

MN 21 The Simile of the Saw - Kakacūpama Sutta

MN 152 The Development of the Faculties - Indriyabhāvanā Sutta

Joshua Tree 5 19-Mar-10

SK: Joshua Tree 5. Dhamma Dena Vipassana Center. March 19, 2010. Venerable Vimalaramsi. And the sutta tonight is...

BV: Part of that...

SK: Part of The Simile of the Saw which is Majjima Nikāya #21...

BV: ...and...

SK: And part of Majjima Nikāya #18, The Honeyball. [But instead gave MN-152]

BV: Ok. Now you've already heard...you've been here for two weeks...you've already heard it twice before. So I'm not going to go through the whole sutta. But the reason that I want to bring this up is because it is so incredibly important to keep in mind. Now this is one of the suttas that I want you to really...to memorize.

The Simile of the Saw - Kakacūpama Sutta

MN 21:

11. "... there are these five courses of speech that others may use when they address you: their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, connected with good or with harm, spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected, with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a

mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. Herein, ... you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected,

BV: It means no matter what anybody says to you that your mind remains unaffected...

MN:

and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, and starting with him, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, ...

BV: Now these aren't just empty words. It doesn't matter what someone else says. You say, "Well, they say something that's hurtful." So? It doesn't matter what they say. You use another person's words as the reminder to start practicing loving-kindness. And all of a sudden what seems to happen...

...the dog is chewing up something...[laughs]

Anyway, you want to have a mind that is on loving-kindness as much as possible. And what happens when your mind is focusing on loving-kindness? People are kind to you. They drop their harsh speech. They drop their emotional upset. The less you get involved with emotional grabbing-on the more your mind becomes clear.

As you continue on with your radiating of loving-kindness to this individual that came to you with their anger, or with their dissatisfaction, or with their judgments, as you radiate loving-kindness to them their tone changes. Or they will walk away because they are not comfortable being around you.

Do you want a situation to change? Love it! Put your loving-kindness into everything. It doesn't matter what you're doing. Use that as your mindfulness practice with your daily activities as much as you can

possibly remember to do it. But you have to remember that you can't get critical and mad at yourself for forgetting. You just forgot for a period of time. Now start over again.

Now the thing with the precepts is really really important. And keeping the precepts as purely as you possibly can is very important. If, for whatever reason, you forget and you break a precept you know that...when you break a precept because your mind tells you, "Oops, you did that one!"...then take the precepts again, right there.

Forgive yourself for making a mistake. There's no need to have guilty feeling about it. Take the precepts again with the determination: "This time I'm going to keep my precepts without breaking them." Your mindfulness improves immeasurably. You start knowing what you're going to do and say before you do it. Which means that you cut down on the emotional outburst of your mind all of a sudden not liking something and having things come out of your mouth that aren't so good.

When you're on the phone, when you're dealing with other people, radiate loving-kindness to whoever you're with. And what that does is it helps your mind get into a sense of real balance. And that equanimity that you've taken so much effort to develop comes in. And people will start to look at you and go, "You're different! What have you been doing?" And then, if they're really curious, you can give them little things to help them like, "I'm learning how to practice having an uplifted mind." "Well I want some of that!" "Ok, it takes a little practice!" And that way you don't become a born-again Buddhist. [laughs]

That way you are teaching by example. And that's the way people really pay attention. They pay attention to the way you handle yourself with whatever situation there is. And putting loving and kind thoughts into that situation, and putting loving and kind thoughts into another person that you're dealing with. It's pretty amazing when you do that because instead of pigeon-holing somebody thinking that they're a particular way, now you're putting loving-kindness into them and the situation and it's allowing for change to

happen and it happens in a wholesome way. That's what the practice is about. It's about living. It's not about anything other than that.

As you continue on with your practice, and you're keeping your precepts very closely and you're sitting for one or two or three hours a day. "Well, that's a lot!" Well, it's either that or watch TV. What do you think, you know? You will progress, and progress very well! And before long Nibbana will arise for you. When? Whenever the conditions are right, but you have to be very careful with the conditions that you're setting up. If you overindulge in your sensual pleasures then mind goes away from Nibbana. Why? Because you're identifying with those sensual pleasures.

Now this doesn't mean you can't eat good food and enjoy it while it's there. Or, you can't do something with one of the sense doors. You can. But your mindfulness is such that you allow it to be. And what winds up happening is you start enjoying everything, every part of life, because you're in the present moment with it; not letting your mind go off and think about other things while you're doing this.

We had a lady from India come and visit. Her name was Dipa Ma, and this lady was amazing, truly remarkable. And you think, well, she's an anagami. She must be not enjoying life because this is the practice. But that was the opposite of what I got from her. I can remember asking her one time, "Dipa Ma, what's in your mind?" And she said, "Hmm, loving-kindness, mindfulness, and concentration."

Wow! Is that all?! And that's what we want to develop. A mind that can be so much in the present moment that whatever you're doing, you're doing it so completely that there is no aversion in your mind at that time. There's only this loving-kindness and you're with it, totally.

S1: Who is this woman, Bhante?

BV: Dipa Ma. A little Indian lady from Calcutta. She's now not with us anymore. Which is really a shame.

S2: Did she hug you?

BV: Yes. [laughs] Oh my! Yes, she did!

S2: A hug that lasted for days!

BV: Oh yeah! You walked around with this silly grin on your face for days on end because there was so much pure love in that hug. Really...it lasted more than a week as I recall.

S2: Yeah, I just walked around grinning for days. Yeah.

S3: You were hugged by her, too?

S2: She kind of insisted. She went like...come here. You know. Ok. A sweet older lady, you know. I walked out of there it was just like, "What happened?!"

BV: "My toes aren't touching the ground anymore!"

S2: Yeah, I never believed this, you know, twinkle toes kind of stuff but, boy, I sure did after that! Is her daughter teaching? Dipa?

BV: She wasn't the last I heard but I haven't heard for quite a few years.

S4: What kind of practice did she do?

BV: She went to Mahasi Center and she practiced what they teach at Mahasi Center. And she did have some psychic abilities that were quite good.

S5: Maybe that's it...psychic ~

BV: No, there was the open heart. It had nothing to do with psychic.

S6: Her mother said she would materialize herself in his class.

BV: Yeah, he said that she was very proficient at diving into the earth

and coming up where she wanted to. She'd pop up all the time. "Hey, I've got a question." Ok. Answer the question. Pop back down.

SK: Boy, that would be the end of you with me!

BV: Oh my god, please don't develop that one! [laughs]

SK: I mean I'm always going and asking him during the week at least twenty five, thirty times, "I have a question."

BV: "Can I ask a question?" Ok. I told her that's what I was going to put on her gravestone, "Can I ask a question?"

MN:

21. "Bhikkhus, if you keep this advice on practicing Loving-Kindness constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?"—"No, venerable sir."— "

BV: He's talking to the monks.

MN:

Therefore, bhikkhus, you should keep this advice on practicing Loving-Kindness constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time."

S: What paragraph was that?

BV: Uh...21. I changed it a bit. He's finding out how I change things. [laughs]

S: Just, I mean, yeah but, part of the matter, it just makes it more fluid.

BV: You know I was going to do 18 but I think I'm going to do 152.

SK: 152 instead of 18.

BV: This is not very long and it's called The Development of the Faculties. Indriyabhāvanā Sutta.

MN: 152

The Development of the Faculties - Indriyabhāvanā Sutta

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Kajangalā in a grove of mukhlhelu trees.

2. Then the brahmin student Uttara, a pupil of the brahmin Pārāsariya, went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. The Blessed One then asked him: "Uttara, does the brahmin Pārāsariya teach his disciples the development of the faculties?"

"He does, Master Gotama."

"But, Uttara, how does he teach his disciples the development of the faculties?"

"Here, Master Gotama, one does not see forms with the eye, one does not hear sounds with the ear. That is how the brahmin Pārāsariya teaches his disciples the development of the faculties."

BV: Shock?! How do you not see while you're looking at something?

MN:

"If that is so, Uttara, then a blind man and a deaf man will have developed faculties, according to what the brahmin Pārāsariya says. For a blind man does not see forms with the eye, and a deaf man does not hear sounds with the ear."

When this was said, the brahmin student Uttara, Pārāsariya's pupil, sat silent, dismayed, with shoulders drooping and head down, glum, and without response.

S: Can you show us that? [laughs]

MN:

3. Then, knowing this, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda: "Ānanda, the brahmin Pārāsariya teaches his disciples the development of the faculties in one way, but in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties is otherwise." "Now is the time, Blessed One, now is the time, Sublime One, for the Blessed One to teach the supreme development of the faculties in the Noble One's Discipline. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the bhikkhus will remember it."

"Then listen, Ananda, and attend closely to what I shall say."

"Yes, venerable sir," he replied. The Blessed One said this:

4. "Now, Ananda, how is there the supreme development of the faculties in the Noble One's Discipline? Here, Ananda, when a bhikkhu sees a form with the eye, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable. He understands thus: 'There has arisen in me what is agreeable, there has arisen what is disagreeable, there has arisen what is both agreeable and disagreeable.

But that is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen; this is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, equanimity.' The agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease in him and equanimity is established.

BV: In other words, when a sight arises and your mind has equanimity in it, you don't have that craving establish itself of, "I like it or I don't like it" because your mind has this very strong balance in it.

MN:

Just as a man with good sight, having opened his eyes might shut them or having shut his eyes might open them, so too concerning anything at all, the agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily, and equanimity is established. This is called in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties regarding forms cognizable by the eye.

BV: So, the stronger your equanimity becomes, the less movement there is...the less shaking of mind there is. There's just being in the present moment and seeing it as it actually is, without having the feeling arise. And if feeling doesn't arise, craving doesn't arise. And if craving doesn't arise, you don't have any thoughts, you don't have any concepts, you don't have any opinions. You're seeing it with true balance.

S: Bhante? I remember that in the Six Sets of Six it says eye craving is not mine, eye craving is not myself. So, can craving arise...

BV: Not without feeling. And there's no feeling, and there's no agreeable and no disagreeable. If feeling doesn't arise, craving won't arise. If feeling does arise, craving can arise.

S: So, can craving be impersonal.

BV: Never

S: Always personal.

BV: Always

S: And, when a person comes out of the ~, is there craving in his mind...

BV: No

S: ...because he sees all the links...

BV: No. He sees it with equanimity.

S: So, they do arise...

BV: They do arise and they do cease all on their own. It's just seeing with equanimity how this process works.

S: So it's...ok.

BV: Just like if your eyes are closed then you open them and you see with equanimity there is nothing agreeable or disagreeable, it's just eye hitting color and form. That's all.

S: Ok, and no craving.

BV: No craving.

S: Ok

MN:

5. "Again, Ananda, when a bhikkhu hears a sound with the ear, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable. He understands thus: ... and equanimity is established. Just as a strong man might easily snap his fingers, so too concerning anything at all, the agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily, and equanimity is established. This is called in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties regarding sounds cognizable by the ear.

6. "Again, Ananda, when a bhikkhu smells an odour with the nose, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable. He understands thus:...and equanimity is established. Just as [300] raindrops on a slightly sloping lotus leaf roll off and do not remain there, so too concerning anything at all, the agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily, and equanimity is established. This is called in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties regarding odours cognizable by the nose.

7. "Again, Ananda, when a bhikkhu tastes a flavour with the tongue, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable.

He understands thus:.. and equanimity is established. Just as a strong man might easily spit out a ball of spittle collected on the tip of his tongue, so too concerning anything at all,

BV: That's a real key statement, "...concerning anything at all...".

MN:

the agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily, and equanimity is established. This is called in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties regarding flavours cognizable by the tongue.

8. "Again, Ananda, when a bhikkhu touches a tangible with the body, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable. He understands thus:... and equanimity is established. Just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm, so too concerning anything at all, the agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily, and equanimity is established. This is called in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties regarding tangibles cognizable by the body.

9. "Again, Ananda, when a bhikkhu cognizes a mind-object with the mind, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable. He understands thus:...and equanimity is established. Just as if a man were to let two or three drops of water fall onto an iron plate heated for a whole day, the falling of the drops might be slow but they would quickly vaporise and vanish,' [356] so too concerning anything at all,

BV: This is how strong the equanimity has to be.

MN:

the agreeable that arose, the disagreeable that arose, and the both

agreeable and disagreeable that arose cease just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily, and equanimity is established. This is called in the Noble One's Discipline the supreme development of the faculties regarding ideas cognizable by the mind.

"That is how there is the supreme development of the faculties in the Noble One's Discipline.

10. "And how, Ānanda, is one a disciple in higher training, one who has entered upon the way? Here, Ānanda, when a bhikkhu sees a form with the eye...[301] hears a sound with the ear...smells an odour with the nose...tastes a flavour with the tongue...touches a tangible with the body...cognizes a mind-object with the mind, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable; he is ashamed, humiliated and disgusted by the agreeable that arose, by the disagreeable that arose, and by the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose. That is how one is a disciple in higher training, one who has entered upon the way.

11-16. "And how, Ānanda, is one a noble one with developed faculties? Here, Ānanda, when a bhikkhu sees a form with the eye...hears a sound with the ear...smells an odour with the nose...tastes a flavour with the tongue...touches a tangible with the body...cognizes a mind-object with the mind, there arises in him what is agreeable, there arises what is disagreeable, there arises what is both agreeable and disagreeable. If he should wish: 'May I abide perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he abides perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive. If he should wish: 'May I abide perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he abides perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive.

BV: The unrepulsive in the repulsive and the repulsive in the unrepulsive is talking about the agreeable and then the disagreeable.

S: You're seeing them both at once?

BV: No. It's individual. You see them one at a time like that.

MN:

If he should wish: 'May I abide perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' he abides perceiving the unrepulsive in that. If he should wish: 'May I abide perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive,' he abides perceiving the repulsive in that. If he should wish: 'May I, avoiding both the repulsive and unrepulsive, [302] abide in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,' he abides in equanimity towards that, mindful and fully aware.

BV: So what we're getting down to is the equanimity again. And how your mind, with true equanimity, doesn't shake anymore, doesn't move anymore. It sees everything as being the same. This is how your mind becomes dispassionate.

S: Is it the same or is it without reaction.

BV: It's seeing without reaction, of course.

S: Yeah

BV: But it's seeing it as being the same. By "the same" I mean without reaction.

S: Right.

BV: Right.

S: I mean if you see a can, a thrown away beer can, laying in a garden and you see a rose, they both have color, shape and form, but you're saying they won't be...

BV: There won't be any reaction.

S: If you see it with equanimity they are just that.

BV: They are just that.

S: Ok.

BV: That's all they are.

S: So it's without reaction.

BV: Yeah.

MN:

That is how one is a noble one with developed faculties.

17. "So, Ānanda, the supreme development of the faculties in the Noble One's Discipline has been taught by me, the disciple in higher training who has entered upon the way has been taught by me, and the noble one with developed faculties has been taught by me.

18. "What should be done for his disciples out of compassion by a Teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them, that I have done for you, Ānanda. There are these roots of trees, these empty huts. Meditate, Ānanda, do not delay, or else you will regret it later. This is our instruction to you."

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

BV: So that gives you an idea of how strong equanimity has to be and how useful the equanimity is when you go really deep into your meditation.

S: It will come in pretty handy, too.

BV: There are these roots of joshua trees...[laughs]
Ok, do you have any questions?

S: So, he said why when Buddha was in Parinibbana and Ānanda cried but the arahat...

BV: Did not...

S: Did not.

BV: Right. Because Ānanda was only a sotapanna. He still had identification with the thoughts and feelings. He knew they weren't personal but he got overwhelmed by his sadness.

Again, there are these roots...[laughs]

So, this really gives you good idea of the direction of the equanimity that has come to full development. That's what the equanimity does for you is keep your mind... This is the same as that. It's there and it's ok for it to be there and that's the way it is. Ok?

Let's share some merit...

*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

BV: And the thing with practicing loving kindness towards all the people that you see or talk to is that it helps keep your mind in that state of equanimity. Ok?

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Transcript by Brent Hagwood 08-Jan-11

Text last edited: 11-Jan-11