

MN-107

To Gaṇaka Moggallāna - Gaṇakamoggallāna Sutta
SEATTLE - 27-MAR-07

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion, the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migāra's Mother. Then the Brahmin Ganaka Moggallāna went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One:

2. "Master Gotama, in this Palace of Migāra's Mother there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, that is, down to the last step of the staircase. Among these brahmins too, there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, that is, in study. Among archers too, there can be seen gradual training...that is, in archery. And also among accountants like us, who earn our living by accountancy, there can be seen gradual training...that is, in computation. For when we get an apprentice first we make him count: one one, two twos, three threes, four fours, five fives, six sixes, seven sevens, eight eights, nine nines, ten tens; and we make him count a hundred too. Now is it also possible, Master Gotama, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline?"

3. "It is possible, brahmin, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline. Just as, brahmin, when a clever horse-trainer obtains a fine thoroughbred colt, he first makes him get used to wearing the bit, and afterwards trains him further, so when the Tathāgata obtains a person to be tamed he first disciplines him thus: 'Come, monk, be virtuous, restrained with the restraint of the Pātimokkha, be perfect in conduct and resort, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training precepts.'

BV:

The Pātimokkha is the rules for the monks. Every morning you take precepts, you have six whole precepts, and monks have 227 of them.

We have a lot of things, that's why when you came to start to give me a hug I started backing away. One of the precepts is that I don't touch women on purpose. And, there are a variety of other rules that I have to keep so, my behaviour is not the same as a normal layman in a lot of ways.

One of things and I think its good to get on tape is that monks are not suppose to do when you give a gift to a monk, the monk is not supposed to say thank you. Because if the monk says thank you that turns that gift into a personal gift between one person and another. When you give a gift I am a representative of all monks, and I accept that gift on behalf of all the monks.

So when I say when you give a gift I will say "Sadhu." Sadhu means well done. And, the amount of merit that you make for giving that gift to the entire Sangha is huge, and it comes back in all kinds of wonderful ways for you. But, if I say, thank you that turns it into a personal gift between one person and another. You still make merit but not very much. So, when I don't say thank you but say "sadhu" instead, I'm actually giving you the highest gift that I can give you at that time, and that is the appreciation of the Sangha, with the Buddha as its head.

So in this country we are all trained to -- somebody gives us something, we say thank you. Somebody helps us in some way we say thank you but the training of the monks is not to do that. Training of the monks is to acknowledge your gift by saying, "well done." Or there was one monk that he was continually saying, "I rejoice in the merit that you're making" -- (light laughter all around) - - as personal preference on that one.

Anyway...

It takes a long time to understand the rules of the monks. It takes a long time to practice so that you don't have any breaks in that. Every new moon and every full moon, when there are four monks together -- they get together in a place called a *sīmā*, which is a consecrated ground where the monks do all their official acts. And, we recite the

entire Pātimokkha, we recite all of the rules. When I was in Burma it got to be a contest on monks when they started reciting to see how fast they could recite it.

Now this is 227 rules, and it's a lot of pages of rules. And, the guy that had the record at the monastery that I was at was twenty-five minutes. And, it was like he was reciting it and it was like (rapid) da-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la – rapid big breath – (rapid) da-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la, like that (laughter all around). That wasn't the intention of the Buddha giving us all those rules to say it that fast. It was for us to go over the rules to remind us that we need to keep those rules and remind us what the rules are.

MN:

4. "When, brahmin, the monk is virtuous...and seeing fear in the slightest fault, trains by undertaking the training precepts, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: 'Come, monk, guard the doors of your sense faculties. On seeing a form with the eye, do not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the eye faculty, undertake the restraint of the eye faculty.'

BV:

Now what we are talking about here is in order to see something there has to be a good working eye and there has to be color, form, and light.

When the good working eye hits the color and form, eye consciousness arises. The meeting of these three things is called eye contact.

With contact as condition eye feeling arises, eye feeling is pleasant, painful, neither painful nor pleasant. With eye feeling as condition, eye craving arises.

Craving is the 'I like it / I don't like it' mind. Craving always manifests as tension and tightness in both your body and mind. With eye

craving as condition, clinging arises.

TT: 9:51

Clinging is all of your opinions, your concepts, your thoughts about, and the story about why you like or dislike that feeling. With clinging as condition, than habitual tendency arises – ‘When this kind of feeling arises, I always have these kinds of thoughts and I always get into this feeling in this way’.

Now you are made up of five different things, the psychophysical process is five different things <five aggregates>; you have a physical body, you have feeling, pleasant, painful, neither painful nor pleasant, you have perception.

Perception is the part of the mind that names things; you look at this and you say that’s a lamp. That part of the mind that has the perception in it. That’s the thing, that gave it the name and it also has memory in it.

You have thoughts and you have consciousness. Now when a feeling arises our natural tendency is to try to control the feeling with the thoughts. ‘I don’t like this I wish it would stop’, I wish it would go away’, ‘Why does it have to bother me now?’ Or, the story. The more you think about the feeling the more intense the feeling becomes. And that causes you to think more and more, and as you get caught in the thinking about, that thinking is trying to control that feeling. And the feeling keeps getting bigger and bigger until finally you can’t stand it any more.

Now there’s a lot of people that are taking drugs for depression or stress in one form or another, it really doesn’t matter what you call it. Because they’re trying to control the feelings with the thoughts, and they’re two separate things, they don’t meet. So the first thing you have to learn how to do, is let go of the thoughts, let them be there by themselves, don’t pay attention to the content of the thought and relax. Let go the tension and tightness caused by minds attention moving to those thoughts.

As you don't keep your attention on the thoughts you let the thoughts be there by themselves and relax you will notice that there is a tight mental fist wrapped around the feeling. That mental fist if it's a pleasant feeling -- that mental fist is trying to hold onto it: 'I want it to stay here, I want it to be the same all the time', 'And I want that feeling to last'. If it's a painful feeling than there, is a pushing away of that feeling, trying to stop that feeling from being there.

But, the truth is when a feeling arises it's there. Anytime you try to fight with the truth, anytime you try to control the truth, anytime you try to change the truth so it will be the way you want it to be, that is the cause of suffering, and it's no small amount of suffering, it's big.

So, what to do when you see this feeling and this tight mental fist around it? Allow the feeling to be there. Loving kindness is loving acceptance of the present moment allowing that feeling to be there. But, you say, 'yeah but it's a painful feeling', okay it's a painful feeling, it's all right for that painful feeling to be there, it has to be alright because it's there. And, if you miss that step when you're walking out and you fall down and hurt your knee, that feeling is going to be there, because the conditions are right for it to arise. Right?

So, you can fight with that feeling, you can get mad at that feeling, you can try to make it do what you want it to do, that only makes that feeling bigger and more intense. So, as you allow that feeling to be there yes it hurts and it's okay for it to hurt, then relax that tension and tightness caused by your attention going to that feeling and allow the space for that feeling to be there, then gently bring that mind back to your object of meditation, your feeling for a brief moment - that's the cessation of suffering.

Now the nature of these kind of things when they arise is they don't go away right away, we all know that. So, your mind is going to bounce back to it and you're going to have the same thoughts, and you need to see those thoughts and let them go and relax. See that

feeling allow it to be there and relax, and come back to your object of meditation. As you do that over and over again, you start to recognize that there is a pattern that starts happening, and as you recognize that pattern, you start to let go of that pain more easily, more quickly, with a mind that isn't trying to do anything with it outside of allow it to be there.

Every time you let go of tension and tightness in your mind and in your body you are purifying your mind. What are you purifying your mind of? Of that false belief that those thoughts and those feelings are me, that they're mine, that I can control them. Then you start to let go of that belief, then you start seeing that this is a process, that is happening, because the conditions are right for that process to be there. And as you allow the space for that sensation to be there, or that painful feeling to be there, and relax into it, you come back to your object of meditation. Then it bounces back you're going to start seeing it as you become more and more familiar with how that process works, you're going to see it more and more quickly and let it go more easily. All the time you're relaxing you're letting go of that attachment to 'I am that'. This happens with every kind of hindrance that arises.

Now there's basically five kinds of hindrances: you have greed or lust; hatred, aversion; sleepiness, dullness; restlessness, anxiety; doubt, perplexity. Whenever these hindrances arise, in whatever form they arise in, they will take your mind completely away from your meditation and get you involved in thinking about this and that. As you become more familiar with the tricks of your mind, you start noticing that a little bit more easily.

So, the instructions in the meditation are very specific. When a thought arises, as soon as you notice that thought is there let that thought go and relax. Let that feeling be there by itself and relax, come back to your object of meditation. At first, when you start meditating your mind might go away for a minute or two minutes, or even five minutes and that's fine. But, as soon as you notice that your mind is not with your object of meditation then you let go of the thoughts and relax, allow the feeling to be there and relax and come

back to your object of meditation. Every time you relax and come back to your object of meditation, you are improving your mindfulness -- it gets stronger.

TT: 20:17

Your observation power becomes more acute (yeah that's a good word), it becomes sharper so you become more and more aware. Now when you're practicing loving kindness I tell you that I want you to smile. And, I want you to smile for some very good reasons, it helps to improve your mindfulness, it helps to improve your awareness that your mind is very uplifted and all of a sudden it isn't. You become much more aware of it much quicker when your smiling and you let go of that and relax and come back and then you start watching how the process works.

What happens first, what happens after that, what happens after that. As you do that eventually, your mind will begin to understand that this is an impersonal process and you'll see it just as a series of things that arise and pass away. As you do that, the hindrance that arose that seemed so overwhelming at first becomes weaker and weaker until finally it fades away. Then you will experience a sense of relief, why? Because, you have let go of an attachment -- what is an attachment? 'I am that thought', 'I am that feeling'. You let go of the belief that this was a personal thing, that is happening. You start to see it as impersonal, right after that, you will experience a very, very happy feeling, and this is called joy.

This happy feeling has excitement in it, and you feel very light in your mind, and very light in your body. Now this happy feeling, you treat in exactly the same way as you did a painful feeling. You allow that feeling to be there by itself, relax and come back to your object of meditation. That's the way to make that happy feeling last longer. But, the first time it happens everybody goes 'HEY, THIS IS GREAT STUFF', (laughter all around). And, you grab onto it and you say 'I'm going to keep this one around, I like this. I had to work real hard to get it' (more laughter all around). I'm going to make it stay and that's the fastest way to make it disappear (laughter all around) – shucks,

I'm so happy (more laughter all around).

Right after the joy fades away you feel very, very tranquil; very, very peaceful and calm. You feel comfortable in your mind, you feel comfortable in your body, and your mind is very composed. It stays on your object of meditation and doesn't move, just without any effort at all. There can still be some thoughts that arise, but you'll see them very quickly, let them be and relax come back, just without any effort at all.

What I just described to you was the first stage of meditation, this is called the jhāna. Jhāna, an awful lot of people that are practicing meditation they use that word to mean absorption, or deep concentration. But, jhāna actually means a 'level of understanding'; as you start to understand how mind works, and you start to let go more and more and come back to your object of meditation you are teaching yourself how this process works, and its kind of neat.

BV:
Yeah?

S:
Are we allowed to ask questions?

BV:
Yes, you can.

S:
To carry this throughout your day, then if you have a feeling like I have a knot in my belly; because I am feeling fear around some thoughts whatever then, not meditating so how do I...

BV:
In the same way, you let go of the thoughts relax and then you start smiling.

S:
Then you start smiling like a fool, walking down the street.

BV:

You bet (laughter all around) like a fool walking down the street giving that smile away to every person you can see.

S:

OK (laughter all around).

S:

Doesn't have to be a foolish grin...

BV:

Well it doesn't matter; it doesn't matter whether it's a foolish grin or an un-foolish grin, the thing is you've got to be grinning (laughter all around).

S: ~

SK:

Well you're smiling with the understanding that what you do in the present moment, dictates what happens in the future. So, if you're smiling even if it isn't genuine, it's going to be easier for you to produce genuine smiles in front of you. That's what your understanding is, so you just start, you know opposing whatever's coming down on you and simply choosing to smile. That's your volition, that's your free will, that's a good thing to remember.

BV:

See the thing is you have the choice of either indulging in your thoughts or not. And, if you see that there is fear there or there is anxiety there or there is worry there, then you have the choice either to let those thoughts go and relax, and start sending some loving kindness to yourself, or into the situation, whatever it needs. Or, you can get caught up in that worry and make yourself sick with that worry.

But, when you get caught up with say fear, anxiety and you get into a car – are you driving? You see what I'm saying? You lose what's

happening with your body, because you get so caught up in your head, in the thoughts and in the impossible situation that it is, because every time you get caught up in a situation, it doesn't matter whether your worrying about how you're going to solve a problem at work, or your worrying about anything it doesn't matter what the content is - if you get caught up in that, then it's a huge mountain, that's insurmountable. You won't see any way around it and you'll spin your wheels trying to think how to solve the problem. When you develop your sense of humor about this, when it comes up and you laugh out loud, all of a sudden this huge mountain, It's just a little bump in the road – don't have to worry about it – it will take care of itself, you'll see.

S:

Can I get that in writing (laughter all around)?

BV:

Yes (laughter all around)...

SK:

It's especially true about things that you think are insurmountable and you can't control them; because the truth is, you can't control them.

BV:

So why worry about them...

SK:

So, it's a choice in the moment and I'm going to be there now with this.

BV:

It's like, I was talking before that the way you solve problems is through your intuition and when you're thinking real hard about how to overcome this mountain you don't pay attention to that little tiny voice. When you start paying attention to that little tiny voice that means you have to let go of the worry. You have to let go of your desires to make things be the way you want them to be. You have to

let all of that go and to come back into the present moment.

TT: 30:03

And the way you do that is by allowing that to be there, relax, see that tight mental fist around that feeling and relax, now smile, laugh. (light laughter all around) How does your mind feel now?

S:
Up lighted...

BV:
Okay, that's why you do that. When you have a light mind your awareness is very fast, you can see when your minds starts to get pulled down, really quickly. And, your awareness is very agile, and you can start nudging that and letting it be and letting it go. That's not to say you do it one time, or five times, or ten times and it's going to go away, it may or may not. That doesn't matter, what matters is how you see what your mind is doing in the present moment, and relax into that.

SK:
When your mind is agile and alert, you're going to think of solutions you couldn't think of before.

BV:
Because that's a quiet mind, and that's where your intuition is – how happy.(laughter all around)
OK...

MN:
On hearing a sound with the ear...On smelling an odor with the nose...On tasting a flavor with the tongue...On touching a tangible with the body...On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, do not grasp at its signs and features. ...

BV:
Don't grab at its signs and features means, don't get caught in the

story. Just notice that your mind is distracted by this. Okay it can be distracted, it doesn't matter, what you do with what happens in the present moment, dictates what happens in the future. So, as you start relaxing into that, you start smiling into that, you start laughing with that – that changes your whole perspective. And, it's much easier to say 'Ah, we'll just think about that later, why don't we enjoy the walk right now?' "Smell the roses", isn't that one of the sayings that was in the 70's, "Stop and smell the roses."

BV:

Yeah?

S:

Say you're grieving the loss of a loved one, I know someone whose mother just recently died.

BV: Ok

S: And he said he's been crying a lot, to where he has got to the place where he just is allowing himself to feel the sadness...

BV:

Of course, the sadness is going to be there...

S:

But, he is allowing himself to feel, he is not going around smiling...

BV:

Look at this, when somebody dies there is going to be a sad feeling, and the natural tendency is to try and control those feelings with your thoughts. You'll have thoughts of 'How sad I am', 'How much I miss that person', 'How much I don't like this situation'. All of those thoughts about that feeling make that feeling bigger and more intense.

As you allow those thoughts to be there but don't keep your attention on it and relax and allow that tight feeling to relax, then it's just this unpleasant sadness, and its there, and it's true, and it's okay

for it to be there. You still need to have a mind that uplifts a little bit. Now what you do is you start sending loving and kind thoughts to family members, or loving and kind thoughts to yourself, or loving and kind thoughts to the person that just died.

One of the biggest problems with grief is the feeling of frustration of not knowing what to do. Now when you start sending loving and kind thoughts you have a feeling of really doing something that's helping.

S:
So you feel empowered.

BV:
Yes, of course. So you're doing something that is a help. Yes, the sadness is there but its okay, its painful yes, that's okay. Relax and then start smiling and radiating that loving kindness to other people, or to yourself, it doesn't really matter. But, now you actually doing something, you don't feel lost...

S:
Or, helpless...

BV:
'Or, helpless', thank you I couldn't pull that word out, I've been working on it for a while (laughter all around); you don't feel helpless.

S:
Well I thought it was empowering...

BV:
Yeah?

S:
So that it means that, the opposite of that is you feel powerless sometimes to do anything.

BV:

But, you're not, you're not ever, because you have the choice to either to indulge in that sadness or not. Now people that don't let go of their grief -- I worked with a hospice for a while and I saw this happen, people would not let go of their grief -- they kept their sadness, they kept thinking about how bad the situation was and how they didn't like it. Within about a year and a half they had some kind of major physical problem, sometimes they even died, because they won't let go of the grief.

Whose grief is it? 'Mine!', 'I don't like this feeling', 'I don't like this situation', 'I really miss that person and I want them to come back'. The more you indulge in those kinds of thoughts, the more pain you hold in, the only way you can handle that and stay sane is by this practice that I am showing you right now, and it works, it really, really does work.

MN:

5. "When, brahmin, the monk guards the doors of his sense faculties, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: 'Come, monk, be moderate in eating. Reflecting wisely, you should take food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: "Thus I shall terminate old feelings

BV: of hunger

MN:

without arousing new feelings

BV: Of desire

MN:

and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort."

BV:

As I was talking about it last night, I was telling you that it's a real good idea to make sure that you actually do pay attention to chewing

your food. My father when I was growing up he said 'You should chew everything twenty-five times'. Well that gets boring counting (laughter all around), but chew everything until it turns to liquid in your mouth, and then swallow it. You won't eat as much, you will digest it much better, and you will be more healthy.

Now the Buddha ate until his stomach was half-full then, and then he put a quarter of the room in his stomach for water and the rest was for air. Monks, a lot of monks like to eat breakfast, but we can only eat from right around 6 o'clock in the morning until high noon, that is the only time we can eat. There are some allowable things in the afternoon; they're called medicine for monks – munching on candies and things like that. But, there are some medicines that are real good; honey is one of the things we can take in the afternoon, and honey is a remarkable medicine; it really works quite well for a lot of things, and salt and things like that. So, when we're talking about not eating to beautify your body, that means that your not eating so that you'll maintain that particular weight. One of the things that happened to me when I got here from Asia, I weight about 200 hundred pounds when I got here, and I was skinny. And, I started eating a lot of the oils that are in this country, that people put in foods and I started gaining weight so fast it was unbelievable. And, I wasn't eating a large quantity of food, I only eat one time of day, I don't eat a breakfast, I just eat once, and I don't eat a lot of food at that time.

TT: 40:50

But, because of the oils and that sort of thing, it just started coming on, I was gaining weight, and I was watching these little tiny Asians eating this food and they were like piling it away. They would take a plate and it would be that high with rice and they put stuff on top of it, and they would eat it all. I couldn't eat that much, but they didn't gain any weight, I did, I don't know why.

Anyway...

MN:

6. "When, brahmin, the monk is moderate in eating, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: 'Come, monk, be devoted to wakefulness. During the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night you should lie down on the right side in the lion's pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in your mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states.'

BV:

And, this is what we did when I first became a monk. A difficult practice because I still had the layman mind (light laughter) and that was the judging mind, and, I would see some monk doing something I would consider breaking the rules, and all of a sudden my mind took off with that, and I suffered a lot for a little while. It actually takes about a year to get rid of these big obstructive states.

When I was in Burma there a monk that when he came -- he was from Korea -- when he came, he could sit for two or three hours in meditation, no problem, just sit there like a rock, and he knew the rules of the monastery was not to eat an evening meal. But, he was from Korea and he was used to eating an evening meal as a monk. So, he started eating that evening meal and the next time I saw him he couldn't sit in meditation for more than fifteen minutes. He had so much restlessness, because he knew he was breaking a rule.

Now this is the importance of keeping your precepts, don't break a precept. If you break a precept that is going to affect your meditation negatively, you're going to have a lot of restlessness arising. You're not going to be peaceful and calm, and you only have six rules (laughter all around)

S: What do you mean by not breaking rules?

BV: You still keep them.

But if for some reason while you're doing the retreat, if you do break

one of the rules, please let me know, well take the precepts again right then, okay?

MN:

7. "When, brahmin, the monk is devoted to wakefulness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: 'Come, monk, be possessed of mindfulness and full awareness. Act in full awareness when going forward and returning; act in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; act in full awareness when flexing and extending your limbs; act in full awareness when wearing your robes and carrying your outer robe and bowl; act in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; act in full awareness when defecating and urinating; act in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.'

BV:

Now you guys can't answer this, full awareness of what?

S:

How your mind works (light laughter all around)...

BV:

You do good work, now that's it, watch what your mind is up to when your doing all of these different kind of activities, and that pretty much covers it all. I mean while your going to sleep, while you wake up, while your talking, while your not talking, while your moving around doing this or that.

S:

Actually, I have a question about that...

BV:

Yes...

S:

I notice this today as I was at work, I have to solve these computer problems, right, so I have to think about structure, come up with

plans. So, what do I do with my object of meditation at that point in time?

BV:

Object of meditation is what you're doing at that time.

S: I was just ~

BV: You have to be able to... you're hired to be a thinker, you have to be able to think. You have to be a problem solver because that's what you're hired to do. But, when you see your mind getting real tight around it or your mind becomes distracted: somebody just sent me something in the email about how mind wanders.

It was a cognitive psychologist, that wrote this thing, and he said the average person, their mind wanders thirty percent of the time. Now when you see your mind wandering, let go, relax, laugh with it, smile and come back to what you're doing in the present moment. And, when you have some time constraints that you're working against you start putting a little bit of pressure on yourself - you're got to get this done by this time - you'll notice that you start worrying about whether you can do that in that length of time or not - that's the time to let everything go and sit down from five to ten minutes and just start relaxing and radiating loving kindness, and, after that, you become super efficient; everything becomes very easy. But, before when you had that restlessness you were scattered and you were worried and you were putting pressure on yourself, and you're trying too hard. You see the whole thing with the meditation is learning the correct amount of energy to put in what you're doing at the present moment. The correct amount is the one that doesn't cause your mind to get restless or to get dull. The correct amount is the one that keeps you on target.

BV:

Yeah?

S:

When I was eating my apple today and I was talking about

mindfulness. And I was saying that I thought that the way I was taught, that my other teacher had told me that I could snack during retreat as long as I savor every bite, because it was suppose to do everything mindfully. Isn't that what you're just saying that whatever you're doing...?

BV:

But, his definition of mindful and mine are not necessarily the same though. We're using the same words,

S: ~

BV: You're watching what mind's attention is doing in the present moment,

S: Right, ok.

BV: how mind's attention moves. I mean when you're sitting there eating the apple and you're savoring the apple that's fine, but what happens when you start thinking about this and then thinking about that, and then you're a thousand miles away, and now you're thinking about your worries and anxieties and... So, it's being able to catch that and let it go and come back to what you're doing in the present.

TT: 49:58

S:

The beauty of this is it can be something that is 24/7, because whatever you're doing in the present moment is your object of meditation. When I was transplanting plants today that was my object of meditation, and anything that wasn't involved with that I let go, and so I was very efficient at what I was doing and didn't waste time...

BV:

Let go and relax, and smile.

S:

Yeah, then digging became pleasurable, because I was smiling, rather than thinking 'oh this is a chore'. Its like, 'Oh, I have this to do', 'Oh, this is going to look pretty here', it's a total different attitude, a little flavor.

BV:

Yeah?

S:

And, now your wife makes you work twice as hard (laughter all around).

BV:

See, there is danger in that, you were lucky...

SK:

The way playful people get caught sometimes is in the learning of the chores, they will release, release, release, release, release, release, many times, you see, and then they feel that a lot of things are happening and they keep releasing, and release. They're stuck, you see. Or, they release, relax, relax, relax...

BV:

Or, they release, relax; release, relax; release, relax, and not coming back to what they're doing...

SK:

It's a theory, it's a theory the six pieces are rolling around like that you see, and they have to reach a level where that's what's happening, but all six pieces are there. But, they're not one then the next, then the next...

BV:

How did you get so smart anyway (laughter all around)...

S: By listening?

MN:

8. "When, brahmin, the monk possesses mindfulness and full awareness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further: 'Come, monk, resort to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.'

9. "He resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest...a heap of straw. On returning from his alms round, after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, ...

BV:

Now this is during the time of the Buddha, when everybody sat on the floor. They always sat cross-legged; we on the other hand have a tendency to sit in chairs a lot. And, if you're sitting on the floor and you are not used to it, you can have a lot of pain come up, and it's not necessary. It's okay to sit in a chair while you're doing this practice, whatever way you're comfortable.

MN:

Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind free from covetousness;

BV: That means wanting things.

MN:

Abandoning ill will and hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. Abandoning sloth and torpor, he abides free from sloth and torpor, ...

BV:

The way you overcome sloth and torpor, which is sleepiness and dullness is by taking more interest in your meditation, more interest in the friend you're sending a loving kindness too, or to yourself. If that doesn't work, and your half an hour sit is up, I recommend that you get up and start doing a walk, but you walk at a normal pace, but walk back and forth, say to go outside just pick a spot and walk

back and forth forty or fifty feet. But, when you get to the end of your walk, stop but don't turn around, and walk backwards. Now you're staying with your object of meditation, when you get to the end of the walk then you walk forwards, when you get to the end you walk backwards. That picks up your energy a lot and helps to balance it.

MN:

...mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. Abandoning restlessness and anxiety, he abides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from restlessness and anxiety.

BV:

The way you purify your mind of restlessness and anxiety is that when you're sitting you don't move. Restlessness is a very unpleasant feeling, and you will feel like moving, like jumping out of your skin. Then in your mind, you start focusing on what it feels like to be tranquil. So, you pull up your feeling of peace and tranquility and you focus on that and radiate that feeling to yourself or your spiritual friend, whoever you're doing your loving kindness to.

Now each one of these hindrances when they arise, they are not going to go away right away. So, you are going to be bouncing back and forth just like a ping-pong game (Bhante makes a sound of a ping-pong ball hitting a table -- laughter all around). Just like the birds, we have; we have Whippoorwills that drive us crazy every summer (Bhante makes a sound of a Whippoorwill -- laughter all around). That's the sound.

Anyway, the hindrance is your friend; it is showing you where your attachment is, it is showing you how this process works. As you accept this more and more and let it be and relax, you then come back to your object of meditation your mindfulness improves, you're teaching yourself more and more clearly how the process works -- a very important aspect of the meditation. As you let go of a hindrance you will go deeper in your meditation, you will get to the second level, the third level, or fourth level, whatever.

BV:
Okay...

MN:
Abandoning doubt, he abides having gone beyond doubt,
unperplexed about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from
doubt.

BV:
The doubt that arises is whether, your doing the practice correctly or
not. As you, become more familiar with relaxing, and smiling, and
coming back to your object of meditation, these doubts won't arise.
They'll just not bother you as you become more and more familiar
with how the process works – right? Got it?

S: Absolutely, absolutely (laughter all around)...

BV: I thought you might.

MN:
10. "Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of
the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensual
pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and
abides in the first jhāna,

BV: That first level of understanding.

MN:
...which is accompanied by thinking and examining thought, with joy
and happiness born of seclusion. With the stilling of thinking and
examining thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna,
which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without thinking
and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of
collectedness.

BV:
When you get into the second level of your meditation – the first

level I've already explained – what happens is your mindfulness will falter, it's not very strong at this time. So, whenever that happens you have another hindrance come up, now you have to work with this hindrance until you finally let that go now you get into the second jhāna. The hindrance always precedes getting into the deeper stages of the meditation. So the hindrances, you better be friends with them, especially restlessness, that's going to stay around until you become an Arahāt, which is a very, very deep state, that is the highest state you can obtain.

TT: 1:00:02

S:

What's it called?

BV:

"Arahāt"

S:

"Arahāt"

BV:

Yeah, that's somebody who doesn't have any ignorance at all, ever – nice state, nice state. Anyway, when you get into the second stage of your understanding, the second jhāna, you start to gain a lot of self-confidence. Because, now you're seeing – "Ah, this is the way it works, now I'm starting to understand this, -- I'm starting to see this." And, this self-confidence starts to come out not only while you're sitting, but in your daily life. You're starting to understand, more and more how you cause your own suffering, and how to let go of that suffering -- so it's a real nice stage of the meditation.

Now this is where you're practicing loving kindness, and I was telling you before that you verbalize your wish. When you get to this stage you can't verbalize your wish any more, you can just bring up that feeling and put that feeling in your heart and surround yourself with that feeling.

S:

Verbalize not out loud in the first stage, saying in your mind 'I wish you peace and calm'.

BV:

Whatever...

S:

In the second stage, you don't say that.

BV:

You don't verbalize it anymore in your mind – this is called the "State of noble silence." These guys, have heard this so many times they always give a smile.

S:

That's why you're looking more over here because they know it all.

BV:

Yeah, they are a 'bunch of know it alls' (laughter all around). The joy you experience at this stage is much stronger, you feel more light in your body and light in your mind. You still have the excitement of the joy but, it is not as much excitement, but you feel like you're floating, you feel like you're going to hit the ceiling if you don't watch out, that's how light you feel. When that feeling goes away and it will, after a period of time you feel more tranquil and more at ease than you ever felt before. Very, very peaceful and calm; very, very comfortable in your body; very, very comfortable in your mind, your mind stays on your object of meditation; very composed.

BV:

Okay...

MN:

With the fading away as well of joy, he abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and

is mindful.'

BV:

When you get to this stage, after having another hindrance, and letting it go, your mind starts to gain a real strong sense of balance. That is what equanimity is, it's a sense of balance. So, you don't have the roller coaster ride of emotions so much anymore, now it's kind of rolling, a rolling wave. As you go deeper into this, the equanimity starts to get stronger and stronger so that even those waves are kind of rough and it starts to turn into little ripples of emotional things, and it is much easier to let them go, it's easier to recognize them.

Now what happens is, and this is always kind of comical for me is the person that has this, they feel the equanimity, they feel very comfortable, they feel very much at ease. And, they come in complaining because they don't feel any joy. 'I don't have any joy'. 'The joy disappeared'. And, I start asking questions about having a sense of balance that you never had before, and feeling very comfortable like you never felt before, and, very, very at ease and all of this. And, 'yes, yes, yes, but I don't have any joy' and I say, 'good, good everything is going along fine'.

Now I don't tell people what stage of meditation they're in, because they don't need to know. You're going through these experiences and you're teaching yourself more, and more deeply how mind's attention moves and you're starting to see it more and more clearly all the time, that's what's important.

In Asia, there is always talk among the students of I'm in this jhāna, I'm in that jhāna, and there is all this pride stuff that happens. And, I decided long time ago I wasn't going to put up with that in my students, so I don't tell anybody what jhāna they're in. Until they get up to the deeper jhāna's and then it's a nice thing to know.

Okay, what happens now is you start to lose more and more tension in your mind, as you lose tension in your mind; you lose tension in your body. As you lose tension in your body you don't feel parts of your body, you don't feel your hand, you might not feel your legs,

you might not feel your back, or shoulders, or wherever. What happens is as you let go of tension in your mind you let go of tension in your body and that's what you feel, is tightness and tensions.

So, it's like they just start disappearing from different parts of your body. Now you're radiating loving kindness from your heart, all of a sudden that disappears. And now you start radiating loving kindness from your mind and that's a good thing.

MN:

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV:

Now the fourth jhāna is where you have up until then, you're considered a beginner meditator. When you get to the fourth jhāna, then you're considered an advanced meditator. Because now you really start to understand how all of this stuff works, you start to see it much more clearly, you have very, very strong balance of mind, that will carry through in your day.

Now when you're doing your meditation, I tell you I want you to keep your meditation going while you get up from your sitting and going out to your walking space and walking. Stay with your meditation, and come back and stay with your meditation, and sit down and stay with your meditation. That means smiling, watching what your mind is doing, staying with your spiritual friend, or yourself.

So...

TT: 1:08:10

MN:

11. "This is my instruction, brahmin, to those monks who are in the higher training, whose minds have not yet attained the goal, who

abide aspiring to the supreme security from bondage. But these things conduce both to a pleasant abiding here and now and to mindfulness and full awareness for those monks who are arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge.”

12. When this was said, the brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna asked the Blessed One: “When Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, do they all attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, or do some not attain it?”

“When, brahmin, they are thus advised and instructed by me, some of my disciples attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it.”

13. “Master Gotama, since Nibbāna exists and the path leading to Nibbāna exists and Master Gotama is present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, some of them attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it?”

14. “As to that, brahmin, I will ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. What do you think, brahmin? Are you familiar with the road leading to Rājagaha?”

“Yes, Master Gotama, I am familiar with the road leading to Rājagaha.”

“What do you think, brahmin? Suppose a man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said: ‘Venerable sir, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the road to Rājagaha.’ Then you told him: ‘Now, good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Follow it for awhile and you will see a certain village, go a little further and you will see a certain town, go a little further and you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, groves, meadows, and ponds.’ Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would take a wrong

road and would go to the west. Then a second man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said: 'Venerable sir, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the road to Rājagaha.' Then you told him: 'Now, good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Follow it for a while and you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, groves, meadows, and ponds.' Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would arrive safely in Rājagaha. Now, brahmin, since Rājagaha exists and the path leading to Rājagaha exists and you are present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when those men have been thus advised and instructed by you, one man takes a wrong road and goes to the west and one arrives safely in Rājagaha?"

"What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I am one who shows the way."

"So too, brahmin, Nibbāna exists and the path leading to Nibbāna exists and I am present as the guide. Yet when my disciples have been thus advised and instructed by me, some of them attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it. What can I do about that, brahmin? The Tathāgata is one who shows the way."

15. When this was said, the brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna said to the Blessed One: "There are persons who are faithless and have gone forth from the home life into homelessness not out of faith but seeking a livelihood, who are fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, loose-spoken, unguarded in their sense faculties, immoderate in eating, undevoted to wakefulness, unconcerned with recluseship, not greatly respectful of training, luxurious, careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion, lazy, wanting in energy, unmindful, not fully aware, unconcentrated, with straying minds, devoid of wisdom, drivellers. Master Gotama does not dwell together with these.

"But there are clansmen who have gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness, who are not fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, and loose-spoken; who are guarded in their sense faculties, moderate in

eating, devoted to wakefulness, concerned with recluseship, greatly respectful of training, not luxurious or careless, who are keen to avoid backsliding, leaders in seclusion, energetic, resolute, established in mindfulness, fully aware, concentrated, with unified minds, possessing wisdom, not drivellers. Master Gotama dwells together with these.

16 "Just as black orris root is reckoned as the best of root perfumes and red sandalwood is reckoned as the best of wood perfumes and jasmine is reckoned as the best of flower perfumes, so too, Master Gotama's advice is supreme among the teachings of today.

17. "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of monks. Let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

BV:

So, what that last part is all about is if we follow the directions the Buddha gives us and stay true to following those directions and don't add a turn or two, or subtract anything, then the chances of us being able to experience what the Buddha was talking about is very, very good.

Okay...

Yes...

S:

'Can I ask a question?'

BV:

Yes, you can.

S:

What does the Buddha say about lay people in their daily life, like did he have more specific roles? About how often to practice so you can carry it with you in all your affairs.

BV:

No, he didn't have anything like that; he figured that once you understood well enough, you would figure that out for yourself. But, he didn't even tell the monks how often that they should practice. He encouraged them to practice often, but he never said that I want you to practice this many hours a day.

Yes...

S:

When you talked about going out, and walking, and walking forwards, and walking backwards that's was if you said...

BV:

If you had sleepiness or dullness...

S:

Oh, right, okay...

BV:

That helps pick up your energy.

S:

Okay and why walking backwards, why must you walk backwards, rather than turning around, and going back, and seeing where you come from?

BV:

Because, it helps pick up your energy.

SK:

We don't really understand it but when you walk backwards, it like winds up your energy.

TT: 1:17:42

BV:

It helps your energy to improve, and then when you go sit, you won't have that dullness of mind.

I think we had better meditate some more, but before we go, I want to share some merit.

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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