

Metta in Daily Life

Joshua Tree 3

Dhamma Talk presented by Bhante Vimalaramsi

13-Mar-10

SK: This is the third Joshua Tree Retreat and Bhante Vimalaramsi will be giving us a talk about using your meditation in daily life.

BV: And the date is...

SK: March the 14th, 2008.

BV: So, this is the last night of the retreat. Just to let you know what's going to be happening tomorrow, we're going to get up at the same time and have our sitting until breakfast time, and then noble silence will be finished. So now you can start talking to everybody. Tomorrow please take five precepts and change the, "...all sexual activity" to "...wrong sexual activity." And some of the things that we have to clean up around here a little bit and get ready to go after lunch. So, Antra will take care of all of the chores that need to be done and tell you what has to happen.

I am quite pleased with everybody's progress. More than a little pleased. So, when you're practicing, when you go out of the retreat, what's going to happen with your meditation is it's going to take a little dip because you've been doing it intensively. When you get out, start moving around more, the meditation will not be as good as it is here. If you practice the meditation every day, before long your meditation will start improving and you'll come up to this level and then you'll start advancing slowly. And this all depends on how much practice you put in.

I strongly recommend that you do your practice in the morning. When you do your practice in the morning it's a great way to start the day. And also if you get into the habit of doing your practice in

the evening then somebody calls up and they want to go out to dinner or go to a show or whatever, and you say, "Well, I was going to meditate, but now I'll meditate tomorrow." And then it turns to the next day and the next day and before long you're not sitting at all. So you really want to be very careful and keep your practice going. And if you feel like sitting in the evening, by all means sit in the evening. But make your main practice the morning practice. Don't just get out of bed and try to meditate. Do your morning things, whatever those morning things are; brush your teeth, wash your face, eat a breakfast, whatever. And when you're really wide awake, then you do your sitting.

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During the day when you have to wait for someone or you go to an office and you have an appointment and you're there early, it's a good idea to radiate loving-kindness to everybody in the room. Now the thing with the loving-kindness while you're practicing here, and everybody has gone beyond sending loving-kindness to individual beings and now you're starting to send loving-kindness to all beings. But with your daily activities, you can radiate loving-kindness to the people around you, or you can radiate loving-kindness to all beings, depending on what you feel, it's up to you. If you radiate to a person of the opposite sex, don't look them in the eye while you're radiating metta. That can be very much misunderstood.

The more you can remember to practice the 6Rs and radiating loving-kindness with your daily activities the better your daily meditation will become. There are going to be times that you're going to forget and you might forget for most of one day. Don't criticize yourself because you didn't remember. Just as soon as you recognize that you're not doing the 6Rs and radiating loving-kindness start doing it again. If you criticize yourself then you're really getting into your aversion toward yourself and about yourself and that's an unwholesome state.

Practice your smiling as much as you possibly can. Smile into things. Make everything with your daily activities part of a game to be light with rather than be heavy with. The more you can smile into what

you're doing while you do it, the easier that task is, the easier it is to finish the job and be very efficient with it, and it helps in all kinds of different ways because your mind stays uplifted.

{06:36}

I had a lady, she started practicing meditation with me, and after the second time I saw her she came up to me and she said, "Are you teaching magic?" And I said, "Well, yeah, in a way I am. I'm teaching you the magic of having a happy mind!", because things started becoming more easy. You don't get so caught up in the daily grind of life.

Still keep making a determination before you go to sleep that you're going to wake up smiling and happy. Keep doing that and try to make a determination what time you want to wake up. When you start hitting it pretty regularly then your determinations are starting to get a little bit better and that will help you when your practice goes deeper. Working with determinations is a real important thing to do, especially if you want to learn how to gain mastery in going in and out of the different mental states, the different jhanas. If you want to learn the mastery then it's really easiest if you come to another retreat that I'm giving because I'll be able to help you a lot with learning the mastery of going in and out of the different jhanas and how to do it.

{08:50}

When we were in Germany they have this timer that had...it was an electronic timer...but it had the seconds on it as well as the minutes, and the minutes went up to two hours. And I'd love to have one of those for...because when you start doing the mastery you always are changing the time a little bit...a few seconds one way or the other. And when you start hitting the time that you're doing it then we start lengthening the time of your sitting and that sort of thing. So, next time I go to Germany, remind me that I need to get one of those timers that has the second hand on it.

What are you doing with your mind when you're going to the car?
Thinking about this, thinking about that. Why not notice that that's

what you're doing and let go of those thoughts and 6R them and start radiating loving-kindness. The more times you can remember to radiate loving-kindness and smiling the sharper your mindfulness becomes. And the easier it is to get good progress with your meditation.

Now some of you have gone incredibly deep in your meditation, and when you get off retreat there's going to be a little dip. But if you keep sitting everyday you will get back up to that and you will be able to go beyond that. So keep your practice going, please. Don't treat it as some kind of thing that I have to do but once you start getting into the practice more and more it's the thing that you want to do, because there's so much more peace and calm. Try to notice your old habits of acting in ways the way that you always react when certain things arise and try to 6R that. Keep your 6Rs going as much as you possibly can remember during the day, especially when you have that feeling like you have 25 things to do and you've only got ten minutes to do it. That feeling is restlessness. And the thing that will help you the most is to sit down for about five minutes and start 6R-ing the restlessness and coming back to the loving-kindness. In about five minutes your mind settles down and then you become very efficient in what you're doing while you're doing it.

Now you were asking about what do you do with your mind if you're on your death bed. That was an interesting question. What do you do with your mind when you know that you're going to be dying? What's the answer? 6R and smile, you bet. Wishing everybody around you a lot of happiness. I happened to be with the ~ Sayadaw about four days before he died and when I went into the room to see him I was shocked. He weighed about 65 pounds. He was just skin and bones. He's the one that did the memorizing of all the Tipitika. He was just a skeleton. And there were people standing around him and they were all wishing that he wouldn't die. And they were all getting into their sadness and when I walked up to the end of the bed he looked at me and had a gleam in his eye and started radiating loving-kindness to me. And I'm not going to let him get away with that, I'm going to give it back to him! So I started radiating loving-kindness to him and then everybody around the bed started lightening up a little bit. But I

found that very interesting that even though he was very close to death he still had a enough awareness to radiate loving-kindness to the people around him. I thought that was great!

And I went with another monk who was a senior monk, and as we walked out of the room he was really sad. He'd known ~ Sayadaw for quite a few years. And I said, "What are you sad for?" And he said, "Well, my friend is about ready to die!" And I said, "He was sending me so much loving-kindness it just about knocked me over! So I started sending it back to him. Weren't you doing that?" And he said, "I didn't remember!" He didn't remember to do it.

Sending loving-kindness in that kind of a situation helps you not to feel a sense of helplessness. It gives you a sense of doing something that is really good and helpful. Not only helpful for the person that's dying but helpful for everybody around you. As your mind elevates with loving-kindness, after a while everybody around you, their mind starts coming up to your level. And they start letting go of the sadness and the dislike of the situation and all of those kind of things. That's probably the biggest part of grief when somebody in your family dies. The feeling of helplessness can be very overpowering.

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Now when we had the tsunami back in 2004, something like that. Anyway, Khema was starting to feel really sad because so many people were suffering. And I told her that she didn't have time to be sad, she needed to be sending loving-kindness. And then she started writing on the internet about what we can do to help all those people that are suffering so much. And we can send them loving-kindness and then they started more of a sense of really doing something good that was helpful. And actually I think a lot of people started recognizing some of her writings because of that.

There's not a situation that you're in that loving-kindness won't make better. That smiling won't help more. And keeping your sense of humor and laughing with things, especially when your mind starts to get heavy with sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, whatever the catch of

the day happens to be. Your sense of humor about being caught changes your perspective from "I am angry" to "It's only anger". And if it's "only anger" it's easy to let go of.

Anytime that you see that your having repeat thoughts, that means that there is an attachment that you have. So anytime you see repeat thoughts what do you need to do? 6R, smile, be happy. Let go of that. It's not that important in the first place. When you're in the grocery store and there's a line of people and you're in a hurry what are you doing with your mind? Wishing that you weren't there. "Why don't those people hurry up because I've got to go do this or I've got to go do that?" Who has to do what? "I've got to go! I've got to do!" I...I...I...I...I! I want to hurry up! You are causing yourself suffering! There's no situation, there's no person that can cause your suffering.

You cause yourself suffering by identifying with thoughts and feelings and taking them personally and then wrestling with them.

So the more you can 6R and relax and smile into things, the less you're going to get caught by these unwholesome states, the less you're going to cause yourself suffering, the more happiness you're going to have with your daily activities and in your life.

{20:56}

Meditation is not about sitting like a rock. Meditation is about living! And the more you can carry your meditation into your daily activities, the lighter your mind becomes, the more alert your mind becomes and the more people around you like you. It's that simple.

I've told this a lot of times before, but I used to have a mirror by the telephone and anytime the telephone rang I would start looking at the mirror and smiling and then I'd pick up the phone and sometimes I'd get a wrong number and I'd wind up talking to them for five or ten minutes because they could feel the loving-kindness coming out of my voice. The mirror is not there for some kind of ego trip or some kind of vanity thing, the mirror is there so you can look and see what your face is doing. So the more you can smile the more it gets across on the telephone. It's really amazing how much more successful you

become by using the telephone when you start smiling. It's really neat! And it doesn't matter whether you're doing it at your job or whether you're doing it at home. I really recommend small mirrors for everybody.

I had this one student in Washington, D.C., and I gave her a small mirror and it said, "Smile" on it. And she carried around with her everywhere. Now what she did, she was a person that did makeup for political figures so when they went on television they would look more like real human beings than having all those shadows and such. And she was helping Joe Lieberman. And Joe Lieberman was getting ready to debate Dick Cheney. And this was before Dick Cheney became Vice President. And Joe Lieberman was very anxious and he had a lot of restlessness. And this woman that I had been teaching the meditation to started telling him some of the things that I told her and he wasn't getting it. So she reached into her purse and pulled out the mirror and stuck it in front of his face and said, "You have to smile!" And he did he started calming down. As it turned out, that was supposedly the best debate of the entire series of debates that they had because they weren't attacking each other personally, they were talking about what they wanted to see happen.

Now this girl was...she was a very attractive woman. And she had a boyfriend and she started telling me about the problems that she was having with her boyfriend and they got in a fight. And I said, "Did you look in the mirror? See what your face looked like when it was angry?" She was a little bit on the vain side and, oh, she didn't want to see her face when it was ugly.

{25:36}

You can almost always tell people that meditate because they don't have so many deep lines in their forehead and they don't have...they let go of a lot of tension in their face. And their face actually becomes more beautiful and younger because of the practice of loving-kindness. And that's one of the advantages of doing the loving-kindness. It says right in the suttas that one of the advantages is that your face becomes beautiful. And of course it does when you're smiling. Check it out sometime when you're angry and look in the

mirror and see what your face looks like. It's frightening! [laughs] It is!

Now, I'm going to go through the advantages of loving-kindness meditation again, just so that you can kind of know what to expect when you're practicing loving-kindness.

You go to sleep easily when you practice loving-kindness. You don't practice deep meditation but if you're having trouble going to sleep, if you just start radiating lightly some loving-kindness to yourself and then let it go, you'll go right to sleep.

You sleep very soundly when you practice loving-kindness meditation. You don't wake up rolling over and tossing and turning and that sort of thing. When you wake up in the morning you wake up alert. You're not groggy. You don't bump into things and mumble a lot and that sort of thing.

Your dreams can be very, very pleasant. If they aren't, you can radiate loving-kindness into the dreams and that will change the dreams so that they will be pleasant.

Animals love you! They like being around you. I can remember one time seeing...I guess it was an alpaca, I'm not sure...in Florida in the field, and Khema and Catherine wanted the alpaca to come over and come close to the fence. So I started radiating loving-kindness and then they started making some hoot sounds and he came right over. It was amazing! But it's from the radiating loving-kindness. All beings want to feel more loved. And as you put love into your heart it goes through your hands, too.

One of the things that's real amazing when you're giving a massage to someone else is you start radiating loving-kindness and feeling that energy go through your hands. People seem to calm down very, very quickly. Their mind becomes peaceful and accepting when you practice loving-kindness.

People like you when you practice loving-kindness. Why? Everybody

likes to be around somebody that is smiling. They have some kind of strange sense of humor. I guess I fall into that kind of category, don't I? [laughs]

Your sense of humor starts to change. You stop laughing at things and you start laughing with things. Nothing makes me laugh and feel happiness arise faster than seeing a little child...a little two or three year old kid...makes me start smiling right straight away. And they do some of the darndest things. It's just great!

I can remember seeing one little boy. He walked into...someplace, I don't remember...but he sat down with his mom and she was busy doing something and I started looking at him. And I was a ways away, I was fifteen or twenty feet away. But I started radiating loving-kindness to him and he started going...like those little animals that you put on the dash of the car and the head bobs up and down, back and forth like that. And I went and did something and I came and walked by again and he was bowing to me like that all the way until I walked out, made me laugh out loud! It was great!

{31:25}

This is the one that I'm not sure of. It says poisons and weapons will not harm you, and fire will not harm you. Well, I don't want to mess with any of those to find out. But one of the advantages of practicing loving-kindness is that devas protect you. That's a hard one to confirm but there are some times you can feel the devas around. And I've told this quite a few times before but I feel it's necessary to tell it again.

I was in Thailand and I was going to get on a bus and go about 70 kilometers from where I was. Just as I stepped on the bus an old friend came by and saw me getting on the bus and I stepped off and I started talking to him and the bus took off without me, which is fine because they come around every hour or two hours or something like that. It's no problem. And then the next bus came along and I said goodbye to my friend and I got on the bus. Now, in Thailand, monks always ride in the front of the bus. I mean the very front seat of the bus. We were driving along on this windy mountain road and I saw

that there were a lot of people looking over the edge and it looked like there'd been some skid marks and that sort of thing. And the bus stopped and we got out and took a look and it was the bus that I would've gotten on and it was really smashed up bad. And if I would've been sitting on that bus I would've been killed. And I attribute that to the devas protecting me. They brought a friend over to stop me from getting on the bus. I don't know how to prove something like that. But there is a time that you sense other beings around you and radiate loving-kindness to them. They'll help you a lot!

{34:16}

Your face will become very beautiful when you're practicing loving-kindness.

Your meditation practice and your progress is faster with loving-kindness than it is with any other kind of meditation. Your progress is faster. I know people that have done mindfulness of breathing for a very long time with almost no progress in their practice. People coming here doing the retreat, their progress is good. And sometimes excellent! Getting into jhana doesn't take that long.

But when you're practicing mindfulness of breathing it can take quite a while before you're actually able to do it. It can take a few months. But when you come and practice loving-kindness meditation I'm looking at a few days before you experience some kinds of joy and tranquility of mind and that sort of thing. That's one of the reasons that I really like loving-kindness meditation because your progress in the meditation is so fast. But when I came to this country and I saw how many people are doing mindfulness of breathing and doing it in a way that doesn't match the suttas, I started realizing that I really did have to teach loving-kindness meditation more so that you had change your meditation. And that way you can start practicing the 6Rs the way the Buddha was talking about. And you start learning about how your mindfulness actually works. And, shoot, I even give you the definitions for mindfulness, although some people don't agree. [laughs] But that's for another time. [laughs]

{36:51}

ST: ~~

BV: Yes, so am I. Another advantage of practicing loving-kindness meditation is that when you are able to get into a jhana, if you don't go any higher and you happen to die, you will die with a very clear mind. And that's a real advantage for practicing loving-kindness meditation. If you don't go any higher and you just stay with the loving-kindness meditation then you will be reborn in a brahma loka, which lasts for a fairly long period of time depending on your depth of the meditation. So there's a lot of advantages that you get by practicing loving-kindness meditation.

The more you can keep your practice going with your daily activities the better your sitting is going to be.

The more loving-kindness you can put into your voice and use gentle speech the better your meditation is going to become.

All of these different kinds of mindfulness help your meditation to improve fairly quickly. And like I said you're going to have the dip after you get off retreat if you stop doing your meditation you're going to have a big dip. You keep the meditation going and keep your 6Rs going you will have progress in your meditation.

Now there's been a lot of talk about how you experience nibbana. Do you have to be in a retreat to experience nibbana? No. It can happen anytime. You can experience it at home as well as you can experience here. So keep the practice going as well as you can. Put as much time into the meditation as you can. And that doesn't mean just sitting, that means with your daily activities, too. Soften your mind as much as you can, all of the time, and your meditation will start to improve by that because you're softening your mind as you soften your speech.

Giving your smile away is important. When you're walking from one place to another, why not smile? Why not be happy? Why not give that happiness away? The more you can do that, the better your

meditation will become. Just that simple.

Okay, I've been talking for a while and what I was going to do tonight was ask you if you have any questions. I know that you were talking about philosophical questions during the retreat. Do you have any now that you want to talk about?

{41:08}

ST: The one was actually answered in the interview. ~~~

BV: Okay. [laughs] Yeah?

ST: What about metta to people who have died?

BV: Oh, good question. Metta to people who have died. Yes, send metta to people who have died but you won't progress in the metta if that's your only object of meditation. Okay. But sending loving-kindness to somebody that's died is a good thing and also sending loving-kindness to the family is a good thing.

I know one monk he recommends you sit with a picture of the person that deceased. And he said you can talk to them. And you can radiate loving-kindness to them and you can tell them how much you love them and how much you appreciate them. And for some people that works and for other people it doesn't. They say they feel funny talking to a picture. But if they want to just radiate loving-kindness to that person that's great. Will that person benefit from it? Yes. They will. But you won't go deeper in your meditation if that's all you do. So you can do that for a little while and then you can start radiating loving-kindness to all beings and that's just fine.

Now one of the other questions that kind of happens is people continually are asking, "While I'm radiating loving-kindness to a spiritual friend, will they know it?" Yes, they will. They won't necessarily know that it was you that was sending that loving-kindness to them but they'll know that they felt a little different and they felt happy.

Okay. Any other question? Yes?

{43:30}

ST: ~ when you're reading a book, ~~

BV: Yeah, when you're reading a book you wind up reading the book.

ST: You don't stop and 6R? [laugh]

BV: No. No. And you have things that you have to do in your job where you have to read this or that or you have to take care of this or that, but you can smile while you're reading the book. You can smile while you're reading your other things and doing your other things.

Yes?

ST: What about the notion of, you know, when walking, just walk, and eating, just eat. How does that kind of fold into ~~

BV: That comes from commentaries. When you're walking, just smile. While you're eating, just smile. Okay?

ST: I have a question. Can you lovingly walk? Can you lovingly do something? That's the same thing as sending your loving-kindness into what you're doing.

BV: Yeah. I did a lot of construction things. And one of my major peeves was having to do plumbing. I have a big body. Everything is down there and I always had trouble putting the nut on the way it was supposed to go and making it all fit so it didn't leak. I never was very good at that. And then I discovered something. I would become frustrated. I would become angry. I wanted to kick the whatever it was. But then I started thinking, "Well, I wonder what would happen if I radiated some loving-kindness into this thing?" Sounds dumb! I'd radiate loving-kindness and walk away for a minute, come back, and it would go on like it was supposed to. And it happened not one time, it happened often that way. You can put loving-kindness into what

you're doing while you're doing it and it does get easier.

Yes?

{45:52}

ST: Isn't it when you're radiating loving-kindness into what you're doing that you are just eating and you are just ~~~ there are ~~

BV: Yes, yes. But you're doing it with an uplifted mind. That's the key. Yeah.

ST: Right, so you're actually, with the loving-kindness, you're actually achieving that ~~ that you are just eating and you are just...~

BV: Yeah, walking or whatever. Of course.

But I found it real interesting that whatever task that I was doing, if I had a hard time doing it, I started radiating loving-kindness into that and all of a sudden it wasn't such a hard task anymore. And I also did things like radiate...I'd have a problem that I was really wrestling with and I couldn't see an answer. So I started radiating loving-kindness that the answer would come. And then I'd walk away for a minute and I wouldn't think about it anymore. And it was like my body was on automatic and it would just do it. It was amazing!

One of the things that I do before I give a dhamma talk is I radiate loving-kindness into my mind so that I will say exactly the right thing so that everybody will understand. But it's just making the wish and radiating the loving-kindness into it and then letting it alone.

ST: When I'm practicing it for long time, does it not sometime become like true nature like you don't need to ~~~ say ~~

BV: With your daily activities there's a lot of different situations. Hopefully, yes, it does become a habit, but it does take some time. Because we have all these old habits that we have to let go of to make the new habit work.

{48:17}

ST: It's also tough. ~~ you become a more loving person..~~~ cannot be...

BV: I found it very helpful. Yeah?

ST: Loving-kindness comes from the heart ~~ but during equanimity it seems to be coming from elsewhere. So you can actually be sending loving-kindness from a state of equanimity not from a heart ~.

BV: Yes.

ST: ~

BV: [laughs] But you're not focusing on the equanimity you're focusing on the loving-kindness...loving-kindness.

ST: But if you're in the state of equanimity you can be...

BV: You can have a very balanced mind and radiate loving-kindness at the same time. Yes.

{49:27}

SK: We have an ongoing discussion that's still floating on our list about do we radiate loving-kindness like the candle radiates light or do we push it out.

BV: No. You don't push it out.

SK: ~~ allowing the development of the feeling so that it's like radiating out and then you move into equanimity and it's ~~ you're radiating it out. Does that make sense?

BV: What you'll start feeling when you start doing this is that there's no boundaries when you radiate loving-kindness in the direction. And you can radiate loving-kindness long, long, long distances.

ST: It is very helpful I found towards ~ and to make ~ easier. It never really related it to smiling but it comes also and when I had the women's retreat going then, in the morning I go in the four directions and in the beginning one of the group has to speak the words, make a sentence. "All beings in this direction be free from doing harm to each other" or maybe "be calm and forgiving" and so on. And so that was very helpful for each one to kind of go a little bit more into it. But then I give the idea to start with dukkha kind of in that direction seeing hospitals or prisoners, prison houses, or families, domestic violence. And had them kind of as a focus seeing the hospitals where people are dying. Feeling the death. ~~~~~

~~~~~ [microphone covered]~~~~~

I learned then that for many it's very helpful to see first the dukkha, you know, just ~~~ some issues. Because it's ~~~

BV: Yeah, that's always a good thing. That's always a good thing.

ST: It's actually also very natural I feel. I remember I jumped out of a speed boat and was caught by the ~~.

BV: Whoa!

ST: Yeah! I had the motor ~ [laughs] ...~ feeling my body. But I had the bikini on and that was my luck because it got...it was unwounded very quickly. And it got me into the fleshy part ~~ and I was really cut down there. But I knew, "I'm done!" I knew. And I had nothing ~ like that. And I hear myself saying, "~~". I saw everybody ~~ there upon the water and on the water and beyond. That was so, so powerful and so grabbing me, that it was no fear. I didn't have any desire to be saved. I am ~~, I am ~~, ~~, that means, "please live". Those beings that are still there ~~. It's a very powerful sentence. And I gave this ~~, somebody had noticed that I didn't come back and he pulled me out...~~

BV: I imagine!

{54:44}

ST: I often think of it. I had no training of it so it is in us. I talk about basic goodness in us.

BV: Yeah.

ST: And then you are kind of from having no alternative you go, "Oh, no hope!" and you can comprehend it. Then you can go actually I think if I continued I would have just gone.

BV: Yeah, it's one of the most wholesome things that you can do with your mind. Mahasi Sayadaw was very big on figuring out things...yeah...figuring things out. And he said that if you're able to get into the first jhana and you sit for thirty minutes three times a day, that was the equivalent in merit of feeding 3,000 people every time, every time you sat. Now, so that was the equivalent of feeding 9,000 people; radiating loving kindness for an hour and a half. How much have you been practicing?

ST: ~~ you said ~~ everything is ~. I think of a time when I was in a nursery watering plants. And then I realized suddenly that the plant before didn't get that much water, I felt ~ very sad.

BV: Yeah.

ST: ~~~

BV: [laughs] I have some aloe vera plants that yell at me when I forget to water them. [laughs]

ST: ~~~

ST: ~~~ kind of also encouraged and point out that it's actualizing our basic human goodness.

{57:39}

BV: There's another thing that you can do that is very helpful. And that is when you're practicing loving-kindness you hold a bottle of

water. Yeah. Now water holds memory, so everyday you hold this bottle of water and you radiate loving-kindness. And you start to feel sick then drink some.

When I was in Malaysia, there was a lady that was pregnant and she asked if I could do something to help her so that she would have an easy birth. So I did some chanting for her and that sort of thing. And I radiated loving-kindness into the water and I gave her the water and she would take little sips of it. She would take some of the water and she would rub it on the baby while still in the womb. And when it got time for her to have the baby she drank the last of the water and she said she had no fear and no anxiety arise in her mind. And the birth was very easy and...well, as easy as natural birth can be. And when the baby came out the baby was smiling. And the baby turned out to be a very, very good baby and would sleep all night and do weird things like that.

ST: It's encouraging ~~

BV: And because of that when I was still staying in Malaysia I started having a lot of pregnant women coming over to me and asking me to give them a chant and the water.

ST: ~~

BV: Yeah! I wound up with...I started to call them My Kids! There were so many of them, there was 27 of them when I left. But you can hold the water and you can radiate that loving feeling in the water and the water will hold that memory. And you can use that on your plants and your plants will respond very well. And you can drink it. If a little child is not feeling good give them some of that water to drink. It really does work.

ST: When it is ~~ construction of the mind in a way, it keeps out the hindrances.

BV: In a way it does, yes.

ST: So the ~ are different. ~~

BV: Okay. Yes.

{1:01:04}

ST: Since you've invited philosophical questions, this is one I'm sure you've heard many times ~~ It has to do with, if there's no self, I'm not sure where the connection is between this and the next life. And why are we so concerned with ending suffering that's not really us?

BV: Because you think it is. Because you think it's you, it's you that's doing the suffering. You don't see as clearly as you need to see that there is no self. And I really don't like the words, "no-self." I like, "impersonal." Because if it's impersonal that gives you a whole different perspective on what the Buddha was talking about.

For instance, the Buddha said that anybody who truly loves himself will never harm another being. Okay? What self is there? You mean you're being selfish in radiating loving-kindness to yourself? Well, if you truly love yourself then you're not going to harm another being it seems like that's a good thing to do! And some of you I was giving the forgiveness meditation to, what were you doing? You were learning how to love yourself, how to let go of that heavy criticism. And because of that your meditation started to blossom. So, the philosophical nature of self and no-self, I really...it's personal or impersonal. If you take things personally then there's an attachment. If you take them impersonally then there is none.

ST: ~~~ that also the concept of no person ~~~ in relationship to the hindrances.

BV: Oh yes!

ST: That is ~~

BV: Oh yes!

ST: ...impersonally ~~

BV: Yes!

ST: ...and so one doesn't feel ~~ put down...~~~

BV: And that's what the relax step helps you to see in a deep way.

{1:03:48}

ST: Can you ~~ what you just talked on these 6Rs.

BV: Did you give her the other 6R thing?

SK: That's the 6Rs.

BV: Yeah. Did you give her the other 6R thing, the one that had the explanations?

ST: That green sheet over there.

Multiple voices: ~~~

ST: ... ~~ tension in mental and bodily formations. And relax."

BV: This is a mnemonic system. It's just a system to help remind how to do the practice of meditation. You recognize when your mind is distracted. You release the distraction. You relax the tension caused by that distraction. Then you re-smile. And you return to your object of meditation. And you repeat it. You repeat the whole process...it starts all over again.

SK: So when you're doing that, you're completing the right effort every time.

ST: ~ actually ~~ almost scientific.

BV: I wish I would have come up with it. Somebody else did!  
[laughs]

ST: Something else ~~ to my consciousness and it was a question about the immaterial jhanas.

BV: Yes.

ST: ~ second immaterial. Is there any object of the meditation. Not ~~ but...one object?

BV: Definitely, there is an object of meditation.

ST: That's what I wanted to know. Immaterial.

BV: Now if you're...

ST: ~~~ faculties or ~~~

BV: Well, when you get to the immaterial jhanas, the metta only goes to the fourth jhana. Then compassion is the fifth jhana.

ST: Kindness...

BV: Yes

ST: Metta...

BV: Yes

ST: Equanimity?

BV: That's the realm of nothingness. But also you can get to the immaterial jhanas with the breath. Yeah. Now there's a lot of teachers that they're teaching about one-pointed concentration and they will say that you lose your breath, you can't find it anymore, when you get to the fourth jhana. You stop breathing. And that's not true.

ST: That's right. It's just ~~

BV: Well, that's one-pointed concentration. You start breathing through your ears and that sort of thing. You don't breathe through your lungs so much.

ST: ~~~ where I get it from I don't know but, ~~~ Oh monks, breathe with me. You don't breathe out, but you breathe in with the whole body and you breathe out with the whole body. There is an awareness of the inner process of the life-ness. That's the way I understand that.

BV: The problem with that is that they say the body, they say the "breath-body", but it's...that is from the commentary not from the actual teaching. It says on the in-breath you experience the entire body. On the out-breath you experience the entire body. And then it says on the in-breath you tranquilize the body formation. On the out...

[End of recording]

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

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

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

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.  
Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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