenly realms and they saw that the Buddha was there and they gave up the heavenly realm to be reborn as a human being. And because they were in the sense pleasure, that sensual realm, that habit just kind of carried over with them, and they really got in their sense pleasures, so the Buddha had to come up with something that would help put that in balance. Now after each one of these body parts, of which there's thirty-two, when you're doing the meditation, what you do is you say one of them; you picture a bowl that has, the head hair in it. Now people think: "Well, hair is very beautiful." Let it sit in a bowl for a week or so and go up and smell it and tell me how beautiful it is, or let me drop a bunch of it in your soup, and tell me how beautiful hair is. After reflecting on that bowl, then you relax. You don't think about it anymore, but you keep that in your mind. And you do that with each one of the body parts, in your mind. Really does give a state of balance that way.

TT: 51:51

MN: {.....}

TT: 51:51

TAPE RESUMES

BV: The next one is the meditation on the charnel grounds. Now during the time of the Buddha, they had these cemeteries where someone would die and their family members were a long ways away. So their friends would take them to the charnel ground, cover them with a piece of cloth, and put them in the charnel ground, and

whenever the family members came, then they would dispose of the body, take care of the body. Sometimes that would be a month; sometimes it might be a year. So the charnel ground was a place where you saw a lot of different stages of decay.

Now to make this point very clear, there was this courtesan, prostitute, that was incredibly beautiful, and if anybody wanted to spend even four hours with her, it cost a thousand pieces of gold. And the Buddha happened to be in the town where she was, and she had some kind of physical problem and she died. And they came to the Buddha and said: "Well, she's dead and she doesn't have any relatives at all, we should take care of the body." And the Buddha said: "No, just leave the body here. One day, then two days, then three days, and then he called the whole town up.

He said: "All of you've known this courtesan. For four hours, it cost a thousand pieces of gold to be with her. Now I'm taking a bid for her. Who will give me a thousand pieces of gold to be with her now?" Now her body is starting to turn blue and it's starting to get bloated, and it's starting to smell pretty bad. And then the Buddha said: "Well," No takers. "Who will give me five hundred pieces of gold?" No takers. "Who will give me a hundred pieces of gold?" No takers. "Who will give me one piece of gold?" No takers. "Who will give me a piece of copper?" That's the smallest... that's like a penny. Nobody would give it to him. And he said: "Well, what's the difference between four days ago and right now? It's the same body." And that lesson [hit home to] an awful lot of people. It balanced their mind: "This is going to happen to this body. Is this body me? Is this who I am?"

Now one of the things that I did as a monk in Thailand, because of being a monk I had special privileges in a lot of ways, and one of the ways, I had this privilege, was, I could go to a hospital, at any time that I wanted, and I could observe autopsies. They're real interesting. And you hear the story about the person, how they died. This one guy was just walking down the street, happy, car, jumped the curb, hit him, killed him immediately, broke a bunch of bones. So they cut through the legs, so you could see the bones, and they tried

to fit them back together. And then they cut through the chest, and they cut the sternum out, and they pulled out the ribs, and flopped out the lungs and cut them, put them on the table, grabbed the heart, pulled that out, cut it out, put it on the table, grabbed the intestines, - lot of intestines, cut them, put them on the table. The liver, gallbladder, spleen. Then they moved up to the head. And they cut around the back of the head, and cut the skull... cut the skin, scalp, and they just flopped it on the person's face. Now the skull is right there. So they took a little hand saw, cut through that, pulled the brain out a little bit, cut it off from the spinal cord, took it out, weighed it. And then they wanted to examine the brain so they would cut it into slices. Now the whole time you're looking at this, you're thinking to yourself: "Where am I in this? Am I the brain? Am I the heart? Am I the liver? Where am I? I, ayah" So seeing this kind of thing is pretty amazing. Now I happened to be where there was a woman that was pregnant that got in a car accident and she died, and her baby died. And they did the autopsy. And they pulled the baby out, cut open the baby's chest, took out the lungs, little pink lungs, perfect, little color, and took out the heart and all of the different parts, trying to see why the baby died. And they did that to the mother. And you say "Ayah that's, gee, that's too bad." But where is their consciousness? Where's the baby? What is a baby? A baby is the same as an adult. A baby is made up of the same parts. It's a very deep realization when you come to that. Now, why would you want to do that? Because, it takes away the fear of death. It takes away the attachment to this [body]. There's nothing to be attached to. Why be afraid?

TT: 59:33

There's another kind of meditation that I could do in Thailand that I couldn't do in Malaysia, and that is going to cemeteries and spending the night. Cemeteries are frightening places. And deceased beings sometimes don't leave the cemetery, and they will come into your dreams, and you can have interesting conversation. I went to this one cemetery, and that day they just put somebody in the ground. And I'm contemplating death; death can come to anyone at any time. Who knows when it's going to come? You can have a

stroke, and be dead. Two seconds. You don't know what's going to happen, when. So I'm contemplating death right by this grave, and one of the things that happens with bodies that are put in the ground, in Thailand they put them in bags, and put them in the ground, sometimes they put them in coffins, but not very often, but when a body starts to decay it starts letting go of gasses. And all of a sudden I'm hearing this moaning and groaning coming from a new grave. Now, that's frightening. I'm there by myself. And I'm hearing somebody dead, making these noises. Ah, man. Hair on my head stood straight out. On my arms, I mean I was afraid. And I was just about ready to get up and run away, when one of the town dogs came into the cemetery and he was a puppy. He started digging at the grave. And I started looking at that and then thinking: "That puppy is hearing these sounds, but he's not afraid. Why should I be afraid?"

So there's a lot of different kinds of meditation, you have to understand that this particular sutta the Buddha gave, was for monks. Most laymen don't like this kind of stuff.

S: ~~

BV: That's, stop being restless. That's why these meditations, when you do them over and over again, you lose your fear of death. One of the meditations that the Buddha highly recommended for everyone, was, contemplation on death. Contemplation on the fact that you don't know when death will come. Why did he want people to meditate on this? Because that puts more urgency in your practice. Doesn't put a lot more energy, but you start realizing: "Hey, I could be dead tomorrow. I better be watching what I'm doing now." And when you really realize that, and you realize how lucky you are to be born in a Buddha era, when the Buddha's teachings are in reasonably good shape, that will make you pay attention a little bit more, it will make you try a little bit more.

Yes?

S: ~

BV: What happens when a monk dies? The other monks, depending on what people want, they take care of the body, quite often they will gather his followers and they will have sharing of merit and chanting and that sort of thing, and then cremate the body.

S: ~?

BV: Cremate the body. After that if there's any relics, parts of the body that didn't get burned all the way, they distribute that with the followers. All of the material things that that monk collected during that lifetime is distributed amongst the Sangha. So, that's what happens. In Malaysia, it's a fast process, a person dies one day, the same day they are buried, or they're cremated. So, Malaysia is a very hot country. I mean, we consider this hot; it's like this all the time there. And a body, a person dies, their body, it starts decaying very quickly, so they act very quickly with it

Ok.

TT: 1:05:58

MN:

{
..... }

TT: 1:05:58

(CONTEMPLATION OF FEELING)

MN: "And how, monks, does a monk abide contemplating feelings as feelings? Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, a monk understands: 'I feel a pleasant feeling'; when feeling a painful feeling, he understands: 'I feel a painful feeling'; when feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.' When feeling a worldly pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel a worldly pleasant feeling';

BV: What does that mean? What's a worldly pleasant feeling? It's just a regular everyday kind of pleasant feeling that arises. It can be a pleasant feeling in the body; it can be a pleasant feeling in the mind. But it's just your run of the mill, everyday kind of feeling that everybody has all the time.

MN: when feeling an unworldly pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly pleasant feeling';

BV: What is an unworldly pleasant feeling? When you're in a jhana. It can be joy, it can be happiness, and it can be equanimity. It is the feeling that arises when there is no suffering, no dukkha, pleasant or unpleasant

S: ~

BV: It's a definitely . . . that's why the Buddha called it a pleasant abiding here and now.

MN: when feeling a worldly painful feeling, he understands: 'I feel a worldly painful feeling';

BV: What is that?

S: ~

BV: Stub your toe, cut your finger, whatever. Now,

MN: when feeling an unworldly painful feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly painful feeling';

BV: What is that?

S: ~

BV: What?

S: ~

BV: It's when a hindrance arises because your mindfulness is not as strong as it could be. Then you have your 'friends' [hindrances] arise. Your best friends, and some of these friends, you better be really, really close with, because they're going to arise until you become an Arahant. So, what to do? Practice, notice how they arise, let them go.

MN: when feeling a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling';

BV: What is a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling? Something neutral. What does that mean?

S: ~

TT: 1:10:15

BV: It means looking at that floor and not seeing any pleasure or pain, just seeing the floor. Seeing the chair, whatever. It doesn't make mind excited, one way or the other. Got that?

MN: when feeling an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: 'I feel an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling';

BV: What does that mean? It means that you're experiencing equanimity, and not necessarily the fourth jhana, but equanimity.

MN:

(INSIGHT)

33. "In this way

{...}

he abides contemplating feelings as feelings both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in feelings their nature of arising,

{...}

Or else mindfulness that 'there is feeling' is simply established

BV: I really don't like, I'm going to cross that out when I get back.

MN: {...}

And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

BV: What does that mean? You're "not clinging to anything in the world," what does that mean?

S: ~

BV: That means that you're not thinking about anything in the world. You're not thinking about concepts. But you're seeing reality. How do you do that? By letting go of all the tension and tightness that arises in your body, in your mind, and letting it be and relaxing. At that moment you're not clinging to anything in the world. You're observing with pure mind, and bringing that pure mind back to your object of meditation.

Let's put it this way. You're hungry, and somebody happens to bring your favorite food, and puts it on the table and you see that. What happens? Your mind, a feeling arises, the anticipation arises, the craving arises, and then all of the thoughts about how you're looking forward to being able to eat that. That's the clinging. When you have equanimity, you can be hungry, they can bring your favorite food and your mind doesn't shake with that. Your mind sees that it's a food that's agreeable and that's fine, you let go of any tension and tightness and when it's the appropriate time you start eating it. You don't eat greedily, and you're not . . . and you don't . . . I mean you eat it in a normal way. You enjoy it while it's there, that's fine. But you're not thinking about all the reasons why you like it. And if somebody forgot to put one of the spices in it, there's not that criticizing of: "This spice isn't in it, it would be better if it was, I wish it was here, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." You know how...

S: ~

BV: No attachments, no aversions. Being completely in the present moment, noticing what's happening. That hunger that arises in your stomach, what does that do to your mind? That's a feeling, it's an unpleasant feeling. That feeling arises, you notice that mind start to grab around it, you let it be and you relax, and then it's just a feeling. Not my feeling, not my hunger, it's just a feeling. And it's all right for it to be there, your mind might bounce back and forth for a little while. That hindrance is strong.

S: ~

BV: It doesn't matter. Like and dislike is the same thing.

S: ~

TT: 1:15:30

BV: Well, if a bee stings you, the first thing that happens is there's shock, and the next thing that happens is there's notice of a painful sensation. The next thing that you notice is, there is this tension and tightness, and then the thoughts about "Oh I hate that." But even if you catch it then, and let it go and relax, you'll go back to that sensation, but it's just a sensation now, it's not my sensation. That little moment of change in your perspective, is the difference between suffering and not suffering.

S: ~

BV: It's still there and what needs to be done at that time?

S: ~

S: ~

BV: When I was in Asia , I stayed at this one place where, when I went out for alms round every morning, I had to walk by a wasp's nest. And the wasps, this particular kind of wasps, were very mean, and if they stung you enough, you could get very sick from this. So the first day I walked by, a wasp came down, just like that bee did for you, and he was right there in front of me, and my reaction to

him was: "Hello there, I hope you have a nice day. Do you feel well today?" And I was talking to him like that, and he flew away. Every day after that, I had at least one wasp come down, and I had a conversation with it; I never got stung, because I didn't have any aversion to the wasp. It's just a little being that wanted some love, so I gave it to him. And monks that came to visit me, they would come running because the wasp would sting them. Now what's the difference? There's a difference in perspective. It's only this little being. It's just like today, we went out to a field and we saw some cows and the cows came up to me. And he was real interested, when I moved towards him he wasn't interested, he wanted to back away. But, I was radiating loving-kindness to him. I was wishing that cow well. And you could see that softness in the eyes. So the function of mindfulness is to remember. To remember what? To be loving and accepting of whatever arises in the present moment. Soften into it. And it's ok that your reactions will be knock you out of being tranquil and calm and made your mind excited. That's fine, that's part of the lesson.

TT: 1:20:07

S: ~

BV: Well, but rather than you're meditating on it I would have rather that you let it go and relax and come back to your object of meditation, than contemplating it. Ok.

S: ~

BV: Yeah, there are snakes in the area. That doesn't matter. Every being wants the same thing, and again it doesn't matter whether they're Asian or not, every being wants the same thing, they want to be loved. So send love to them. Wish them well. That doesn't mean that you go up to a poisonous snake and put your nose right in front of his face. But it does mean that when you see a snake and you wish them well; give them the space to go wherever they're going to go, do whatever they are going to do.

Ok, I've been talking for a real long time. And we're only halfway done with this sutta, so guess what we get to listen to tomorrow. Now, does anybody have any questions, or comments? Yes.

S: ~

BV: Thinking about. Contemplating always infers analyzing and thinking about. Thinking about your reaction, what you should have done, what you could have done, what you wish you would have done, all of that is clinging.

S: ~

BV: I have real trouble with the word "contemplate," let's put it that way, because of the way it's always taken in this language. When you contemplate something, that means you think about it; that's not what I'm talking about. Not thinking about. Noticing it, letting it be, you're relaxing, coming back to your object of meditation, and then seeing how mind moves. Ok?

BV: Ok, let's share some merit then.

May suffering ones, be suffering free
And the fear struck, fearless be
May the grieving shed all grief
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth
Devas and nagas of mighty power
Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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May you reach Nibbana Quickly and easily in this very lifetime!
Metta2U all.
Bhante Vimalaramsi.

Questions concerning this Dhamma talk transcript on the "Satipatthana Sutta" should be directed to Bhante Vimalaramsi at bhantev4u@dhammasukha.org

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