

MN 59

The Many Kinds of Feeling

Bahuvedaniya Sutta

Dhamma talk by Bhante Vimalaramsi
27-Dec-01

BV: Ok, this is going to be taken from Sutta number fifty-nine in "The Middle Length Sayings", it's "The Many Kinds of Feeling", and I'm sure you've all experienced all of these kinds of feelings.

MN: 1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

2. Then the carpenter Pañcakanga went to the venerable Udāyin, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and asked him:

3. "Venerable sir, how many kinds of feeling have been stated by the Blessed One?"

"Three kinds of feeling have been stated by the Blessed One, householder: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. These three kinds of feeling have been stated by the Blessed One"

"Not three kinds of feeling have been stated by the Blessed One, venerable Udāyin; two kinds of feeling have been stated by the Blessed One: pleasant feeling and painful feeling. This neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling has been stated by the Blessed One as a peaceful and sublime kind of pleasure."

A second time and a third time the venerable Udayin stated his position, and a second time and a third time the carpenter Pañcakanga stated his.

BV: Pañcakanga is mentioned a few times in the suttas; he was very much into practice. And he was a sotāpanna, which is the first stage of enlightenment.

MN: But the venerable Udāyin could not convince the carpenter Pañcakanga nor could the carpenter Pañcakanga convince the venerable Udāyin.

4. The venerable Ānanda heard their conversation. Then he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and reported the Blessed One the entire conversation between the venerable Udāyin and the carpenter Pañcakanga. When he had finished, the Blessed One told the venerable Ānanda:

5. "Ānanda, it was actually a true presentation that the carpenter Pañcakanga would not accept from Udāyin and it was actually a true presentation that Udāyin would not accept from the carpenter Pañcakanga. I have stated two kinds of feeling in one presentation; I have stated three kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated five kinds of feeling in another presentation;

BV: The five kinds of feelings are . . .sukha, dukkha . . . dukkha, sukha, ok, ah: unpleasant physical feeling; pleasant physical feeling; unpleasant emotional feeling; pleasant emotional feeling; and equanimity. That's the five kinds of feelings.

MN: I have stated six kinds of feeling in another presentation;

BV: The six kinds of feeling are your sense doors; your eye door; ear; nose; tongue; body; and mind. Now in each of these consciousnesses arise, as soon as it arises, as soon as that contact is made, there is a feeling that arises, and it can be either a pleasant feeling or an unpleasant feeling. If it's a loud noise, it's an unpleasant feeling, or if it's a noise that you don't like, it's an unpleasant feeling.

Ok.

And

MN: I have stated eighteen kinds of feeling in another presentation;

BV: And I'm not going to go into all of these, but it basically comes down to: contact, and then feeling, and then craving. These come together.

MN: I have stated thirty-six kinds of feeling in another presentation; I have stated one hundred and eight kinds of feeling in another presentation.

BV: I won't go into those.

MN: That is how the Dhamma has been shown by me in [different] presentations.

"When the Dhamma has thus been shown by me in [different] presentations, it may be expected of those who will not concede, allow, and accept what is well stated and well spoken by others that they will take to quarreling, brawling, and disputing, stabbing each other with verbal daggers.

BV: That's one of the favorite expressions in the suttas – getting stabbed with a verbal dagger.

MN: But it may be expected of those who concede, allow, and accept what is well stated and well spoken by others that they will live in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.

TT: 05:09

6. "Ānanda, there are these five cords of sensual pleasure. What are the five? Forms cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. Sounds cognizable by the ear . . . Odors cognizable by the nose . . . Flavors cognizable by the tongue . . . Tangibles cognizable by the body that are wished for, desired,

agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. These are the five cords of sensual pleasure.

Now the pleasure and joy that arise dependent on these five cords of sensual pleasure are called sensual pleasure.

7. "Should anyone say: 'That is the utmost pleasure and joy that beings experience,' I would not concede that to him. Why is that? Because there is another kind of pleasure loftier and more sublime than that pleasure. And what is that other kind of pleasure? Here, Ānanda, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states,

BV: "secluded from sensual pleasures" – While you're on this retreat, being secluded from sensual pleasures is, you don't let your mind get caught by sensual pleasures. When you're sitting in meditation, you can sit with your eyes open or closed, but you're cutting out all of the other sensory input instead of looking around. When a sound appears, you let the sound go. One of the biggest sensual pleasures that we have is the tongue. I've seen people get led around by their tongue, and they would drive miles just for their tongue. "Oh, I've got to get some of that cheese cake across town." And I have a mental image of a leash on the tongue, pulling the body along. But when you're eating, even though the food is very good here, I mean it's great Thai food, don't let your mind get caught up in thinking about how good that food is. See, it's the thinking that's the problem. So when taste hits your tongue, do you even know what flavors you are eating? If you eat a mango, what's the taste of a mango, how does that arrive on your tongue? It's not just in one spot. The taste of a mango is, to Asians they call it salty, to me it's sour, and then it's sweet. And the sour is on the tip of the tongue, and the sweet is on the side, a little bit further back. When you look at flavors and how they hit your tongue, and let it go without thinking about the flavor, now you're being secluded from that sensual pleasure. You're seeing it for what it is, it's just an arising and passing away of a phenomenon, that's all. When you're secluded from sensual pleasure, that means you're not getting caught by thinking about them. Now if you eat a good mango, and you start thinking: "Oh that was really

nice; I'd like to get some more of that" and then your mind thinks about something else, and then it thinks about something else and you completely forget where you are. So when you're secluded from sensual pleasures, you don't let these five senses carry you away. You see that arising, you let it be; let it go. Relax that tightness and tension in your body, especially in your head, and then what? Smile. Feel that lightness in your heart, feel your heart open up and expand. That's how you're secluded from sensual pleasures. Being secluded from unwholesome states, is, whenever a hindrance arises, you let the hindrance go, you relax, let go of that tightness and tension in your head, in your mind, in your brain, and gently come back to your meditation again. Now you've got the five hindrances, and they like to gang up on you, they don't come one at a time. You can have an unpleasant feeling arise like restlessness, and dislike that feeling, and want to control the feeling. You remember last night I was talking about the five aggregates, and feelings are one thing and thoughts are something else. You can't control feelings with thoughts. And that's not our job. Our job is to simply see things as they are, and let them be. Relax. Let go of all that tightness. Feel your mind open up and become calm, and come back to your object of meditation. And then when your mind gets pulled back away – how did that happen? When you start really investigating and observing closely how your mind moves, you become more and more familiar with that movement and you'll be able to catch it faster so you can let it go and relax and stay with your object of meditation.

TT: 10:40

Now you've just started the retreat, you're not going to be able to do it very well yet, and that's ok, it takes practice. Practice makes perfect eventually. Darn it! (Laughs) But it can really be an enlightening experience. When you are in the habit of getting caught by an unpleasant feeling arising and then that tight mental fist that goes around it and then all of those thoughts that arise because of that feeling that you attach to something else, something that happened in the past. When you start to see this as process, instead of taking it personally, then you start letting go more and more easily.

Now one of the things that, when I was practicing vipassanā, which I did for twenty years very intensively in Burma and Thailand and all over Asia – the instructions in the vipassanā were: when something like anger or dissatisfaction arises, you stay with that until it disappears. When you stay with that, you don't see that tightness. You don't see that grabbing on mentally, and the dissatisfaction and aversion you have to that feeling. So when we're talking about this kind of practice, this seeing that your mind is distracted, as soon as you see that distraction you open up and let it go. And you come back to your object of meditation and then you start watching the process. How did it happen? What happened first? What happened right after that? What happened after that? And when you start seeing THAT, then the feeling just starts to arise, and you go: "Oh, look at that one. Wow." And your mind doesn't get carried away for two or three or five minutes.

Mind by nature, wants to think everything away, and it wants to analyze everything, and what we want to do is let go. Let go of everything that arises, even joy when it arises, even happiness when it arises. It's a pleasant feeling but it's still a feeling.

Now what this sutta is going to start talking about, and I'm just starting to get into it, is the jhānas. Because of the two different kinds of meditation that are being taught in the world today, one of them is one-pointed concentration, even if it's moment to moment, and the other is tranquility. When the Buddha was around and he was teaching the tranquility meditation, there were a lot of Brahmins that really didn't like it because that was going against their tradition. They were into practicing one-pointed concentration. When you get in one-pointed concentration, you get to certain levels of depth in the concentration; the first major step is called access concentration. When your mind gets to this state, the force of your concentration pushes down the hindrances. Now the hindrances are everywhere you're attached, all of your attachments are with the hindrances. But when you get to this certain level, it pushes down, it stops them from arising. Even if you try to bring a hindrance up, your mind won't accept it, and just let it go. I mean you can practice with this if you

get in access concentration, you still have some thoughts, you still have fairly strong awareness, your mind isn't stuck on your object of meditation yet, so when you're in this state, you can say: "Ok, now I know I'm in this state, because my mind is staying on the object of meditation", and you say: "Ok, let's test this." And this is something I did when I was in Burma. "Let's see what happens if I bring up a thought of dislike, I'll think of something that somebody did to me I really didn't like, and see if I can hold on to that." And as soon as I brought that thought up, the force of the concentration pushed it down, pushed it away.

TT: 15:13

Now with the tranquility meditation, which is what the Buddha taught, your mind is on your object of meditation and you get distracted, you let go of the distraction, you see that tightness and tension in your mind, in your head, in your brain, in your body, and you let that go. And as soon as you do that, you feel your mind open up and expand and it takes a little step down. And you bring this mind that is very pure awareness, it's a mind that doesn't have any thoughts, you bring that mind back to your object of meditation. When your mindfulness gets a little bit weak, your mind starts to slip off your object of meditation a little bit, you will have a hindrance arise. And now you have to work with the hindrance again.

There's a Tibetan story, I think it was probably Milarepa, he's the famous one for these kind of stories. He was up in the mountains, in a cave, and he was doing some meditation and it was about sunset, and he decided he was going to make himself a cup of tea. So he started the fire and got the water going real well and these daemons came screaming into his cave. And they were yelling and smelled bad, they had rotten flesh, and they had skulls for decorations and things like that. And Milarepa looked up and he said: "Oh, I've got some company, welcome! Come on in, have a cup of tea." And the daemons said: "Aren't you afraid of us?" And he said: "No, anytime you dukkha daemons come around, you're welcome. You're showing me where I am attached. Sit down, let's talk."

Now, these dukkha demons of anger and sadness, and depression, and fear, and all of these things – as soon as your mindfulness gets a little bit weak, these dukkha demons come, and they're going to pull you away. And these hindrances are your best friends, because they're showing you exactly where you're attachment is, and how you're attached to it. Because, you have anger come up, that's always a good one, everybody identifies with that pretty well, and then you have the associated thoughts about why you're angry.

Now last night I talked about Dependent Origination a little bit, so I'm going to cut it down. You have the six sense doors, and you have contact, with your eyes. Your eye hits color and form. And as soon as that touches, that's called contact. Right after contact, feeling arises. I just told you about that. Right after feeling, craving arises. What is craving? It's the "I like it, I don't like it mind." It's where the tightness begins. It's also where that false idea of ego identification is. Right after the craving, clinging arises. What is clinging? Clinging is all the thoughts about why you like it or don't like it. That's where the thinking mind is. So when a hindrance arises, you remember yesterday, I was telling you what to do when a sensation arises or a hindrance arises. First you've got to look at the thoughts and let go of the thoughts, then you got to look at that tight mental fist around that, and let that go, and relax, and then come back to your meditation. And it's going to go back again. Sometimes you might get a whole wish in, sometimes you don't. And that doesn't matter. Every time you let go of the distraction and come back to your meditation object, which is, the feeling of being happy and making a wish for that happiness, feeling that wish, every time you do that your mindfulness gets a little bit sharper. So if it keeps pulling your mind away, a lot of people, they'll start complaining about it's impossible to do anything, I get so caught by these kinds of things I get so caught by the thoughts, and you get so caught by the dissatisfaction, the dislike. It's ok to get caught, but it's not ok to take it personally, because this is part of a process. It is part of process, it is not yours personally. How do I know?

TT: 19:59

You're sitting in meditation and all of a sudden you're mad. Did you ask that feeling to come up? Only a fool would think if they did. Can you make that feeling go away? No. It will go away when it's good and ready. When this anger comes up, your mind goes out and grabs a hold of it, and it squeezes tight and you get caught up in the story about the feeling. So the first thing we have to do is let go of the story. And then we let the feeling be. "It's an unpleasant feeling." "Ok, welcome to the human race. We've all got them." That's part of being alive, there's pleasant feelings, there's unpleasant feelings and that's fine. It's alright for the feeling to be there. It has to be alright, because the truth is, it's there, whether you like it or not. So what we have to do is: allow the feeling to be there without trying to control it, without trying to make it be something other than it is. When this unpleasant feeling arises our craving mind pushes against it, pushes hard. And as hard as your mind pushes, it pushes back that hard, and it gets stronger. And then you push it again, and then it pushes back, and it gets stronger. So, instead of trying to control these feelings with our thoughts, what we have to do is first, let go of the thoughts, and then let go of the tight mental fist around that feeling, the dislike of this unpleasant feeling. So first we let go of the story. The story doesn't matter at all. That's part of the analyzing mind, that's part of the psychology. Buddhism doesn't have anything to do with psychology. Psychology is about thinking, and trying to straighten your thinking out. Buddhism is about seeing the process and how it works, and let go of the whole thing. Open up and relax. Every time craving arises, there is tension or tightness somewhere in your body. Let it go. Especially, the brain. So you let go of that tension, and you let go of the tightness. Sometimes it can be tightness in your stomach, sometimes it's tightness in your shoulders, sometimes it's in your buttocks, it doesn't matter. In the small of your back. You allow that to be there. You let go of the tightness. Why do we do that? Because it doesn't work to tighten around it, you know that for a fact. It doesn't work to try to control it; we know that for a fact. So let's try something different. Instead of resisting what arises in the present moment, we accept it with open arms. You say: "Ok, you're there. It's true. I don't like you much, but it doesn't matter what I like." The truth is that feeling is there when it's there. Every time you let go of that feeling, and you relax, and you let that

feeling float around where ever it wants to go. You come back to your object of meditation; your mindfulness gets a little bit sharper. Now your mind gets pulled back to that feeling. You see how that starts to occur. At first, you're not going to see it very well, you're not going to see it until maybe you're already caught by it. But you let go again and you relax, and you come back to your object of meditation. The more times that you do that, the more clearly you start to see how it happens. Every time you let go of anger, you let it be there by itself. There's no pushing against it. Now the anger's standing there by itself. And then it starts to push a little bit and it says: "Hey! I can't get any stronger." So it starts getting weaker. Over time, by your continually allowing it to be there without reacting the way you've always acted in the past, as you start responding with loving acceptance, and not trying to control, it gets a little bit weaker, and a little bit weaker, and your mindfulness gets a little bit stronger, and a little bit stronger, until finally you can see that your mind is on your object of meditation and you see it start to wobble a little but, and you go: "Oh, look at that!" And let that go, and then it just stays right there. It doesn't even come up and disturb you anymore. So there's this continual process of working with the hindrances. It's not easy. It's the hardest work that you'll ever do. But it's also the most fulfilling, because when you let go of the hindrance, that means that you have no more unwholesome state. You're secluded from that unwholesome state. Your mindfulness is very strong. Your mind now it stays on your object of meditation, and that feeling of loving kindness just starts to flow out, and it's really nice. Then what happens?

TT: 25:14

MN: a monk enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by

BV: This says "applied and sustained thought." This is, in Pāli it's "vitakka" and "vicāra". "Vitakka" literally means thinking, and "vicāra", the closer meaning is examination. So instead of saying applied and sustained thought I'm going to use -

MN: thinking and examination, with joy and pleasure born of seclusion. This is that other kind of pleasure loftier and more sublime than the previous pleasure.

BV: Now what happens when you let go of this hindrance? This heavy weight that you've been carrying around for so long isn't there any more – very strong relief. And you start to feel really happy. That's what joy is. Now there's five different kinds of joy. Three kinds of joy can be experienced by anyone at any time, depending on their circumstances. Two kinds of joy are only experienced through deep mental development. The first kind of joy is like gooseflesh, little bumps, and they're there for a little bit, and they disappear very quickly. You feel reasonably happy. The next kind of joy is a little bit stronger, it's like a flash of lightening. It's there, it's real strong for a moment, then it disappears. The next kind of joy is like, you're standing in the ocean and there's huge waves coming over you, and these waves are waves of joy. Now these three kinds of joy can be experienced by anyone at anytime. The next kind of joy is called uplifting joy. And this is the kind of joy that they're talking about here. You will smile, I guarantee it. You feel exceptionally happy. You mind feels very light, and your body feels very light. Now these kinds of joy, every joy that arises, right after that joy, when it fades away, there's a very strong feeling of peace and tranquility. When you get up to the mental development of uplifting joy, this joy is very strong and it can last for quite a while. It can last for half an hour, for forty five minutes, an hour depending. Now what do you do when joy arises? The same thing that you do when that unpleasant anger arose. You let it be there, by itself. But it's kind of hard because it feels so good. It's such a happy feeling. The longer you allow that feeling to be there without trying to control it and grab on to it, it will stay for longer and longer periods of time. But, if you try to grab on to it, you say: "Oh, this really feels good!" – Fastest way to make it go away that I know. It will really just disappear very quickly. You can't be attached to the joy. You don't want to be attached to the anger. But they're both feelings. And we have to allow the feeling to be there, open up and let it be and relax, and come back to your object of meditation Now after this uplifting joy, you feel very strong comfortableness, in both your mind and your body. Where joy is like

this; it's kind of an excited happiness. The happiness that the Buddha is talking here is like this; it's like a placid lake.

Now, in Pāli, when they're talking about the five different parts of the first jhāna, they say vitakka, vicāra, pīti, that's joy, sukha, that's happiness, and ekaggatā. Now just about all of the meditation teachers I ever ran across, have told me that "ekaggatā" means one-pointed concentration. But, I looked it in the "Pali-English Dictionary." And it says: "Tranquility of mind." Isn't that strange? So it's not one-pointedness of mind, it's tranquility of mind. And what they call "one-pointedness" is actually "stillness of mind." Now the difference between stillness and one-pointedness, is the one-pointedness grabs on to your object of meditation and it won't let it go. But stillness says your mind is very at ease, it doesn't move around, your mind is very still, very tranquil, and it stays on your object of meditation.

TT: 30:01

And that will last for a period of time, and this is the first major step in meditation. Jhāna means meditation stage. During the time of the Buddha, when the Brahmins got a hold of some of his vocabulary, they took these words and they put it into what they were practicing, and they changed the meaning. An interesting thing: the word samādhi. Everybody knows what samādhi is. Samadhi is one-pointed concentration. The word samādhi had never been used before the time of the Buddha. He made that word up to describe a very particular kind of mental state, and, like I told you last night, sāma means tranquil, dhi means wisdom. So it's a calmness, it's a collectedness, it's a stillness, but it's not one-pointed. It doesn't exclude anything. Now when I was in Thailand, I was doing a retreat at this forest monastery, and we had to go down to the dining hall every day for lunch. And one day, somebody decided that they were going to bring their little kid in. And this little kid had great concentration. I mean I wanted to walk up and smack him. And they wanted to test, to see what his concentration was like. So they had him get into this concentration stage, and they took some chop sticks and they started beating him all over the place, and poking him, no reaction at all. They took his hands, his hands were sitting in his lap,

they took his hands and put them over his head, and after a little while, they just started going down, and then when they touched some part of his body, they stopped. They took a real loud bell right next to his ear, like the bell out there. If you've been out there and rang that bell, you know what it's like, it's pretty loud. Now, imagine that you're sitting in meditation and somebody comes up and you don't know that this is going to happen, and they ring it real loud. There's no reaction at all. He got out of the meditation. And they started asking him if he had any experience at all, of the sensations or the sound or any of that. He said "No." He was actually kind of surprised because his hands weren't in the way that he started his meditation.

One pointed concentration makes your mind so focused, that you lose awareness of everything else around you. Tranquility meditation, on the other hand, does not. Your mind starts to develop equanimity; it has a balance of mind. And, somebody can come up and they can poke you, and you feel it, but your mind has this balance in it and it says: "Ok.", but you know that it happened. Come up with a loud bell. You hear it – "Ah. Ok." But if you move your hands over head, you'll probably end up with your hands just on your head, like this. That's the difference between one-pointed concentration and tranquility concentration. Tranquility, it is a kind of concentration, but I don't like using that word because it's misunderstood. We call it tranquility meditation. You have full awareness, even when you go into the deeper jhānas. You have full awareness. You know that these things occur. Somebody goes by real close with a motorcycle, you hear it, but it doesn't make your mind shake anymore. Your mind doesn't go to it, it just hears a sound and that's it. It can be there as long as it wants to. So the word ekaggata has been translated as one-pointed concentration because of the Brahmins during the time of the Buddha, and after the Buddha, and they wanted to take these words and confuse what the Buddha's teachings were. Which happens with all religions, every religion is like that. When I went to Indonesia, which used to be a Buddhist country before the Muslims came, the Muslims took all of the words that really meant good things and they turned it into meaning of something that is very bad.

So something like the word "sukha", which means blissful, or very happy, the lack of pain, and they turned it in to "excrement".

TAPE SIDE TWO

But you use the word "sukha" in a talk, and anybody that knows anything about the Muslims or the language, they call it Bahasa,(1) they hear that word and they think you're cussing at them. So when you go back to more of the original, sometimes you break words down, and sometimes you don't. Ekaggatā, actually, the word "ekagga" means tranquil. They put "tā" at the end of it, so it's ekaggatā, and the "tā" basically means the act of. It's basically what it means. But because of the Brahmins changing things around, they made it into "eka" means one, "gata" means point. So it gets kind of tricky.

Anyway, back to the sutta.

TT: 35:07

MN: Repeats (Now this is a kind of pleasure, higher and more sublime than the previous pleasure.)

BV: So this is a much higher pleasure than any of the sense doors, sensual pleasures.

MN: 8. "Should anyone say: 'That is the utmost pleasure and joy that beings experience,' I would not concede that to him. Why is that? Because there is another kind of pleasure loftier and more sublime than that pleasure. And what is that other kind of pleasure? Here Ānanda, with the stilling of [thinking and examining], a monk enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and stillness of mind without [thinking and examining] with joy and pleasure born of stillness. {...}

BV: Ok, you let go of a hindrance, and what happens is where there was a lot of pain, a lot of dukkha, now there's sukha. Sukha is happiness, and that sukha arises because you've let go of the pain. Nature abhors a vacuum, and it will almost always put the opposite of what was being held on to. So if you hold on to joy, you can look forward to having some unhappiness come too after that. And that was one of our favorite expressions while we were doing the vipassanā in Burma: "After every dukkha, there's sukha, and after every sukha, there's dukkha." That's the way it is. You've let go of that heavy weight, and it changes your perspective. Now you can sit for sometimes an hour, hour and a half, two hours very, very comfortably, you get up and go: "Wow, that was great!", and then you go out and you do your walking and you come back and you say: "Let's do that again." And what doesn't happen?

Because of that want to have that state rise again, you try a little bit too hard. And you have restlessness coming out like you wouldn't believe. You feel like jumping out of your skin. But this is good. This is your teacher. I'm not your teacher. You teach yourself. What do you do when restlessness arises, when you feel like you've got to move, you can't stand it? Sit still. You bring up the last three factors of enlightenment, that's after you've investigated, you come back to your object of meditation, you focus on tranquility, on stillness of mind, on equanimity. So each one of these hindrances, when they arise, is your best friend. Now every one of the hindrances have the false idea that: "I am that. I am angry. I'm sad. I'm afraid." So you let go of the hindrance, relax, and come back to your object of meditation. And you might have to do this four or five sittings, because that desire doesn't go away easily. But if you're a fast learner, after that sitting you start examining, you start investigating, you start saying: "What did I do different this time than I did last time? Last time I had the first jhāna, I had this experience that was truly wonderful – what did I do different this time?" And then you start to think and go: "Ut Oh I wanted it to happen." So you get up and do your walking for a little awhile and you come back and you say to yourself: "What ever is going to happen is going to happen and that's fine." And the first part of your sitting is still going to be fairly active. But your mindfulness is going to be very sharp, and

you're going to see your mind go away. And you let go of that and you relax and you come back to your object of meditation. And it goes away again, and you let go and you relax and come back to your object of meditation, and after you do this for a period of time, all of a sudden CLICK. Now you feel joy that is really something. The uplifting joy is very, very strong, and your mind feels really light, and you feel like you're floating in the air. Now I had an experience in Burma, where I was sitting right next to somebody else that was meditating, and they got this uplifting joy and they actually came up off the ground. They came off about that far. I'm sitting there and I'm being mindful and I'm watching everything and then I hear this ~ "What in the world is that?" And then a few minutes later I hear this ~ , and my curiosity's getting really strong. So I'm thinking: "I can't stand this." Now after hearing this for awhile, I said: 'Ok, I'm going to break this sitting, I've got to see what's happening."

TT: 40:02

So I opened up my eyes and this monk sitting right next to me was about two feet off the ground. "Wow!" Now in Burma, what we did, we didn't have private interviews, we went in groups, and it so happened that he was in the same group that I was in. So we went to the interview and he was right before me, which was real good because once you give your interview, you get up and leave. And he comes in and he said: "You know, I'm floating. I'm bouncing up in the air." And the teacher just kind of ho hums and he says: "Yeah, that's just joy, nothing to. . . no big deal." "But I'm telling ya, I'm floating in the air! It's really neat!" It's kind of like the TM people, when they say they can fly, it's kind of the same thing. Anyway.

When you get in the second jhāna, you don't have this mind that pulls you away so much anymore, and you're not able to make a wish in your mind. If you make a wish, it's very difficult, and it'll give you a headache if you keep trying to. So you let go of the wish. Now, one of the things that you experience in the second jhāna is self confidence. You really start to gain confidence that you are progressing in the practice. You see that and you start to feel really good. Your mindfulness is very sharp; the happiness that arises is

very deep and very comfortable, and it's just great. The tranquility and stillness of mind is unbelievable. And you'll sit that way for a little while. I don't know how to judge in times because you might sit that way for a half an hour, you might sit that way for an hour, it doesn't matter. But eventually your mind starts to dull out a little bit. And all of a sudden it just kind of pulls away and what do you get caught by? Another good friend. You got another hindrance. Now your hindrance is where all that wrong idea that these states are you are collected and remembered. So, now you have the self confidence that you can recognize: "Aie, it's just a hindrance, never mind." And you let it go and you relax and you come back. And it's more easy, and your balance of mind is stronger, you have stronger equanimity. In the suttas, it doesn't really talk about the development of equanimity until you get to the third jhāna, but it's there even from the first jhāna.

Now you're seeing very clearly impermanence: "I was in this great state, now I'm not. Now my mind's gone to this other thing, and it's moving around." You're seeing impermanence, very, very clearly, and you're seeing the unsatisfactoriness even of being in the jhāna because it doesn't last as long as you want it to. There's unsatisfactoriness. And you're seeing that everything arises is impersonal. And you're seeing this while you're in the jhāna because things change while you're in the jhāna too. That is vipassanā, while you're experiencing the jhāna. And that agrees completely with what it talks about in the suttas.

So now your confidence starts to get better and better and this confidence doesn't only stay with you while you're sitting. You start to have more confidence because you able to see things more clearly with your daily activities, the other things that you're doing. You start being able to see the movements of mind more easily.

Ok

MN: 9. ... Here, Ānanda, with the fading away as well of joy, a monk abides in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, and still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna,

on account of which noble ones announce : 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.' {...}

BV: This has always been kind of a comical thing for me, because I'll be teaching somebody and they're doing nicely and somebody will get hooked to the joy, and they know when they have joy: "Ok, I'm in the jhāna." And then they'll come and they say: "There's something wrong with my meditation." "Ok, what's wrong?" "I don't have any more joy." And I say: "Ok, do you feel really strong balance in your mind?" "Yeah." "Do you feel real comfortable?" "Yeah." "Good, continue" "But I don't have any joy!" "Ok, good! Everything is moving along nicely."

TT: 44:57

Now I don't tell people what jhāna they're in, until they get up in the high jhānas. Because then it gets tricky. So I'm not going to come around and say: "You're experiencing the first jhāna, you're experiencing the second jhāna." You hear this, figure it out for yourself. And you'll be able to. But the comfort that you have when you get in the third jhāna is really, it's beyond words. Now I was telling you yesterday, how if you don't have any tension in your mind, you don't have any tension in your body. And you don't. Another thing that happens when you get in the third jhāna is, your blood starts to purify. Start getting rid of toxins, because you have a pure mind. When I was in Malaysia, some people just started meditating with me and I asked them if I could take some of their blood, and test it. So we drew a little bit of blood, just a few drops, it's no big deal, and we tested that, and we kept it on a slide, then we kept it in the refrigerator, and then, their meditation was quite good, and they got into the third jhāna, and I said: "Ok, I want to test your blood again, see what's happening." So we tested the blood again, put it under the microscope to see what the difference was, same person. The first blood I took, it had black lines around the blood cells, the platelets. And it had black dots in the middle. When they got into the third jhāna and we tested that blood, looked under the microscope, the platelet was completely red. The other one was kind of a brownish red, now it's cherry red. There's no black spots in

it at all. So that convinced me pretty well that: "Yeah I can figure that you can say that you purified your blood."

Now there's an interesting thing that somebody just showed me on the internet. That there is this man that, he started working with water. And he would think of some people like Mother Teresa, or Hitler and then he would flash freeze it, and he would put it under the microscope to see what the difference was in the crystals. And Mother Teresa's the crystal, and he thought of Mother Teresa he was holding this flask and he also typed it on the outside. Mother Teresa was very nice snowflake. Hitler was very chaotic. So he thought that that was pretty interesting. And then he started playing around with different kinds of emotional states. And he put one where there was peace and happiness. And he put that feeling in the water and then tested the water, and it was a perfect snowflake. I mean it was gorgeous. And the pictures are on the internet, you can see them for yourself. I don't remember the web site, unfortunately. So that got me thinking, and I started thinking: "Well, you know your body is made up of how much water? Seventy percent or so? And if you're focusing on loving kindness, what are you doing?" You're changing the actual structure of the water in your body. You're healing yourself. And when you get up into the jhānas, it becomes more and more refined. Why? Because your purifying your mind so much, you're focusing on a wholesome object, so much that all of the water in the blood changes. It's just a little interesting side step.

When you get to the third jhāna, your mind is exceptionally clear, your mindfulness is very good. But eventually your mindfulness will slip, and you got another hindrance. You see how important the hindrances are, because when we let go of the hindrances we go deeper into our meditation. But it's necessary to have the hindrances, they're not something to fight, they're not something to try to push away. They're something to open up to and completely accept them, let them be; let them go. The reason we have a tight mental fist around our hindrances is because: "I don't like it." As you go deeper in your meditation, you start seeing that more and more quickly and you say: "Well, I'm causing myself a lot of pain, let's not do that one any more!" When you get to a certain place in the third jhāna, the

kind of meditation that I'm teaching you right now is called: "Breaking down the barriers." So, I'll see how your mind is doing, and I see how deep you're going, and then I'll come up to you and I'll say: "Ok, why don't you change to another spiritual friend? Doesn't matter what sex it is now." Why? Because you have equanimity of mind. Your mind won't get caught by lust. And in a real short time you'll come to me and say: "Oh, that's really easy, I can stay with that person all day; it's a piece of cake." And I say: "Good. Change to another spiritual friend."

TT: 49:54

And after three or four spiritual friends then you come to me and we'll talk a little bit and I'll say: "Ok, everything is going along nicely. Now I want you to change to a family member." And you do three or four or five family members. Then you'll come and I'll say: "Ok, everything is doing well, now I want you to send loving and kind thoughts to a neutral person." A neutral person is somebody that you see fairly often, but you really don't know them. It's like you ride the same bus every day to go to work, and the same people get on the bus, but you never talk to them, you don't know them at all, they're a neutral person. Or somebody that's behind the counter that you go, and you buy something from them occasionally, but you know them by sight, but you really don't know them. Now you start working with a neutral person, and it's somewhat difficult. So I'll say: "Ok, then go back to one of your family members and get that feeling going very well, and as soon as that feeling really starts to flow, and your mind is very peaceful and calm, and you have that equanimity and you feel comfortable, then change over to your neutral friend. And you might have to do that a few times before your mind becomes comfortable with sending loving kindness to a neutral person. And then I'll tell you to do that again, with a different person, and then a different person. Then you come to me and I say "Everything is going just great. Now, how about an enemy?" "Oh, jeez, I don't want to do that." "Yep, got to do an enemy." So you start practicing, radiating loving and kind thoughts to your enemy, and all of a sudden it turns into hatred. So you go back to your neutral person, and you get that feeling going again, and then you go back to your enemy, until that

enemy is not an enemy anymore, so you can sit and radiate loving kindness to that person and it's just the same as one of your family members or one of your spiritual friends. And we do that with as many enemies as you can think of. This is called breaking down the barriers. Now when you do that, I'll tell you I want you to start sending loving and kind thoughts to all beings, and when you get good at being able to do that, your mind will go deeper, and that comfortable feeling will disappear, says here:

MN: 10.{"..."} Here, Ānanda, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, a monk enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. {"..."}

BV: Now this whole time you've been radiating loving kindness, and it has a real feeling to it, and it's a flow and it's really wonderful. Now that feeling will stop. And now it's just, you become love at this state. You have such good balance of mind and you can just hold that warm glowing heart, and you don't have to radiate it out, you can't radiate it out. Your mind has such perfect balance in it. And you'll be in that kind of meditation, it doesn't matter whether you're walking or whether you're sitting or whether you're taking a bath or whatever as long as you can keep your mindfulness going you can have this perfect equanimity. And you go deeper. And eventually that feeling of love changes into a feeling of compassion. You start feeling expansion, and there is no boundaries to it. There's just expansion. And this is called the realm of infinite space. And you go deeper. And you still can have hindrances arise when your mindfulness slips a little bit. And every one of those helps you to go deeper, they help you to let go of your attachments. As you go deeper in your meditation, you start to see consciousnesses arise, and you start feeling a different kind of feeling, which is a joy. And you become joy, just like you become compassion, like you became love. They're more subtle, a finer feeling. Now a lot of people have this idea that loving kindness is a very high vibration. Actually, all the high vibration stuff is the emotional attachment and the hindrances. If you don't believe me, feel what your body feels like when you have anger. Do you feel low, and peaceful and calm? No, you feel agitated. More and

more you're opening and relaxing, you're opening and relaxing, your mind becomes more and more peaceful, and more and more calm. When you're able to see the consciousnesses arise, it happens very fast, but your mindfulness at this point is exceptional, really good, and you can see arising and passing away of all the individual consciousnesses..

TT: 55:00

Now the two main hindrances that arise when you get up in these states are: dullness of mind, you don't have sleepiness anymore, you just feel your mind dull out, or restlessness. And you still have some likes and dislikes with this too, but these are the biggies. When you try to focus too much, you put too much energy into it, it causes restlessness to arise. And you have this hindrance to deal with. And if you don't put quiet enough energy into it, your mind dulls out. Now you have this hindrance to work with. So you still have the hindrances there but they're very easy to let go of now. Your mindfulness is so sharp you see how it all arises and you can just let it go very quickly. So you're learning how to walk on a tightrope that is like a one strand spider web, very, very fine, and if you try even the least, least little bit too hard, swick! You get restlessness. You don't try quite hard enough, swick! Dullness. So this is what you're learning. You're learning that balance of the kind of effort you need to practice. When you go deeper, you get into the realm of nothingness. And the realm of nothingness is probably the most interesting state of all the meditations. Because you see things as phenomena arising and passing away. You see hindrances, you see the factors of enlightenment, you still can see the aggregates, you can see all of these things, but you're not seeing anything outside of mind anymore. Now this is kind of comical - when I was teaching in Malaysia because one lady came to me and she said: "This meditation's a bunch of bunk." And she was really moving fast. She said: "I felt like a fool, I was sitting there, I wasn't seeing anything." That made me happy. I said: "Good, do you still have feeling?" "Well, yeah, there's feeling." And then we went through all the aggregates and then we went through the enlightenment factors, and then we went through the hindrances, and she said: "Well, yeah that's there

too. But there's nothing." And I said: "Yeah, that's right, it's just different factors arising and passing away." Now when you were in, experiencing that joy, and you're seeing all these consciousnesses arising and passing away, you see impermanence like you never dreamed possible, and you see the unsatisfactoriness of that because everything's always moving, it's always changing and the one wish that all of us have, and this is where ignorance comes from, is that we want something to be permanent, in an impermanent universe. We want something to be solid. We want it to be there, that's where the concept of God comes from. "He's the same today as he was yesterday and he's always going to be that way." But when you do the meditation and you get to this state, you see that there's nothing, there is just arising and passing away of phenomena. And it's painful. And you see that there's no controller. It just happens the way that it happens. There's no me, there's no my, there's no I there. When you get into the realm of nothingness, your equanimity gets super strong. You have really, really strong balance of mind. And this is as far as the Brahma Viharas, the loving kindness, joy, compassion, and equanimity will take you, because these all have to do with feeling. When you get to the state of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, there's still some feeling there sometimes and sometimes there's not, and then sometimes there's perceptions and sometimes there's not, and it's very subtle.

When you're in the state of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, you don't have the five aggregates, you don't have the seven factors of enlightenment, you don't have the hindrances. And when you come out of that state, that's when you reflect on what your experience was while you were in that state. Real subtle stuff. Is that nibbana? No. You keep going. And in one of the suttas, Ānanda was talking to the Buddha and he was talking about the high mental states and he said: "If you have to have an attachment, the best attachment is neither-perception-nor-non-perception." And the Buddha agreed with that. That if you have to have an attachment, that's the best one. But, when you let go of everything, now you've been continually opening up and relaxing. When you first start out your meditation your mind is going like this – and then you get into the jhāna, and then it's going like this – and you go in the higher

jhānas and then it's going like this- now you get up to neither-perception-nor-non-perception, it's barely moving. You've tranquilized everything so deeply, it's barely moving, and then it will get to a place that stops, and that's the cessation of perception and feeling.

TT: 1:00:09

When the perception and feeling come back, then you experience Dependent Origination. That is not nibbana yet. Nibbana occurs after you've let go of Dependent Origination.

Now this is considerably different than what they're teaching in Burma. They said: "When you get to a certain place, you're going to see impermanence three or four or five times, very fast, and then you're going to have this blackout and that's what nibbana is. Or you're going to see suffering four or five times, very fast, or you're going to see not self four or five times very fast and then there's this blackout, and then you review, your mind automatically reviews all of the insight knowledges." They don't even talk about Dependent Origination. And this is the thing that the Buddha came to talk to us about. This is why a Buddha arises, because it's so subtle that it takes a Buddha to be able to see it and recognize it and to then be able to talk about it to everybody else. So, when I went through all of the insight knowledges and I checked to see whether these insight knowledges were really what they were talking about, I found out that they weren't, which was somewhat of a disappointment to me because I had twenty years invested in this, and I had spent thousands of dollars. I experienced everything they said I was supposed to experience, and it still wasn't it. So when I went back to Malaysia, and I started getting into the suttas, I didn't really understand the suttas very well at all, because I was still using this commentary that talks about all of the insight knowledges, it talks about vipassanā the way it's being taught right now. And I went to a monastery in Malaysia that was a Sri Lankan monastery, and there were a lot of Sri Lankan monks that came through, and one of them said: "Oh you're teaching meditation." I was teaching loving kindness at the time because I couldn't, with a clear conscience teach vipassanā, because I knew personally that this wasn't it. So I'm

teaching loving kindness and he said: "How do you teach it?" And I told him, and he said: "You're teaching it perfect, but you're using the language of the Visuddhimagga." –a Buddhist commentary – "Throw that book away. Go to the suttas. Start reading the suttas." And he gave me a couple of very pertinent suttas to read. And as soon as I started reading it, because now I'd let go of all of the information in the Visuddhimagga, I said: "This is a clean chart." I came to the suttas and they were incredibly clear, crystal clear. Now I know what the Buddha's talking about. Now I was like every other American. I'm just a dumb American, I don't know anything about Buddhism, I know about meditation and I want to do more of it. So I'll believe anything you have to say. And it so happened that the first meditation teacher that I ran across was a vipassanā teacher, the Burmese style. And I stayed with that to the end. I've always been around the suttas but every time I've tried to read them, they didn't make sense because they didn't agree with this commentary, and this commentary, hey, this is the encyclopedia of meditation. And in this commentary it said: "The Buddha taught forty different meditations." And I went through this book and I counted fifty-six. And some of the things that he says in the Visuddhimagga, are just a continuation of the same kind of meditation, the same focus.

TT: 1:03:41 Tape ends

Footnote 1. Bahasa = The language of Indonesia

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