

CONTEMPLATION

And

MEDITATION

(VIHARA BUDDHA GOTAMA SUTTA SHARINGS)

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa

INTRODUCTION

This series of Sutta Sharings aims to clarify the difference between Sati and Satipatthana, and consequently the difference between Contemplation (Vipassana) and Meditation (Samatha).

In sutta (discourse) AN: 2.31 the Buddha said that two things give rise to insight knowledge - Samatha and Vipassana. As discussed later, the Buddha's meditation is the First Jhana, Second Jhana, Third Jhana, Fourth Jhana -this is the practice of Samatha.

Samatha and Vipassana together constitute Bhavana (Development). Samatha leads to the development of the mind, as the five hindrances (panca nivarana) which are obstructions to wisdom are eliminated when one attains the Jhanas. Vipassana leads to the development of a person's character, and that is the result of practicing Samma Sati (Right Mindfulness) and Samma Vayama (Right Effort), getting rid of unwholesome states and cultivating wholesome states.

Meditation is practiced in the sitting position, with eyes closed, to attain the Jhanas. When one attains the First Jhana: *“The monk is said to have blindfolded Mara, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Mara’s eye of its opportunity.”* (MN 26). This is because the consciousness has transcended the sensual realm (kamaloka) and entered the form realm (rupaloka). Hence the Jhanas are stated to be “Superhuman States” (Uttarimanussa Dhamma) by the Buddha.

Contemplation is practiced in normal everyday life where impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), non self (anatta) are understood by contemplating body, feelings, mind, and Dhamma. Understanding the three characteristics of life, one begins to improve oneself by getting rid of unwholesome states and developing wholesome states.

OCTOBER 2017:

Right View and The Importance of Dhamma (Sutta) - Vinaya

DN 16.6.1 (Maha Parinibbana Sutta)

And the Lord said to Ananda: “Ananda, it may be that you think: ‘The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no Teacher!’ It should not be seen like this, Ananda, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma-vinaya will, at my passing, be your Teacher.”

SN 47.9 (Gilano Sutta)

“Therefore, Ananda, be a lamp unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves, with no other refuge. Take the Dhamma as your lamp, take the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge ...

Those monks, Ananda, either now or after I am gone, who dwell with themselves as their lamp, with themselves as their own refuge, with no other refuge; with the Dhamma

as their lamp, with the Dhamma as their refuge, with no other refuge - it is these monks, Ananda, who will be for me topmost of those keen on the training.”

AN 4.180 (Mahapadesa Sutta)

“Here, monks, a monk might say:

- I. ‘In the presence of the Blessed One I heard this ... This is the Dhamma; this is the Vinaya; this is the Teacher’s teaching’*
- II. ‘In such and such a residence a Sangha is dwelling with elders and prominent monks. In the presence of that Sangha I heard this ... This is the Dhamma; this is the Vinaya; this is the Teacher’s teaching’*
- III. ‘In such and such a residence several elder monks are dwelling who are learned, heirs to the heritage, experts on the Dhamma-Vinaya, experts on the outlines. In the presence of those elders I heard this ... This is the Dhamma; this is the Vinaya; this is the Teacher’s teaching’*
- IV. ‘In such and such a residence one elder monk is dwelling who is learned, an heir to the heritage, an expert on the Dhamma-Vinaya, an expert on the outlines. In the presence of that elder I heard this ... This is the Dhamma; this is the Vinaya; this is the Teacher’s teaching’*

That monk’s statement should neither be approved nor rejected. Without approving or rejecting it, you should thoroughly learn those words and phrases and then check for them in the Suttas (discourses) and seek them in the Vinaya (monastic discipline). If when you check for them in the Suttas and seek them in the Vinaya, (you find that) they are not included among the Suttas and are not to be seen in the Vinaya, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Surely this is not the word of the Blessed One, Arahant Samma-Sambuddha. It has been badly learned by that monk.’ Thus should you discard it.”

AN 5.88

“Monks, possessing five qualities, an elder monk is acting for the harm of many people, for the unhappiness of many people, for the ruin, the harm, the suffering of many people, of devas and of humans. What five?”

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- I. An elder is of long standing and has long gone forth.*
 - II. He is well known and famous, and has a following of many people, including lay persons and monastics.*
 - III. He gains robes, alms food, lodging, and medical care.*
 - IV. He has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and accumulates what he has learned ...*
 - V. He holds wrong views and has a distorted perspective.*
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(This sutta proves that even a very senior, learned, famous, and popular monk can have wrong views. Hence we are advised to only rely on the Buddha's words as mentioned in the above suttas.)

NOVEMBER 2017:

SATI

Definition of Sati

Sati is consistently defined in suttas AN 5.14, 7.4, 7.67, 8.30, 10.17; SN 48.9, 48.10, 48.50; MN 53 as follows: e.g. AN 5.14 “*And what, monks, is the faculty of Sati? Here, monks, the ariyan disciple is mindful, possessing supreme mindfulness & alertness, one who remembers and recollects what was done & said long ago.*”

According to the Pali-English dictionary, the word Sati is derived from *Smrti*, which means ‘to remember’. So Sati can mean mindfulness, recollection, or calling to mind.

Nowadays most writers prefer to translate Sati as mindfulness. However in the Buddha's teaching we should remember that it does not refer to general mindfulness.

There is another Pali word that refers more to general mindfulness, and that is Sampajanna - see MN 119, SN 47.35.

Right mindfulness (Sammāsati) is defined in SN 45.8 as follows:

“And what, monks, is right mindfulness? Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... dhamma in dhamma, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world. This is called right mindfulness.”

So we see that right mindfulness refers to contemplating only four objects: body, feelings, mind, and dhamma. In other words, it is a specific mindfulness on only four objects. In suttas SN 47.6 and SN 47.7, the Buddha calls these four objects as a monk’s own resort, a monk’s own ancestral domain; forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tactile objects, i.e. the five objects of sensual pleasure, are the domain of others; and if a monk strays outside his own domain into the domain of others, Mara will gain access and will get a hold on him. Thus the practice of right mindfulness is to remember to direct one’s mindfulness only to body, feelings, mind, and dhamma, and to remember not to be distracted by forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tactile objects, which are Mara’s bait.

How Sati is practised as a Factor of Enlightenment (Bojjhanga)

SN 46.3

“Monks, those monks who are accomplished in virtue, accomplished in concentration, accomplished in wisdom, accomplished in liberation, accomplished in the knowledge and vision of liberation: even the sight of those monks is helpful, I say; even listening to them ... even approaching them ... even attending on them ... even recollecting them ... even going forth after them is helpful, I say. For what reason? Because when one has heard the dhamma from such monks one dwells withdrawn by way of two kinds of withdrawal - withdrawal of body and withdrawal of mind.

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Dwelling thus withdrawn, one recollects that dhamma and thinks it over. Whenever, monks, a monk dwelling thus withdrawn recollects that dhamma and thinks it over, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of mindfulness (Sati) is aroused by the monk; on that occasion the monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of mindfulness comes to fulfillment by development in the monk.”

So we see from here that listening, and recollecting the dhamma and thinking it over is the practice of mindfulness that can bring one to enlightenment. In fact it is the most important factor, as the other factors of enlightenment follow from this first one, as this sutta shows. Similarly, in the Ariyan Eightfold Path, right view (which comes from listening to the original dhamma - MN 43) is the first and most important factor which leads subsequently to the other factors of the Ariyan Eightfold Path - see MN 117.

In MN 117 it is stated that the practice of right effort (Sammavayama) leads to right mindfulness (Sammāsati). Right effort is the effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome states and to get rid of arisen unwholesome states; to develop wholesome states and maintain arisen wholesome states. To do this one needs to pay attention to one's body actions, speech, feelings, thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, the Buddha's teachings (dhamma). Thus the practice of right effort goes hand in hand with right mindfulness, and the combination is called vipassana (contemplation) which is to be practised in everyday life. The dhamma is a compass that gives us the right direction in life and we use it in our everyday life, reflecting on our bodily actions, our speech, our mind (feelings, thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, etc.), and the dhamma, and developing (bhavana) our mind, our character.

AN 2.31

“Monks, these two things give rise to knowledge / insight. What two? Samatha (tranquility) and vipassana (contemplation).”

This sutta shows that when we contemplate with a focused mind, insight arises. This is confirmed by the sutta below.

SN 46.38

“When, monks, a noble disciple listens to the dhamma with eager ears, attending to it as a matter of vital concern, directing his whole mind to it, on that occasion the five hindrances are not present in him; on that occasion the seven factors of enlightenment go to fulfillment by development.”

Thus we see from the suttas and vinaya that most people (thousands of them) attained stream-entry (and other Paths and Fruits) from listening to the dhamma with focused attention. The stock formula for stream-entry can be seen in the sutta that follows.

MN 56

‘Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upali progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens; he explained the danger, degradation, and defilement in sensual pleasures, and the blessing of renunciation. When he knew that the householder Upali’s mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident, he expounded to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder Upali sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the dhamma arose in him: “All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation.” then the householder Upali saw the dhamma, attained the dhamma, understood the dhamma, fathomed the dhamma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher’s Dispensation.’

Sati is purified in Samadhi (concentration)

Mindfulness is most pure in states of samadhi, when mindfulness is directed to only one object, and not scattered. Perfect samadhi consists of the four jhanas. In the state of the second jhana all thoughts cease (SN 36.11), a state of ariyan silence (SN 21.1) - this truly is ‘bare attention’.

MN 39

“Again, monks, with the fading away as well of delight (piti), a monk abides in equanimity, and mindful (sato) and fully aware (sampajano), still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhana, on account of which the ariyans say: ‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful (satima)’ ...

Again, monks, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and the previous disappearance of joy and grief, a monk enters upon and abides in the fourth jhana, which has neither pain nor pleasure and complete purity (parisuddhi) of mindfulness and equanimity ...

When his concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to the knowledge of recollection of past lives, that is, one birth, two births, ... ten ... hundred ... thousand ... hundred thousand births, many aeons ... ”

So we see from the above that mindfulness is completely purified in the fourth jhana, and because of that, the monk attains the ability to recollect his manifold past lives, confirming the definition of Sati to be the ability to remember what was said and done a long time ago. Thus it is clear that mindfulness is needed in both vipassana (contemplation) as well as samatha (tranquility) practice, and the practice of both leads to knowledge / insight, i.e. Wisdom.

DECEMBER 2017:

Satipatthana

(This article is to be read in conjunction with the preceding article on Sati)

Whereas there is a clear definition of Sati (mindfulness) in nine suttas, there is no similar clear-cut definition of Satipatthana given in the suttas. How it is used, appears to be the same as sati, namely mindfulness on four specific objects. However there is an important

difference between them. This can be seen if we study carefully several suttas in the Satipatthana Samyutta (chapter 47 of the Samyutta Nikaya) and a few other suttas.

SN 47.1

“Monks, this is the one-way path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the passing away of pain and grief, for the achievement of the method, for the realization of nibbana, that is, the four satipatthana. What four?”

Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... Dhamma in Dhamma”

So we see above that the practice of satipatthana is to be mindful of the four objects as in the practice of sati.

Now we refer to an important sutta below:

SN 47.20

“Monks, suppose that on hearing ‘The most beautiful girl of the land! The most beautiful girl of the land!’ a great crowd of people would assemble. Now that most beautiful girl of the land would dance exquisitely and sing exquisitely. On hearing, ‘The most beautiful girl of the land is dancing! The most beautiful girl of the land is singing!’ an even larger crowd of people would assemble. Then a man would come along, wishing to live, not wishing to die, wishing for happiness, averse to suffering. Someone would say to him: ‘Good man, you must carry around this bowl of oil filled to the brim between the crowd and the most beautiful girl of the land. A man with drawn sword will be following right behind you, and wherever you spill even a little of it, right there he will fell your head.’

What do you think, monks, would that man stop attending to that bowl of oil and out of negligence turn his attention outwards?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“I have made up this simile, monks, in order to convey a meaning. This here is the meaning: ‘The bowl of oil filled to the brim’: this is a designation for mindfulness directed to the body. Therefore, monks, you should train yourselves thus: ‘We will develop and cultivate mindfulness directed to the body, make it our vehicle, make it our basis, stabilize it, exercise ourselves in it, and fully perfect it.’ Thus, monks, should you train yourselves.”

It is clear in this sutta that the man has to pay intense, unremitting, one-pointed attention on the bowl of oil and not allow it to spill because his very life depends on this. This is said to be how mindfulness directed to the body should be practised, i.e. satipatthana on the body. This implies that satipatthana means ‘intense, unremitting, one-pointed mindfulness’ or simply ‘intense mindfulness’. This is corroborated by MN 118 below:

MN 118 (Anapanasati Sutta)

“And how, monks, do the four satipatthana, developed and cultivated, fulfil the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhanga)?

Monks, on whatever occasion a monk abides contemplating the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief in regard to the world - on that occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in him. On whatever occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in a monk - on that occasion the mindfulness factor of enlightenment is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfillment in him. ... ”

So we see here in the Anapanasati Sutta that satipatthana is referred to as ‘unremitting mindfulness’. Also we notice in this sutta that anapanasati (mindfulness of the breath meditation) fulfills the four satipatthana. This means that when one cultivates and develops intense, unremitting, one-pointed mindfulness on the breath, one is also observant of changing body states, feelings, mind states, and Dhamma. This is also stated in MN 111 where the Arahant Sariputta said that he was aware of all these changing states while in the various jhanas (states of perfect/right concentration).

The next sutta shows that the practice of satipatthana results in states of concentration:

SN 47.8

“So too, monks, here some foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world. While he dwells contemplating the body in the body, his mind does not become concentrated, his corruptions (i.e. hindrances) are not abandoned, he does not pick up that sign. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... Dhamma in Dhamma ... he does not pick up that sign.

That foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk, does not gain pleasant dwellings in this very life, nor does he gain mindfulness and clear awareness. For what reason? Because, monks, that foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk does not pick up the sign of his own mind. ...

So too, monks, here some wise, competent, skillful monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world. While he dwells contemplating the body in the body, his mind becomes concentrated, his corruptions are abandoned, he picks up that sign. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... Dhamma in Dhamma ... he picks up that sign.

That wise, competent, skillful monk gains pleasant dwellings in this very life, and he gains mindfulness and clear awareness. For what reason? Because, monks, that wise, competent, skillful monk picks up the sign of his own mind.”

The sutta above shows that if a foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk practises satipatthana, his mind does not become concentrated, so the hindrances are not abandoned, and he does not gain pleasant dwellings (i.e. the jhanas - states of perfect/right concentration) in this very life, and he does not even gain mindfulness and clear awareness (sati-sampajanna).

However, if a wise, competent, skillful monk practises satipatthana, his mind becomes concentrated, the hindrances are abandoned, and he gains pleasant dwellings in this very life and also sati-sampajanna.

This shows very clearly that if one practises satipatthana correctly, one must attain the jhanas, resulting in abandonment of the hindrances. In other words, satipatthana is the way/method/basis to attain the jhanas. This is exactly what is stated in MN 44 below:

MN 44 (Culavedalla Sutta)

“Unification of mind, friend Visakha, is concentration; the four satipatthana are the basis of concentration; the four right kinds of striving are the accessories of concentration; the repetition, development, and cultivation of these same states is the development of concentration therein.”

The four satipatthana are the basis of concentration, meaning that satipatthana is the practice for attaining concentration. In other words, satipatthana is synonymous with samatha meditation. This is also confirmed in MN 125 where satipatthana is mentioned in place of the first jhana.

MN 125 (Dantabhumi Sutta)

“Having thus abandoned the five hindrances, corruptions of the mind that weaken wisdom, he abides contemplating the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief in regard to the world. He abides contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... Dhamma in Dhamma ...

... Then the Tathagatha disciplines him further: ‘Come, monk, abide contemplating the body in the body, but do not think thoughts of sensual desire. Abide contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... Dhamma in Dhamma ...’

With the stilling of thought directed and thought sustained, he enters upon and abides in the second jhana ... third jhana ... fourth jhana. ”

Normally, after abandoning the five hindrances, a monk enters the first jhana as stated in several suttas, e.g. MN 51. Here instead, satipatthana is mentioned, followed by the second jhana, third jhana, and fourth jhana. Obviously here satipatthana is synonymous with the first jhana.

Concentration, i.e. jhana states, are essential for the development of psychic powers. It is not possible to attain psychic powers without first attaining the four jhanas. The Arahant Anuruddha was the foremost of the Buddha’s disciples with the divine/heavenly

eye. He could see the thousandfold world systems; exercise psychokinesis (being one, he becomes many, etc.); possess the divine ear; remember many world cycles of past lives; read the minds of other beings; etc. In various suttas he attributed all of these psychic powers to the cultivation and development of the four satipatthana - SN 47.28, SN 52.3, SN 52.6, SN 52.11 to SN 52.24. Below we quote one such sutta:

SN 52.12

“By having developed and cultivated what things has the Venerable Anuruddha attained to such great supernormal knowledge/powers?”

It is, friends, because I have developed and cultivated the four satipatthana that I have attained to such great supernormal powers. What four? Here, friends, I dwell contemplating the body in the body ... feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... Dhamma in Dhamma ... ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world.

Further, friends, it is because I have developed and cultivated these four satipatthana that I wield the various kinds of psychic powers: having been one I become many; having been many I become one; I appear and disappear; I pass through fences, walls and mountains unhindered as if through air; I walk on the water without breaking the surface as if on land; I fly cross-legged through the sky like a bird with wings; I even touch and stroke with my hand the sun and moon, mighty and powerful as they are; and I travel in the body as far as the Brahma world.”

Conclusion

The practice of right mindfulness (samma sati - the seventh factor of the Ariyan Eightfold Path) is to be mindful of the body, feelings, mind, and Dhamma in everyday life, without being distracted and enticed by forms, sounds, odours, flavours, and tangibles, which are Mara’s bait. It is to be practised along with right effort (samma vayama - the sixth factor of the Ariyan Eightfold Path) to get rid of unwholesome states

and to develop wholesome states. This is the essence of the spiritual path. This combination of right mindfulness and right effort is vipassana (contemplation).

The practice of satipatthana (intense state of mindfulness) is to attain concentration (samma samadhi - the eighth factor of the Ariyan Eightfold Path) in order to get rid of the hindrances (nivarana) and attain higher states of wisdom. It is also the link between the seventh and eighth factors of the Ariyan Eightfold Path. Thus the practice of satipatthana is samatha (tranquility) meditation.

Vipassana and samatha are both necessary for liberation. This is evident in the AN 4.170.

JANUARY 2018:

MEDITATION

(This article is to be read in conjunction with the preceding articles on Sati and Satipatthana)

Type of Meditation Praised by the Buddha

Meditation has a long history in India, and in the last five thousand years practically all types of meditation you can think of have been practised by the yogis of India. So what exactly is the type of meditation that the Buddha praised, and what type of meditation did he not praise? Fortunately for us this is spelt out clearly for us by the Ven. Ananda in Sutta MN 108 below.

MN 108 (Gopakamoggallana Sutta)

“The Blessed One, brahmin, did not praise every type of meditation, nor did he condemn every type of meditation. What kind of meditation did the Blessed one not praise? Here, brahmin, someone abides with his mind obsessed by sensual lust, a prey to sensual

lust, and he does not understand as it actually is the escape from arisen sensual lust. While he harbours sensual lust within, he meditates, pre-meditates, out-meditates, and mismeditates. He abides with his mind obsessed by ill will, a prey to ill will...with his mind obsessed by sloth and torpor, a prey to sloth and torpor...with his mind obsessed by restlessness and remorse, a prey to restlessness and remorse...with his mind obsessed by doubt, a prey to doubt, and he does not understand as it actually is the escape from arisen doubt. While he harbours doubt within, he meditates, pre-meditates, out-meditates, and mismeditates. The Blessed One did not praise that kind of meditation.

And what kind of meditation did the Blessed One praise? Here, brahmin quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters upon and abides in the first jhana... With the stilling of thought directed and sustained, he enters upon and abides in the second jhana...With the fading away as well of delight...he enters upon and abides in the third jhana...With the abandoning of pleasure and pain...he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhana...The Blessed One praised that kind of meditation.”

So we see from the above, the type of meditation that does not lead to the elimination of the five hindrances was not praised by the Buddha. The reason given here is that the person harbors the five hindrances within him, and so he abides with a mind obsessed by these hindrances.

The type of meditation praised by the Buddha is the type that leads to the attainment of the four jhanas. This also implies that with the attainment of the four jhanas, the five hindrances are eliminated. The four jhanas are called Right Concentration and that is the eighth factor of the Ariyan Eightfold Path.

Note that before a person can enter and abide in the first jhana he has to renounce sensual desires and unwholesome states. This is the fundamental training of a renunciant.

Elimination of the Hindrances

Why is the elimination of the five hindrances so important? The answer is found in sutta SN 46.40 quoted below.

SN 46.40 (Bojjhanga Samyutta)

“Monks, these five hindrances are makers of blindness, causing lack of vision, causing lack of knowledge, detrimental to wisdom, tending to vexation, leading away from Nibbana. What five? The hindrance of sensual desire is a maker of blindness...The hindrance of ill will...The hindrance of sloth and torpor...The hindrance of restlessness and remorse...The hindrance of doubt is a maker of blindness...leading away from Nibbana. These five hindrances are makers of blindness, causing lack of vision, causing lack of knowledge, detrimental to wisdom, tending to vexation, leading away from Nibbana.”

Elimination of the five hindrances occurs at three levels: temporary, long-term, and permanent.

- i) **Temporary elimination** occurs when a person pays focused attention (yoniso manasikara). This is stated in SN 46.38.

SN 46.38 (Bojjhanga Samyutta)

“When, monks a noble disciple listens to the Dhamma with eager ears, attending to it as a matter of vital concern, directing his whole mind to it, on that occasion the five hindrances are not present in him; on that occasion the seven factors of enlightenment go to fulfillment by development.”

Because of the temporary elimination of the five hindrances a person can attain right view (which is synonymous with stream-entry) when listening to the True Dhamma (Suttas).

MN 43 (Mahavedalla Sutta)

“Friend, there are two conditions for the arising of right view: the voice of another (teaching the True Dhamma) and focused attention. These are the two conditions for the arising of right view.”

- ii) **Long-term elimination** of the hindrances occurs when a person attains the jhanas

MN 68 (Nalakapana Sutta)

“What should be done, Anuruddha, by a clansman who has gone forth thus? While he still does not attain to the delight and bliss that are secluded from sensual desires and secluded from unwholesome states (i.e. first jhana), or to something more peaceful than that (i.e. higher jhanas), covetousness invades his mind and remains, ill will invades his mind and remains, sloth and torpor invades his mind and remains, restlessness and remorse... doubt... discontent... weariness invades his mind and remains...

When he attains to the delight and bliss that are secluded from sensual desires and secluded from unwholesome states (i.e. first jhana), or to something more peaceful than that (i.e. higher jhanas), covetousness does not invade his mind and remain, ill will...sloth and torpor...restlessness and remorse...doubt...discontent...weariness does not invade his mind and remain!”

DN 2 (Samannaphala Sutta)

“As long, Sire, as a monk does not perceive the disappearance of the five hindrances in himself, he feels as if in debt, in sickness, in bonds, in slavery, on a desert journey. But when he perceives the disappearance of the five hindrances in himself, it is as if he were freed from debt, from sickness, from bonds, from slavery, from the perils of the desert.”

This long-term elimination of the hindrances is different from permanent elimination. After a person attains the jhanas, if he creates extremely heavy evil kamma, he can lose his ability to attain jhana again and the hindrances can return. This was the case with the Buddha’s disciple Devadatta who attempted to kill the Buddha. As a result he lost all his psychic powers and his jhanas.

- iii) **Permanent elimination** of the five hindrances occurs on attainment of arahanthood (liberation)

SN 54.12 (Anapana Samyutta)

“Friend Mahanama, those monks who are trainees (sekha – all ariyans except the arahant), who have not attained the mind’s ideal, who dwell aspiring for the unsurpassed security from bondage, dwell having abandoned the five hindrances...

But, friend Mahanama, for those monks who are arahants...the five hindrances have been abandoned, cut off at the root, made like palm stumps, obliterated so that they are no more subject to future arising.”

In the temporary and long-term elimination of the five hindrances, sensual desires, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt are still present, but at a low level and do not obsess the mind. That is why they are not hindrances. However, since these states are still present albeit at low level, they can resurface as hindrances in future. Only the arahant has permanently eliminated the five hindrances.

How to Attain the Four Jhanas

So how do we meditate to attain the four jhanas? That is given in MN 44 quoted below:

MN 44 (Culavedalla Sutta)

“Unification of mind, friend Visakha, is concentration; the four satipatthana (intense states of mindfulness) are the basis of concentration; the four right kinds of striving are the accessories of concentration; the repetition, development, and cultivation of these same states is the development of concentration therein.”

So we need to practise the four satipatthana to attain the four jhanas, and what type of meditation fulfills the four satipatthana? One such meditation is mindfulness of breathing (anapanasati), as explained in MN 118 (Anapanasati Sutta).

In the explanation of the practice of satipatthana given in SN 47.1 it is said :

SN 47.1 (Satipatthana Samyutta)

“...Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings...mind in mind...Dhamma in Dhamma, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world.”

We note above that a condition for practising satipatthana competently, skillfully, is “having removed covetousness and grief in regard to the world.” When something in the world gives us pleasure and delight, we want to covet (possess) it. Greed arises. And if we cannot get it, grief arises. So to remove covetousness and grief in regard to the world, we have to turn our backs to worldly pleasure, to renounce the world. In other words to be able to practise satipatthana successfully and attain the supernormal states (uttarimanussa dhamma) of jhana, we have to renounce sensual pleasures. This is corroborated by the suttas below:

MN 75 (Magandiya Sutta)

“What do you think, Magandiya? Have you ever seen or heard of a king or a king’s minister enjoying himself, provided and endowed with the five objects of sensual pleasure who, without abandoning craving for sensual pleasures, without removing fever for sensual pleasures, was able to abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, or who is able or who will be able to so abide...?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Good, Magandiya. I too have never seen or heard of a king or a king’s minister enjoying himself, provided and endowed with the five objects of sensual pleasure who, without abandoning craving for sensual pleasures, without removing fever for sensual pleasures, was able to abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, or who is able or who will be able to so abide...”

MN 14 (Culadukkhakkhandha Sutta)

“Venerable Sir, I have long understood the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One thus : ‘Greed is an imperfection that defiles the mind, hatred...delusion is an imperfection that defiles the mind.’ Yet while I understand the Dhamma taught by the

Blessed One thus, at times states of greed, hatred, and delusion invade my mind and remain. I have wondered, Venerable Sir, what state is still unabandoned by me internally, owing to which at times these states of greed, hatred, and delusion invade my mind and remain.”

“Mahanama, there is still a state unabandoned by you internally, owing to which at times states of greed, hatred, and delusion invade your mind and remain; for were that state already abandoned by you internally you would not be living the home life, you would not be enjoying sensual pleasures. It is because that state (i.e. sensual desires) is unabandoned by you internally that you are living the home life and enjoying sensual pleasures.

Even though an ariyan disciple has seen clearly as it actually is, with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, as long as he still does not attain to the delight (piti) and bliss (sukha) that are apart from sensual desires, apart from unwholesome states (i.e. first jhana), or to something more peaceful than that (i.e. higher jhanas), he may still be attracted to sensual pleasures...”

To make us understand the unrestrained, uncultivated mind, and how to restrain or cultivate it, the Buddha gave the simile of the six animals in sutta SN 35.247.

A hunter caught six animals – a bird, snake, crocodile, monkey, dog, and a jackal. After tying a rope around the neck of each of the animals, he then tied the six ropes together in a knot and released the animals. Each would pull in a different direction. The strongest would pull and the others have to follow. When tired, another would take over pulling the others. This is similar to the normal uncultivated mind which is pulled by sights/forms, sounds, odours, flavours, tangibles, and thoughts. It is moving from object to object all the time. This is the scattered, uncultivated mind, still seeking after pleasurable sense objects.

To discipline the mind, the Buddha again taught by using the simile of the six animals. The hunter should tie the six ropes to a strong stout post. Then whichever direction the animals fly, jump, run, they only go round and round the post until they become tired and obediently lie down beside the post, tamed. In the same way, to tame the mind we should meditate by tying the mind to one object only, e.g. mindfulness of breathing (anapanasati). Then no matter which direction the mind runs out to, we should

pull it back to that one object each time. With perseverance one eventually can tame the mind to stay with that one object and attain the first jhana.

The Meditation Practice of the Buddha

What meditation did the Buddha personally practise? The answer is found in the following suttas.

SN 54.11 (Anapanasati Samyutta)

“Monks, if wanderers of other sects ask you: ‘In what dwelling, friends, did the Blessed One generally dwell during the rains residence?’ – being asked thus, you should answer those wanderers thus: ‘During the rains residence, friends, the Blessed One generally dwelt in the concentration by mindfulness of breathing’...

If anyone, monks, speaking rightly could say of anything: ‘It is an ariyan dwelling, a divine dwelling, the Tathagata’s dwelling,’ it is of concentration by mindfulness of breathing that one could rightly say this.”

SN 54.8 (Anapanasati Samyutta)

“It is in this way, monks, that concentration by mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit.

I too, monks before my enlightenment, while I was still a bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, generally dwelt in this dwelling. While I generally dwelt in this dwelling, neither my body nor my eyes became fatigued and my mind, by not clinging, was liberated from the asavas.”

Conclusion

We see that the only type of meditation praised by the Buddha is the four jhanas, which is synonymous with perfection of satipatthana. However to be successful one has to renounce sensual desires and unwholesome states, which is practically impossible for most lay persons, and very difficult even for a monastic. This is why the Buddha stressed on listening to his discourses (suttas) by calling all his monastic as well as lay followers as savaka, i.e. listeners or hearers of his words. That at least can bring one into stream-entry, and so be destined for enlightenment in not more than seven subsequent lifetimes.

Nowadays, some monastics say that jhanas are not necessary for liberation. Some also claim there is no mindfulness while in jhana, and that jhanas are external sect meditation, not the Buddha's. The Buddha warned that irreverence/disrespect for concentration is one of five factors leading to the decline of the True Dhamma (SN 16.13)

There may be different types of concentration (samadhi), but right/perfect concentration is the four jhanas. The states of jhana as described in the suttas are exemplified in MN 111.

MN 111 (Anupada Sutta)

“And the states in the first jhana – the thought directed, thought sustained, delight, bliss, and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; the zeal, 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.” ... (followed by the description of the other jhana states).

It is evident that the Buddha's jhanas are states of intense, discerning, penetrative mindfulness, being completely rid of hindrances. And that can lead to deep, profound insights for the realization of nibbana when they are supported by the other seven factors of the Ariyan Eightfold Path.

March 2018:

Summary

MN 143 Anathapindikovada Sutta (Advice to Anathapindika)

(translated by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi)

Thus have I heard . On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park.

Now on that occasion the householder Anathapindika was afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill. Then he addressed a certain man thus: "Come, good man, go to the Blessed One, pay homage in my name with your head at his feet, and say: 'Venerable sir, the householder Anathapindika is afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill; he pays homage with his head at the Blessed One's feet.' Then go to the venerable Sariputta, pay homage in my name with your head at his feet, and say: 'Venerable sir, the householder Anathapindika is afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill; he pays homage with his head at the venerable Sariputta's feet.' Then say: 'It would be good, venerable sir, if the venerable Sariputta would come to the residence of the householder Anathapindika, out of compassion.'"

"Yes, sir," the man replied, and he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to the Blessed One, he sat down at one side and delivered his message. Then he went to the venerable Sariputta, and after paying homage to the venerable Sariputta, he delivered his message, saying: "It would be good, venerable sir, if the venerable Sariputta would come to the residence of the householder Anathapindika, out of compassion." The venerable Sariputta consented in silence.

Then the venerable Sariputta dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went to the residence of the householder Anathapindika with the venerable Ananda as his attendant. Having gone there, he sat down on a seat made ready and said to the householder Anathapindika: "I hope you are getting well, householder, I hope you are comfortable. I hope your painful feelings are subsiding and not increasing, and that their subsiding, not their increase, is apparent."

"Venerable Sariputta, I am not getting well, I am not comfortable. My painful feelings are increasing, not subsiding; their increase and not their subsiding is apparent.

Contemplation and Meditation

Just as if a strong man were splitting my head open with a sharp sword, so too, violent winds cut through my head. I am not getting well... Just as if a strong man were tightening a tough leather strap around my head as a headband, so too, there are violent pains in my head. I am not getting well... Just as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to carve up an ox's belly with a sharp butcher's knife, so too, violent winds are carving up my belly. I am not getting well... Just as if two strong men were to seize a weaker man by both arms and roast him over a pit of hot coals, so too, there is a violent burning in my body. I am not getting well, I am not comfortable. My painful feelings are increasing, not subsiding; their increase and not their subsiding is apparent."

"Then, householder, you should train thus: 'I will not cling to the eye, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the eye.' Thus you should train. You should train thus: 'I will not cling to the ear... I will not cling to the nose... I will not cling to the tongue... I will not cling to the body... I will not cling to the mind, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the mind.' Thus you should train.

"Householder, you should train thus: 'I will not cling to forms... I will not cling to sounds... I will not cling to odours... I will not cling to flavours... I will not cling to tangibles... I will not cling to mind-objects, and my consciousness will not be dependent on mind-objects.' Thus you should train.

"Householder, you should train thus: 'I will not cling to eye-consciousness... I will not cling to ear-consciousness... I will not cling to nose-consciousness... I will not cling to tongue-consciousness... I will not cling to body-consciousness... I will not cling to mind-consciousness, and my consciousness will not be dependent on mind-consciousness.' Thus you should train.

"Householder, you should train thus: 'I will not cling to eye-contact... I will not cling to ear-contact... I will not cling to nose-contact... I will not cling to tongue-contact... I will not cling to body-contact... I will not cling to mind-contact, and my consciousness will not be dependent on mind-contact.' Thus you should train.

"Householder, you should train thus: 'I will not cling to feeling born of eye-contact... I will not cling to feeling born of ear-contact... I will not cling to feeling born of nose-contact... I will not cling to feeling born of tongue-contact... I will not cling to feeling born of body-contact... I will not cling to feeling born of mind-contact, and my consciousness will not be dependent on feeling born of mind-contact.' Thus you should train.

“Householder, you should train thus: ‘I will not cling to the earth element... I will not cling to the water element... I will not cling to the fire element... I will not cling to the air element... I will not cling to the space element... I will not cling to the consciousness element, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the consciousness element.’ Thus you should train.

“Householder, you should train thus: ‘I will not cling to material form... I will not cling to feeling... I will not cling to perception... I will not cling to formations... I will not cling to consciousness, and my consciousness will not be dependent on consciousness.’ Thus you should train.

“Householder, you should train thus: ‘I will not cling to the base of infinite space... I will not cling to the base of infinite consciousness... I will not cling to the base of nothingness... I will not cling to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’ Thus you should train.

“Householder, you should train thus: ‘I will not cling to this world, and my consciousness will not be dependent on this world. I will not cling to the world beyond, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the world beyond.’ Thus you should train.

“Householder, you should train thus: ‘I will not cling to what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after, and examined by the mind, and my consciousness will not be dependent on that.’ Thus you should train.”

When this was said, the householder Anathapiṇḍika wept and shed tears. Then the venerable Ananda asked him: “Are you foundering, householder, are you sinking?”

*“I am not foundering, venerable Ananda, I am not sinking. But **although I have long waited upon the Teacher and bhikkhus worthy of esteem, never before have I heard such a talk on the Dhamma.**”*

*“**Such talk on the Dhamma, householder, is not given to lay people clothed in white. Such talk on the Dhamma is given to those who have gone forth.**”*

“Well then, venerable Sariputta, let such talk on the Dhamma be given to lay people clothed in white. There are clansmen with little dust in their eyes who are wasting away through not hearing (such talk on) the Dhamma. There will be those who will understand the Dhamma.”

Then, after giving the householder Anathapindika this advice, the venerable Sariputta and the venerable Ananda rose from their seats and departed. Soon after they had left, the householder Anathapindika died and reappeared in the Tusita heaven...

Anathapindika was known to be the main supporter of our Buddha Gotama and his large community of monk disciples. So he associated closely with them for many years, up to his dying day. Yet in spite of that we learn from this discourse (sutta), he did not get the chance to hear deep discourses. This shows that lay persons during the Buddha's time hardly ever get to hear the deep discourses given by the Buddha or his Arahant disciples. Lay persons only got to hear the introductory basic explanation of the four Ariyan Truths concerning suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation. But even then we find that many tens of thousands of lay persons attained Stream-entry (First Path Ariyahood) upon hearing this basic Dhamma for the first time. This is evident in the Suttas and Vinaya books.

For example, in the Vinaya books, it is mentioned that after the Buddha converted one thousand matted-hair ascetics (Jatilas, who practised the jhanas, states of meditative absorption) to become monks, he preached to them the Aditta-Pariyaya Sutta (SN35.28). Hearing the Dhamma for the first time, all one thousand became Arahants. Then the Buddha brought them to Rajagaha where King Bimbisara threw a big lunch offering for them and called upon the Rajagaha residents to come to see the Arahants. After the meal the Buddha discoursed on the Four Ariyan Truths concerning suffering to them. It is said that one hundred and twenty thousand people attained Stream-entry upon hearing the Dhamma for the first time. On another occasion the Vinaya books state that the Buddha preached the same discourse to eighty thousand newcomer lay persons, and all of them attained Stream-entry. The few lay persons who attained higher stages of Ariyahood were like the Anagamin Citta who discussed the higher Dhamma with monks every day when they went to his house to accept meal offering.

In DN 14 (Mahapadana Sutta) the Buddha said he recollected the past ninety-one world cycles, and only found six Buddhas willing to teach the Dhamma. On the other hand, sometimes five hundred Pacceka Buddhas (who do not teach) can be found at one time, as shown in the Isigili Sutta (MN 116). This shows that the vast majority of Buddhas do not want to teach and spread the Dhamma. In other words, it is extremely rare to encounter the True Dhamma, the discourses given by a Samma Sambuddha.

In the Pasadika Sutta (DN 29) the Buddha said that the holy life that he taught is “*perfect, with nothing lack and nothing superfluous (i.e. complete), well proclaimed in the perfection of its purity*”. In other words, we cannot find the teaching of any other Buddha more complete or perfect than that of our Buddha Gotama. Our Buddha Gotama is among the topmost, most perfect Buddhas.

Nowadays we are extremely fortunate to be able to investigate all the discourses of the Buddha which have been transmitted down to us over two millennia in the five Nikaya (collections of sutta). Furthermore, we can choose either to read them in book form or listen to recorded talks (with explanations) by various monastics, instead of having to memorise every sutta as in the Buddha’s time. So it looks like we are even more fortunate than those born in India during the time of the Buddha. Now everyone can learn the Dhamma! Learning the Buddhavacana (Buddha Word) is like having the Buddha personally teaching us.

For all the above reasons, it would be absolutely foolish not to grab this rare opportunity to investigate the discourses of our Buddha Gotama with whole-hearted effort in order to attain Stream-entry. Otherwise eternal rebirths await us. And in the eternity of rebirths, there will be countless rebirths in the ghost realm, animal realm, and hell – entailing indescribable suffering.



Ciram Tittathu Saddhammo

Sutta Numbering and Abbreviations

DN : Digha Nikaya (DN 15 refers to sutta no. 15)

MN : Majjhima Nikaya, (MN 38 refers to sutta no. 38)

SN : Samyutta Nikaya, (SN 12.43 refers to Chapter 12, sutta no. 43)

AN: Anguttara Nikaya, (AN2.26 refers to book of Twos, sutta no.26)

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