

## MN10 The Foundations of Mindfulness - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

Presented by Bhante Vimalaramsi on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2006

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BV: Ok, the sutta tonight is the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, The Foundations of Mindfulness.

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

2. "Monks, this is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of Nibbāna—namely, the four foundations of mindfulness.

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

BV: This translation says: "feelings as feelings", but we got to take the "s" off of that because it's way too misunderstood, so we want to say "feeling as feeling."

MN: ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

BV: Now, the first part is the contemplation of the body, and it starts out with mindfulness of breathing. Now, an interesting thing is that the instructions of mindfulness of breathing are exactly, word for word, letter for letter, the same here as it is in the Anāpānasati Sutta, the Kāyagatāsati - Mindfulness of Body Sutta - and sutta number sixty two (MN62) where the Buddha gives instructions in mindfulness of breathing. So these instructions are pretty much standardized through all of the different kinds of meditation.

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

Breathing in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short.'

BV: The key word to this part of the instructions is he 'understands'. He knows when he's taking a long breath and when it's short. He knows when the breath is very fine and when it's coarse. He knows when it's subtle, and when it's not. He understands. It doesn't say: "he focuses on". He doesn't say: "he puts his strong attention only on the breath", it says he understands the breath. And again, you want to notice that it doesn't say "nostril tip", "nostril", "upper lip", or "abdomen", or any combination of those. You just understand what the breath is doing in the present moment. Now...

MN: He trains thus:

BV: These are key words because this is the actual instruction in the meditation itself.

MN: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body';

BV: In the first edition of The Middle Length Sayings, Bhikkhu Bodhi, I talked to him about this, he was obliged to put in brackets: (of breath) behind 'experiencing the whole body'. That was when Nyanaponika was still alive, and Nyanaponika was Bhikkhu Bodhi's teacher, so he felt obliged to put that in. After Nyanaponika died, he came out with a second edition, and he took 'of breath' out because it's misleading. It makes you, if you put 'of breath' behind 'experiencing the entire body', it implies that you're focusing very deeply just on the breath to the exclusion of everything else, which is a form of absorption concentration. But you'll see in a moment that that is not the case. So when he came out with the second edition, he took that out in every place except The Mindfulness of Breathing sutta. He forgot to take it out in that one, but he took it out everywhere else.

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

BV: Now, this is the entire instructions in the meditation of how to do mindfulness of breathing. I have had many, many discussions with many, many monks who are practicing meditation and teaching meditation, and I say: "Well, how do you practice mindfulness of breathing?" - "Well, I put my attention on my nostril or upper lip, and I keep my attention there very strongly." Now, that doesn't match the instructions of 'he trains thus'. He trains thus: tranquillizing the bodily formation on the in-breath, and tranquillizing the bodily formation on the out-breath. They're just taking the breath without the tranquillizing. **This last part**

**of the instruction is the very thing that makes the Buddha's meditation different from everybody else's teaching.**

All of the Brahmins and Hindus of the time, they were doing breath meditation, but they were focusing just on the breath. They didn't put that extra step of tranquillizing the bodily formation. Now, what is tranquillizing the bodily formation mean? Most people, especially in this country, when you talk to them about the body, to them the body is from the neck down, and the mind is from the neck up, when in fact the body is from the top of the head all the way down.

Now, when it says tranquillize the bodily formation, what it's talking about is there is subtle tensions and tightness's in your head, in your mind, in your brain. You relax on the in-breath, you feel an opening and a calming, you relax on the out-breath, you feel an opening and a calming, opening and calming. You're using the breath as the reminder to relax, to tranquillize your bodily formation. Now, this means also that if there's any tension anywhere in your body, if you see that tension, you relax that, also relaxing this (the head). The subtle tightness that's in your head is also a tightness in your mind. So you're actually tranquillizing both the bodily formation, and the mental, formation by relaxing.

How many times have you heard me say: "When there's a distraction, let go of that, relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation?" The more you can relax the tension and tightness that is very subtle in your head, the faster your meditation deepens. And when I've talked to the monks and the other teachers that are teaching mindfulness of breathing, and I come to this statement of tranquillizing the bodily formation on the in-breath and the out-breath, and I say: "Do you do that?", and there's a very blank look. "No, we don't do the meditation this way. We follow the Buddha's teaching another way." But this extra step is the key to changing your entire meditation so that it becomes immediately effective. The progress in meditation is so much faster when you follow all of the instructions when you're doing mindfulness of breathing, that he gave.

Now, I know that a lot of Vipassana people, they say they practice the Mahasi method, and the Mahasi method says that when there's a distraction, you put your attention on that distraction until it goes away and then immediately come back to the breath. They don't have any relaxing in it. If there's no relaxing then you have things like access concentration and moment-to-moment concentration. When you have this kind of one-pointed concentration, when your concentration gets deep enough, the force of the concentration pushes down the hindrances so they don't arise. And they call that purifying the mind, and in a way they're right. But it's not the way that the Buddha taught.

It's a little bit different than that. The way the Buddha taught to tranquillize your mind was by letting go of the tension and tightness caused by distraction. How do you let it go? You relax. What are you relaxing? You are relaxing the tension

and tightness caused by craving. Craving always manifests as tension and tightness in your mind and in your body. So every time you let go of that tension, especially the tension that's in your head, you'll feel an expansion, and your mind takes a little step down and becomes calm. Right after that you'll notice that there's not any thoughts. But there's real, good, strong, pure awareness, and you bring that mind, that has no craving because you've let it go, back to your object of meditation.

Now, this is day three of the meditation and some of you are doing incredibly well – that's not a good word – very, very well, and it makes me very happy that you're following these instructions like you are because you're starting to progress; you're starting to have happiness and joy arise; you're starting to feel more at ease with the meditation; and you're starting to understand what this is all about. And that comes from following that one extra step of relaxing. I've been to many, many retreats practicing the Mahasi method, and I started noticing after the first seven or eight years that it takes about five years to really understand what the meditation isn't, before you start understanding what the meditation is. But, that's not happening with this retreat. You're all starting to understand what the meditation is, right now. You don't have to go through the five year period that most people do. You're really starting to grasp it, and it makes me incredibly happy to see how well you're all doing. It's hard work, but you're getting it.

So this extra step of tranquillizing the bodily formation, letting go of the tension and tightness, means that you're letting go of craving. And what is craving? That is the cause of suffering. And when you let go of that craving, and your mind becomes... you feel that expansion and calmness, that pure mind, that is where the cessation of suffering is. And you're bringing that cessation back to your object of meditation. So it's kind of an amazing phenomena that so many people are so interested in practicing the Buddha's teaching, but they're not following the instructions. This is only four lines in the instructions, four sentences, but they're not following them exactly. When I first started practicing meditation, it happened to be with the Mahasi method, and I was just... I considered myself a dumb American, I didn't know anything. So whatever the teacher said that I was supposed to do, that's what I did. It took me twenty years to finally go and understand what these instructions were talking about because I was always following what the teacher said without investigating more deeply on my own. So I want to encourage you not to believe anything that I'm saying. I want you to investigate on your own and see whether this really works or not, and you're starting to do that.

MN: 'Just as a skilled lathe-operator or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands: 'I make a long turn'; or, when making a short turn, understands: 'I make a short turn'; so too, breathing in long, a monk understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short, he

understands: 'I breathe out short.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation.'

BV: As you begin to see when distractions arise in your mind and you let go of the distraction and relax, smile and come back to your object of meditation, you're beginning to see how mind moves, mind's attention moves. And with that you're starting to develop wisdom, little bit by little bit. Now, if you have an active mind, but you see that as soon as you notice, you let go of the distraction, relax, smile, and come back, you're starting to improve your mindfulness. Improving your mindfulness means you're starting to see how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. You know, you're sitting in meditation and your mind is on your object of meditation, breathing or whatever, and all of a sudden you're thinking about what happened yesterday. How did that happen? When I was studying about the seven factors of enlightenment, I started thinking that there actually... there needs to be another one or two added into that. The first thing has to have, you have to have curiosity. You have to want to know: "What happened? How did that work?" Not getting involved in why did that work that way, but how did it work? That's the key question that the Buddha was always presenting: How? How does that arise? How does that work?

Since coming back to this country - I spent twelve years in Asia - and coming back to this country, there was a lot of talk about stress, and a lot of talk about depression, and a lot of talk about drugs to overcome the depression, and drugs to overcome the stress. When you start looking at how mind's attention moves, you don't need any drugs for that. All you have to do is start to pay attention to how this arises. So how does stress arise? A feeling arises, most often it's a painful feeling: "I don't like this." Critical mind is real big in this. "I want it to be different than it is." Right after the feeling, the "I like it, I don't like it" mind. Right after that, the story about why you like or don't like that feeling, and your habitual tendency of really getting involved with trying to think your feeling away.

Now, on one of the charts that we handed out, the top one as I remember, is the five aggregates, and it shows how those turn into the four foundations of mindfulness. Now, when your mindfulness becomes weak or distracted, then you look at the bottom line and you see all of these hindrances that are there. When your mindfulness gets weak then a hindrance will arise. The hindrances are not the enemy to fight with, they're friends to welcome in. They are your best friends because they're showing you up close and personal where your attachments are. And what is an attachment? Attachment is the belief that: "I am that. I am this feeling. I am this thought."

But you know, I've talked to an awful lot of people and I say: "Well, you have this depression. Did you ask that feeling to come up?" Did you say: "Well, I haven't been depressed for a few days, it's time to get depressed?" No, nobody's crazy

enough to do that. Well, maybe some people are. But it arises because there's an expectation of something being the way "I want it to be". That's your opinions and your concepts and that sort of thing. When reality doesn't meet that expectation, a painful feeling arises, and the I-don't-like-it mind grabs onto that and you get more and more involved in all of the concepts and opinions, and ideas about why you want it to be other than the way it is. But the truth is, it arises because of past action. What arises and is in the present moment is the truth. It's ok for that feeling to be there. It has to be ok because it is the truth. What you do with what arises in the present moment dictates what happens in the future. If you fight with the truth, if you resist the truth, if you try to change the truth to match your ideas, you can look forward to suffering.

Now, the more you think about a feeling, the bigger and more intense that feeling becomes, until just a regular feeling turns into this huge emergency. "And I can't sleep, and I can't eat, and I'm so depressed all the time!" Why? Because you continually are resisting a feeling and trying to think your feeling away, and it doesn't work. Why doesn't it work? Because you can't control whether feeling arises or not. It arises because conditions are right for it to arise. What you're learning how to do right now is to recognize that tension and tightness that arises right after the feeling arises. That tension and tightness is craving.

That's the start of that false idea that "This is me. This is mine. I don't like it. I want it to be different than it is." Then you have the clinging. And the clinging is the story, all of the ideas, all of the concepts, all of the opinions about why this feeling should be other than it is. So you keep trying to think the feeling, so the feeling gets bigger and more intense. Like it has a lot of energy, and all of a sudden you're trying to push it back down, and it pushes back and gets stronger. So you have to finally wind up saying: "Well I can't stand this, I'm going to take some drugs. That'll control it." And these drugs wind up dulling your mind and causing your body all kinds of different problems, and it doesn't solve the problem. What's going to solve the problem? Practicing meditation the way the Buddha taught practicing the meditation.

And I told you the first night, the Buddha didn't just teach sitting like a rock - that's meditation. He said you have to practice your generosity. Anybody that's really into their depression, be a friend to them - take them to a hospital where somebody is dying of cancer and say: "You think you got problems? What are you depressed about? Here's somebody that's got some real problems." Then you suggest what their job is, is to go visit this person in the hospital and make them smile and feel at home and at ease. Practice your generosity, practice it as much as you possibly can. Practice giving in your speech; saying things that make other people feel good; in your actions, helping in whatever way is necessary; and with your thoughts. Now, you're practicing loving-kindness meditation; you're doing that. You're practicing all of these things and keeping your precepts. Now, your meditation is starting to blossom. I mean, I just look at your faces and it makes me smile because one of the advantages of practicing loving-kindness meditation

is your face becomes very beautiful. Your face starts to get radiant and glowing, and that's what I'm seeing. It's great! You're practicing giving that loving-kindness to your friend. Giving it away. Now, when you get home, call up your spiritual friend and ask them if they've noticed any difference in the last week or so. It's amazing.

The whole point of The Satipatthāna Sutta is to try to teach us how to let go of craving. How to improve our observation power, and watch how mind's attention goes from one thing to another. That's what mindfulness is, seeing attention go from one thing to another. Relaxing, letting it be, smiling, coming back. Staying with that as much as you possibly can. But you can't criticize yourself because you're not as good as you think you should be. Criticizing is no fair. You're as good as you are, and that's great. You have to let go of the expectations. You have to develop what Suzuki Roshi used to phrase as the 'beginner's mind'. Do you know what's going to happen five minutes from now? I don't either. Roof could fall down. Airplane can come right here and drop right in on us. Who knows? Why do we have to try to expect something to be in a particular way? The more we have expectations, the more suffering we cause ourselves when those expectations don't arise.

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

BV: Now, what's it talking about here? How are you contemplating? First off, I really don't like the word 'contemplating' because it implies thinking, and this is observation. But we'll let that slide for a minute. How are you seeing the body as a body internally? How do you do it? You see when there's tension and tightness and you relax. On the in-breath you relax, on the out-breath.

MN: {repeats} he abides contemplating the body as a body externally,

BV: You're using the breath as the reminder to relax. That's the external part of the body. And you're doing both internally and externally.

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

BV: You're seeing that all the time. You're seeing the nature of both arising and passing away, but it's not just of the physical body, it's of the tension and tightness and the mental body that you're seeing that relax.

MN: or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

BV: How are you independent, not clinging to anything in the world? Remember, clinging is thinking about. You're independent because you're letting go of that "I like it, I don't like it" mind, that craving. Just letting it go. You become independent, you become very clear without the cloudiness of the false belief that "This is me. This is who I am".

MN: That is how a monk abides contemplating the body as a body.

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

7. In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

BV: Then we get into the four postures, and I've always thought that this was kind of comical, especially when I was practicing with the Mahasi method because they said: "Well, know what posture you're in, and note it ten or fifteen times: sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting; standing, standing, standing; walking, walking, walking; lying down, lying down, lying down. It always seemed kind of a strange exercise. I know when I'm standing, I know when I'm sitting. It's saying that whatever posture you're in, practice your meditation, practice staying with your object of meditation. Practice, if you're doing mindfulness of breathing: on the in-breath relax, on the out-breath relax, whether you're sitting, standing, walking, or lying down. If you're practicing loving-kindness then stay with that radiating feeling, and making a wish and wishing your friend happiness, whether you're standing, sitting, lying down, or walking.

Now, here's another part that is very interesting, and this is called "full awareness".

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

BV: Now, the question is, full awareness of what? It's real easy answer. Full awareness of your object of meditation. What this is trying to tell you is, it

doesn't matter what you're doing, stay with your object of meditation. Doesn't matter whether you're eating or going to the bathroom. You stay with your object of meditation, when you're sitting, when you're standing, when you're walking, when you're falling asleep, when you're waking up. Stay with your object of meditation. Smile. Wish your friend happiness. Easy, right?

MN: 9. "In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally...And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a monk abides contemplating the body as a body.

BV: It doesn't matter what your body is doing at the time, stay with your meditation as much as you possibly can. Be fully aware when your mind is uplifted and when it's not. Be fully aware when your mind is tight, and when it's not. Be fully aware when there's a hindrance, and when there's not. Know what to do with all these things; stay with your object of meditation. If your mind is pulled away to something, let it be, relax, and come back to your object of meditation, continually. Do that fifty thousand times an hour. Or smile and have fun with it. Keep your mind light, keep your mind uplifted. That's why the corners of your mouth are so important because the corners of your mouth go up, so does your mental state. With your mental state uplifted, it's very easy to see when you start to heavy out and get heavy emotional states. It's very easy to see when you get caught, and it's also very easy, with practice, to let it be and relax, unless your attachment is really, really strong. Then you have to roll up your sleeves and go to work with it.

But let's say that you're... you get up in the middle of the night; you got to go to the bathroom; you think: "No, I'm not going to turn the light on, I'll just go in there." And you stub your toe. What happens in your mind? First thing, there's a painful feeling. Next: "I don't like that painful feeling." Next: "I hate it when I stub my toe, that really hurts, and grrr, grrrr, grrr, grrrr, grrr." And limping around and cursing, and all of those sorts of things. Is your mind alert, uplifted, or not? So what do you do? You know, anytime you have a physical pain arise in your body, your mind and your body is telling you right then: "It hurts and I need some love." And what do we always give it? "I hate this feeling when it arises, God I wish it would... oh that hurts so bad, I hate that." You're giving it aversion.

Now, this is something that I've practiced a lot because when I was in Asia I was barefoot a lot. And they have this bad habit in Asia of having these little steps that are about that high, that lead into the bathroom, and I've broken a lot of toes because of that. And I actually got quite good at being able to recognize the dissatisfaction of the pain when it arose, and I really was able to see how all of these things arose because it happened often enough. And when I would notice that my mind got onto the dissatisfaction of that pain, I would let that go and relax, and start sending loving-kindness into my toe. And then I would keep doing that for a little while, while I hobbled into the bathroom and did whatever I

did, and then I hobbled back out and I laid down. Next morning I'd wake up then start moving around and I looked down at my foot and it's all bloody. And I'm starting to think: "Well, what in the world, how did that happen?" And then my memory kicks in, and it says: "Oh, I kicked that real hard last night, I stubbed my toe." But there's not so much pain in that. As you begin to put loving-kindness into a pain, and let go of the dissatisfaction, the endorphins in your body start flowing all through your body. The endorphins are about ten times more powerful than morphine. It takes that pain and you don't even feel it anymore. And this has happened, not a few times, this has happened a lot, my toes are real crooked because of it.

So when your awareness is up, and your mind is uplifted, those kinds of things will automatically start to happen more often. Your mindfulness starts to improve more as you have a happy mind. Remember the other day, I was telling you, in sutta number nineteen (MN19) the Buddha said: "What a person thinks and ponders on, that is the inclination of their mind." You think and ponder on dissatisfaction and having critical thoughts, your mind is naturally going to tend towards that. You start thinking more and more loving and kind thoughts and giving those thoughts to other people, then your mind is going to tend towards that all the time. Takes practice, but what else have we got to do? So, the more you practice smiling and having a light mind, the more your mind will tend to smile and be light. This is what this instruction of full awareness is all about. No matter what you're doing, stay with having that light mind and wishing yourself and other people well, and as you do that you will tend to have that happen more and more often, and that leads to happiness. But it also leads to a kind of awareness that's very much more alert when your mind gets pulled down. So if you stub your toe, you don't go to bed cursing, and waking up in the morning cursing because the pain didn't go away.

When I was practicing the Mahasi method when I was in Burma, they were encouraging us very much to eat very, very, very slowly, and watch each little movement as you had it occur. And sometimes it would take us an hour to finish; this is of constant movement, to finish a meal. I never was able to translate those kind of slow, meticulous actions into everyday living. I never did quite figure out: "Why are we doing that?" When I was doing a walking meditation, I was seeing five hundred, a thousand or more, little tiny movements as I was picking the heel up; and then I saw that, that many again as I was picking the toe up; and then I saw that many again as I was moving my foot forward; and I saw that many again as I was dropping it. It took me forty-five minutes to walk the length of the meditation hall, one time. But how does that translate into everyday life? "Well, you need to see the intention before every movement." It made me wonder - was that practicing full awareness? When I started getting back into the suttas, I started reflecting on those times when I was moving very slowly all the time, and I started thinking about the things that they were talking about, of watching all of these tiny movements of the body. But one thing they never told me to watch was what my mind was doing.

They wanted me to focus my attention on actions of the body and completely left mind alone. I don't think that's what the Buddha had intended when he was teaching the Satipatthāna Sutta. I think the Buddha had intended that he wants you to watch what mind is up to all the time no matter what your actions are. He wants you to see when craving arises; he wants you to see when clinging arises. How do these movements of mind's attention occur? That's how you start to begin to see what Dependent Origination is all about. Not by keeping your attention in an external way on a movement, but by keeping your attention on mind's movement, when it goes from one thing to another. Now, that doesn't mean that you don't pay attention to what you're doing while you're doing it, you can really hurt yourself if you don't, but you watch what mind is doing as much as you possibly can.

Now, with all of these jhanas that I was talking about last night, can you experience joy and happiness while you're walking from here to there, or while you're washing your body, or while you're washing your clothes, or while you're eating a meal? Can you see joy and happiness and stillness of mind while you're doing that? If your mindfulness is good, yes. Can you experience equanimity when you're walking to your car? That doesn't mean letting your mind go and think about this and think about that. It means seeing that there's this distraction, letting go of that, coming back into the present moment while you're walking. Can you do that? That's what this is all about. It's about teaching ourselves how to have this incredibly balanced mind that's very alert and that tends towards happiness. And this is not the kind of happiness that's giddy and you feel like laughing; it's a sense of relief because there's no suffering.

The jhanas can be experienced with whatever you're doing, but it takes strong mindfulness, it takes strong attention, and observation of how mind's movement arises. And when it gets distracted, that distraction is a hindrance. Letting go of the hindrance, letting go of the craving, smiling and coming back, keeping your mind uplifted and light - that's the meditation! Too many people have the idea that meditation is only about sitting like he's doing (Buddha statue), not moving. Well, I know chickens that can do that, and they can sit for hours on end, but is that a useful thing? The whole point of the meditation is to be able to take it out into your life and use it daily, be able to see how you cause your own pain by these attachments. Like when you stub your toe and curse it, and then you try to push the pain away so you can do something else, and the pain keeps coming back, and you keep disliking it - does that lead to the cessation of suffering? No. Why? Because there's still attachment there, there's still the "I believe this sensation is mine and I don't like it. I want it to be different than it is". Fighting with the truth, fighting with what is happening in the present moment. The Buddha was very much in favour of learning how to lovingly accept whatever arises and see that with balance. That's what the Satipatthāna Sutta is trying to teach.

Now, one of the things that the Buddha said in one of the discourses, and I don't remember which one it was right off, but he said basically there's three kinds of personality. The personality like Sariputta; his mind tended very much towards intellect; his mind was very bright, but he was not very sensitive to feeling. Then there was the mind like Moggallāna; he was an intelligent man, but his mind tended more towards feeling, and he was very sensitive to different kinds of feeling. And then there was the kind of person that was like the Buddha, that was a mixture of these two; he was very sensitive to feeling and also very intelligent. For people that are very sensitive to feeling, they have a tendency to get caught in lust and physical desires a lot. They have a tendency to indulge in that. So the Buddha came up with a meditation for that kind of personality type, and this is called the foulness meditation. This is the meditation of the body parts. And when I first became a monk, it was highly recommended that all of the monks practice this meditation for a period of time, so that they wouldn't have lust coming up in their minds so much.

MN: 10. "Again, monks, a monk reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, contents of the stomach,

BV: And this is where it gets real good. This always made my mind completely balanced when I got to this part.

MN: feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.'

MN 10.10 Just as though there were a bag with an opening at both ends full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good eyes were to open it and review it thus: "This is hill rice, this is red rice, these are beans, these are peas, this is millet, this is white rice; so to, a bhikkhu reviews the same body... as full of many kinds of impurity thus: 'In this body there are head-hairs... and urine.'

BV: Everybody's body has it. Every time I got to the phlegm and bile and pus and blood and all of these kinds of things, my mind would lose any desire for any kind of physical gratification.

11. "In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Now, I had one retreat that there was an awful lot of people that were the kind of, they were lust temperament types of persons. So I said "Ok, I want you for

three days, I want you to look at every other person's body in the room, and I want you to see them turned inside out. And tell me what's beautiful about that". "Hey, you have some great intestines. What a liver! Oh that pus is really an interesting colour". See how it balances your mind though. Now, this meditation is not for everybody. A person that has a kind of an angry temperament, they can get into the foulness of the body so heavily that they have a tendency to commit suicide and things like that. So it's not for everyone.

But I practiced this particular meditation for six months. And what I wound up doing in my mind was visualizing a bowl, and you know how everybody's attached to hair? "Oh I have to go get my hair fixed, and it's .. I need to cut my hair, colour my hair, and it's so beautiful." Well, take a bowl of hair and sit it in front of you: it smells bad. How do you feel when you have a few hairs in your soup? You see it really isn't such a beautiful thing. And the longer that it would sit in the bowl, the worse it starts to smell. Now, I was visualizing these things, but I also am a realist enough to know that: "Yeah, this is real." And when you put every organ that this is talking about into a bowl, and contemplate: "What is beautiful about that?" It's just this thing, you start losing your attachments.

Right after I did that I'd had the opportunity to go visit, in Bangkok, the big hospital there that was across the river. I can't remember the name of it, huge hospital. But they let monks go in to see the autopsies, which is incredibly interesting. And I went in and there's a man, early in the morning, walking down the street, minding his own business, the car jumped over the curb, hit him and killed him immediately. And here he is, sitting on the table, and his broken bones, and then they cut him open and took out the heart, and they weighed the heart, and the liver and all of these different organs. And then they cut around like this, and they took the skin, and they put it over his face, and they took a hand saw, cut the skull, pulled the brain out, measured the brain, thought he might have had some kind of brain problem, so they started slicing it. Now, just that morning he was a live human being, and now what is that? Where is the being in that? "Am I here? Am I the brain? Am I the heart? Where am I? I am not there. There is no 'I' in this." And that's a big realization. And it does keep your mind very much in balanced. And it was quite interesting.

There was, I think there was four or five people that had died, and one lady, she had... she died of a stroke. So when they took her brain out you could see there was a big bloody spot. So they cut through it and then they found that she had a tumour. But the whole time I was sitting there, after I had gone through this mentally, now I'm seeing it actually as it is, and I'm thinking: "Well, what's so special about this? This is not much, not much of anything. It's certainly not me, not mine." There's a kind of balance that is very real when you do this kind of meditation, but you have to do it with a teacher. Ok, you can have a tendency to get very morbid. So I know how to teach this because I've practiced it enough, but I don't teach it to too many people, only for people that are really having

problems with lust. And it might take two or three retreats before I'll even suggest it; I want to see what people will do.

Now, loving-kindness meditation is not for every type of personality. If your mind tends more towards intellect, and is not very sensitive to feeling, it's better to do the mindfulness of breathing meditation. Mindfulness of breathing meditation is for every type of personality type. But I started teaching loving-kindness meditation in Malaysia because in Malaysia the Chinese speak English. That's one of the reasons I like going there because I could actually talk to them and teach them, but they're a third of the population of Malaysia. A third of the population is Indian, a third of the population is Malay. Malay run the government, and they're continually pushing down the Chinese. Chinese are very ambitious, hard working people, and the Malay are not so much, so they're always putting roadblocks in the way and stopping the Chinese from gaining too much. They don't want them to gain too much influence in the country. And the Chinese were walking around being angry.

So when I started teaching meditation there, I didn't think that there's a lot of people that were practicing mindfulness of breathing, but I didn't think that was an appropriate meditation for these people at that time. So I said: "I'm going to teach you loving-kindness meditation." And as you know, I teach loving-kindness in a little bit different way than most people teach it. And they really took to it. And there were major personality changes that started to happen for these folks. After doing a one-week retreat they would go back to work, and then people at work would start noticing that they didn't get angry so easily, and they were more smiling, and they were happier, more uplifted. So that was one of the ways I had the opportunity to help the Malay Chinese so that they didn't become... walk around being angry all the time. They learned how to have balance in their life, and that's what the meditation is for, teaching balance. Just like this meditation.

There is another meditation that the foundations of mindfulness talks about, and it's actually nine different kinds of meditation, and this is called the cemetery meditation. And that's a real hard meditation to do now because it takes a charnel ground. A charnel ground is where they take dead bodies and they let them sit until, well in India at the time of the Buddha, they let them sit there until the family would come and bury them if they didn't have enough money to be cremated and that sort of thing. So you would go to these charnel grounds and there would be all kinds of different bodies in different degrees of decay. And the Buddha recommended that if you have a lust kind of personality or you're very much attached to things, to go and stare at a body that's decaying. It's real sobering. I did get a chance to do that one time with a human body. I've done it with animals. But it's really quite something.

You get to see again how repulsive the body is, but you also get to see that it's... "I'm not there. It's not me. It's not mine. It's just a body." When you start losing

your attachment to your body, you start losing attachment to mental states too. And with that comes more and more balance with your practice. Now, an interesting thing is, in this particular sutta, it talks about the elements. And it talks about the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the air element; it just talks about the four elements. And when you go to sutta number sixty-two (MN62), it talks about the elements also. And it's kind of surprising the difference of the elements, because it's just talking about earth, air, water and fire, but here in this particular sutta, it describes what each one of these great elements are. And it says...

MN 62.8: ... whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to, that is, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to: this is called the internal earth element.

BV: And then when you're talking about the water element...

MN 62.9: ... Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to, that is, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to: this is called the internal water element.

12. "Again, monk, a bhikkhu reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, by way of the elements thus: 'In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and their element.' Just as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at the crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a bhikkhu reviews this same body... by way of elements thus: 'In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.'

BV: Now, the elements, you can say the earth element is hardness and solidity; the fire element is hot and cold; the air element is vibration; and the water element is called cohesion. Now, it's a real interesting phenomena, and I want you all to try this sometime during the retreat. Stick your hand in a bucket of water and tell me what water feels like. What does water feel like? You'll feel hot and cold, that's the heat element. I want to know what the water element feels like. That'll be a fun one for you because you can't feel it. Oh, and I'm hearing some people are saying: "Oh yes I can, I know what water feels like." Oh, you're feeling hot and cold, but you don't feel water. It's one of the darndest things. And this is something that you touch every day, but you never think about.

13. "In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not

clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

14. "Again monk, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a bhikkhu compares the same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'

15. :In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

16. "Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'

17. "... That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

So the charnel ground contemplation, because you can't really do that with a human body, I think we'll let that go as far as explaining it. But when you... in Thailand there were some people that were very highly religious, and they knew that they were going to die, they would go to a monk and say to the monk: "What I would like you to do is take my body and preserve it, so other people can come around and see what a dead body is like." And then there would be monks that would come around and they would sit there and quite often fear arises, at first, when you realize that the dead body... I mean that's what this is going to be in a little while, and we always hold on to it, we always cling to it. But once you let go of your attachment and just start looking at a body as what it is, it's just a body, it's just some elements that are all mixed up together, your mind can have a very freeing, opening, experience. And you can develop your jhanas with that. But it's continually relaxing into what you're looking at. Letting go of the clinging, letting go of all of the different mental states looking at a dead body can bring up, and all of the feelings that can arise; letting them be, letting them go, and seeing it for what it really is.

18-24. "Again, As though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews... a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews... disconnected bones scattered in all directions - here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip bone, there a back-bone, here a rib-bone, there a breast-bone, here an arm-bone, there a shoulder-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone,

here a tooth, there the skull - a bhikkhu compares this body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'

25. "... That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

26-30. "Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones bleached white, the colour of shells... bones heaped up... bones more than a year old, rotted and crumbled to dust, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: 'This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.'

31. "In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of vanishing. Or else mindfulness that 'there is a body' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

Now, we get into contemplation of the feeling.

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

BV: What is a worldly pleasant feeling?

S: Hot chocolate?

BV: Hot chocolate (Laughs)! Chocolate of any kind. eh?

S: Joy?

BV: Yes, that's true. Joy is a very pleasant worldly feeling, but what makes it worldly?

S: "I want more."

BV: I want more. Yes. It's the identification with that feeling: "I am that." Ok, and...

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

BV: What is an unworldly pleasant feeling?

S: Joy from experienced in a Jhana?

BV: Still joy, but there's not the identification with it.

BV: That's what makes it unworldly. See, this is a very subtle way of talking about the difference between a person who has mental development and a person who doesn't have any mental development. A person who doesn't have any mental development, when joy arises, they really indulge in it and try to hold onto it and make it last for as long as they can. And they take it as theirs. A person who has mental development sees it for what it is. It is a pleasant feeling, let it be, relax, come back to your object of meditation.

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

BV: Basically, it's the same thing as a pleasant feeling. Yeah, the chocolate is all gone. Oh, dukkha, dukkha! Ha Ha!

One of the things that happens in the suttas, that people don't really realize, because they talk a lot about pleasant feeling and attachment to pleasant feeling. The suttas don't really talk much about painful feeling because it's supposed to be understood. But painful feeling and pleasant feeling are the same coin just different sides. The craving is like that: "I like it. I don't like it." It's still craving. But one of them is a pleasurable thing and one of them is a painful thing.

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

BV: What is that? When a painful feeling arises, you see it as painful, allow it to be there, relax into that, and come back to your object of meditation.

S: It's impersonal.

BV: It's impersonal, that's it. That's it exactly. Both the pleasant worldly feeling or unpleasant worldly feeling, they are still feeling, but when it's unpleasant we always try to control it in one way, and when it's pleasant we try to control it in another. But there's still the belief that: "I am that. I have control over a feeling."

BV: And that's where the decision that I was talking about last night, the decision of whether you take this personally or impersonally. And that's the thing that makes Dependent Origination such an amazing process to watch because you

see; because this arises, that arises; and because that arises, this arises. When feeling arises, craving arises; because of craving, clinging arises; because of clinging your habitual tendencies arise. There's no personal thing in that, it's just part of an impersonal process, and it always works in the same way. It always... it has contact, it has feeling, craving, clinging, habitual tendency. But, when you make the decision to let go of the craving, then the clinging, the habitual tendency, and the rest of Dependent Origination doesn't arise. Now, you have that pure mind, now you have that clear mind, and you always bring that clear mind back to your object of meditation. That is how you develop your wisdom. That is what wisdom is all about.

I got on a web site last year I think it was, and it was with a bunch of people that were studying Abhidhamma, and they were throwing the word "wisdom" around left and right, and how you have to develop your wisdom, and I finally said: "Well, what in the world are you talking about? What's your definition of wisdom?" And one person actually wrote me back and said: "Well, wisdom is wisdom." Oh, that makes a lot of sense. Yeah, now I understand.

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

33. "In this way he abides contemplating feelings as feelings internally, or he abides contemplating feelings as feelings externally, or he abides contemplating feelings as feelings both internally or externally. Or else he abides contemplating in feelings their nature of arising, or he contemplates in feelings their nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in feelings their nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that 'there is feeling' is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings.

I've been talking for a long time again. Ok, let's share some merit then.

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

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

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

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

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

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