

*Foundation Series on Buddhist Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation (TWIM)*  
*As taught by*  
*Sister Khema and overseen by Most Venerable “Bhante” Vimalaramsi Maha Thera*  
*the Gift of Dhamma is Priceless!*

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**Title: ‘2010- FS-07- Why practice meditation?’**

When we stopped last time on 2010-FS-06- the last section read like this.

“.....**Q: How does Mindfulness fit in here?**

**A: *Mindfulness* means *REMEMBERING* to keep this observation practice going all the time to the extent that mind routinely keeps it going. It becomes part of your life experience.**

When the meditator keeps the 6R’s going, they are fulfilling Right Effort which is an important part of the 8-Fold Path. They are beginning to examine life through a more impersonal perspective in a very natural way that can be kept going. Gradually they figure out how much easier life can be if they let the suffering go. Difficult upsets begin to pass away more quickly as you realize how they arise. Responses to interactions in life begin to happen in more wholesome ways.

This is truly how this Buddhist practice works. It works today just like it did in the Buddha’s time.”

**Q: I have a question.**

**A: Go ahead “Q”.**

**Q: Am I correct in assuming that Mindfulness really means to remember to keep the practice of observation going?**

**A: You got it.**

**Q: Do you think it means anything else beyond that?**

**A: This kind of Mindfulness leads to more peaceful co-existence.**

**Q: Did the Buddha have something specific in mind describing these results?**

**A: Yes. It’s rather nice to keep a description of this around where you can see it each morning as a reminder. The Buddha gave a discourse to the monks describing HOW SHOULD WE TRAIN?**

This discourse exemplifies the life outcome we are working for. Look at the MN-21 “Simile of the Saw” translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

**“Monks, this is how we should train:**

*When others talk to us their speech may be Timely or untimely; True or false; Gentle or harsh;  
 Connected with good or connected with harm; Filled with loving-kindness or inner hatred.*

*We need to train ourselves this way:*

*“My mind will remain unaffected and I will say no words that are evil or untrue.*

*I shall be compassionate for others welfare.*

*I shall keep my mind filled with loving-kindness without ever entertaining thoughts of anger or hatred.*

*I shall radiate loving-kindness to everyone all of the time; to all beings as to myself.*

*I shall radiate and pervade all beings with a mind that is abundant, exalted, immeasurable,  
 without anger or hostility.”*

*'That is what we need to practice!'*

--- End notation from discourse ---

This is great stuff. It's like being thrown back in time and being told that 'sticks and stones will break my bones, but names can never hurt me!'

Remember hearing about turning the other cheek? No difference here. Maybe we never knew someone who actually would turn the other cheek. But here it is again held out to us as a challenge of something to really do if our life. It is truly possible to do but it takes practice.

We have to understand **how this can be done.**

Mindfulness a key component to be developed so that we can keep our practice going. As mindfulness develops it begins to kick in on it's own. We don't stop anymore to look over things and kick it in; rather it just begins to happen.

This is how Choice (**Volition**) works in Buddhism. There is a moment of choice where we can let go and follow through or not. This is where the most important choice is made in Buddhism:

***to crave and cling OR not to crave and cling; to suffer or not to suffer, that is the question!***

If we are up the challenge by following this practice, then we are learning to recognize the arising tension and releasing it. We are letting go, relinquishing old habitual tendencies of grabbing onto what is arising and choosing not to identify with it personally (**atta in Pali**). Instead, we are letting go of whatever arises it and of all residual tension by doing the relax step of the practice. By doing this, we are letting go of our opinions or ideas and just allowing an impersonal process to happen. This is key. Without that Relax step progress cannot happen.

**Q: Can I ask a question?**

**A: Sure.**

**Q: Can you tie things together compactly for me that we have touched on so far.**

**A: Yes. I think I can.**

In order to do the practice and KNOW what is happening, the meditator has to first know what the being, you or me are actually composed of in simple terms to work with.

**Q: That would be the aggregates, right?**

**A: Right. Those five Aggregates are**

**BODY-kaya;**

**FEELING- vedana;**

**PERCEPTION- sanna**

**THOUGHTS- sankhara**

**CONSCIOUSNESS-vinnana**

**Q: What's next?**

**A: We have to learn to take a look at things by using the 4 Noble Truths.**

We went over the 4 noble truths as being

1) there is **suffering**;

2) there is a **cause** of suffering;

- 3) there is a **cessation** of suffering; and  
 4) there is a **path/way** to this cessation of suffering.

**Q: didn't you say we could use these in different ways too?**

**A: That's right. We first have to recognize that suffering is caused by dissatisfaction of how things are ; dissatisfaction with change.**

That is what the suffering actually is. Now, the meditator begins to examine what the cause of that dissatisfaction is and how it begins when we personally place an opinion onto any arising feeling.

**Q: I remember the three kinds of feeling too?**

**A: Yes. They are just as important to basically understand.**

FEELING is simply FEELING. It is always 1) PAINFUL, 2) PLEASANT or 3) NEITHER PAINFUL-NOR- PLEASANT.

Do you also remember the 5 Precepts and the 5 hindrances?

**Q: Yes. The 5 Precepts are what helps me to have smooth meditation and a smoother ride in life.**

**A: Yes. That's right.**

The precepts are made up from Universal Law. The Buddha gave us these as simple advice to follow for a happier life. What are the 5 Precepts Q?

**Q: The 5 Precepts are**

- 1) Not to intentionally Kill;
- 2) Not to steal;
- 3) Not to Lie, speak gossip, or slander others;
- 4) Not to commit wrong sexual activity;
- 5) Not to take any recreational drugs or alcohol.

**A: Good one!**

**Q: And then you spoke about what happens if you broke these precepts.**

**A: That's right.**

If a person breaks these precepts, then there are certain results which always occur. These are 5 barriers or what they call "hindrances" that will come up to block us from having tranquility and contentment in our life. These hindrances can come up in life or in meditation if you break these precepts.

Those 5 Hindrances are:

1. Lust & Greed, the I want it mind leading towards Attachment;
2. Hatred & ill-will, the I don't want it mind leading towards Aversion;
3. Sloth and torpor;
4. Restlessness, guilt, remorse;
5. Doubt in the way the teacher is teaching the practice or in the way you are doing the practice or it can be just doubt about your life.

**Q: So when people are living life, everyone is living with this scale regardless of whether we practice the meditation or not?**

**A: Yes. As I said, anyone can check the balance of this scale for themselves to see whether it's true or not. This isn't just for meditators to know about. But it's tough to check on this if you don't know it exists, isn't it?**

**Q: Sure. That makes sense.**

**A: Remember, I also talked with you about how a being experiences life in this existence.**

**Q: Right, that's called Cognition. The meditator experiences life through the 6 sense doors with the external doors being the Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue, and Body and the 6<sup>th</sup> sense door is the internal sense door of MIND.**

**A: Good "Q". You are beginning to remember.**

**Q: So this is the basic teaching?**

**A: Yes. Here is a diagram to help you notice how the practice moves you in the direction of the desired results.**

There are 4 stages we pass through on this spiritual journey. On the journey First, we have to meet each of the sense doors and understand how contact happens through them. Secondly, the meditator begins to notice how CRAVING arises and almost immediately leaps into CLINGING.

<b>First</b>	<b>Secondly</b> we begin to notice	<b>Thirdly</b> we begin to shift our perspective of how way we view the	<b>Fourthly</b>
BODY →	When affected by CRAVING & CLINGING , the personal/selfish PERSPECTIVE is involved. And as things arise and pass away we experience the impermanent nature of each arising. →	+ Body	The practice leads us to new Impersonal/selfless PERSPECTIVE without old opinions blocking the way. Now we can experiment taking this perspective directly into life while observing the difference it can make. In this case, we try out the idea that  <b>This Body is not me, it is not mine, it is not my self.....</b>  It is just what it is, THE body
FEELING →	“ →	+ FEELING	This is not me, not mine, not my self. It is just feeling.
PERCEPTION →	“ →	+ PERCEPTION	This is not me, not mine, not my self. It is just perception
THOUGHTS →	“ →	+ THOUGHTS	This is not me, not mine, not my self. It is just perception.
CONSCIOUSNESS →	“ →	+CONSCIOUSNESS	This is not me, not mind, not my self. This is just the process of arising consciousness.

Living the impersonal perspective opens the space for us to offer a RESPONSE instead of a RE-ACTION to situations in our life. We begin to realize a Universal Law. .

***“ NOTHING IS HAPPENING TO US ! EVERYTHING IS HAPPENING FROM US !”***

**I** When the meditator believes that all parts of cognition are ME, is MINE, is MY SELF, this is the sum total of the whole mass of suffering.

**II** Buddhist Practice leads us to see HOW a being comes to believe all of experience is me, is mine, is my self. As we uncover how craving and clinging actually arise, we discover this is not so.

**III** The meditator begins to see for themselves that there really is such a state without suffering that is attainable which the Buddha called “cessation of suffering”.

**IV** This practice leads us to test out the instructions on HOW to let go of any unwholesome suffering which is rooted in this wrong idea of personalizing the whole experience and to replace this with something wholesome that relieves suffering and brings happiness into life. That something would be the impersonal perspective.

**Q: And that would be practicing Right Effort through keeping the 6Rs going, right?**

**A: You got it.**

The student, meditator, practitioner must simply and clearly define suffering, cause, cessation and path to cessation.

Then they must remember to practice this path systematically letting go of the suffering and replacing it. Lightly they say to themselves, “whenever it gets tough, ‘nevermind’ it”. “ This is not me. This is not mine. This is not my self.”

Then they replace any unwholesome thought in mind with a good and wholesome thought starting with a SMILE. And you can add ‘a giggle’ to the mix, each time you catch yourself thinking something was YOU when it was not you at all! Haha.

Once we catch this, let it go, and come up with something to replace it, then we proceed with a wholesome helping thought → word → deed → and keep that going in life to re-train mind!

**Q: That is Buddhism?**

**A: That is Buddhism.**

This is a nutshell version of what is happening in this shift of perspective leading to a shift of actions.

**Q: And it sure makes life easier.**

**A: I know . It’s true. It turns life into a game and is really refreshing. You can actually smile again. <grin>**

As we practice the 6Rs we unfold the 37 Requisites of Enlightenment. We will define them and then weave them together until they make a perfect Dhamma Cloth once again!

If we commit to keeping this practice going, this cloth will begin to automatically reweave itself repeatedly for the practitioner. It will become a new wholesome habit which will relieve a great deal of lamentation, pain, grief and despair which is the dissatisfaction, the suffering in their life.

Such things as suffering, cause, cessation, and path; meditation and mindfulness; feeling, craving, clinging, habitual tendencies and action will become crystal clear through Knowledge, practice, and arising Vision.

**Q: I heard about knowledge and wisdom in some books. But what is knowledge and vision?**

**A: On the way to knowledge and wisdom, we attain knowledge and vision first which actually means knowing by seeing.**

This is the method the Buddha presented which allows us not to accept anything blindly. Only as we see things happening does Knowledge and Wisdom evolve. The meditator MUST personally experience it for themselves.

Wisdom means we can see clearly how the impersonal process of Dependent Origination works and the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha left us the precise instructions ‘how he saw clearly’. It doesn’t work unless you give up all other ideas and just do it as he advised. The other ascetics found this out when they tried on their own to make it happen.


This is the way to Peace and the way to freedom from suffering through clear understanding and the application of this into daily life. This practice leads the meditator to proper and fruitful actions. This is why you will hear us say

**Life is Meditation; Meditation is life!**

Next installment we will begin examining the 37 Requisites of Enlightenment. Please keep your practice going and ask us questions if you have any.

**ASSIGNMENT:**

1. Please go to [www.dhammasukha.org](http://www.dhammasukha.org) and listen to the Instructions for the METTA meditation if you have not begun this practice. It helps us if everyone does the same meditation during training. The **instructions for practicing METTA and WALKING meditations are found at <http://dhammasukha.org/Study/study.htm>**
2. When you are practicing, **please sit a minimum ½ hour each time**. No less. Read over the training information at the website and try to follow the instructions exactly.
3. During walking meditation walk a minimum of 15 min and max of 45.

<p>4. <b>An EXERCISE:</b></p>		<p>Let us know how this smiling is going. Have fun with this and keep things light.</p>
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Much metta and smiles to you all.  
Rev. Sister Khema

Next installment: 2010- FS-08: More in depth→ “What is a Human Being composed of that makes this journey?” [covering 5 Aggregates (khandas) more in depth and introducing the 6 Sense doors (salyatana) in action.

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