

MN 46 The Greater Discourse on the Ways of Undertaking Things
Mahādhammasamādā Sutta
Dhamma Talk presented by Bhante Vimalaramsi
2-December-09
Anaheim Retreat I

ST: When you open your eyes you're happy, as soon as you close eyes only that goes away.

BV: No. No. You're only letting your mind play tricks with you.

Okay. Okay, the discourse tonight is called The Greater Discourse on Ways of Undertaking Things. Now, when people think about practicing meditation, they think it's just only about sitting. Meditation is much more than that.

There's three parts to meditation. The first part is practicing your Generosity. Now most people think that means money; donating money, donating food, that sort of thing. But, actually, the generosity that the Buddha was talking about with this is in your daily life. You give people kind speech. You do kind actions to help other people and you keep your mind focused on happy, uplifting thoughts. That's how you practice your generosity.

If you go into a grocery store and there's a little baby that's being kind of loud and crying and not happy, then start sending them loving and kind thoughts. Make them smile! They'll stop crying immediately, and you know how good that makes a mother feel? [laughs] So, when you practice your generosity you practice giving of yourself to other people. Okay?

It's real important, especially these days and in this country. Everybody is "I", "Me first". And, how difficult is it to say something that will make somebody else smile. When you get in that long line at the grocery store, how's that little person that's taking the money? They see the long line, they feel not happy about it. They're going as

fast as they can. Say something to make them smile. Let them know that it's okay, everything is fine!

That's how you practice your generosity. You give to other people what is needed in the present moment. Sometimes it is giving food to other people. Sometimes it is donating things to the monastery. But most of the time it's giving to people around you.

Do you want the world to be a happier place than it is? Then be happy! It's that simple! You give kind speech, you help people in whatever way you can. Not because you're gonna get something in return but because you want to help! And, you think very uplifted happy thoughts. That's what I was talking about last night with the sutta, The Simile of the Saw. It said it doesn't matter whether somebody is being honest or dishonest, or they're being kind or unkind. It doesn't matter! What matters is what you do with your own mind in the present moment. And, when you start radiating loving-kindness to other people they start appreciating that and they start having a mind that's more at ease.

{04:57}

Somebody sent me a YouTube, it was about two minutes. It was in a European train. A man walked in, sat down beside somebody. He was smiling the whole time. He came in looking around and then he started laughing a little bit. And, everybody was kind of looking at him like he's very peculiar. And, then he starts laughing more loudly. And, then he really starts laughing very hard and everybody around him started laughing. They didn't know why they were laughing but they felt good. He was affecting the world around him in a positive way. After he got everybody on the train laughing, then he got off the train and went on another train and did it to somebody else.
[laughs]

It's a real interesting thing. If you want to try an experiment, go to a shopping mall and walk around with a sour face and see how everybody else treats you. And, then stop, take a minute, start smiling. Look other people in the eye and smile. That's all. Start

radiating loving-kindness. I tried this on my own when I was a layman. I sat down at a place after walking around with a grumpy face and everybody was grumpy along with it. I sat down and I started smiling and I closed my eyes and I radiated happy feelings. And, after a few minutes I started feeling people staring at me. And, I opened my eyes and I looked around. There was twelve people standing right beside me, smiling! You want to affect the world in a positive way? Then take the responsibility to be happy! Not grumpy, not disliking, "Aww, this person, I hate them!" Why do you hate them? Because there's something in them that you see in yourself that you don't like. So, you start sending loving and kind thoughts to that person and before long they start changing.

I used to have somebody go out and buy me a bunch of mirrors; little mirrors like this. And, I had them write underneath with some fingernail polish, "Smile". And, I told them every time they get on the telephone, hold it up and smile. The reason you use the mirror is not because of vanity, it's to see whether you're smiling or not. And, when you stop smiling then you can start again. You want good telephone conversations? Smile! This is the first part of meditation. It doesn't have to do with just sitting passively. It has to do with life.

Now, the second part of the meditation is keeping your precepts. This is a universal law. All religions talk about keeping the precepts. I even looked it up in the Bible, in Matthew. The same precepts that the Buddha taught are exactly the same that's in that Bible. Pretty amazing! But, we can't just use that as some kind of, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I can do that when I come to the temple," or, "I can do that when I come to the church," or wherever you happen to be. This is an all-the-time practice. Now, it's a real interesting thing that the closer you keep your precepts the calmer your mind becomes. You don't have hindrances arise so often.

{09:47}

There was a lady in Malaysia, she came...she'd spent her whole life keeping the precepts. She wouldn't even consider breaking one precept. She helped other people and then she came to me and said,

"I want to learn how to meditate." I said, "Fine. I'm going to give a retreat next weekend. Come for that." So, I gave her the instructions in meditation and after lunch I looked her up and I said, "How's your meditation going?" And, she said, "Well, I can only sit for 45 minutes." And, I said, "Only? Okay. Why don't you sit longer?" She said, "You know, I'm not used to sitting on the floor and my knees are just causing so much pain! That's as long as I can stand!" So, I told her, "There's no magic in the floor. If you want to sit in a chair then sit in a chair." Her next sitting was four hours. She got into the first jhāna. Now, this is the first time she'd ever tried to meditate! Why was she so good at that? Because, she kept her precepts very closely.

If you break a precept you can look forward to having hindrances arise in your meditation. In this country it's not taken very seriously at all. You go to a retreat, they give you the precepts in Pali so nobody really understands what they are. You notice that when we take the precepts we do it in English so you have some understanding of what they are. And, they just do it one time. Now, there's places that they give retreats for three months and about fifty percent of the people that take the retreat don't understand what they're doing or how to do the meditation. This is after three months! Half of the people don't understand! Why? They're letting their mind play around. They're getting involved with their hindrances. They might have a hindrance that'll last for two or three weeks because they don't understand what the hindrances are.

The closer you can keep your precepts the easier life becomes. It turns into a protection. In the suttas it says anybody that really keeps their precepts will not ever die a violent death. You'll die of natural causes. You won't fall off a cliff, you won't get into an accident and be killed because it's a protection. So, It's real important that you understand that the meditation is not just sitting like one of these Buddha images. That's only a small part of it.

- It's real important that you don't kill on purpose.

- You don't take anything that's not given.

- You don't have wrong sexual activity; that's sexual activity with somebody that's too young, still under the care of the family, or with another person's mate. You don't do that.

- You don't tell lies, even little white lies. You don't curse. You don't use foul language. You don't use speech that causes people to divide themselves. You use the kind of speech that pulls people together. And, you don't gossip. What's gossip? Making up stories that aren't true. Now, you have a friend that you go see and they ask about one of your friends. You tell them the truth as best as you know and let it go at that. You don't start making up stories.

- And you don't take drugs or alcohol. If you take drugs or alcohol, your likelihood of breaking the other precepts is very high and when you take alcohol or drugs just to "take the edge off," just so I can relax, it dulls your mind a lot! And, you'll notice that when you try to sit in meditation you go to sleep pretty easily. Why is that? Because, you've been practicing dulling your mind.

{15:40}

So, it's real important to keep these precepts without breaking them. And, if you, by chance, forget and make a mistake and break one of the precepts, this is not time for you to feel guilty. It's time for you to take the precepts again, forgive yourself for making a mistake, and make the determination, "I'm not gonna do that again!" This is a part of training. There's nothing in Buddhism that has to do with guilt. There is a path that you're walking on. Sometimes, you might slip off. Well, if you slip off, recognize that you made a mistake, forgive yourself, get back on the path, and start again! That's the real way! That leads to a happy life.

One of the things of taking and keeping the precepts that's real interesting is, when people break precepts and an emergency happens...somebody has an accident or there's a fire...what they do is they run around and they don't know what to do. For instance, I lived in Hawaii for a while while I was a layman. I worked at a

restaurant. The smoking was pretty regular there. Somebody took an ashtray, didn't see that there was still a live cigarette in it, put it in with a bunch of paper. I'm all the way across the room helping somebody and all of a sudden there's this big billow of smoke and everybody standing right beside it started running around saying, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" And, I looked and I said, "Yeah, it looks like a fire." So, I very calmly walked over and I got a pitcher of water and put the fire out. Why did that happen like that? Those people that didn't follow their precepts at all, they didn't know what to do in a situation that called for a specific action. I knew what to do. I followed the precepts. It only makes sense, doesn't it? It is a kind of protection. Now, this Greater Discourse on the Ways of Undertaking Things.

{18:30}

MN 46: Mahādhammasamādā Sutta

The Greater Discourse on Ways of Undertaking Things

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvathī 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, for the most part beings have this wish, desire, and longing: 'If only unwished for things, undesired, disagreeable things would diminish and wished for, desired, and agreeable things would increase!'

BV: Sounds right, doesn't it? Everybody has that wish.

MN 46:

Yet although beings have this wish, desire, and longing, unwished for, undesired, disagreeable things increase for them and wished for, desired, agreeable things diminish.

BV: Why is that?

MN 46:

Now, monks, what do you think is the reason for that?"

"Venerable sir, our teaching is rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, have the Blessed One as their resort. It would be good if the Blessed One would explain the meaning of these words. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it."

"Then listen, monks, and attend closely to what I shall say."

"Yes, venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

3. "Here, monks, an untaught ordinary person who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, does not know what things should be cultivated and what things should not be cultivated, he does not know what things should be followed and what things should not be followed. Not knowing this, he cultivates the things that should not be cultivated and does not cultivate the things that should be cultivated, he follows things that should not be followed and does not follow things that should be followed. It is because he does this that unwished for, undesired, disagreeable things increase for him and wished for, desired, agreeable things diminish. Why is that? That is what happens to one who does not see and understand.

4, "A well-taught noble disciple who has regards for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, knows what things should be cultivated and what things should not be cultivated, he knows what things should be followed and what things should not be followed. Knowing this, he cultivates things that should be cultivated and does not cultivate things that should not be cultivated, he follows things that should be followed and does not follow things that should not be followed. It is because he does this that unwished for, undesired, disagreeable things diminish for him

{22:13}

BV: They become less.

MN 46:

...and wished for, desired, agreeable things increase. Why is that? That is what happens to one who sees and understands.

5. "Monks, there are four ways of undertaking things. What are the four? There is a way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pain. There is a way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain. There is a way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure. There is a way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure.

THE IGNORANT PERSON

6. "Now, monks, one who is ignorant, not knowing this way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pain, does not understand as it actually is thus: 'This way of undertaking things is painful now and ripens in the future as pain.' Not knowing it, not understanding it as it actually is, the ignorant one cultivates it and does not avoid it; because he does so, unwished for, undesired, disagreeable things increase for him and wished for, desired, agreeable things diminish. Why is that? That is what happens when one does not see.

7. "Now, monks, one who is ignorant, not knowing this way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain, does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'This way of undertaking things is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain.' Not knowing it, not understanding it as it actually is, the ignorant one cultivates it and does not avoid it; because he does so, unwished for things increase for him and wished for things diminish. Why is that? That is what happens to one who does not see.

{25:04}

8. "Now, monks, one who is ignorant, not knowing this way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure, does not understand as it actually is thus:

'This way of undertaking things is painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure.' Not knowing it, not understanding it as it actually is, the ignorant one does not cultivate it but avoids it; because he does so, unwished for things increase for him and wished for things diminish. Why is that? That is what happens to one who does not see.

9. "Now, monks, one who is ignorant, not knowing the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasant, does not understand it as it actually is thus:

'This way of undertaking things is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure.' Not knowing it, not understanding it as it actually is, the ignorant one does not cultivate it but avoids it; because he does so, unwished for things increase for him and wished for things diminish. Why is that? That is what happens to one who does not see.

THE WISE PERSON

10. "Now, monks, one who is wise, knowing this way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pain, understands it as it actually is thus: 'This way of undertaking things is painful now and ripens in the future as pain. Knowing it, understanding it as it actually is, the wise one does not cultivate it but avoids it; as he does so, unwished for, undesired, disagreeable things diminish for him and wished for, desired, agreeable things increase. Why is that? That is what happens to one who sees.

11. "Now, monks, one who is wise, knowing the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain, understands it as it actually is thus: 'This way of undertaking things is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain.' Knowing it, understanding it as it actually is, the wise one does not cultivate it

but avoids it; and because he does so, unwished for things diminish for him and wished for things increase. Why is that? That is what happens to one who sees.

12. "Now, monks, one who is wise, knowing this way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure, understands it as it actually is thus: 'This way of undertaking things is painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure.' Knowing it, understanding it as it actually is, the wise man does not avoid it but cultivates it; because he does so, unwished for things diminish for him and wished for things increase. Why is that? That is what happens to one who sees.

13. "Now, Monks, one who is wise, knowing this way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure, understands it as it actually is thus: 'This way of undertaking things is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure.' Knowing it, understanding it as it actually is, the wise one does not avoid it but cultivates it; because he does so, unwished for things diminish for him and wished for things increase. Why is that? That is what happens to one who sees.

THE FOUR WAYS

14. "What, monks, is the way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pain? Here, someone in pain and grief kills living beings, he experiences pain and grief that have killing of living beings as condition. In pain and grief he takes what is not given, he misconducts himself in sensual pleasures, he speaks falsehood, he speaks maliciously, he speaks harshly, he gossips, he is covetous...

{30:27}

BV: Greedy, holding on.

MN 46:

...has a mind of ill will, holds wrong view, and he experiences pain

and grief that have wrong view as condition. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, even in hell. This is called the way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pain.

15. "What, monks, is the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain? Here, monks, someone in pleasure and joy kills living beings, and he experiences pleasure and joy that have killing of living beings as the condition.

BV: Many people that are hunters...in Missouri this is deer season, and they have a lot of joy killing deer. One of them actually killed a deer on our property that we were protecting, and she was still giving milk to her young. Not real happy with that person that did that.

MN 46:

In pleasure and joy he takes what is not given, holds wrong view, and experiences pleasure and joy that have wrong view as condition. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, even in hell. This is called the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain.

BV: Now, this has to do with sexual activity, also. People have pleasure right now but they know that they're doing something that's not right. So, they can have a lot of pleasure right now but when they're reborn they're not gonna be very happy about it.

There's a story in the Jataka Tales about a man that...he was always going out with other people's wives and having sexual activity. He did it his whole life. And when he was reborn he was reborn in a very, very nasty place. There's molten lead in a big pot. It takes 50,000 years for him to come down and 50,000 years for him to come up and he had enough time to utter one syllable before he went back down again. Not a pleasant existence. There's lots of pain in that. And, he caused that to himself because he wanted to take the

pleasure now and ignored the fact that there was pain coming.

MN 46:

16. "What, monks, is the way of undertaking things that's painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure? Here, monks, someone in pain and grief abstains from killing living beings, and he experiences pain and grief that have abstention from killing living beings as condition.

BV: An example...I was telling Antra about this...I live in a cabin in the forest and there's a lot of wasps. Do you know what wasps are? They're stinging beasts. And, anytime a wasp would come into my cabin I would very patiently get a glass and put it up and put a piece of paper over it and take him outside and let him go and tell him to tell all of his friends not to bother me. And, I was getting up one morning and I put my hand on the cover to throw the covers off and a wasp stung me! And, I got a hold of him and I started scolding him. I said, "I'm really nice to all of your family! Why did you do that?" And, the wasp kind of hung his head, and then I let him go outside. [laughs]

{35:38}

MN 46:

In pain and grief he abstains from taking what is not given,

BV: Even though you might really want it.

MN 46:

...from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from speaking falsehood, from speaking maliciously, from speaking harshly, from gossiping, he is not covetous, he does not have a mind of ill will, he holds right view, and he experiences pain and grief that have right view as condition.

BV: See what I said with speech; better to say nothing than to say something wrong, and to curse, and to divide people, and to create stories that aren't true.

MN 46:

On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in a heavenly world. This is called the way of undertaking things that is painful now...

BV: You might want to do it, but you refrain from doing it.

MN 46:

...and ripens in the future as pleasure.

17. "What, monks, is the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure? Here, monks, someone in pleasure and joy abstains from killing living beings, he experiences pleasure and joy that have abstention from killing living beings as condition.

BV: Now, we're talking about ants, cockroaches, mosquitoes; all of those little nasty things. Spiders. Don't kill them! Have joy in taking them and moving them somewhere else. We have a lot of mice living in the forest. That's just the way it goes. But, we have these traps that...it's like a little green house they get in, they can't get out. And, we're always telling them that we love them but we don't want them around. And, we take them three or four miles away and let them go free. We don't kill them, no need.

MN 46:

{...}

THE SIMILES

18. "Monks, suppose there was a bitter gourd mixed with poison,

BV: A bitter gourd to my way of taste is poison. [laughs]

{38:59}

MN 46:

and a man who wanted to live, not to die, wanted pleasure and recoiled from pain, and they told him: 'Good man, this bitter gourd is mixed with poison. Drink from it if you want; as you drink from it, its color and smell and taste does not agree with you, after drinking from it, you will come to death or deadly suffering.' Then he drank from it without reflecting and did not relinquish it. As he drank from it, its color, smell, and taste did not agree with him, and after drinking from it, he came to the death or deadly suffering. Similar to that, I say, is a way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pain.

19. "Suppose there were a bronze cup of beverage possessing good color, good smell, and good taste, but it was mixed with poison, and a man who came who wanted to live, not to die, who wanted pleasure and recoiled from pain, they told him: 'Good man, this bronze cup of beverage possesses a good flavor, good smell, and good color, but it's mixed with poison. Drink from it if you want; as you drink from it, its color, smell, and taste will agree with you, but after drinking from it, you will come to death or deadly suffering.' Then he drank from it without reflecting and did not relinquish it. As he drank from it, its color, smell, and taste agreed with him, but after drinking from it, he came to death or deadly suffering. Similar to that, I say, is the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain.

20. "Suppose there were fermented urine mixed with various medicines, and a man came sick with jaundice, and they told him: 'Good man, this fermented urine is mixed with various medicines.

BV: You're Sri Lankan, you understand that that's part of the monks' medicine is fermented urine. Yeah. [laughs] It doesn't taste so bad, but it really smells bad! You put herbs and stuff in it for different kinds of sickness. You understand these things. That's monks' medicine. A lot of monks don't do that anymore.

I had a monk friend that had a skin disease that was very bad. He was always itching and he was scratching until there was blood. And, K Sri Dhammananda told him...he didn't tell him to drink his own

urine, he told him to go get some cow urine from a cow that had just given birth to a calf. And, he did and K Sri Dhammananda put it out in the sun covered up for four days and it fermented. And, then we got some herbs that K Sri said to give him and we mixed it with them and he had to drink it. Taste is not bad, although some of the herbs were pretty potent. But nobody wanted to be around him after that because he smelled so bad with the poisons coming out. But, in a week he got rid of this skin disease. It really does work. It's not as appetizing as it could be but it does work. Anyway...

MN 46:

[repeats] ['Good man, this fermented urine is mixed with various medicines.] Drink from it if you want; as you drink from it, the smell, color, and taste will not agree with you, but after drinking it, you will be well.' Then he drank from it after reflecting, and did not relinquish it. He drank from it, and its colors, taste, and smell did not agree with him, but after drinking from it, he became well. Similar to that, I say, is the way of undertaking things that is painful now and ripens in the future as pleasure.

21. "Suppose there were curd, honey, ghee, and molasses mixed together, and a man with dysentery came, and they told him: 'Good man, this curd, honey, ghee, and molasses mixed together. Drink from it if you want; as you drink from it, its color, smell, and taste will agree with you, and after drinking from it you as you will, you be well.' Then he drank from it after reflecting, and did not relinquish it. As he drank from it, its color, smell, and taste agreed with him, after drinking from it, he became well. Similar to that, I say, is the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure.

22. "Just as in the autumn, in the last month of the rainy season, when the sky is clear and cloudless, the sun rises above the earth dispelling all darkness from space with its shining and beaming and radiance, so too, the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pleasure dispels with its shining and beaming and radiance any other doctrines whatever of ordinary recluses and brahmins."

That is what the Blessed One said. The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

{46:06}

BV: Now, this gives you more and more of an idea of the importance of keeping your precepts because you just kind of ho-hum with your precepts, "Well, that doesn't matter so much". You say something that's not true, once you start developing your mind, your mind will say, "I shouldn't have said that. That wasn't true". And, then you go and you sit in meditation and you have a very restless mind! I have students that don't really care about the precepts. They think they want to purify their mind but they don't want to take the trouble to follow the precepts. They practice for a long time. They have very, very slow progress. It's really to your advantage to keep your precepts as closely as you can.

One of the things that's happening in the world in a lot of Buddhist countries is that people and monks seem to think that it's impossible for you to attain nibbana in this lifetime, so why try? I'm here to tell you right now if you follow this advice that I've given you tonight, you are on the road to attaining nibbana! Now, there's some of you that have had some joy arise. There are some of you that have had very strong balance of mind. There are some of you that are going even deeper than that...in this retreat. If you attain one jhāna one time in your life, you have the potential of attaining nibbana in this lifetime. That's the way it works! It says that in the Abhidhamma. It really does work this way. The more you lighten your mind, the less you break precepts, the easier your meditation becomes. And, your understanding just starts to zoom!

Now, you haven't heard me talk too much about jhāna. I don't know if you understand that word or not. Do you understand what a jhāna is? Okay. It's mentioned many, many thousands of times in the suttas. A jhāna is a level of your understanding. You're understanding what? How your mind's attention works. You can go to...you have a hindrance arise...we'll do it this way. You have a hindrance arise and

then you let it go and you relax and you smile and you come back to your meditation object and stay with it as long as you can. But then the hindrance comes up again. So, you do the same thing again. Let it be, relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation. Every time you let go of that hindrance you are developing your mindfulness a little bit.

{50:25}

Now, before long a hindrance comes up and as it comes up you start to notice that there's something that happens right before that hindrance pulls my mind away. Okay. So, you 6R that, you let it be, you relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation. But, the next time your mind gets distracted you notice that little thing right before you got really pulled away and you 6R right then. And, what happens is that you start to stay on your object of meditation for longer and that the distraction doesn't last for as long.

Now, when you first start meditating your mind is gonna flip-flop because you're not used to doing it. Okay. Fine! That's not a problem. If your mind gets distracted a hundred times in your sitting and a hundred times you recognize it, you let it be, you relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation, that IS good meditation! Too many times, because mostly of people that practice Zen meditation, they tell you that you're supposed to quote, "Clear Your Mind!"...like thoughts are some kind of enemy you can fight with. But they're not! Thoughts, when they come up and they distract you away, are part of restlessness. And that's okay!

Your job is to recognize that it happened, let it go, relax, smile, and come back. When you do that you start catching your mind and the distraction a little bit more quickly and you start staying on your object of meditation for a little bit longer. Now, it might be that your object of meditation, you might stay on it for ten seconds before your mind gets distracted again. Fine! That's not a problem. Let it be, relax, smile, come back. As you get familiar with how your mind gets distracted you start to see little things that happen before you really get taken away. So, you start letting go a little bit quicker, and a little

bit quicker. And, you start staying on your object of meditation for a little bit longer; maybe fifteen seconds, twenty seconds, thirty seconds...that means that you're progressing. Okay?

{53:33}

Now, you're still gonna get pulled away, and that's fine. But, you're starting to teach yourself how this process works. You can't force anything. You can't make your mind be the way you want it to be. It's gonna be the way it's gonna be and that has to be okay because that's the Dhamma, that's the truth! It's gonna be that way when it happens. It's real profound, isn't it? But, as you become more familiar with how mind's attention went from your object of meditation to this distraction...it didn't happen all at once. There is a process that happens, and as you start to see right before my mind got distracted for a minute there was something else there. So, you finally...you let it go and relax and then you notice, "Oh, there's that one again!" And, you let go right then.

Now, you stay on your object of meditation for maybe forty seconds or a minute. And, before long the distraction doesn't last very long, the distraction is a hindrance, but it's okay. But, you start staying for a little bit longer; a minute, two minutes. And, then you start feeling joy arise. But, first you feel a sense of relief. "Wow! I finally let go of this hindrance and it didn't arise again!" A big rock had been taken off your shoulder. And, the joy that arises...

Now, there's five different kinds of joy:

- There is "goose bumps". Now these first three kinds of joy happen to anybody when the conditions are right. The last two kind only happen with mental development. The first kind is getting "goose bumps". You know what I mean? Goose flesh? Okay, and it last for a very short period of time and it fades away and you feel a brief moment of tranquility. Just nice.

- The next kind of joy is like a flash of lightning. It's very quick, it's very intense, and it disappears very quickly. And, the tranquility that

you feel after that is...it lasts for a little bit longer...couple of minutes. It's really nice! Now, you all can experience this at anytime in your life when the conditions are right.

{56:45}

- The next kind of joy is like standing in the ocean and you have this wave of joy come over you. Oh, it's wonderful! And, then another wave comes over you. When that joy fades away you have a period of time that might be five minutes, ten minutes, maybe even a little longer of very, very strong tranquility. You feel really peaceful!

- Okay, the next two kinds of joy only arise through mental development. The next kind of joy is called "Uplifting Joy". You feel very light in your body, you feel very light in your mind. It'll last for a period of time and then it'll fade away. But, right after that you feel very strong tranquility. You feel really peaceful. And, you starting thing, "Now, this is why I'm meditating! This is good stuff!" And, you feel more comfortable in your mind and in your body than you've felt before; peaceful, calm, you're mind's not running around anymore. You can still have a distracting thought but you'll see it very quickly. And, it's very easy to let it go and 6R it and come back.

Now, what I just described to you is the first jhāna. Okay? You're starting to learn how mind's attention moves from one thing to another and you're starting to learn how to let go of distractions. And, it's called the first jhāna. Now, you're going to be in that state for a period of time. But, it will fade away. For whatever reason your mindfulness will become weak and now you have another hindrance to work with. But, now you're getting the idea of, "Oh, I know what to do with this!" So, you don't get so involved in the content of the distraction, you see it for what it is, it's just a distracting thought. You let it go and relax and come back.

{59:35}

{End of tape}

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 . . .

Sutta translation (C) Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995, 2001. Reprinted from The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya with permission of Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144 U.S.A. www.wisdompubs.org

Transcribed Brent Hagwood 07-Apr-11