

MN 111 Anupada Sutta - One by One As They Occurred

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi
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SK: ~~ introduction ~~

BV: It's mine too.

SK: You are kind of partial to that.

BV: The reason that I'm partial to it is because this proves that Sāriputta, he was considered a dry arahat. In other words he never practiced anything but vipassanā, that's what the belief is, and this proves that it's not true. He practiced vipassanā while he was in each one of the jhānas, and there's other reasons that it's my favorite, but I'll go over those in a little bit.

What this sutta is about is, Sāriputta's experience in meditation, and it goes through each one of the jhānas. So you'll be able to recognize, possibly recognize, where you're at.

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. " ... , Sāriputta is wise; Sāriputta has great wisdom; Sāriputta has wide wisdom; Sāriputta has joyous wisdom; Sāriputta has quick wisdom; Sāriputta has keen wisdom; Sāriputta has penetrative wisdom. ...

BV: Anytime the word 'wise' or 'wisdom' is brought up in the suttas, it is talking about how he is able to see the process of dependent origination. This is something that's not spoken of very often. So anytime you hear that anyone is wise, it means that they're able to see through their own direct knowledge, through their direct experience: how feeling arises; and then craving arises; and then the clinging arises; and the habitual tendency; and the birth; and the sorrow, and lamentation, and pain, and grief, and...

SK: ... Despair.

MN: ... During half a month, Sāriputta had insights into states one by one as they occurred. ...

BV: Now, this is another misunderstanding about getting into jhāna when you're practicing a form of one-pointed concentration. People think that you have joy and happiness, and collectedness of mind all at the same time, but this sutta says: "No, it happens one at a time." And through your own direct experience, you're able to see this, that these states come up.

MN: ... Now Sāriputta's insights into states one by one as they occurred was this:
3. "Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the first jhāna, ...

BV: Jhāna, again, does not mean 'concentration', jhāna means 'a level of understanding'. Now, how do you get into jhāna? That's the question. You're sitting in meditation and a hindrance comes up and pulls your mind away. You have thoughts about this or that, whatever it happens to be, and you recognize it, and you let it be there. You don't try to push it away, you just let the thought be there, and you relax the tightness caused by that, and then you smile, and you come back to your object of meditation, and stay with your object of meditation.

As you do this over and over again, you start to see how the hindrance starts to arise. As you become familiar with it, you'll notice right before your mind really got carried away, there was some little thing that happened. So the next time you come back to your object of meditation and your mind gets distracted, then at that little thing, then you start using the 6Rs: you recognize, release it, relax, smile, come back, stay with your object of meditation. As you do that, you begin to stay with your object of meditation longer, and the distraction becomes less. Eventually, because you're not feeding that distraction anymore with your attention, you finally let it go one time, and it just fades away and doesn't come back anymore.

Now, what happens for you is, you feel an immediate sense of relief, you've let go of an attachment. Right after that, you have a lot of joy arising, you feel happy. And joy is, it's a real happy feeling, but it has excitement in it, and then that will fade away. And right after the joy, you feel your mind become very, very tranquil, and peaceful, and you feel very comfortable in your mind and in your body. This is what the Buddha called happiness, sukha. And your mind naturally stays on your object of meditation without a distraction for a long period of time. And that, what I just described to you, is the first jhāna.

Now, what is your understanding of this? You saw how the hindrance arose, and you started seeing ... what happens right before that ... what happens right before that ... what happens right before that. And as you relax more and more, then that hindrance just doesn't arise anymore, and your mind is very pure, your mind is very uplifted and alert.

Ok...

MN: ... {repeats: Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the first jhāna}, which is accompanied by thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of seclusion.

4. "And the states in the first jhāna—the thinking, the examining thought, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; ...

BV: Now, he had other things happening while he was in this jhāna too.

It's called...

MN: ... the contact, feeling, perception, thoughts, and mind; ...

BV: This is called the five aggregates. The five aggregates and the four foundations of mindfulness are just different ways of saying the same thing. Ok? You have body, you have body with the four foundations. You have feeling, you have feeling with the four foundations. Feeling and perception and consciousness always arises together, and then you have thoughts. Now, the thoughts are, in Pāli they call it 'saṅkhāra'. It's more than just thoughts, but at the beginning I call it 'thoughts' because that's what you're able to recognize; and you have consciousness.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: So each one of these things come up while you're in the jhāna.

MN: ... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' ...

BV: Now, what are we talking about here? We're talking about how things arise and pass away, we're talking about impermanence. They're there for a little while and then they disappear. Everything is impermanent, and because it's impermanent, it's a form of suffering, it's a form of dukkha, and this whole process is impersonal. You don't have any control over it. It happens because conditions are right for it to happen.

MN: ... Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, ...

BV: In other words, he didn't have any lust or greed to hold on.

MN: ... unrepelled, ...

BV: He didn't have any anger, or dissatisfaction, or aversion.

MN: ... independent, detached, free, dissociated, ...

BV: This is all words describing the impersonal nature of this.

MN: ... with a mind rid of barriers. ...

BV: When you're in the jhāna, you don't have any hindrances arise. Now what happens is, you're in that jhāna for a period of time, and then your mindfulness becomes weak for one reason or another, it becomes distracted for whatever reason. Now you have another hindrance arise. Now you have to work with this hindrance in the same way. The hindrances are teaching you where your attachments are. What is your attachment? Your attachment is: "I am that. I am that feeling. I am those thoughts. I am this sensation." When you start seeing that in a more impersonal way - as it's only a feeling, it's only a thought, and you let it be, and you relax - when you relax, you're letting go of craving.

What is the second noble truth? The cause of suffering is craving. So you're letting go of that craving. Then you experience the third noble truth: that is the cessation of suffering, or cessation of craving, and what's the way to do that? By practicing the eightfold path. The entire eightfold path manifest in the right effort. Right effort and the 6Rs are the same thing. I just broke it up into six pieces instead of four. You recognize that your mind has an unwholesome state, you're identifying with something; you let go of that unwholesome state and relax; now you bring up a wholesome state, smile, and you come back to your object of meditation;

and you stay with your object of meditation, you keep that wholesome state going. So the 6Rs and right effort are the same thing.

MN: ... He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' ...

BV: Now, when you get into the first jhāna, you know you still have more work to do. That's all this says.

MN: ... and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there's still more to do.

5. "Again, with the stilling of thinking and examining thought, Sāriputta entered and abided in the second jhāna which has self-confidence and stillness of mind without thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of collectedness.

BV: Now, what happens when you get into the second jhāna? Up until this time, you are verbalizing in your mind the wish. When you get to the second jhāna, you let go of the verbalizing and just bring the feeling up, the feeling of the wish. You know what it feels like to be peaceful and calm. Now, if you have restlessness, and you feel like your mind is kind of scattered, then you use the wish for peace and calm, and feel that wish, and put that in your heart, and surround your friend with that feeling, and radiate that feeling to your friend. That will help to let go of the restlessness.

Now, you can make a wish for happiness in any variety of ways. It doesn't matter, as long as it's a wholesome wish. It doesn't matter what your wish is as long as you feel that wish: joy, having a clear mind, being able to accept. You know what it feels like when you accept something? When you just say: "Well, it's there and it's ok for it to be there." You know what that feeling is like, you put that feeling in your heart, and radiate that feeling to your friend. When you do this, you start to have more confidence in what you're doing, and this confidence starts to carry on through with your daily activities, you feel like you have more confidence with whatever you're doing.

Now, the thing with this particular sutta is, it's talking about his sitting in meditation, but it's not just sitting in meditation. It's being able to see this with your daily activities. When a hindrance arises, somebody says something you don't like, what happens to your mind? And look at all those thoughts that you have about not liking and aversion. So you let go of that, and you relax, you smile, you

come back, and continue smiling during the day. Keep that smile going for as long as you can.

MN: 6. "And the states in the second jhāna—the self-confidence, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; ...

BV: Now, when the joy arises, it's a little bit stronger. It's a really a nice feeling, but it still has a little bit of excitement in it. And when that fades away, which it will, then the tranquility you feel is deeper, and you feel much more calm, and you feel more comfortable in your mind and your body than you've felt before. So you feel really nice and your mind stays with your object of meditation for a little bit longer period of time.

MN: ... the contact, feeling, perception, thoughts, and mind; ...

BV: There's the five aggregates again which means you're still practicing the four foundations of mindfulness.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: So what happens is, you start to get more enthusiastic about sitting in meditation, and you start going: "Well, this is good." So you want to sit. What you want to do is make sure that you sit every day at least for thirty minutes. If you have longer, then sit longer, but you can carry this meditation with you when you're walking. You get off work and you say: "I want to meditate, but if I sit down, it's been such a hard day, I'll probably go to sleep." So you do your walking meditation, and you stay with your spiritual friend while you're walking.

Now, the thing with walking is, you're used to walking from here to there, and thinking about this and thinking about that, then just kind of ho-humming with your mind. So when you start doing the walking meditation, your mind is going to wander, it's going to think like it always does when you're walking, and that's ok. As soon as you notice that you're doing it, you practice your 6Rs again: let it go, relax, smile, come back, stay with your spiritual friend. When you're doing your walking meditation, you can walk up to forty-five minutes. When you do your walking, you don't walk slowly, you walk at a normal pace just like you do with when you're walking from one place to another. You keep your eyes down, not staring at anything in front of you, just keeping your eyes down because if you're

looking around, your mind goes over there, what you're looking at, and then you're a thousand miles away and you forget. So if you keep your eyes down, then you can stay with your spiritual friend, but at first it's a little difficult, that's ok. Every time you recognize that your mind is distracted - and you let go of that distraction, and relax, and smile, and come back to your object of meditation - your mindfulness improves a little bit.

So the hindrance, the thing that's pulling you away, is not an enemy to fight with. It's just a wandering thought, and it's ok for it to be there. You let it be there by itself and relax. The relax step is most important because the relax step is where you let go of the craving, that little tightness that wraps around your brain. You'll feel it open up, and it's a feeling of expansion that happens. You notice after a while that as soon as you do that, you don't have any thoughts in your mind. Your mind is very alert, your mind is pure at that time because there's no craving in it, and you bring that mind back to your object of meditation.

So continually you need to remember to relax, let go of that tension and tightness. What do you do when you feel a headache coming on? You start reaching for the aspirin to get rid of the headache, but if you are mindful, if you see how mind's attention went to that feeling, you'll notice that there's some tight muscles in the back of your neck. Relax, let those muscles go. Headache fades away very quickly then. Now, this isn't hundred percent. There are times that there's some chemical imbalance that can cause the headache to continue on, but as you relax into it more and more, it will not last for as long and it will eventually fade away.

And...

MN: ... He understood ...

BV: How everything is impermanent...

MN: ... and with the cultivation of this attainment, he confirmed that there is still more to do.

7. ... with the fading away of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling happiness with the body, he entered upon and abided 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 into the third jhāna, you no longer have joy arise. You feel very comfortable in your mind and in your body. Your mind stays on your object of meditation very nicely for a period of time without any distraction at all - five minutes, ten minutes, like that - and you start to feel that your mind has very strong balance in it. It's like you lose your emotional upsets, and you feel this equanimity, and you're fully aware of the things around you. You still hear sounds. If something touches your body, you feel that - a fly, or a mosquito, or whatever - you would feel it, but it doesn't make your mind shake anymore.

Now you have this very strong balance and: "Ah, it's only a feeling. It's nothing." Now, as you lose tension in your mind, you start to lose feeling in your body. So your hands will disappear, or a leg - you just won't notice it anymore - or an arm. Eventually, your body will just kind of disappear, and when that happens, the feeling of loving kindness will come up into your head, and you'll be able to radiate loving kindness with your head.

The Chinese are great at calling, they call mind, they call it your heart and your mind together, and that's what's really happening. You don't have any more feeling here in your body, so that feeling comes up and you can radiate loving kindness to your friend. Don't try to push the feeling down. If it's going to go up there, let it be up there. Sometimes you'll sit, and it starts here (gesture) and then it'll go up by itself, you don't have to do anything. As you become more familiar with this state, it will just start... you'll just start radiating from loving kindness from your head.

MN: 8. "And the states in the third jhāna—the equanimity, the happiness, the mindfulness, the full awareness, the unification of mind; ...

BV: Now again, we still have the five aggregates while you're in the jhāna. You have contact, feeling, perception, and formations, and mind. You get more enthusiastic about your practice because now you're starting to feeling like you're really progressing, you feel like: "Ah, this is good. I like this!" And the equanimity starts to grow and get a little bit stronger as you go deeper into the practice.

MN: ... decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention— these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: So there's everything is happening one thing at a time, and you'll be able to see that as you go deeper into your meditation.

MN: ... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: So you're still seeing impermanence, and you're seeing more and more clearly the different links of dependent origination. You start to see them more and more, with more clarity. It becomes more obvious because your mind is settling down now, and you have this balance of mind, and you see a feeling arise, and right after that feeling you see a tension, and then there are thoughts, and there's the identification with these thoughts.

Now, the clinging has your opinions, your concepts, your ideas, and the identification with those: "I'm right and they're wrong." But when you start having more balance in your mind, you start seeing this just as part of a process, and you 6R that and you come back to your object of meditation. A feeling might still arise. It can be a sensation in your body that your mindfulness becomes weak, and all of a sudden that pain in the knee becomes very big. Now, that's a feeling, and right after that feeling: "I don't like that feeling." That's the craving, and then all of the thoughts about why you don't like that feeling, and your habitual tendency. Every time a feeling like this comes up: "I always do it this way. I always try to think my feeling away." So the first thing you do is, let go of the thoughts and relax. Now you see that tight mental fist wrapped around the feeling. When a feeling arises, it's there; that's the truth. You... anytime you try to change that, anytime you try to control that feeling, anytime you try to make it a little bit different than it is, you're fighting with the truth, and that's the cause for more suffering, and that's the cause for the hindrance lasting longer.

So what you have to do is say: "Ok, that feeling is there, and I don't like that feeling. That's the truth, but it's ok for that feeling to be there because it is the truth, it's there." So you allow the space for that feeling to be there without resisting it." Now you relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation. The nature of these kinds of sensations is, they don't go away right away. So your mind bounces back to that. Then you have thoughts about it again. So you let the thoughts go, and you relax; let go of that tight mental fist, and relax; smile; come back to your object of meditation. Eventually, one of two things will happen: either the pain will go away or it won't, but if it doesn't go way, your equanimity is so strong that it doesn't even pull your attention to it. So you just ignore it, let it be.

MN: 9. "Again, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the fourth

jhāna , which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV: So a pain arises when you get into the fourth jhāna, it doesn't make your mind shake. You just notice there's a sensation there, doesn't even pull your attention to it. Now, when you get to this jhāna, this is when I will tell you that you're an advanced meditator. You've been teaching yourself how the process of dependent origination works, then you've seen it directly and you're starting to understand that happens every time. This is the very reason why the Western mind and the Eastern mind are the same because this is how mind works. It doesn't matter where you come from.

Now, when you get to this jhāna, this is when I will tell you to start changing your meditation, and not staying with your spiritual friend anymore. And there's other people that I'll have you radiating loving kindness to: family members, neutral persons, enemies. When you're done with that, then I'll change your meditation again, and have you start to send loving kindness in all of the six directions: in front, in back, to the right, to the left, above, below, and you're sending loving kindness in all of these different directions to all beings.

MN: 10. "And the states in the fourth jhāna—the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquility, the purity of mindfulness, and unification of mind; ...

BV: Your mind begins to stay on your object of meditation for a longer period of time, and your mind becomes very tranquil, very much at ease. Any little movement of mind's attention you're able to see, and when you see that is... when your mind is on your object of meditation, what happens is - a thought, or sensation, or whatever a distraction is - will start your mind to wobble. And then it wobbles, and it gets bigger and bigger until finally there's a distraction. But now, when you get into the fourth jhāna, you'll start to see your mind wobble, and you 6R right then, and then your mind stays on your object of meditation. You're starting to learn what it is to have a still mind, a composed mind.

BV: Ok...

MN: {repeats: "And the states in the fourth jhāna—the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquility, purity of mindfulness, and unification of mind;} the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates here, and this is important to realize because if you're practicing a one-pointed kind of concentration where your mind stays on one object only, you're not able to see these five aggregates because your mind is glued to that thing, whatever you put your attention on.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: So he's still seeing impermanence. You're seeing change continually, you're seeing it with a very balanced mind. Now, people that practice straight vipassanā, seeing impermanence is a major thing, and they focus on seeing impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of things, and when they do that, they don't see how dependent origination arises, they don't see dependent origination at all. But when you're practicing the way that I'm showing you, you are able to see more deeply how these links arise, and how they are there for a moment and disappear. So what you're seeing is dependent origination, but you're seeing the impermanence at a much finer level. It's not this big, gross level up here (gesture), it's at a much deeper level that you're seeing impermanence happening all the time, and it happens with each link of the dependent origination.

MN: 11. "Again, with the complete surmounting of gross perceptions of form, with the disappearance of gross perceptions of sensory impact, ...

BV: Now, what we're talking about here is, you don't feel your body anymore unless there is contact. So if I came up to you and were to touch you, you would feel that, your mind would not shake. Or I could come up to you and I could say: "I need to talk with you for a minute", you would hear that. Or a motor cycle, or somebody with a boom-box, or whatever, you would hear that, but it doesn't make your mind go to that. So you have this very strong equanimity. You still do have feeling, you still do have the six sense doors, and feeling can arise at those, but it's very fine feeling, it's not the big, gross feeling that will pull your attention away.

Ok...

MN: ... Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.

BV: Now we're starting to get somewhere. Now, an interesting thing happens: you're practicing loving kindness all the way up to this level, but when you get to the base of infinite space, what happens is the feeling of loving kindness changes. You have to tell me how it changes, I don't tell you, but it changes from loving kindness to compassion, and it does it by itself. And you will feel an expansion in all the directions at the same time, and it's just a continual expansion going out. That's what you'll feel, but there's no center-point, there's just this feeling of expansion. This is what it feels like to be in the base of infinite space.

Now, a lot of, especially the Mahāyāna, they're real big on compassion. They talk about compassion all the time, and they talk about 'infinite compassion', and they say: "That's what the Buddha sat in, in meditation every morning." Well, what he was actually sitting in was infinite space and radiating compassion. That's just a little misunderstanding that they have.

MN: 12. "And the states in the base of infinite space—the perception of the base of infinite space and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates. You can still feel things even though you don't feel your body unless there's contact. Now, you can sit in this realm for awhile, and then you think: "Well, it's time for me to get up and do some walking." As you stay with this feeling of compassion and the expansion, you can get up and you can do your walking. The only thing you will feel on your body is the bottom of your feet where there's contact, and your head. Now, if a wind comes up and it brushes your clothing against your leg, you would feel that, but you have to have contact in order to feel things.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood this, and he also understood there's more to do.

13. "Again, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite consciousness.

BV: Now, what happens is, the feeling of compassion changes again to a feeling of joy. Now, this kind of joy is called the 'all pervading joy', every cell in your body feels kind of happy. And also, at each one of the sense doors, there's a kind of

flickering that happens at each sense door. It's easiest to describe with the eyes: it's like watching a movie that's going a little bit too slow, and you see: ... there's one frame and there's a blank spot ... there's another frame and a blank spot ... this is, you're beginning to see individual consciousnesses arise and pass away. It happens fairly fast. (finger snap) That was a hundred thousand arising and passing away of consciousnesses of the ear, but you'll be able to see this. Your equanimity is very strong at this point, you have this balance of mind.

Now, in between each of these different jhānas, when your mindfulness becomes weak, you will have a hindrance arise, but at this point the hindrance is not a problem for you. You see how it arises, you can let it go very easily, and relax, and come back, and as you let go of that attachment, then you purify your mind more. So the hindrances are there to help you go deeper.

MN: 14. "And the states in the base of infinite consciousness—the perception of the base of infinite consciousness and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the four foundations of mindfulness and the five aggregates here. So you're practicing vipassanā while you are in an immaterial jhāna.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: You still see these things, you see how they arise.

MN: ... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood this:...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he still knew he had more to do.

15. "Again, by completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of nothingness.

BV: Now, when you get into infinite consciousness, I'll let you stay there for a little while, and I'll say: "Now I want you to focus in between those consciousnesses when they arise and pass away." Now, when I say that there, it... you do that: with the eyes, it's kind of a blinking; with the ears, with sound; or smell; or taste; or touch; or thoughts. You'll see them arise and pass away very quickly, and as you focus in between each one of those, what will happen is your mind goes a lot

deeper, and you will begin to experience not looking outside of mind anymore. Up until then you're always looking at what's happening outside, now you're going inside, and there's nothing, but there's a lot.

Now, when you get to this state, the feeling of joy changes again. It changes to a very, very strong equanimity. At the fourth jhāna it was strong, at nothingness it's a lot stronger, and what you're doing is sending equanimity in all of the six directions, and all of the directions at the same time.

Now, as odd as it sounds, you're looking at nothing, but this is probably the most interesting state of meditation that you can be in because now you're starting to learn about the amount of energy you need to keep with the equanimity and radiating that feeling. If you put a little bit too much, your mind gets restless; if you don't put quite enough, your mind dulls out. So you're constantly having to adjust. Even during the same sitting, you might have to adjust five ... six ... ten times, depending on what your mind is up to. As you go deeper in your meditation, you'll be able to stay with your object of meditation for much longer period of time ... an hour ... an hour and a half ... without having any distracting thoughts pull you away, or without having anything pull you away.

One of the mistakes some of the meditators that have been practicing a lot of other kinds of meditation, the mistake that they make - because they have practiced straight vipassanā where you watch what happens until it goes away - instead of noticing a slight movement of mind's attention and 6Ring that and letting it be. They will watch this and be very clear with watching it, but they're not really developing their mind to go deeper.

So it's very important that you practice the 6Rs, and it becomes a flow, and it's just recognize and all of the rest of the things kind of happen by themselves. You want it to be automatic, and by the time you get to this stage, it's pretty much automatic. You still sometimes need a little bit of energy to recognize and let go, but you'll see your mind. It doesn't so much wobble anymore, it doesn't move very much, and you're starting to see more and more deeply how distractions arise. Then there are other things that happen which I am not going to tell you about, you have to tell me when it happens. Sorry.

Now, all the way up to this realm, you still have the five aggregates, you still have the foundations of mindfulness right there. This is as far as these will take you. What happens next is, before your mind felt like it was expanding ... out ... out ... out ... out. Now, it starts to get so small that it's really hard to tell whether it's

there or not, and that's what we call the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

MN: 17. "Again, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

18. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he contemplated the past states which had, ceased, and changed, ...

BV: So when you get to this state, what happens is you're really very alert, but it feels like you went to sleep, but you know it wasn't sleep because your mind was so sharp and alert. That's what the feeling of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is like. And when you come out of that state, then you reflect on what you saw while you were in that state. And there's still some things that occur while you're in that state. I'm not going to tell you about it, I prefer you to tell me.

But what you do is, you automatically 6R whatever it was that comes up into your mind at that time. So what you're doing with the meditation is, you're starting a meditation and your mind flip-flops like this (gesture). Right? And as you go deeper in your meditation, it moves less and less, until you get to the fourth jhāna where it's more like vibrating. And every time you keep relaxing, the vibration becomes ... less ... and less ... and less ... until it's hard to tell whether it's there or not. That's neither-perception-nor-non-perception. But when you come out, you see there was still little, tiny bits of movement. Now, you'll be able to sit in this state for a long period of time. Any slight vibration or movement you 6R. Now, this starts to make the craving... it starts to make sense because the craving is that movement of tightness that happens in your mind. Now what you're doing is, you're seeing that it's just the start of something happening, and you 6R, and that vibration, that movement, ceases, and now you're sitting and you're very still. Your mind is very well balanced. It's really very nice state to be in because you don't have any distractions anymore.

As you continue to do this, you will go deeper, and what happens next is called the cessation of perception, feeling, and consciousness. It's just like somebody turned off the lights. There's no consciousness. You don't even know you're in that state until you get out. Now, you'll be in that state for a short period of time - five or ten minutes, something like that - and when you come out what happens is you will see, just like it's brand new and you'd never seen it before, all of the links of dependent origination. They will come up, and you'll see them arise, and then you'll see how they cease. And your understanding becomes so good, and your

understanding of everything that arises is part of an impersonal process, and you see it, and it's such a big, wonderful realization that your mind goes beyond all conditions. You've let go of all conditions when you are letting go of each one of these links of dependent origination until ignorance, and then you let go of ignorance, and there's nothing left to let go of. It's an unconditioned state! This is Nibbāna, this is how you experience it.

Ok...

MN: 19. "Again, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the cessation of perception, feeling, and consciousness. And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

BV: What does that mean? All of his attachments - gone - because he saw how the links of dependent origination come into being and how they cease, and how this is all an impersonal process. That's the big: "Oh, wow!"

MN: 20. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. ...

BV: He'll be in it for a short period of time, it doesn't take very long.

MN: ... Having done so, he recalled the past states which had ceased, and changed, thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. ...

BV: He doesn't have any more taints.

MN: ... He understood: 'There is no escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is not.

BV: Now, there's four different states of sainthood: sotāpanna; sakadāgāmī, that's the second state; anāgāmī is the third state; arahat is the fourth. Now this... whichever one you experience is entirely personal and it's up to your personal merit of which one you attain. I can show you right up to the door of cessation of perception and feeling, but that's as far as I go. The rest is yours. So don't ask me what state you're going to be in when you come out of this because it entirely depends on you.

If you're going to be a sotāpanna, then you will see dependent origination arise and pass away one time. If you're going to be a sakadāgāmī, you're going to see it happen two times, and it happens fast: ... bing ... bing ... bing ... bing ... bing ... like that. If you're going to be an anāgāmī, then it will happen three times for you. Or if you become an arahat, it will happen four times. Now, when you think about what the Buddha was talking about when he was talking about the saṅgha - and that happens to be one of the favorite chants of the monks when they're talking about saṅgha - they talk about the four pairs of individuals. What are the four pairs: sotāpanna, sotāpanna with fruition...

ST: Could you explain that please?

BV: Sotāpanna with the path - magga, and magga-phala; sakadāgāmī with the path, sakadāgāmī with path and fruition; and it's that way with anāgāmī and arahat. The fruition doesn't necessarily happen right after you experience the path, it can be anytime. Sāriputta spent a mahākappa and a hundred thousand lifetimes purifying himself, so he could be second to the Buddha in wisdom, but it's a huge long period of time. So when he experienced the path knowledge, he also experienced the fruition knowledge right after that. It happened very quickly for him, but it doesn't necessarily happen quickly for anyone else.

Sometimes you have the path knowledge. You know you've really experienced something special, and then you get off of retreat or start doing your daily activities and taking care of things - and it might be a week, it might be a month, it might be a year later, who knows - all of a sudden you'll feel that your mind is starting to get very small again, and you say: "Well, I'm going to go sit down and watch this." And then you will experience the cessation of perception and feeling again. Then you will experience the links of dependent origination when you come out of that, and you will experience the fruition of that attainment, and when you get the fruition, that's where the personality change really happens.

That's when you start losing the fetters. If it's the first stage: you lose all doubt that this is really the path, you don't have doubt come up again; you lose the belief that rites and rituals lead to Nibbāna, you know that it doesn't; and you lose the belief in a personal self. That's what happens with the first stage. The second stage, you weaken lust and hatred. They're not completely gone, but they're considerably less than they were. The third stage, the lust and the hatred disappear. Now, think about what is it like to have a mind without any lust or hatred ever arising in it again, no matter what happens to you in daily life? You have this very strong equanimity, and your mind is very much in the present

moment. You still have some fetters, but they're not real big. When you get to be an arahat, there's five other fetters that you let go of. One of them is the desire to be reborn in another realm, in the brahma-loka or whatever; you lose restlessness, got to wait until you get to be an arahat to get rid of that dirty rat; you lose dullness of mind; you lose pride that you're something special; and you lose ignorance. Now, with a mind like that someone can come up and ask you a question, and you're completely using your intuition to give them the answer. There's no distraction at all, you're always in your intuition. Nice!

MN: 21. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He has attained mastery and perfection in noble virtue, attained mastery and perfection in noble collectedness, attained mastery and perfection in noble wisdom, attained mastery and perfection in noble deliverance,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

22. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He is the son of the Blessed One, born from his breast, born from his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material things,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

23. "Monks, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set rolling by the Tathāgata is kept rolling rightly by Sāriputta."

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

BV: And every time I read this sutta, so am I. So this gives you an idea of what you can expect at each one of the jhānas when they happen, but you might not be able to recognize it. I know that... the last retreat, I was helping this one lady, and she became an advanced meditator, and I told her, and she didn't hear that. She didn't understand what I was saying, and she got up into the realm of infinite consciousness. She got off retreat, she started talking to other people about not even experiencing one jhāna.

SK: She was starting them perfectly.

BV: Yeah.

SK: She didn't understand.

BV: She didn't understand what was happening, and finally I heard this, and I went to her, and I said: "Lookit! You pay attention to what I'm saying right now. You are in the immaterial realms. You have experienced six different types of jhāna. Don't be talking about never experiencing jhāna." She'd been doing the straight vipassanā for so many years that she couldn't believe it. She didn't know how to recognize. She didn't know what she was experiencing.

SK: Well, do you suppose that if she was speaking to other people about any kind of jhāna experience, it was a complete shutdown like you know, no experience like that. So was she waiting to shut down completely, you know absorption jhānas? That was what she was doing?

BV: Ah, probably.

SK: Because... ~~~

BV: Because that's what she had been talked about in thinking that the absorption means that you just sit with one thing in your mind. But I was shocked that she didn't hear what I was saying about this stuff.

Now, can this happen for you, can you attain Nibbāna in this lifetime? Yes. All you have to do is keep practicing your 6Rs. The 6Rs will take you right up to the very doorstep of the cessation of perception and feeling. I know that there's a lot of monks... I met a lot of monks in Sri Lanka, that they don't believe that it's possible to attain Nibbāna in this lifetime: "Why even try? Why meditate?"

ST: Is that because they're practicing the other way, and they can't? Just...

BV: It's because they're caught up in intellect and study, and that's what their teachers have told them. Now, where did it come from originally? I don't know, but you can attain Nibbāna, the first stage or the second stage, just by listening to the suttas. You start contemplating how dependent origination works, and you start seeing it in yourself by listening to the Dhamma, and then somebody comes along and they reads about dependent origination and how you attain Nibbāna, and you understand it so deeply that you can attain that.

The first two stages of sainthood are possible just through study and listening, but people don't believe it, and that belief is the thing that stops it. I'm here to tell you, you can believe it, this is real. How many people have even heard about how you can attain Nibbāna, about what it really is? There's not many people around

to talk about this sort of thing because they don't understand, and because monks have been spending so long with their books, and not doing the meditation. They don't believe that it's possible. Their loss. It is possible, it is possible in this lifetime.

You have to keep your precepts, that's a given. Don't break your precepts for any reason, or if you do happen to make a mistake, don't make yourself feel guilty for doing it. Forgive yourself, take the precepts again right then in a language that you understand what you're saying, not just parroting what the precepts are in a language you don't understand. You have to do it with understanding, and then make the determination: "I'm not going to do that again." And you'll become a lot more mindful of what you're going to do before you do it, and that helps purify your mind right then and there, and then you keep practicing your 6Rs with your daily activities. Somebody says something you don't like, what happens to your mind? And you 6R that, and let it be. It's not so important.

That's why the sutta that I did... that I worked with last night is so important. It doesn't matter when somebody comes to you, if they're telling you the truth or a lie. It doesn't matter if they're coming to you with anger or with loving kindness. You see that person and you start radiating loving kindness to that person. You use that person as the reminder to radiate loving kindness to all beings everywhere. What you think and ponder on, that's the inclination of your mind.

And it's all up to you. If you follow these directions that I've given you, you can be successful, and you will be more happy, and everything starts to be easy, and you become more successful with whatever you're doing. You know this... the economy is so bad and everybody's so worried about this and that. If you trust in the Dhamma, the Dhamma takes care of you in wonderful ways, it protects you. You don't have to get upset because somebody lost their job. If they're taking care of the Dhamma, they'll find another one, and it'll just pop into them. I mean, there's somebody will come up, say: "I need your help." "Do this!" See, when you take care of the Dhamma, the Dhamma takes care of you.

Ok, why don't we 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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