

## DN 33 The Chanting Together - Sangīti Sutta

Dhamma Talk by Bhante Vimalaramsi

Miami FL 01-Jun-2001

BV: Ok, tonight we're going to be on the set of three things, and it's a lot longer than I remembered it, what we have sixty sets of three, so we'll have to move along a little bit faster than we did last week with the twos.

{1}

BV: Ok, there's three unwholesome roots. They are: greed; hatred; and delusion. There's three wholesome roots: non-greed; non-hatred; non-delusion.

How do you get these? When lust comes up in your mind, you have the idea in your mind: "I want." When hatred comes up in your mind, you have the idea in your mind: "I don't want. And delusion. What is delusion? A mind that's deluded, takes all of these mental states, personally. Now, when you have craving in your mind, craving is the: "I want, I don't want", and that's lust, hatred, and delusion.

The way Dependent Origination works, you have an eye, it hits color and form. As soon as that arises, feeling arises. When the feeling arises, the feeling is either unpleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. If it's a pleasant feeling, right after that, your mind says: "I like that." That's craving. Right after that, there's all of the reasons why you like that: the thinking about, and the habitual thinking.

So how do you overcome, lust hatred and delusion? As soon as eye, hits color and form, eye consciousness arises. When that consciousness arises, right after that, feeling arises. When you mindfulness is good, when you're able to observe what happens,

you'll start to notice that your mind begins to tighten around that object.

Now I took eye and color and form, but it's any of the six sense doors. It can be a sound, a taste, a smell, a touch, a thought. Right after the feeling arises, that's when the habitual habit that we have, of taking that thought, or that feeling, personally. We take the sight personally: "This is my sight. I see."

And when we do that, that causes mind to tighten around it. And then you have thoughts about that sight: how you like it, how you don't like it. Lust, hatred. You've got delusion. Delusion is always the false identification of that being, personal: "That's me. That's mine. That's who I am. That's my sight. That's my sound. I like that sound. I don't like that sound."

This is how, the craving arises, and it causes more and more pain, to arise, because we get involved with it, and then we try to control it. If it's an unpleasant sound, then we try to make that sound, or that sight, pleasant, or we try to push it away so we don't have to pay attention to it anymore. If it's a pleasant sight, a pleasant sound, we try to hold on to it: "I like this. I don't want it to change, ever. I want it to be the same, always, because it's pleasant."

But because everything is part of the universe, and the universe is always impermanent, it's always changing. Nothing ever stays the same, even though your mind would like it to be the same. Everything is in a state of movement. The pleasant thing, after a little while, something else occurs, and it turns into an unpleasant thing. The unpleasant thing eventually turns into another pleasant thing.

But the delusion is always that we think it's ours personally. We're very much involved with that tightness, and taking all thoughts, and all feelings, as they are yours, and that's all. And then if you like it, you want it to stay around. If you don't like it you want it to change.

Now if you're sitting in meditation, you can have a very pleasant feeling arise. And this is where the idea of: "When joy arises, don't be attached to it." If you try to hold on to joy, and make that joy

stay, that's the fastest way to make the joy go away. Joy by itself, it's not good or bad. It just is. It's a feeling that arises.

An unpleasant feeling, a pain that arises in your body. You can become just as attached to that, as you can to joy. How? By taking that feeling personally, and trying to make it the way you want it to be. With the joy, you're trying to make it stay. "I like it. I don't want it to change." With the unpleasant feeling, what you're trying to do, instead of being attached and holding it on trying to keep it close, you're being attached and trying to push it away. "I don't want that around. I don't like that feeling. It hurts." In a lot of ways, the unpleasant feeling has stronger attachments, than pleasant feeling, because there's always that dissatisfaction with unpleasantness. The pleasant feeling is a little bit more tricky, because it's nice, your mind just kind of grabs on, little bit.

But the more aware you become of how this process works, this process: you have a physical body; feelings; perception; thoughts; consciousness. When you have a physical body, that means that you have a physical eye, that hits an external object, color and form. That is called contact. When that contact arises, feeling arises. Right after feeling, "I like it. I don't like it" arises, the craving. What is the cause of suffering? What's the Second Noble Truth? The First Noble Truth is that there is suffering. The Second Noble Truth is: the cause of suffering is craving.

Now, ever time you have that: "I like it" mind, "I don't like it" mind, your mind has craving in it, at that time, and your mind has delusion in it, at that time, because you're taking an impersonal process, and making it personal. Now you say: "Well, but I see something and I like it." You're not seeing how the process works. Good working eye hitting color and form. Contact. There's always a very subtle feeling. Feeling is pleasant, unpleasant, neutral. When it's pleasant or unpleasant, that attachment occurs. The tightening of the mind, the craving, the cause of the suffering, because you want it or you don't want it. It's the same coin, different sides. Craving is, trying to control. So what we're trying to do is, see everything as impersonal, so we let go of the control, and see it the way it really is.

Now when you see craving arising in your mind, and you let it go, you will feel an expansion in your mind. You will feel a clarity. It won't be thoughts, but there will be very sharp observation, and with that observation, there's a space around it, and a calmness, and you bring that calmness in to the present moment back to your object of meditation, whatever you're doing at the time.

So, having non-delusion, means letting go of that tightness in the mind, letting go of all thoughts about the tightness. Relax. Letting go of the tightness. Relax. This sounds like the instructions for meditation, doesn't it? It doesn't matter, whether you're doing this while you're sitting on the pillow, or you're walking from here to there, or you're driving your car, or, you're at work, it doesn't matter,

When you start to see there's tightness in your mind, let it go and relax. "Oh, but I have to think." I have a perfect example about not thinking. Somebody put out some matches, and you were supposed to add some and subtract some and it was supposed to come out to four, and you could only change one match, to make this occur. And I looked at it for a minute, I let go of all thinking of how to solve the problem, and reached over and moved that one match, and it was perfect. I didn't do it with the thinking mind. I didn't have to sit down, and try to figure out, if I moved this one match, is that going to come up to equal four. I didn't think about that at all. How did I do it? I did it by not thinking, and letting my intuitive mind give me the answer.

Too many times we think too much. We've been taught that the only way to solve a problem is by thinking about it. And your mind becomes tight and tense when you think too much, and you become confused, and you become tired, and you become dull, there's all kinds of hindrances that can arise from thinking too much.

As you let go of the thinking, and relax, everything becomes easier, everything. You get an idea in your mind: "I want something to be in a particular way." And it's not that way. Ok, how are you going to solve it? How are you going to solve the problem? Are you going to solve the problem by hating the problem? Is that going to make the solution come? Are you going to solve the problem by getting into

your anxiety about the problem: "It's got to be solved. I have to solve it."? Are you going to find the answer to the problem by worrying about it? How do you solve problems? All of these have thinking in them. You let go of the thinking.

Look at how much suffering you're causing yourself. Look at how much pain you cause yourself, by thinking and worrying and disliking. You make yourself tired, because of all of the energy that you expel. "But I have this problem. I have to solve it." You don't solve the problem, by thinking about it. You solve the problem by relaxing into it, and let your mind come up with the answer. You don't hear the answer a lot of times because you're so busy and so loud with your thoughts.

This is what meditation teaches you. Meditation teaches you how to relax and let go of these hindrances when they arise. And the hindrances basically come down to: "I like it. I want it. I don't like it. I don't want it.", and the identification with it. "Well, the problem's still there." Ok, solve it yourself, but solve it by letting it be, letting it go, and coming up with a natural answer.

Now this person that came up with this little thing with the matches, he told me that there was a man that spent a long time thinking about the answer, hours. He thought he couldn't come up with the answer because he spent so much time thinking about it. I came up with the answer less than five minutes, because I didn't think about it. I just let the answer come.

Ok-

{2}

BV: Ok, there's three kinds of right conduct.

Yeah?

S: ~

BV: If you want to stay healthy, you have to be very careful with your conduct. And conduct means body, speech, and mind. That means that you have to take care of your body. That means you have to put the right kind of food in your body, that's healthy, and you have to take care of exercising it enough, not so much that you become attached to it, but that's taking care of your physical needs.

The Buddha took care of his physical needs by walking ever place that he went, and he would go out on his preaching tours, and he would walk ten kilometers, fifteen kilometers, twenty kilometers, from one town, to the next. He stayed in great shape by doing that. We don't do that now. We have to come up with other ways of staying in shape. But he was taking care of his physical fitness.

Now somebody gives him a poison, he's not going to eat it, but we do. We eat poisons all the time. We eat sugar. We eat stuff that has all kinds of insecticides on it. It's poison. So we have to take care, a little bit more, because what's happening today is not the same as what happened during the time of the Buddha.

During the time of the Buddha, things were much simpler. They didn't have food that was fiddled with, taking the DNA and changing it around, and taking the DNA from a fish and putting it in your beans. He didn't have that sort of thing. That wasn't a concern. Today, it is a concern, so we have to be careful.

If you're not careful, your body can get sick very easily, and what happens to your mind when your body gets sick? Do you feel like laughing and having fun? No. You feel grumpy. So there is some degree of control, but it's wholesome. It's directing your mind and your body so that you'll have enough energy to be able to attain nibbāna. That's called chanda in Pāli. Wholesome desire. You have to have a wholesome desire. If you don't, you're just going to sit here and never move. You don't have a desire to get up. You don't have a desire to go to the bathroom. You don't have a desire to eat. You don't have a desire to take care of your body. But you need to be able to do that.

Now the three kinds of wrong conduct in body, speech and mind... I don't like the way that that... They always talk about these three things as body, speech and mind, or thought, and I prefer to change it around, to mind, body, and speech, or mind, speech and body, I don't care, just put mind first, because mind is the fore-runner of everything. Good conduct, or bad conduct, starts from mind first. It doesn't just accidentally happen to your body and then you start noticing it with mind. You have to have intention, and that means mind.

Now what's wrong conduct? Wrong conduct is not taking and keeping the five precepts. That's easy. For laymen, that's very easy. For monks, it's a little more difficult.

Five precepts: don't kill living beings; don't steal; don't have wrongful sexual activity; don't tell lies even though you think it's all right to tell a white lie - don't tell lies; don't drink alcohol or take drugs – now this is recreational stuff – to get high, to get some relief from the tensions of the day. Now I know some doctors, my mother's doctor in fact, he told her that she needs to take a little glass of wine before going to bed. She doesn't do it so that she can get drunk, but it does help the heart. It is a kind of medicine. It doesn't make her mind so cloudy, because it's just a little bit. It's not very much. A lot of the drugs, especially the Chinese, they use little bits of alcohol as a preservative for the herbs and such. Now I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about going in and getting a glass of alcohol and drinking it then, or taking a drug, not because your body is sick, but because you want to escape.

Now, what happens when you break one of these five precepts? You wind up causing pain to yourself, or someone else around you. I should say: "and, or", because you always hurt yourself when you break a precept. It causes remorse to arise in your mind. You wish you hadn't of done that sort of thing. This is wrong conduct.

Now what's wrong conduct in thought? The want to deceive somebody else, by saying something that's not true. Gossip. Slander. Trying to put a stake between two people. Doing anything or saying anything that causes pain. Wrong thought.

What's right conduct? Keeping the five precepts. Don't break them. Practicing your generosity. Helping other people so they can smile and be happy. Telling other people Dhamma. Encouraging an uplifted mind. Now all of these different things, you do with your speech, you do by example with your body, and you do with your mind. Mind first, again.

Now it says there's three kinds of unwholesome thought. The more you actually practice Dhamma, the less your ego will become, the more humble you become. Some of the things, that when I'm talking with somebody about Dhamma, that come out of my mouth are a shock to me. I mean it's a wonderful thing. I say something I never thought of before. And it came out of my mouth. Now I can get real prideful about that, but my mind doesn't tend towards that. My mind is in a state of awe. "Wow. That was a good one. It's not mine. I never thought it before. I never said it before. But wasn't that wonderful?" I don't take it personally.

The more, you begin to practice meditationn, and practice opening, and letting go, every time you let go of that little subtle tightness in your head, and relax, you're letting go of the ego attachment, so your mind tends more towards humility, than it does ego, or what we call ego. Now what was it we were talking about yesterday? Pride and accomplishment?

S: ~

BV: Now the answer for that is whether there's a sense of wonder. It's like you do something, and it really comes out great, and you're as amazed as everybody else, at how nice it is. It's not that it causes your mind to tighten around and says: "I did that. I'm something special." It's wonder. It's humility, "Wow, that came out of these hands, How did that happen?" You see? And it's the same with Dhamma. Ok? Ok.

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BV: Ok, I don't like the translation here so much. It says three kinds of unwholesome thought. Akusala means unwholesome. Vitakkā, is

one part of thought. When you're practicing meditation, and you get into a deep state of meditation, you get to the first jhāna, you experience vitakkā, and vicāra, and those two kinds of thought. I suppose you could call it something like initial arising? That's not it either. I guess thought can work with this but it, but it just doesn't feel right for some reason. Well, we'll leave it at that, unwholesome thought.

Thoughts of sensuality, thoughts of enmity, thoughts of cruelty. What does this mean? Thoughts of sensuality, that means any of the six sense doors, when they arise, you're taking the sense door personally, and you're trying to hold on to it, and you really become attached to it, and you like it very much. Now quite often, in this country it seems that sensuality and sexuality equals the same, but this is not quite like that. When you see something, when somebody very beautiful walks by, just the sight of them, can excite your mind. And when it excites your mind, there's the attachment of: "I like", and then there's the imagination that goes on beyond that, and the thinking about.

Now the enmity means, the dislike. You see an ugly sight. You try to close your eyes: "I don't want to see it anymore." You see an accident happen on the road, and somebody has their head cut off. You don't like seeing that sort of thing.

Now cruelty is kind of an interesting thing because, there's so many different ways of being cruel. We can be cruel in body, and speech, and mind. Being cruel in body means, harming someone physically. Being cruel in speech means emotionally, harming someone. Being cruel in thought means holding grudges. It means always remembering the negative, and dwelling on them. These are unwholesome kinds of thoughts and actions.

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BV: There's three kinds of wholesome thought. Thoughts of renunciation. Thoughts of non-enmity. Thoughts of non-cruelty.

What is a thought of renunciation? There was a book called the refuges, and the monk that defined renunciation, said: "Renunciation always means no sexuality at all.", and that doesn't have very much to do with renunciation, no sex. He's wrong. Renouncing that mind that grabs on and wants to hold, that's what renunciation is. That mind that tries to possess, letting go of that. Seeing how it causes all kinds of pain and dissatisfaction to arise.

Now we were talking about relationships a little while ago. You fall in love with someone else, and then you spend your time thinking about them, when you're not with that person. The more you think about them, the more the desire for them to be in a particular way arises, the way you want them to be, and your mind gets caught in imagination, and, when that imagination and the projection of how you want things to be isn't met, there's a lot of pain.

So what can we do? We can renounce all of the thinking, and all of the imagination, and all of the projection of the way you want this other person to be. Now, if you're in a relationship, and you're caught with the sensual desire, of wanting somebody to be a particular way, even when you're with them, you're not with them. You're caught in your mind. You're caught in ideas, and thoughts, and the way you want things to be.

But, when you see that arising, we renounce that kind of thought, and those kind of feelings. We renounce them as being ours personally. We let go of them and relax. Let go of all of that thinking and attachments, and as soon as you do that, your mind becomes very clear, and then when you're with the person you've fallen in love with, you're with them completely, in the present moment. You have much more joy.

Now the renunciation is the letting go of those desires, for things to be other than they are. Renunciation is, learning how to change yourself, by letting go of, the way you want things to be, and begin to accept the way things are, right now. And that doesn't mean if you run across a problem that you can't solve it. But you do it with a clear mind, not with a thinking mind.

You want a situation to change, let go of your attachment to the situation. Let go of the demand that your reality be the same as somebody else's. And then there's real freedom in your relationship, and there's a much more honesty in your relationship. And there's more openness.

Now when you do that, when you really start renouncing, you're also developing, non-enmity, non-hatred, and this means emotionally, as well as physically, and mentally. It means that you don't say things that make your mate upset, because you have this hidden idea the way you want things to be and they're not that way, so you say things that are hurtful. The things that are hurtful, are cruel. And it can lead to physical abuse, which is something we hear about a lot.

I've had some interesting questions with parents that say: "I don't know whether I should spank my child or not. If they're being naughty, should I spank them? Is that being cruel?" You have to teach discipline in some way.

There's a story about this man that, his neighbor sold him a mule. And once this man got this mule, he couldn't make this mule do anything. He tried to get the mule to pull a trailer; he wouldn't do it. So he went back to his neighbor, started complaining, said: "This mule is worthless. He won't do anything. I want my money back." The neighbor said: "Well, just wait a minute. I want to show you something." So they both walk to the mule, and the neighbor gets a big log, about this big, and he takes this log and he smacks the mule on top of the head. And the man said: "What are you doing that to my mule for?" And the neighbor said: "Well, I had to get his attention first. Now he'll do anything I want him to."

I'm not suggesting that, but sometimes, to discipline children, you have to get their attention in one way or another. I'm not suggesting that you slap them or harm them in any way, but sometimes they do need to be shocked a little bit, and they can be shocked by your saying: "Ok, the TV is off. The computer is off. No games. You sit in the corner staring at the corner for awhile." That can shock them to start thinking: "Well this kind of behavior doesn't work and I won't do that any more. And I know that there are some families they do,

occasionally... they shock somebody because they can't...how else are they going to get you to pay attention? "Maybe if I hit you, that will help." But not to harm. And it's your choice. What ever works.

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BV: There's three kinds of unwholesome motivation. Sankappa, doesn't mean motivation so much as it means imagination, or the imaging power of your mind. That is through sensuality, enmity, and cruelty, again. The unwholesome use of mind, towards –

Tape ends

DN 33 Sutta sections:

1.

1.10. 'There are [sets of] three things. . . Which are they?

(1) 'Three unwholesome roots: of greed, hatred, delusion

(*lobho akusala-mūlaṃ, doso akusala- mūlaṃ, moho akusala- mūlaṃ*).

(2) 'Three wholesome roots: of non-greed, non-hatred non-delusion

(*alobho. . .*).

2.

(3) 'Three kinds of wrong conduct: in body, speech and thought

(*kaya-duccaritath, vaci-duccaritañz, mano-duccaritañz*).

(4) 'Three kinds of right conduct: {in body, speech and thought

(*katiya-sucaritarh.. .*).

3.

(5) 'Three kinds of unwholesome thought (*akusala-vitakkā*):

of sensuality, of enmity, of cruelty (*kāma-vitakko, vyāpadavitakko, vihiñzsa-vitakko*).

4.

(6) `Three kinds of wholesome thought: of renunciation (*nekkhamma-vitakko*), of non-enmity, of non-cruelty.

5.

(7) `Three kinds of unwholesome motivation (*sankappa*): through sensuality, enmity, cruelty.

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