

MN19 Two Kinds of Thoughts - Dvedhāvitakka Sutta

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 18th February 2007
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BV: This particular sutta, if you've listened to some of the talks on the website, you've probably heard it before. This is called the 'Two Kinds of Thought'. And this is a kind of an important sutta because it brings up a lot of very interesting points, not only having to do with your meditation, but also having to live your life.

A while back we developed a kind of systematic way of practicing the meditation. And we call it the 6Rs because each one of these starts with an 'R' word. We **Recognize** when mind has gone away from the object of meditation. We **Release** that distraction. In other words, we let it be there by itself, but we don't give it any more attention. We **Relax** the tension and tightness caused in our head and in our mind. We **Re-smile**. Now, you've heard me talk a lot yesterday and during the interviews about smiling, and I want you to be serious about that; I want you to smile a lot. It improves your mindfulness so much that it's unbelievable. It's a very good tool. After Re-smiling then you **Return** to your object of meditation and you **Repeat** - staying with your object of meditation and repeat the whole thing over again when mind gets distracted.

Each part of the 6Rs is run by mindfulness. Now, what's the definition of mindfulness? I need a definition for mindfulness; what is it? It's remembering to watch how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. That's what mindfulness actually is. It doesn't have anything to do with concentration or staying on one thing in the present moment. It is just about observing how mind's attention is moving from one thing to another, in the present moment. So, with each of these 6Rs, Recognizing takes remembering to watch. Releasing means remembering to let go. See how remembering is mixed up in

all of this. It's remembering to relax; it's remembering to smile; coming back to your object of meditation. All of these different Rs has mindfulness in them. It's like mindfulness is the gas for the vehicle to work. And if you don't have this gas then you kind of wind up floundering in your meditation, not quite knowing exactly what to do. But practicing the 6Rs is the way to remember how to do the meditation, how to do it exactly, how to do it precisely.

Now, when something arises, and it pulls your attention from one thing to another, it always happens in the same way. Your mind is on your object of meditation, and you lose your mindfulness. You lose the observation of staying with your object of meditation at that time. It gets weak for whatever reason, it's just distracted. Now, your mind goes from your object of meditation to the distraction.

Distraction: any one of the six sense doors. Doesn't matter what it is. It just pulls your attention away. Now, the question that we need to answer is: how did that happen? Why it happened – we don't care. How did this process work? The Buddha taught us precisely and exactly how mind's attention goes from one thing to another. And I'm not going to go through the entire dependent origination tonight, but there is a feeling that arises at one of the sense doors. Now, feeling isn't about emotion necessarily. Feelings are pleasant, or painful, or neither painful nor pleasant. That's what feelings are. Right after feeling arises, craving arises. Craving is the: "I like it, I don't like it" mind. Craving always manifests as a slight tightness or tension in your mind and in your body. Right after the craving arises, then the clinging arises. What's clinging? Give it a try.

Ok, it's "I am that feeling, I am these thoughts." That's what attachment always is. And when you hear about greed, hatred, and delusion, delusion is always taking the greed into the lust, and the hatred as being mine personally: "This is me, this is who I am." So, both of those have the same definition. I get real big on definitions whenever I give a talk because there's a lot of words that we're supposed to understand, but we don't always have a clear idea; like the word 'mindfulness'. It's talked about a whole lot, but I've read countless numbers of books that say this is what mindfulness is and they go off on some story and they never tell you what it is. So,

that's why I gave you that definition: it's remembering to observe how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. With that definition, all the other descriptions can start to make sense. So, that's why I do that with definitions.

Clinging is all of the stories, all of the concepts, all of your opinions, all of your ideas about why you like or dislike the feeling that arises, and this is where the real strong reinforcement of: "I am that" comes from. It starts with the craving, but it gets built up real strong once there's thoughts about the stories, the opinions, the ideas. After clinging arises then there is your habitual tendencies. Now, in a lot of different teachers will give different definitions for the Pāli word 'bhava'. Some of them will give a definition of experience, being, existence, things like that. I had a real deep talk with my teacher, who was an abhidhamma scholar for many years; a couple years ago he just passed away, U Silananda, he was a Burmese scholar. And we had a long discussion about the word: 'bhava' and he was giving me all of these abhidhamma quotes about bhava, and I asked him if we could say that it is the 'habitual tendency'. And he stopped for a little while, and he said: "Actually, that's a good definition". So, that's the one I'm going to go with. And your habitual tendency is: "Whenever this feeling arises, I always act that way." When this feeling arises, the craving is there, the concepts, the opinions, the ideas about it, always make this set of thoughts come up, or this set of feelings, or this desire to control the situation.

Now, when we start talking about the psycho-physical process of mind and body: we have a physical body; we have feeling - that's pleasant, unpleasant, neutral; there is perception, perception is a part of the mind that looks at this and says: "This is a glass" - that's that part of the mind that names things; we have thoughts; and we have consciousness. Now, what happens to us all the time is a feeling arises - it doesn't matter whether it's pleasant or unpleasant, but most often when it's unpleasant - that's when the thoughts really come up strong and want to control the feeling. But feelings are one thing and thoughts are something else. You can't control the feelings with the thoughts. Every time you try to control the feeling with the thought, you get caught in your habitual tendency of thinking: "I am

that feeling. I want it to be the way I want it to be when I want it that way”, and “I really suffer a lot, because I’m indulging in these desires to control the feeling”. So, the more we can recognize that feelings are one thing and thoughts are something else, then we can let go of the thoughts about it, and see the feeling for what it is, and allow the feeling to be without trying to control it, without trying to make it any different than it is. When a feeling arises, did you ask it to come up? Did you say: “Well, you know, I haven’t been sad for a long time; I haven’t been worried for a long time; I haven’t been upset for a long time; it’s time to have that feeling come up”? Nobody’s going to do that. It comes up because the conditions are right for it to arise. Whatever arises in the present moment dictates what happens in the future. If you resist the present moment, if you fight with the present moment, if you try to control the present moment in any way, you can look forward to a lot of suffering and pain.

Now, this is where we have our choice. This is a volitional choice that we can make right at that moment. When this painful feeling comes up, and we let go of the thoughts about it, and we can allow the feeling to be or we can fight with it, and it’s always our personal choice. When we allow the feeling to be, what are we doing at that moment? We’re letting go of the identification with that feeling. The feeling is just the feeling. I didn’t ask it to come up, it’s up by itself. It’s all right for it to be there; it has to be all right because that’s the truth, that’s the Dhamma. Now, you can notice as you allow that feeling to be that there’s some tension and tightness kind of wrapped around that feeling, and that tension and tightness is the craving. Now, let’s take a look at the Four Noble Truths. We have suffering; yeah we have it, that’s for sure. There’s a cause of suffering. What’s the cause of suffering? Craving, and craving always manifests as this tension and tightness; remember that, this is an important thing. Then you have the cessation of suffering. How do you have the cessation of suffering? By letting go of the craving, by letting go of that tension caused in your mind and in your body, letting it be. And you do this by following the Eightfold Path. So, we have a choice: whenever a feeling arises, we can take that feeling personally and

wrestle with it, and fight with it, and try to control it, and dislike it or indulge in it, or not. That's our choice.

As you become more familiar with the 6Rs: Recognize, Release, Relax – see, that's letting go of that craving - Re-smile, Return, Repeat. As you become more familiar with that process, you start to see more and more clearly how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. As you become more familiar with how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, you start recognizing it more quickly, you start letting it go more easily. In other words, you're letting go of the hindrance when it arises. So, it doesn't catch you for as long. That's how you purify your mind. Every time you let go of craving, every time you relax that craving, your mind is pure at that time. There's no thoughts in your mind, there's only this real, real, pure, alertness, and a peaceful calm feeling, and you want to bring that mind back to your object of meditation. That's the mind that's free from the craving. That's how you purify your mind.

Now, old habitual habits are going to stick around for a period of time. How long have you been practicing this habit of this being this way? It's not going to take that long to let it go and change that habit, but it's going to take a while. As you start to learn how you cause yourself pain and suffering, as you start to see how you not only cause yourself pain and suffering, but you cause pain and suffering to other people around you, then you start going: "Oh, I don't want to do that. Let's let that go." Now, with the instructions last night, I told you I want you to smile and I want you to laugh. "Oh gee, this is a spiritual path, we're not supposed to laugh." But the thing is, the fastest way to change your perspective, the fastest way to let go of the "I am that", is to laugh with your mind at how crazy it is for being attached. And as soon as you do that, you're no longer attached. That attachment that you had of: "I am that" changes very, very quickly from: "I am that" to "It's only that"; "I'm mad"... "Oh, it's only anger. I don't need to get angry at anything." It's easy to let go of when you have that change in perspective.

That is the first part of the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path, they call it right view, they call it right understanding; I have another

definition of "sammā" which to me is a little bit softer, and I call it "harmonious". When you think of "right" then the opposite always comes up in your mind whether you really like to think about it or not, and there's "wrong". So, everything is black and white. But when you use the word "harmonious", that takes it out of that realm and makes it a little bit more fluid. So, I kind of prefer "harmonious perspective" instead of "right understanding" or "right view". When you have harmonious perspective, you have the perspective that everything is impersonal, and there's happiness; there's a collectedness; there's a kind of contentment with that kind of view whenever you can remember to do this.

Some years back I was teaching loving kindness meditation, but at the time I was practicing mindfulness of breathing - because I've done both meditations for a long period of time - and one of my students walked up to me and they said: "You're not smiling when you sit." And I really let people know: "I want you to smile all the time. Sit with a smile on your face." Well, I wasn't practicing loving kindness, so I didn't even consider that I should smile, and as soon as they said that, I went: "Yeah, that's right, doesn't matter which meditation it is. If you're going to practice the 6Rs, you got to practice them all the way, so you got to smile." And then I started watching very closely what happened when there was a smile on your lips and a smile in your heart. Your awareness is so much uplifted; your agility of mind and your mindfulness is so much sharper. It's easier to recognize when your mind is starting to go away, so you can catch it more quickly and let go more easily. So, I started saying: "Ok, we'll try that one and see how it goes". And I really became impressed with the speed of the progress in the meditation whenever you add a smile with your practice. It really works.

And you add your sense of humour to that, and what does that do? When you have a sense of humour about how crazy your mind can be, you're not crazy anymore, you're in the present moment. And you haven't got that identification with this feeling that can seem overwhelming because it's so big and makes you feel so bad, but when you laugh with that, all of a sudden you see this huge

mountain that's completely overwhelming is nothing but this little bump. The only reason it turned into the huge mountain was because of your perspective. And when you laugh with this it changes your perspective, and all of a sudden your mindfulness picks up, your alertness picks up, and you start to see more clearly how mind becomes serious about things. And when it becomes serious, that means there's an attachment there. There's the "I am that" that is caught up in that.

Ok, here is: 'The Two Kinds of Thought'.

MN:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the monks thus: " monks."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. " Monks, before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, it occurred to me: 'Suppose that I divide my thoughts into two classes.' Then I set on one side thoughts of sensual desire, thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of cruelty, and I set on the other side thoughts of renunciation, thoughts of non-ill will, and thoughts of non-cruelty.

BV: What are thoughts of non-ill will?

S: Loving-kindness.

BV: Hmm. What are thoughts of non-cruelty?

S: Compassion.

BV: She's already heard this talk probably twenty times. Give me a definition of compassion.

BV: It's accepting that another person has pain. Allowing them the space to have that pain. You can't take another's pain away from them; their pain is their pain. As you allow them the space to have their pain, you love them unconditionally. That's compassion.

I just went to a talk where somebody was giving a definition of compassion of taking their pain away a little bit, and that's the fastest way to make yourself sad. "Oh, you poor dear. I feel so sorry for you." Well, all I'm doing is making myself feel lousy, and I'm certainly not helping them out any. I used to go to the hospital a lot when I was in Asia. A lot of people had cancer and had different kinds of diseases where there was a lot of pain. Always before I went, when I was walking down the hall, I was preparing myself to walk into the room. And I did that by telling myself: "It doesn't matter what their pain is, it's ok for them to have that. I can be happy." And I would repeat that, as I was walking down the hallway, and I always walked in and I had smile on my face and: "Hey, how's it going?" And they would tell me things like - as soon as I walked into the room - it was like fresh air coming into the room because their pain is their pain, and it's ok. It has to be ok because that's the truth. And I was radiating loving kindness. So, that's my definition of compassion. There's probably a lot more to it than that, but that's the way I found it to be most useful.

MN:

3. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of sensual desire arose in me. I understood thus: This thought of sensual desire has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others' affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna.'

BV: When there's sensual desire or any of the hindrances that arise in your mind, they will cause pain in you and can cause pain in other people around you when you're not practicing your mindfulness. Now, the hindrances, as much as people don't like me saying this, are your best teachers. I mean head and shoulders higher than any other kind of teaching that you could possibly learn because the hindrances are showing you where your attachments are. They're your best friends. Every hindrance has: "I am that" attached to it, so there's a real strong identification with this hindrance or that one, and there's a lot of craving involved with it: "I like this and I want to keep this; I love this feeling when it comes up, and I indulge in it that way". Or when it comes up: "Oh, no I don't want that and I try to push it away, I try to control it". But it's always: "I am that." Now, when a hindrance arises, it is showing you exactly where your attachment is and how attached you are to that hindrance, to either the liking or the disliking it.

The whole part of being able to see how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, is a very important aspect of how the process of this mind and body actually works. The whole point of the meditation is to see this process as clearly as you possibly can. It always happens in the same way: there's contact with one of the sense doors, the feeling arises - pleasant, unpleasant, neutral - craving arises, clinging arises, habitual tendency is there. I won't go on to explain all of the dependent origination, but this is enough to give you the idea that you have to be able to see how that hindrance pulls your mind from your object of meditation - where you're peaceful, and calm, and smiling, and happy, and very much at ease - to being, sad, anxious, worried, depressed, fearful, whatever the catch of the day happens to be. How did that happen? That is the key question that we need to look at in Buddhism.

Over the years it seems that there's been a bigger stress on why does something happen. And when I was in Burma, one of my teachers, he used to kind of laugh because all of the Westerners, they were always worried about why. And he said: "It's a Western disease. It's analysing things. It's trying to figure out why something happens. Who needs that?" When we let go of the 'why' and start

looking at the 'how', we start seeing it more and more as part of an impersonal process, just to be observed rather than a personal process to try to control. So, it's a very necessary thing to have the hindrances arise. And they will always accommodate you when your mindfulness is a little bit weak, when it's not as sharp as it could be. And there's all kinds of reasons for your mindfulness wavering in one way or another, but we don't care about 'why', we just care about 'how'. So, the more we can start to observe: "How'd that happen? What happened first? What happened after that? What happened after that? What happened next?" As you're able to see the process, you start becoming more and more familiar with how this process works.

As you become more familiar with this, you start letting go as you start recognizing this process more and more easily, more and more quickly. You start letting go of some of your habitual tendencies; you start letting go of the thoughts about; you start letting go of the craving; you start letting the feeling be. And as you become more and more familiar with that, you do that faster and faster. When you treat a hindrance in this way, you're seeing it as an impersonal process. It doesn't have anything to fight with; it doesn't have anything to push back against because "I'm not there. I'm not trying to control it. I'm not trying to fight with it. I'm allowing this feeling to be there by itself, letting go of the thoughts and the cravings about that feeling." As you do that, that hindrance becomes weaker and weaker until finally it fades away.

When that happens there's a huge sense of relief. It's like somebody just took this big bag of rocks off of your shoulders and you didn't even know you were carrying it; feel really good. And then you feel joy. You feel really, really happy. And the joyful feeling, this kind of joyful feeling is different from other kinds of joyful feeling. This is called uplifting joy, and this joy you feel very light in your mind. You feel very light in your body, almost like you're floating. It's like you could take a walk out in the desert and almost not leave any footprints; that's how light you feel. Now, that will last for a period of time and then when that fades away, you'll feel more comfortable than you've ever felt before. You'll feel comfortable in your mind;

you'll feel very comfortable in your body. This is what the Buddha called "sukha", happiness. Your mind becomes very tranquil, very much at ease. You've let go of this hindrance that kept on pulling your mind's attention away. Now, your mind's attention just stays on the object of meditation by itself. It's no effort. This is what they call effortless effort. Your mind is very tranquil, it's very easy to notice when a thought starts to come up, and you can let it go very quickly, relax, and then come back.

What I've just described to you is the experience of the first jhāna. Now, the thing with the word "jhāna" is, it's gotten such a bad rap in so many different areas, that the understanding of the word "jhāna" isn't as clear as it could be. The word "jhāna" means a level of understanding, and you've gained that understanding by letting go of the hindrance. You've gained the understanding by seeing how this process worked, and how it was part of an impersonal process. So, there was the letting go of this attachment, and that leads to this stage of understanding, and there's a lot of insight into this. Your insight is the thing that helps you develop your wisdom. The definition of wisdom is seeing the process of dependent origination, always. Every time the word wisdom is used in the scriptures, in the texts, it's talking about dependent origination, bar none, always that.

Now, when say the sensual desire comes up, it's a pleasant feeling and your mind grabs onto that and says: "Hey, I like that. This is really something." And then there's that craving that says: "I like it. I want it. I want it to stay the same all the time." And then your thoughts and your opinions about why you like that feeling, and your habitual tendency. As you begin to become familiar with this, and it takes effort to see how this practice actually does work, and the effort is this: - and we'll go back to the Eightfold Path - noticing when an unwholesome state arises; letting go of that unwholesome state, and relaxing; bringing up a wholesome state, and smiling; and keeping that wholesome state going. So, sensual desire arises: "I like it. I want it to be this way. I want it never to change." But of course everything does change.

And it's real exciting and all of whatever the cause of the sensual desire is. But your mind grabs on to it and says: "This is really great." Now, why is this called a hindrance? Because you don't even know where you are any more. You don't know you have a body. You don't even know what your mind is doing. All you know is that you like it. And you're indulging in all of these thoughts. And you're identifying with all of these thoughts, and taking them personally. That's why it's a hindrance. So, this can cause affliction for yourself. It can cause a lot of pain to arise in yourself because you're taking it personally: "This is who I am." You can cause pain in other people because your desire to have that sensual pleasure, you can wind up stepping on other people's toes to get that pleasure. You can cause pain for other people. You can cause pain for both of you.

MN: {repeats}; it obstructs wisdom

BV: Now, remember the definition of wisdom is seeing dependent origination. You're not able to see how the process works because you're so involved in trying to obtain that sensual pleasure.

MN: {repeats} , causes difficulties

BV: I think that everybody can probably agree with that.

MN: {repeats} , and leads away from Nibbāna.'

BV: Anything that leads away from wisdom leads away from Nibbāna.

MN: When I considered: This leads to my own affliction,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This leads to others' affliction,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This leads to the affliction of both,' it subsided in me; when I considered: 'This obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna,' it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of sensual desire arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

BV: And the way you do that is always by practicing the 6Rs.

Translating is really a difficult thing because you're going from one language to another, and there's always different nuances in the way words are being used and that sort of thing. And when you hear in a translation what this just said: "I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it" - it gives the feeling, with this translation, of: you took it, you manhandled it, and you pushed it away, but that's not the real feeling of it. It's seeing it, allowing it to be, not getting involved with it, relaxing, smiling, come back to your object of meditation. That's how you develop your wisdom. So, we have to kind of be careful with all of our different translations.

I happened to be up in Seattle where they have some of the oldest texts they just found in Afghanistan, and it was 'Writings of a Monk' in his original language, whatever that happened to be, I don't remember the name of it. But I got invited to a translation party with the scholars to see what was being said, and it was a real good experience. And they were trying to be as clear and precise with the words as they could possibly be, and I really appreciated that. They came up with one definition of the word "perception" that I really didn't like what they were saying, and I suggested that they change the definition of perception into "naming" instead of what they used - I don't remember right off. But it was a real interesting experience to be there and see how truly interested they are in trying to be as precise as possible, and a couple of them weren't Buddhists, they didn't care. It was just an intellectual exercise. And this is where we have to be real careful with our translations because there has to be the practical aspect of the translation. If you're too literal, it can lead one direction; if you're not literal enough, it can lead in another direction. So, I suggested to some of them that it would be good if they started meditating, so that they could get clearer with the definitions that they were using.

And there was a Mahayana monk that was there, and he was real interested in the meditation. As a matter of fact, we stopped for about fifteen minutes and the nun wanted to talk to me about meditation the way I was teaching it. And the whole time that we'd

been in the room - she was like real nondescript - and I went out and I talked to her. She said that she practiced this form and that form of meditation and what did I think? And I said: "Well, I don't know, but I do it according to the original suttas as much as I possibly can. And we practice the 6Rs, and I explained the 6Rs to her. Now, this was just a fifteen-minute chit-chat that we had. She walked back into the room and you could have turned all of the lights off. I mean, she was glowing. She was so happy that she finally ran across something that seemed to make sense, and she promised me that she was going to try it, so we'll see.

Anyway, this goes through repeating the same thing again with thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of cruelty, and how they cause pain for others:

MN: 4-5. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of ill will arose in me...a thought of cruelty arose in me. I understood thus: This thought of cruelty has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others' affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna.' When I considered thus... it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of cruelty arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it.

BV: He 6 r'd it. Then, this is one of my favourite things in all of the texts. It says...

MN:

6. "Monks, whatever a monk frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of sensual desire, he has abandoned the thought of renunciation to cultivate the thought of sensual desire, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of sensual desire.

BV: Now, what's this talking about? Our old habitual tendencies - what do we think about? The more you think about something, the more your mind inclines to think about it; the more you indulge in thoughts of sensual desire, the more you're going to have thoughts of sensual desire; the more you think about having a pure mind and letting go of craving, the more your mind will tend towards doing that. What you think and ponder on, that's the inclination of your mind.

MN: If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of ill will... upon thoughts of cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of non-cruelty to cultivate the thought of cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of cruelty

I had a friend a few years ago, she was really an amazing person; she was a nurse, but she really, really, heavily indulged in worry and the 'what if?' - "What if this happens? What if that happens?" And she really indulged in it a lot. And the more she did it, the more she did it! And she was coming up - she really got into her imagination very heavily, about 'worry about this' and 'worry about that' - and she was an emotional wreck because that's what was happening. She was worrying about something that didn't have to do with what's happening right here, right now. "Well, what if this happens?" and "What if that happens?" and I kept on saying: "You know you really cause yourself an awful lot of pain. And what if it doesn't happen? Can we worry about that? What if there is no disaster? Oh, shucks! Let's worry about not having a disaster instead of having one!"

And finally I got to her and I started showing her that the more you think and ponder on these kind of problems, the more you tend to think about it. So, start developing a mind that has loving kindness in it. A mind that, as you think more and more kind and loving thoughts, your mind will tend towards that. You want to affect the world around you in a positive way? Change what you think about. What you think and ponder on, that's the inclination of your mind. If you spend time thinking and pondering on thoughts of sensual desire, you're going to have a lot of thoughts of sensual desire. You're going to start indulging in thoughts of ill will towards other

people, you're going to have a lot of thoughts of ill will. But it's not only towards other people. A lot of people, and I want to say a lot of people, they indulge in self-critical thinking.

Now, we get into the Eightfold Path again. And we have the one part of the Eightfold Path that says right speech. And I've always not liked that definition, so I change it, what the heck? And I call it: "harmonious communication." Now, when you have harmonious communication, that means communication with yourself as well as with everybody else around you. Who do you spend the most time with? Who are you most critical of? Who needs the most love? Who needs more understanding, more openness, more kindness? We need to practice it for ourselves before we can give it away.

If you don't have it, you can't give it. That's why this retreat is an important thing; I'm telling you I want you to practice loving kindness. Bring that feeling of loving kindness up, radiate that feeling, but make a wish for your own happiness for the first ten minutes of every sitting. And you do that, when you make the wish, you want to feel the wish. You make a wish - say your mind is very active - ok, you make a wish for a peaceful and calm mind. Now, feel what it's like to be peaceful and calm. Take that feeling, put it in your heart, surround yourself with it. Radiate that feeling to yourself. If you're being very judgmental on yourself, you're very cruel to yourself; then it's time to give yourself a lot of love and kindness.

If your mind is very scattered, then feel what it's like to have a mind that's very centred. See, that's the way you use the wish. You have to feel that wish before you can give it to anyone, including yourself. That takes it out of the realm of wishful thinking into the realm of reality. And the more you can practice sending loving and kind thoughts to your spiritual friends, the more you can give them that love and that kindness. You can't give something you don't have. Wish we could, but it doesn't work that way. So, we have to have that feeling before we can give that feeling away. And when we give it away, we're helping that other person, not just a little bit, and we're helping our self at the same time.

And then again, this is where the smile comes in because it's real easy to send that loving-kind feeling when you're smiling to your spiritual friend in your mind, in your eyes, with your mouth, in your heart. The more you can radiate that kind feeling - I don't care what you're doing, whether it's with chopping up vegetables, cleaning out the toilet, going to the bathroom, taking a shower, eating your food, walking from here to there, it doesn't matter what you're doing - use your mindfulness. Remember to observe what your mind is doing in the present moment, and to stay with your object of meditation as much as you can. That's one of the reasons I want you to smile because it helps remind you more easily. So, I'm a sneaky monk. I can't help it. I want you to be happy. I really want you to be happy! And I'm trying to suggest ways for you to practice so you can be. And as you become happier in yourself, everybody else around you starts to feel that happiness. I mean that's why you work here because you're around a wonderful person that has that. It's worth it being here. She has a very clear mind. You want some? She gives it away all the time.

See, one of the things about Buddhism that is not as clearly understood as it could be is that meditation is not just about sitting. There are three different aspects to meditation. The Buddha said the first part is practicing your generosity. That's part of meditation, to give your happy feelings away, give your smile away, get in the habit of giving as much as you possibly can. Now, there's three ways of giving. You give with your speech, you give with your physical actions, and you give with your mind. The more you can practice giving in that way the more you'll affect the world around you in a positive way.

The second part of the meditation is taking and keeping your precepts. Don't break your precepts. That leads to a mind that is more alert to what you're going to do before you do it. And then you make the conscious decision: "No, I don't want to do that, I don't want to say that because that can cause harm." And that leads to a very calm mind; that leads to a very accepting mind; that leads to a mind that is ready to do the sitting. What is the cause of the hindrances arising? Breaking the precepts. And we've all broken all of

the precepts from time immemorial, so they're going to come up at different times, depends on the conditions. How we handle the hindrances is very important. As we let go of the unharmonious communication with ourself, and develop the harmonious communication, we are able to give that harmony to the world around us. That's the way it works.

So, whatever a monk frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of mind. If you want to indulge in critical mind, if you want to indulge in angry mind: "That person is stupid even for thinking that or saying that!" Then you can look forward to that arising over and over again. You can look forward to having more and more anger and dissatisfaction and the need to quote "vent", which means: "Taking that anger and throwing it out at the universe because I don't want it inside anymore." But it doesn't get rid of the problem. If you don't want to live a life where you have to vent, then you have to start becoming more aware of how mind's attention moves, and you have to start becoming more aware of your frequently thought and pondered upon ideas, and thoughts, and your inclinations of mind. "Well, I've been acting this way for the last fifty years, I don't see a reason to stop." Does it lead to your happiness and the happiness of every one around you, or not? That's what dictates whether we should practice that or not. And if it doesn't, then it's time to change. "Oh, geez, change? You mean I have to change, I can't stay the same all the time?" Well, if you want to be happy, yeah.

Change from your old habits; develop new habits; change from having anger arise because somebody says or does something that you don't like, or worry, or anxiety, or frustration, whatever it happens to be - change. Start focusing on loving kindness; start focusing on an uplifted mind; smile more. That helps to overcome the problems. The Buddha was probably the greatest problem solver ever; except for when there was another Buddha before him - I can't say ever. And his solution was very simple, and it's so simple that when we run across the answer today, we go: "No! No, we can't do that! That's too easy!" But it is that simple. See, the trick is following

the directions that the Buddha gave as closely as you possibly can. That is the trick.

And the instructions - like the instructions of mindfulness of breathing - they're only four sentences. But if you don't follow these four sentences, they're not going to lead to the same end result. The first two sentences are about breathing in long and breathing out long, and short. And the key words for that are you understand what you're doing. You understand when you breathe in long and out long, when you breathe in short and out short. It doesn't say nostril tip; it doesn't say upper lip; it doesn't say abdomen; it doesn't say follow the breath all the way in and all the way out; it just says you understand that it's your breathing. Then it says you 'train'. Ok, now we're getting right down to the nitty gritty. You train by experiencing the entire body on the in-breath, and experience the entire body on the out-breath. It doesn't say 'breath-body'; it says 'body'. Breath-body is commentary; body is sutta. And then the last part of the instructions is very, very clear. You train thus: on the in-breath, relax; on the out-breath, relax. It says tranquilize your bodily formation on the in-breath, and tranquilize your bodily formation on the out-breath. You do that. You don't add anything, you don't subtract anything. You will get good results very quickly.

Don't follow what a commentary says if it doesn't tell you to do that exactly. There are commentaries that are quite good. There are commentaries that are very misleading. We have to be careful with that. Always check what a commentary says against the original teaching. And even some of the original teachings, there's problems.

It was roughly two hundred and thirty-five years after the Buddha died, there was an awful lot of brahmins that started taking on the robes, and they were giving their teaching and saying that it was the Buddha's teaching. So, they called a Buddhist council. And they were asking these monks detailed questions about what the Buddha taught, and if they couldn't answer about the Four Noble Truths, and dependent origination, and things like that, then they were disrobed. But they had influenced an awful lot of the teaching, and put in a lot of things that were actually kind of sexist about the nuns and

laywomen, and things like that, that are still in our text today. Now, there's rules for the nuns, they say if you're going to be a nun, then she have to follow these rules, and the first rule is: if a nun has been a nun for a hundred years, and somebody becomes a monk that very day, the nun has to bow to the monk. Let's not do that now. It all has to do with respect. It's learning how to live together.

The nuns and the monks, they have different quarters, they've sectioned off, and that's ok. But there's still interaction between the monks and the nuns where every new moon and full moon the monks are supposed to give Dhamma talks, but sometimes the nuns can come to the monks and give Dhamma talks. So, there's this and that - never by reading some of the rules - that never would actually come into being if we followed those rules without using our common sense and good judgment. One of the suttas, it says that women could never run a government. And how many women are there running governments now? Do you know? Well, that's a flat out falsehood because it's happening. That says that that was a Brahmin that wrote that because they were very much against women. They wanted the women to be in the house and be a slave. They couldn't go out of the house by themselves. There were all kinds of things like that during the time of the Buddha, and the Buddha was very big on letting go of those kinds of restrictions. That's why he allowed women to become bhikkhunis. He was saying that women can get the same attainment as men can, see? And that was so politically incorrect at that time that it was remarkable.

7. "Just as in the last month of the rainy season, in the autumn, when the crops thicken, a cowherd would guard his cows by constantly tapping and poking them on this side and that with a stick to check and curb them. Why is that? Because he sees that he could be flogged, imprisoned, fined, or blamed [if he let them stray into the crops]. So too I saw in unwholesome states danger, degradation, and defilement, and in wholesome states the blessing of renunciation, the aspect of cleansing.

8. "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of renunciation arose in me. I understood thus: 'this thought of

renunciation has arisen in me. This does not lead to my own affliction, or to others' affliction, or to the affliction of both; it aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties, and leads to Nibbāna. If I think and ponder upon this thought even for a night, even for a day, even for a night and day, I see nothing to fear from it. But with excessive thinking and pondering I might tire my body, and when the body is tired, the mind becomes disturbed, and when the mind is disturbed, it is far from collectedness.' So I steadied my mind internally, quieted it, brought it to stillness, and collected it. Why is that? So that my mind should not be disturbed.

BV: Now, I know that - I was in Asia for twelve years - I know that there's a big push for monks to only get four hours sleep a night, and I did that. I was at Mahasi Center for eight months, and I got there, we went to bed at eleven o'clock, we got up at three o'clock, started meditating. And then we it got to be rains retreat, and I'd been there for about five months, and the teacher said, one day - when I went in to the interview - "How much sleep you taking?" And I said: "Four hours." He said: "Why are you sleeping so much?" So I said: "Ok." So, I cut it in half for three months; lousy meditation. Took a lot of energy to stay awake that long, and I was eating huge quantities of food and losing weight because it took so much energy. Now, when I got done - it was when there was a lot of social unrest in Burma in 1988 - the government asked all of the foreign monks to leave the country. So, we had to leave or I would have kept going. But I got back into Thailand and I went to Malaysia, and I wound up sleeping huge quantities of time to catch up in the amount of sleep that I really needed.

MN: 9-10 "As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of non-ill will arose in me... a thought of non-cruelty arose in me. I understood thus: 'This thought of non-cruelty has arisen in me. This does not lead to my own affliction, or to others' affliction, or to the affliction of both; it aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties, and leads to Nibbāna. If I think and ponder upon this thought even for a

night, even for a day, even for a night and day, I see nothing to fear from it. But with excessive thinking and pondering I might tire my body, and when the body is tired, the mind becomes strained, and when the mind is strained, it is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind internally, quieted it, brought it to singleness, and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind should not be strained.

Now, with this retreat, I say: "Go to bed at ten o'clock, get up at five o'clock." That's seven hours sleep right there. I'm being fairly lenient. And then after lunch, I say: "Take another hour of sleep. So, you're going to get eight hours of sleep. Why? Because your meditation is better that way. The idea that you can force yourself to take less sleep... a lot of people, they can force that to happen for a long period of time - ten or fifteen years - and then they go crazy for a period of time. And then they go into the hospital and they give them all kinds of drugs, and they wind up sleeping like twenty hours a day until they catch up, and then they're fine, they're not crazy anymore. You have to take the right amount of sleep, don't over push it. Eight hours is fine, even for monks eight hours is fine. I have this one friend in Northern California that, he's been practicing going to bed at midnight and getting up at two o'clock for years and years and years. And he's oh, eighty-five now I think? And he does it! And he also takes naps. Takes a nap in the morning, takes a nap after lunch, takes a nap in the evening, but he only gets two hours sleep!

So, the whole point of this is learning to recognize when you have unwholesome states in your mind, not only while you're sitting, but while you're living. And what do you do with the unwholesome states when they arise? That's where your mindfulness has to be able to be clear enough to be able to recognize there's a hindrance there. There's sadness, there's worry, there's anxiety, there's fear, there's depression, there's frustration, there's anger. You have to be alert enough to see how that process works so you stop identifying with it. You stop getting caught by your habitual tendency. Somebody calls me on the phone and they ask me a dumb question and I yell at

them? And tell them they're stupid? No. That's just an old habit. That's just an old tendency that you're not being aware of, and you need to practice your 6Rs right then, right there. You're causing harm to yourself; you're causing harm to other people by showing anger, by giving that anger away. You're not creating a world that has peace in it. You're creating a world that has a lot of adversity in it. And we have to clean up our act here on this planet. And when we start, acting this way by seeing what we think and ponder on, that's the inclination of our mind, and we start recognizing it and letting it go, and relaxing, and changing what we think and ponder on, then we start affecting the world around us in a positive way. So, that's what this whole sutta is actually about, and this is telling us how we should use our mindfulness.

11. "Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of renunciation, he has abandoned the thought of sensual desire to cultivate the thought of renunciation, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of renunciation. If he frequently thinks and ponders upon thoughts of non-ill will... upon thoughts of non-cruelty, he has abandoned the thought of cruelty to cultivate the thought of non-cruelty, and then his mind inclines to thoughts of non-cruelty.

12. "Just as in the last month of the hot season, when all the crops have been brought inside the villages, a cowherd would guard his cows while staying at the root of a tree or out in the open, since he needs only to be mindful that the cows are there; so too, there was need for me only to be mindful that those states were there.

BV: As you continue developing, and thinking and pondering on wholesome things, then your mindfulness doesn't need to be as sharp. See, the whole thing with learning how to smile and learning how to laugh, is to keep that balance of mind. When your mind starts to get out of balance, your alertness - you can really see it very quickly - and come back into the balance when you practice the 6Rs. That's what the whole message that the Buddha is giving us.

And this sutta goes on and it describes about how you experience the jhānas. And I've already gone into that, how you get into the jhānas by letting go of the hindrances, and it's not just one time. Hindrances have a real habit of coming up over and over again. You got all kind of hindrances that'll arise. But every time they do as you see them, allow them to be, relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation. It gets weaker and weaker, and this is how you go through the jhānas. Now, I already described what happens when you do that the first time, letting go of the hindrance, then you have this relief, and joy, and happiness, tranquillity, steadiness of mind. Eventually, your mindfulness is going to waver, it's going to get weak, and when that happens, guess what? You get another friend to come visit. But now you're starting to understand how the process worked, so you don't get so caught up in the hindrance itself. You start to say: "Ok, we have this here, and this is how this is working, and I see that more and more clearly." So, you let go until finally it fades away and you'll go into the next jhāna.

The hindrances are the necessary part of your practice because they help you to purify your mind if you treat them in the right way. As you allow them to be and relax, and not get involved with them, you are purifying your mind, you're changing your old habitual tendencies from: "Every time this happens I always act that way." Well, now you say: "Every time this happens there's a new way to act." You don't have to get involved; you don't have to try to control the situation; you can give more space; you can allow things to be much more easily when you start letting go of the hindrances. And every time you let go of a hindrance, you go deeper into your practice. It's great stuff. Your understanding becomes so much more clear. See, we're all a bunch of slow learners. We really are. We have to see the same thing over and over and over and over and over again before we finally start to grasp: "Oh, this is what's happening." And that's where your mindfulness kicks in, remembering to observe how this happens.

I've been talking for a long time, ho hum, just like always. Anybody have any questions, comments, statements?

S: How do you use the breath when doing Anapanasati practice?

BV: Yes, it's like you know that you're breathing, and you know when the breath is long and when it's short, but you don't have to focus on it. And when you're doing the breathing meditation, you use the breath as the reminder to relax the tension and tightness. There's always tension and tightness in your head. See, a lot of people in this country, when you start talking about 'relax the body', they think your body is from your neck down, and actually it's from the top of your head down. And the tightness that happens is in the head.

When people come and practice with me, I generally encourage them not to read anything for a year. Just listen to the Dhamma talks because I'm reading the suttas to you, but I'm explaining what the suttas mean, and you'll start to recognize: "Oh, I've had that experience and it says that here." And after you do that for awhile, then you pick up the suttas and you understand the suttas very easily. So, continually referencing the body, even in the Kāyagatāsati Sutta, the first part of the instructions on the body is the breath. And those are exactly the same instructions: to relax on the in-breath and relax on the out-breath. It's, you notice your entire body, and the way you notice your entire body is if you see tension and tightness; you have a shoulder that's pulled up, or you have tightness in your back, or you have tension in your knees, or you have a cramp starting to come, whatever; and relax that, but also it's the relaxing of the tension and tightness in the head. That's the subtle tightness that almost everyone misses. But you don't necessarily really understand until you're doing the meditation.

And when you do the meditation then the suttas, they just start opening up in ways that you've never experienced before, and it gets to be really, really fun. So, my suggestion is: do the practice for awhile first - do a fairly long retreat if you have the time, so that you can really start understanding what mind is doing and how it works, and using the 6Rs with it, and that sort of thing, and then come back to the sutta. But in this particular book (MN), don't start with sutta number one. It's the longest, most complicated sutta in the entire

book. But the way I used to use the book was I would just open it up to a page and go: "Oh, this looks interesting, ok, let's see what it says about this." And I would just go kind of random: "Oh, this looks like it would be a fun sutta to read now." And you'd be surprised how the questions you had all of a sudden get answered because you just randomly: "Oh, let's try this one. Oh wow, I've been wondering that for a long time." And it really gets to be kind of fun.

But we have to be patient. Every time your mind gets pulled to that sensation, let go of the thoughts about it, relax, allow that sensation to be there by itself, relax, come back to your object of meditation. Eventually one of two things will happen. Either that sensation will go away or it won't. If it goes away then you just continue on with your practice. If it doesn't go away, your mind will have developed equanimity that's so strong that the sensation doesn't pull your attention to it anymore. So, the thing that I want to stress is, if you have that sensation arise every time you sit, and you sit in exactly the same way, change your posture a little bit. It doesn't mean you have to uncross your legs, or maybe you want to uncross one leg or both legs, or however you... but try changing your posture a little bit to see whether that sensation still comes up. If it does, and as soon as you get up from your meditation, you don't notice it anymore, that is a meditation pain and that's helping you to gain your balance. Otherwise, don't hurt your body from forcing that sensation to arise.

I learned that when I was in Burma. The teacher said... I kept on coming to him and he'd say: "Well, why don't you sit longer?" And I'm sitting three hours and he said: "Sit longer." And I sit longer, and I sit four hours and he said: "Sit longer." And before long, I was sitting seven or eight hours, and I was forcing it, and I was sitting with my legs very tight, and I developed blood clots in my legs. Why do I sit on a chair instead of sit on the floor and give a Dhamma talk? Because I have blood clots, my legs go to sleep. I don't recommend doing that. Sit in a way that is comfortable, and the circulation is good, and always when you get done with your sitting, you should walk, get your circulation moving. Don't hurt your body by doing this.

Another quick story: the whole time I was in Burma, and before - which was about fifteen years of practice before I went to Burma - they told me over and over again that the best meditation object you can have is pain. So, when I went there and I finally got so that I had real strong equanimity to the pain, I couldn't make the pain arise anymore. And I actually went to the teacher and complained because I didn't get any pain, and I was trying to sit in all kinds of ways that would definitely cause pain to arise, but it wouldn't come up!

S: I have a question, and seems very silly question, but ... when you talk about a short breath what do you mean?

BV: Well, it's short in regard to the depth of the breath when you take a real deep breath. You know, there's times that you can be breathing and it's very shallow, very fast and it's not particularly deep, and other times you take a real deep breath; it's just knowing when you take a long breath and short, that way. When the breath is coarse and when it's fine, when it's fast and when it's slow. It's noticing those kinds of things about the breath, that's what it's really talking about. Ok? Anything else? Is that all?

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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