Meditation and Daily Life

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 45:34

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sambha sampuddhasa namo tassa bhagavato arahato sambha sampuddhasa namo tassa bhagavato arahato sambha sampuddhasa

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-enlightened one.

There's always this blank when I begin a talk. Starts somewhere. I suppose what I'd like to do is make a link between what we're doing in meditation and what we do in the world out there. And people find that difficult. I was rather fortunate. When I say people find it difficult, I mean people in this particular tradition, especially Theravāda, also in other traditions, but I always feel fortunate because I began with Zen Buddhism up in North England, the Throstle Hole Abbey Foundation, I don't know whether you know of it.

And Zen practice is very much based on work—you do a lot of physical work. I'm now talking about the monastic routine up there. Obviously when they do a special course of just meditation there tends to be more meditation—they call it a session—but just in their ordinary daily rota they do a lot of physical work. They keep gardens. And this came about because of the history of Buddhism in China which then spread to Japan where the idea of begging was just not on. And so the Chinese monks began to grow their own food, things like that.

The reason you worked hard, I mean you put a lot of energy into it, was because in the work you got your concentration and your mindfulness so that when you went to sit there was that attention, there was the ability to watch. So that mixture of working, even though it was physical work, and meditation, made it quite easy for me to see how the meditation worked in daily life, how it just moved into it. There was no real thought about it, it just went into daily life. Whatever you were doing, you attended to it.

And one thing that helps, of course, is the way that Zen or Chan or Dzogchen, some of you might know Dzogchen from the Tibetan tradition, begin their meditation. You might describe it as awareness at the six sense doors. In Buddhism you have the five senses, which we're all aware of, and the sixth sense, which is the mind itself. It's a sensing thing, it receives. It receives thoughts, it receives emotions. And being at the forefront, within the all, it's easy to maintain that general awareness when you go out into the world. So there didn't seem to be this huge distinction.

Now I just used the word there, the all. That's the Buddha, you see. He says the all. The six senses is the all. So to understand that, we have to get the idea that we are actually living in this bubble, this bubble of consciousness. It doesn't have an edge to it which is contained. It's just this space. So at this present time,

in terms of my eye consciousness, I'm just caught within this room. It's difficult for me to see outside this room. So visually, I'm caught within the bubble, you might say, of this visual consciousness. And that's all I know, isn't it?

And it's a truism—all you know is what you know. You can't go beyond what you know. And what you know is that which the senses give you and your own mind and your own heart. There's nothing else. You can't go beyond that. So in a sense we're living in this enclosed little universe of my consciousness. And it's obviously similar, but different from yours. Otherwise we couldn't communicate.

But walking into this room, nobody will deny that the room has, as it were, its own existence, for want of a better word. So if we all leave, nobody believes the room disappears. It's not here because we see it. But on the other hand, thinking subjectively, this room—there exist as many rooms as there are people in it, in terms of how the room is experienced. So we all walk in here and there's your room and my room, etc. And with it we have our relationship to it.

So that's the all, that's the all that the Buddha's talking about. Within that all, there is the whole of *saṃsāra* , the whole of onward going, the whole of unsatisfactoriness, and within that whole, eventually, is the Nibbanic experience. So the nirvanic experience isn't outside consciously—we're not going somewhere to experience *nirvana*. It's not like you take a train down from Manchester to London, and it's over there. *Nir vana* is simply another way of being in the world. So what we're investigating is the way we're being, or perhaps better, becoming, this constant sense of becoming somebody in the world.

So now, with the Zen Dzogchen approach, that distance between being up in the front of your mind, as it were, and then going out into the world didn't seem so separate. But in this other tradition, which is the Theravāda tradition, and also in the Tibetan tradition known as the Mahamudra tradition, they also have this form of meditation. We're actually trying to find within ourselves a sort of observation post, a position which is at the interface of consciousness and what the mind is offering, what the senses are offering. It's as though we've stepped out of ourselves, stood behind it and just watched. Or above it or below it, it doesn't matter what image you want to use. But it's as though we are exiting from the personality. Sort of finding a place where you're up front as to where thoughts arise. They arise there.

Now, you see, as I'm speaking to you now, I can't be looking at my thoughts that way, or else I'd lose it. If I become objective to my thoughts, I'll just know thinking, and the talk comes to an end and we'll have to do some walking meditation. I can't do—I've got to be up there in the thought. So it's the same with my emotional life. If I'm now, say, depressed, you see, and I start feeling my depression, well, it's going to be really depressing for you all, because I'm just going to express how depressed I am.

Somehow, I've got to maintain that distance, but in a sense, when I'm talking, I've got to manufacture. I've got to manufacture a particular mood to go with the talk. I manufacture a particular mood to go with when I meet somebody I know—a happiness arises. So but I've got to be up there, I've got to be in that emotion as it were. Whereas here you see I can somehow step behind it. I can see it. I can point to it. So I

can say joy and it's there as it were in front of me.

When we have a pain—a headache or something—and we're trying to do some work, it's there, we're in it. It's very difficult for us to separate entirely from it and we immediately search for some pills to get rid of it. But here I can form a sort of space as it were between that which knows—the knowing—and the headache, the knee ache, the back ache. The sneeze. I can see the body going, "achoo," like that in front of me.

So there's some way in which I can objectify the whole psychophysical organism that usually I'm in. I'm in it and being it, walking around the world as this being. And to do that, we use this little technique, you see, of pointing with a word. You don't have to do that. There are perfectly viable *vipassanā* techniques that don't do the pointing with the word. But they still get that position. They still know it as an object.

The reason why the noting is there is, as we discussed last night, just to keep the intellect pointed, but there's a more subtle reason in that even when you are not using a word, you are still conceptualizing what you look at. You're still seeing it by way of a concept. So just to say the word, at least as it were, brings that concept to mind, and then we can move towards it.

So one thing might be, you see, is that you might have an itch. So you recognize it, "itching, itching," you see, and you can feel it. I've got one in here now. And you feel the itching, you see, and so long as I say "itching," there comes that whole response to it. Got to scratch it, get rid of the itch, you see. If I can just keep saying "itching," but I put my attention directly on to the sensation, it's as though I'm going beyond the idea of itching, and when that idea of itching goes, the idea of reacting to it goes, because I only react to something that I recognise.

When I get down to an itch as an itch, as it really manifests in the body, it's just a little sense disturbance, like a little scratching on the surface of the skin. And being with that, it means that this awareness I've got, this intelligence I've got, is pulling itself out of its embeddement, confusion with the intellect.

When I was at the college I used to work at, I once went to a colleague who was a fundamental materialist. There is the body, full stop—when you're dead that's the end of it. And I said to him—this is on the corridor—I said to him, "Is there an intelligence which doesn't think?" And he looked at me. We used to have these silly conversations. And he looked at me, and just for a moment, he looked. And he never said it. He just turned around and walked away.

And I was left thinking, what the hell have I said? And he took about ten, twenty paces, stopped, turned around, came straight back at me and said, "No," and then walked off. So presumably he's still stuck in the mire of delusion, you see.

So what we recognise by noting and by seeing thought—by recognising thought, there must be something that recognises the thought. There must be something outside thought which knows thought. And then we begin to see that thought is just there.

What do we mean by concept, you see? What do we mean by concept? They're symbols, aren't they? They're just symbols which carry history. If I say, for instance, "ice cream." Just say ice cream. What comes immediately, you see? It's not just the word, is it? I mean, a cornet came, with a twirl of ice cream. And then I'm on the beach and there's donkeys. You see, there's all sorts of things. Blackpool and stuff. All these things come up just with the word "ice cream." If you said it to me another time, I might get a whole load of different history. And there comes with it this deliciousness. See, got to have an ice cream.

So whenever we have a word, we always bring with it our understanding, which is historical, and our emotional involvement in whatever it is that we're conceiving. And that's okay. That's okay. You need it in ordinary life. But here, you see, in our meditation, we actually want to see that process and how it stops us from directly experiencing what we're actually experiencing.

So, for instance, today we had lasagna. Am I correct? I think it was lasagna. So there'll be, I'm sure there'll be amongst us, a specialised cook who knows what exactly a lasagna ought to be or whatever, what it should be cooked. So the pasta was not al dente, you see. It wasn't quite right. Teeth should go through it, but there should be a hardness to it. It shouldn't be too soft. If there's a little hardness in the middle, it's not properly cooked.

So anybody going there with a concept of what lasagna ought to be like because they are this expert lasagna user, they might not like that at all. They might have formed a real aversion to it, unable to eat it. You get that with gourmets, don't you? "It's terrible, take it away, I can't stand it." And it's perfectly good food.

So, as we're eating, we can see how the concept is affecting us. The chips, you see. So, while the chips came, I thought, oh, it's lovely, you see. The chips came, but I had no vinegar, so I could feel this disappointment. I had salt, but I had no vinegar. Where's the vinegar? And I thought, well, relax. It's not the end of the world. Chips without vinegar. No HP. Terrible. And this just arises naturally because of my conditioning with chips. What can you do?

If you battle that, if you think, well, you shouldn't be thinking that. That's terrible. That's just suppressive, isn't it? You're just layering another negativity. So here we are, we're taking this position always behind the mind, if you'll excuse that image, and you're just watching things arise and pass away.

I mean, what is there? There's sensations, sensations coming from the body, pleasant, unpleasant, feelings from the heart, pleasant, unpleasant, thoughts and images. That's it. And it all works in unison with different little habits and it produces this personality. And the personality changes, doesn't it? You're this way with this person and then you're slightly different with another person and you're slightly different when you're by yourself. It's not as though the personality is a static thing. It's got all sorts of shades and nuances depending on the situation you're in. Different types of habits arise.

Next time you happen to talk to a policeman, just watch your body. Or even seeing a policeman as well.

"Not me. All the guilt comes up. Not me. I didn't do it." Or when you're standing next to somebody over whom you have some position. You just watch your body posture. You always lift it. Lift your chin. Even if the person is six foot six. Just engage. And if you walk into a room of somebody whom you have to have respect for, even a doctor—very few people have the old respect for doctors—but even so, walking into a doctor, just notice, you see, you just lower yourself a bit.

But this is just normal body language, you see. In the West, where we've come to this wonderful state of total equality, of course, we deny all this. We behave as though we're all perfectly equal. But in fact, if you watch yourself closely, you change. You change depending on who you meet, who you're with.

One of the more obvious ones is when you meet little children. You suddenly take on this baby voice and act in a stupid way. The kid thinks there's something wrong with this adult. As far as you're concerned, you have this special communication with a child. "Hello, how are you doing?"

So here we are, taking this position within ourselves, and the process is a detachment. We're not getting involved. It's one of allowing things to manifest and watching them die away. So it's very passive. It's not active. We're not actually manufacturing anything in the mind. What it's leading us to is a stillness of thought, a complete calmness of the heart, and a stillness of the body. Silence in the mind, calmness in the heart, stillness in the body. That's what *vipassanā* would lead you to, you see. It would lead you to that point of just bringing all that energy, finally just rolling down to this perfect stasis. Perfect stasis.

Now, if that was it, if that was the end of the plot, you see, then of course that would be the end of the practice. You would just meditate, come to this end point and that would be it.

Now if you go back to the Buddha's life, so he's struggling to find a way out of his question. Why do we suffer? Why are we unhappy? Why don't we find perfect fulfillment? Why am I here? All these existential questions. And just as an aside, remember that he remembers this point in childhood. This is really very crucial, very important. These stories that come through, they give you a pointer as to where the insight about how to go beyond suffering comes.

He's tried all these different methods, the absorptions and the mortifications. And he comes to this point, he remembers this point in childhood, where he's watching his father doing the plowing ceremony. So what is it about that attention that he had there, which is different from all the attention that he'd got through all this practice with these teachers, and through his mortification practices, and it goes back to that mind that the child has—best recognised before seven, that pre-conceptual, when the mind, before it begins to really proliferate, where you can see, especially young children, where they might see something which they'd never seen before, a bug or something.

I have a picture of two little girls watching this bug and it's perfect. And they just lock on to it. It's like the world shuts down and all they know is this little bug. And the jaw drops.

Now, that's why in your meditation the jaw has to be relaxed. Because the jaw and the tongue are

intimately connected to thought. And sometimes you'll actually catch, if you watch, you'll actually catch your tongue moving with thought. It's already ready to speak. It's just tickling away on the top. So by relaxing that, you immediately relax the whole process of thinking.

And after it's actually observed this little bug, only then, when it's absorbed it, when it's really absorbed what it's looking at, will it ask for its name. And once it's told it's a beetle, it has a concept and a history. So the next time it sees a beetle, it's much more interested to tell the parent that it recognizes what it is, a beetle. But it's not seen the beetle. It's not seeing the beetle like it saw the beetle before. From now on, all beetles are seen with that history, with that word, with that concept. Even if the beetle is slightly different, it's still a beetle. That's a beetle. That's the end of it.

And that's what we're doing. We're not specifically seeing what's coming in without the clarity of that historical garbage that comes with everything that we experience. So here, we're trying to cleanse that. And that means that we have to go through the process of very gently allowing the mind to calm down, to bring it to a stop. Calm down, bring it to a stop. To let these emotions become, to let them express themselves, because that's the emotional history we have. That's the baggage we're carrying from all the past. And to allow it to pass away, to burn itself out.

Now, if that were the end of the process, when the Buddha was enlightened, that would have been it, wouldn't it? He'd have just turned into a blob. He'd have just sat there and people would have come and said, what's wrong with you? And he wouldn't be able to speak, would he? He'd have just said, ugh, or something. Enlightened, shut up, go away. So he just sat there and did nothing because he's done it. He's perfectly happy.

But peculiarly enough, that doesn't happen at all. The first thought, or the first thoughts that arise in his mind is, who? Who can I teach this to? Who can I teach this to? So now we have a very different thing arising. There must be some connection. There must be some connection between this wisdom, this intelligence we have, and the world it finds itself in, the world it finds itself in, and the people that it finds itself connected to.

Now that's put into the Eightfold Path. So as soon as there is right understanding, there moves into a right attitude. And it happens naturally. I mean, we do have exercises. We do *mettā* practice. That's a practice on developing goodwill, developing our compassion. There are all sorts of practices in Buddhism to do that. But actually, it's not necessary because that wisdom will always want to express itself.

How do we know this wisdom always wants to express itself? Because this same intelligence, which has now become, shall we say, very wise, when it was deluded, wanted to express itself. So this intelligence we have, this intuitive intelligence, is always in a state of wanting to express what it knows. And the reason for that is that it doesn't know what it knows until it's expressed. If it did not express anything, it would stay in a complete state of original ignorance. And that's the beginning of the Eightfold Path, the one that we chant in the morning. *Avijjā*, not knowing.

This ignorance isn't a culpable thing. It's not as though we're evil because we don't know. We don't know because we don't know. So it's like little children. They don't know. They have to be taught. So it's a case of not knowing. It's the function, it's the inner quality of intelligence that it wants to know. That's how it's defined. It wants to know. Intelligence wants to know. And in wanting to know, it needs to be able to know it knows. And it can only know it knows when it expresses something, when it says something, paints something, creates music, talks to people, relates to people, does something in the world, creates something in the world, a business, whatever it is. Those are all expressions of the either delusive nature in our intelligence or its wisdom nature.

So in other words, you can't exist and not express. Otherwise you just remain a vegetable. So there's the Buddha. He's become fully enlightened. And he says, I've attained the unconditioned consciousness. Unconditioned. Perhaps a better word is unbound, unbounded.

So this intelligence that we have, it's bounded, it's caught up in the sensual world. So it thinks itself to be what it sees, and the seeing process. It experiences itself as not only the hearing, but I hear, I am the one who hears. That binds us to hearing, and it binds us to seeking in hearing the happiness that it craves.

I mean, what is suffering? I don't mean, that's not a definition of suffering. I mean, what is it that is suffering? Does the body suffer? I mean, when you get pain in the knees, is the body suffering? It's just a sensation, isn't it? The knee isn't saying, ouch, I'm suffering. The knee is just giving off certain sensations. When you're depressed and the depression is there in front of you, is the depression depressed about being depressed. The depression is just a feeling. It doesn't have any intelligence. It doesn't know anything. It's just there as depression. Does a word, does the word, does the intellect understand what it's actually saying? Words are just little symbols, aren't they?

So that which understands, that which has a relationship to emotions, that which has a knowledge, understanding of sensations from the body, that is something else. So it must be that that suffers. So the answer lies not in the pain of the body, or in the emotional state of the heart, or in the way the mind thinks, but in the relationship that this intelligence has to the psychophysical organism it finds itself in.

So the relationship we have now is, this is me. And because of that, we're constantly expecting this to give us that sense of peace and joy, calm, that we want. And we get upset when it doesn't. Pain in the knee, and all that.

So, there's an intimate link between the wisdom that we gain from observing ourselves, the purity that we gain from allowing these emotions to expend their energy, and the new attitudes that arise in the heart which we recognise as sharing, love, giving, generosity, compassion, sympathetic joy, because of that communication we have with other people.

And when that drops further outward, as it were, as an expression, even if you're stuck there with this love, what use is that? If you went to a cave and just sat there and said, may all beings be happy. Well, you

might. Of course, you might. I mean, I'm not being cynical about this. You might be sending out waves, colossal waves of love with changing the world and all that. But in a sense, it might also be just you in this cave feeling very happy about how much you love people. And if somebody comes along and says, can you help me shift this bowl? You say, go away. Don't disturb me, I'm in a state of perfect love here.

So, you can get stuck at these stages. You might think, well, the whole purpose of life is just to sit and meditate and get into this perfect state of peace and happiness. But that's not what the Buddha did. Remember that he's the exemplar, he's the paradigm of our path. And you might think, well, in that case, I might stop that attitude and just develop this huge compassion, the Buddha heart. But that just turns you into just a self-regarding person. You just sit there beaming out this love.

So it has to move out, it has to express itself, and it expresses itself through right speech, right action, and right livelihood. So you can see how the Eightfold Path just follows, follows the one after the other. So the way we speak, the way we communicate is an expression of that heart, the kindness, compassionate way, sympathy, joyfulness, which is an expression of our understanding, of the way we relate to the world.

When we start doing something, it's done with that attention because that's what this intelligence is. It's a state of attention. And that's a nice word in English because there's also the word attend, to attend to. Nurses attend to their patients. There's a sense of, in that word, there's almost an inclusive, the idea of caring, attention and care, care and attention. So you could say that those are the hallmarks of your daily life. There are some things that you have to pay more attention to, like a phone call. And there are some things that you have to be more careful with, like when you're cooking. Be careful.

So the two are one and the same, but they're coming from, shall we say, a different type of relationship. One is more based on the intellect, the understanding, and one is more based in the heart, on a sense of care. They're always there. So now you can see how this intelligence which we've been training to sit back and watch, to sit back and watch and understand and see and understand what's going on, how it now begins to, as it were, come down into the attitude into the heart and how it begins to flow outward into the world in the way we speak and the way we act and finally the very livelihood that we have.

So here's the Buddha putting livelihood. Logically speaking, there's no need to put livelihood there because it's included in right action. But such is his understanding of the fact that most of our lives are doing something, unless we're unfortunate not to have a job. But even then, in the West anyway, they come and go. So now, your attitude. What is your attitude to the work you're doing?

Yesterday I was talking to somebody who was going through one of these awful periods where there's that vanity about what they're doing, about the uselessness, why am I doing this, it means nothing to me and all that. And what you often find when you get into that mood is that actually it's coming again from this idea of self that all we're concerned about is making the job interesting to me. It's interesting to me. What's it for me? How much am I earning? And there's always going to arise that dissatisfaction because the I always wants to aggrandize. That's the self. It always wants to accumulate. Because the more it

accumulates, the safer it feels. I mean, you feel much safer if you had a million pounds in the bank than just a hundred. I would. I mean, you'd have this fallback.

So, I can't remember, there was, I think, one of these rich people said, I've done poverty, and I've done riches, and being rich is better. So, there's no particular virtue in being poor, it's just the way you end up. But you can see how the self is always trying to make the world safe and wonderful around itself.

So what's missing is missing that connection with the other person. So again, as soon as we do that, people become objects. You're just using them, using them to fulfill your desires. And that's bound to bring a dissatisfaction because people refuse to be objects to your desire. They always do something which you don't want them to do. And then you get angry and say, why did you do that?

If we now turn around in ourselves and we say, right, well... What would be a proper attitude to my work? Well, there has to be, obviously, some self-care. So we've tried to make that distinction with our eating, that we're not eating just to gain happiness, just to feel blissed out on chips. We're not doing that. We're actually trying to feed the body, we're trying to change our relationship to food, seeing it as medicine, seeing it as nourishment. That gives us a very different attitude.

So now, when I'm doing my work, when we're doing work in society, surely the attitude which I ought to give out is one of service, isn't it? Service. As soon as you serve other people, you're immediately in a state of communication to them as people, because you're trying to be of service to them. So to be of service to somebody means that you have to open up to them as individuals. They have to speak to you. They have to tell you what they want. Even if it's just brushing the streets, for heaven's sake. You're doing it as a service.

So this puts a very different timbre on life, doesn't it? It puts a very different shading on life. I mean, we do it naturally with people whom we love, with family members. We'll do things for them and do it with a good heart and with an open heart. And when you do that, you get that good feeling, don't you? You get that glow. So that's the attitude of livelihood. It's one of being of service.

That doesn't take away the fact that there has to be that self-regard as well. You have to do something which is good for you, good for them. So in this way you can see how the meditation is preparing us to develop a completely different, not completely, I'm sure you all have this sense of service, is to develop the attitude of service and to distinguish between doing something just simply for ourselves out of selfish motivations and doing something which is caring for us, caring for the other.

And that brings us into that funny area where people get stuck, where they say, well, should I go for a position? Where does ambition come in? Should I then just say, well, I want to serve society, I want to serve people, and I'll just wait for the job to come. And you end up on the dole. Again, it's always, if you're serving, if you're serving, what you want to serve is your best, isn't it? If you invite a person round for a meal, you want to serve the best food that you can make, don't you? You want to serve them the best. You want to offer what you have as the best. If you invite a friend round for beans on toast, it can be

depressing. Unless you told them, of course.

So when you offer your services to society, you're offering your best. So if there's an opening which you feel you can do, then you go and offer your service to that. If you don't get the job you want, if you don't get the position you wanted, because you did it out of an attitude of service, in other words, there's an acceptance that you don't fit into what they want, then there's no pain, there's no hurt. The potential to do that job still lies there. It's just they either found somebody else or whatever.

We had a case just recently at Gaia House where somebody came to apply for a job, one of the managers' jobs. And we knew her. She was a fairly regular visitor. And she'd set herself, set her heart on becoming a manager. But there was another person who applied for the same position. And eventually it was this other person who got the job. Well, it was like a disaster, really. Weeping, despair. And it was only a year's job. I mean, you'd be out after a year. There wasn't some huge life commitment to it. But the suffering that she went through because of that belies that

Even though there was that wanting to serve, there was something else there which attached her to that job. And not getting it brought about the pain. So it's a case of offering ourselves as a service and then recognizing that it might not be received, it might not be accepted. And that's okay. That's okay. So it doesn't stop you from following an ambitious route. There's nothing stopping any of you becoming Prime Minister if you feel that's where your talent lies.

So I hope that makes a connection between what we're doing here in the sitting and your daily life. I hope it makes you connect. There's a very intimate connection to it, very intimate.

So to reinforce that, you have to take some of the tricks that you gain from your meditation retreat into your daily life. And one of the most powerful ones is to stop. Keep stopping. Very simple occasions like if the phone rings. So when you get the first ring, you don't have to launch yourself at the phone, do you? You can note that the phone is ringing. And just relax. Like most people will hold on for three rings. I hold on for seven, ten rings for heaven's sake. I'm very patient. Well, three rings at least. So there's just that recognition, the phone is ringing, and then you just finish off what you're doing. You don't just forget, and then when you come back, you've lost your place. Then the next one goes, and you pick it up on the third ring. You're calm, you're collected, you're not in a rush, and therefore you're open to the telephone call.

After you've set yourself a task at work or just in your daily life, if you're aware of that intention, then put an end time to that intention. Like, for instance, I mess around a lot with this crazy computer stuff. And if I don't put a time on it, like two hours passes. I'm sure you've all experienced that. You wake up and two hours are gone. Two and a half hours. Whoa! And I've got in the habit, I have this little watch here which gives me a beep every 40 minutes. So just stop for a minute. It stops you getting caught up in something.

So when you set yourself a job, no matter what it is, it doesn't matter of length, you could be just mowing the lawn. So you say to yourself at the end of that, I'll just stop. You just relax. And then the accumulation

of that job, maybe you got a bit of an irritation, who knows, maybe you picked up some irritation, maybe you developed unwittingly some irritation around it, some rush, some pressure. Just stop, let it, let it. And in this way, throughout the day, we're constantly bringing ourselves back to this very posture, this posture of just being here. Then you move again from that base.

And for those of you who haven't done this before it's important to do meditation in the morning and evening. Two hours is good. But 20 minutes is enough. You just need enough time to access this level of consciousness. It's a level of consciousness. A way of being in the world. Just remind yourself, this is where I'm supposed to be at all day. And then throughout the day you do these little stoppings. Keep bringing yourself back. Remember how it was in that sitting.

And then in the evening when you come back, always better before you eat, before you have an evening ahead of you. Just to sit for 20 minutes and just see what you've accumulated during the day. The tensions, the irritations, the disappointment. Just let them calm down, calm down. And of course it makes your evening much more pleasant. If you do it too late, you just fall asleep. If you do it just before you go to bed, it's just preparation for falling asleep really. Nothing happens. So do it when you're still awake, especially before you eat. And then you'll see it has an effect on the evening.

So just very slowly, very slowly. And after each of these meditations, just a moment of developing *mettā*, goodwill, which we'll do tomorrow. And that prepares this intelligence to move into the world with a proper attitude. So that's the path in a nutshell.

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