Guided Mettā

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 28:26

Mettā bhāvanā, developing goodwill. Don't be concerned if during the exercise loving feelings don't arise. Here we're concerned with attitude, developing an attitude of goodwill, *mettā*. If pleasant emotions do arise, all well and good. If not, the exercise is still working for us and eventually the heart will respond. Remember you can stop the tape any time and develop a part of it further. So make sure you're now sitting in a comfortable position and feel free to move. So long as you move slowly, it won't disturb your concentration.

So let's begin. Bring to mind someone you have a warm regard for, not connected to erotically or romantically. An old friend, friend of the family, and so on. Offer them some worldly blessings—good health, long life, prosperity, whatever's appropriate—and we can offer them some spiritual blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill-will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Allowing those images to fade away, sensing that goodwill in our hearts, bring to mind all those who are near and dear to us, offering them worldly blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Allowing those images to fade away, bring to mind friends, people at work, whomever we wish, offering them worldly blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Allowing those images to fade away and turning the stream of compassion inward towards ourselves, let's offer ourselves some worldly blessings.

May I be free of greed and selfishness. May I be free of hatred and ill will. May I be free of fear and

anxiety. May I be free of ignorance and delusion. May I be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May I be forgiving and compassionate. May I be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May I be peaceful and calm. May I be liberated of all my sufferings. May I experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbān a*.

Having generated now this goodwill within our hearts, let's begin to radiate it outwards. First of all, to those immediate to us, in our household, in our group, offering everyone worldly blessings.

May we be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May we be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May we be forgiving and compassionate. May we be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May we be peaceful and calm. May we be liberated of all our sufferings. May we experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Continuing to radiate it outwards till we've covered the whole of our area or town or city, offering everyone—the good and bad alike—worldly blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Continuing to radiate it outwards till we've covered the whole of our country, offering everyone worldly blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Continuing to radiate it outwards till we've covered the whole of the earth, offering everyone worldly blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Pausing for a while to consider those areas where there's war, destitution, oppression.

And now, choosing a phrase which most expresses whatever quality we wish to develop, be it love, compassion, joy or just peacefulness—a phrase such as "may all beings be happy"—gently repeating it in our hearts and offering it to all beings, to all beings before us and behind us, to the left, to the right, below and above and all around.

I shall chant the Discourse on Loving Kindness:

Kāraṇīyam attha-kusalena yantaṁ santaṁ padaṁ abhisamecca, sakko ujū ca sūjū ca, suvaco c'assa mudu anatimānī. Santussako ca subharo ca, appakicco ca sallahuka-vutti, santindriyocca nipako ca, appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho. Na ca khuddaṁ samācare kiñci yena viññū pare upavadeyyuṁ. Sukhino vā khemino hontu, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā.

Ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi, tasā vā thāvarā vānavasesā, dīghā vā ye mahantā vā, majjhimā rassakā aṇuka-thūlā. Diṭṭhā vā ye ca adiṭṭhā, ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre, bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā.

Na paro paraṁ nikubbetha, nātimaññetha katthaci naṁ kiñci. Byārosanā paṭighasaññā, nāññamaññassa dukkhaṁ iccheyya. Mātā yathā niyaṁ puttaṁ, āyusā ekaputtam anurakkhe, evaṁ pi sabbabhūtesu, mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṁ.

Mettañca sabba-lokasmiṁ, mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṁ. Uddhaṁ adho ca tiriyañca, asambādhaṁ averaṁ asapattaṁ. Tiṭṭhaṁ caraṁ nisinno vā, sayāno vā yāvat'assa vigata-middho, etaṁ satiṁ adhiṭṭheyya, brahmam etaṁ vihāram idham āhu.

Diṭṭhiñca anupagamma, sīlavā dassanena sampanno, kāmesu vineyya gedhaṁ, na hi jātu gabbha-seyyaṁ punar eti'ti.

Having established this goodwill, a heart of openness, generosity, compassion, let us now work with that area of forgiveness.

First, bring to mind someone we have hurt, and as the incident comes to mind, the attendant emotions will arise—perhaps a feeling of self-righteousness, or a feeling of shame, guilt, remorse, whatever. As those emotions arise, we will have a reaction to them. We'll want to indulge our self-righteousness and we'll not want to feel or experience our sense of remorse or guilt.

So, using that memory to contact these emotions and being wary not to allow the memory to shoot off into fantasy, but just to contact emotions, let those emotions arise, and let's see how we relate to them. Just working with that little vicious circle: the memory, the attendant emotions, and how we relate to those emotions. Can we see how we cause suffering for ourselves? Can we acknowledge these attitudes and emotions as unskillful, unwholesome, negative, life destructive, not life enhancing? Undermining our capacity to love, to relate, leading only to more suffering, not the end of it.

And the antidote, of course, is to ask for forgiveness—arising out of a sense of remorse, a desire to be reconciled, a desire to put right what we did wrong, a desire to compensate.

Bringing that person to mind, let's talk about the situation with them and ask them to forgive us. Whatever harm I have done to you, in thought, word and deed, by way of greed, hatred and delusion, intentionally or unintentionally, please forgive me.

Perhaps you can see a change in them, a desire in them to forgive, to become reconciled. Can you accept their hand of friendship? Can you accept their forgiveness? Can we forgive ourselves?

Let's offer them some worldly blessings.

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

So, allowing that image to fade away, sensing that goodwill in our hearts, let's bring to mind someone who has hurt us. And again, using that memory to contact feelings, emotions—the feelings of hurt, the feelings of revenge. And again, to see that reaction, how we don't want to feel the hurt, how we want to indulge our sense of revenge. Just working with that little vicious circle: the memory, the attendant emotions, and our reaction to those emotions, being careful not to spin off into fantasy.

Can we see how we cause suffering for ourselves? Can we acknowledge these attitudes and emotions as unskillful, unwholesome, negative, life-destructive, not life-enhancing, undermining our capacity to love, to relate, leading only to more suffering, not the end of it?

And the antidote, of course, is to forgive. Remembering that to forgive is not to forget, it's not to excuse, it's not to condone. It's simply a change of attitude, away from revenge and hurt, towards understanding and compassion. Driven always by a desire to be reconciled.

Let us bring that person to mind, talk about the event and offer them our forgiveness. Whatever harm you have done to me, in thought, word and deed, by way of greed, hatred and delusion, intentionally or unintentionally, I forgive you.

Perhaps we can see a change in them, a feeling of relief, a desire to be reconciled. Can we offer them a hand of friendship and with it worldly blessings?

May you be free of greed and selfishness, hatred and ill-will, fear and anxiety, ignorance and delusion. May you be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May you be forgiving and compassionate. May you be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May you be peaceful and calm. May you be liberated of all your sufferings. May you experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Allowing that image to fade away.

And now we've completed two of the four great efforts to develop what is beautiful in us and to get rid of what is ugly within us. The next two are to prevent further ugliness and to develop virtues which are not developed.

So first, let us recognize a certain trait, unskillful, unwholesome within us, which we don't want to

develop. Using the four affirmations: I can, I am able to resist its temptation. I ought to, for my own benefit and the benefit of others. I want to, and I will. Can, ought, want, will. And let us make a resolution that should ever a temptation arise, we will be resolute not to fall to it.

Sometimes there's a trait within us, a virtue which is not fully developed. Sometimes we see a virtue in another which we would like for ourselves. Again, using the four affirmations: I can, I am able to develop that virtue. I ought to, for my own benefit and the benefit of others. I want to, and I will. And let us make a resolve that should an occasion offer itself, we will practice that virtue.

So again, let us turn that stream of compassion inwards and offer ourselves again some worldly blessings.

May I be free of greed and selfishness. May I be free of hatred and ill will. May I be free of fear and anxiety. May I be free of ignorance and delusion. May I be kind and gentle, sympathetic and benevolent. May I be forgiving and compassionate. May I be joyful and rejoice in the success of others. May I be peaceful and calm. May I be liberated of all my sufferings. May I experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbān a*.

And so finally, let us offer our goodwill once more to all beings in all directions.

May all beings be free of physical pain. May all beings be free of mental distress. May all beings be liberated of all their sufferings. May all beings live in contentment and joy. May all beings live together in peace and harmony. May all beings experience the peace and bliss of *Nibbāna*.

Sabbe sattā sukhitā hantu. Sabbe sattā sukhitā hantu. Sabbe sattā sukhitā hantu.

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