Encouragement: The Principles of Meditation and Right Awareness

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 41:43

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa. Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa. Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa. Homage to the Buddha, the Blessed, Noble and Fully Self-Enlightened.

For posterity, it's just an opportunity I take as a reminder to some, but also as an introduction to a few of you, about the principles of meditation and the difficulties we come across and why we do what we do basically.

When the Buddha talks about right awareness, when the Buddha talks about awareness, he talks about a certain type of awareness. It's not as though awareness ever leaves us in a sense, because even in sleep there is a residual awareness. Something must hear the alarm clock or else we'd be dead. So it's this particular type of awareness that the Buddha is talking about.

The point of the awareness is to take us out of what he called *dukkha*. This word *dukkha* is very central to his teachings and it translates as "a hard place." We normally see it translated as unsatisfactoriness, or at worst unhappiness—just a feeling of life not delivering what we hope it would. That's at its most subtle: meaninglessness, existential angst, all that. But also just the ordinary pains and horrors of daily life—all that comes under this wonderful word *dukkha*. And he said that his teaching was basically about *dukkha* —about this situation within and the end of it. So a bit of hope there, you see. And this right awareness was something that he himself discovered.

We say that the Buddha was self-enlightened—not because he didn't have teachers. He actually went to two of them we know of and practiced what we now call the absorptions under them, these very beautiful mental states that we can get through our meditation. And he also practiced some heavy mortifications which we think was through the influence of the Jain leader who was his elder contemporary, the Nigantha.

But although these gave him techniques, it didn't actually help him to really answer the question that was eating away at him as to whether there was an end to suffering. And in his day that would have meant, as it does to people who believe this, just constant rebirth, just repetitious rebirth. We experience it every day: you wake up and off you go—wash, breakfast, work, back, eat, bed, up, breakfast, bed, back. So it's like a machine. We do it every—you know, then weekend, Monday, off we go. Monday, what do you do? You get up, you eat, you go back to bed. So that's it. When you take that on a more cosmic level, like every

lifetime, it's really boring, you see. So this idea of rebirth was pretty horrific in his time, and for those of us who understand that, it's pretty horrific to think about it too. So that was the core of his unsatisfactoriness really.

Remember, he'd left his home life which had delivered all the pleasures that in those days you could achieve. He was from a fairly well-to-do family, a governing family, the ruling class, and left that. And then he did all this other stuff with beautiful mental states, but they disappeared and he just ended up being the same old depressed Gautama. And then he tried this self-mortification which he said was just painful and ignoble—so you've got nothing but unprofitable, painful, and ignoble. So you can't get worse than that. So you can see he comes to a point where he's pretty despairing, and I imagine him really at the end of his tether.

As the story goes, somebody's passing by—a woman's passing by with a bit of rice pudding—and offers him some, and it revivifies him. And we all know the salvific effect of rice pudding. So something happens at that point. It says that he remembers something in childhood, and I think this is really the kernel. He was watching his father doing the ploughing ceremony. He's a child watching his father, and there was something about that watching which was different. He was in an absorption, he was absorbed, but there was something different about it from all the absorptions he previously experienced.

And that difference was this enquiry. That difference was this sense of "what is happening," this "what is it," the question in the mind, just that wonderful childlike curiosity. And it was that that made him think, "Well, maybe this is it. Maybe I've got to investigate. I've not got to try and achieve happiness. I've got to investigate the way things are." And then with the insight there comes the liberation, and that's exactly what happened.

So once he was liberated he began to teach, and again the core word is this *sati*, right awareness. And when he talks about right awareness, he's talking about a way of looking at something, a way of investigating something. And those were the three characteristics that we did during the sitting meditation: it's seeing the impermanence, radical impermanence; it's seeing how we create suffering for ourselves; and it's seeing that whatever we experience does not constitute me—it's not a me, if only because it arises and passes away.

So the idea is that when we sit, we first of all have to draw the attention into a direct experience of what we're actually experiencing, which means that we have to come off thought. Remember, thought is a big barrier because words, concepts—they hold our history, and what it does is it makes us look at things from this prejudicial point of view of past experience. It stops us experiencing things as they are in this present moment, even at a very simple level. And I'll be reminding you of this when you go and eat.

Just eating a fruit, an apple or something—as soon as we see an apple, as soon as we taste it, we put it into a category. We measure it against all other apples that we've had. We compare it, and it's either a great apple or a useless apple or a tasteless apple. But we never actually taste this apple as apple, as itself. It's

always in comparison with other apples.

And to do that, you've got to really let go of the mind, and you do that by putting your attention directly upon your taste. Because the taste doesn't lie. What I mean by that is that whatever your taste buds are giving you, that's what they're giving you. You don't have to layer it on top with some sort of comparison about past apples—it's not going to help the tasting of this present apple.

People who are wine tasters do that in a natural way because they've really got to taste it, and after they've tasted it they can compare. But not while they're tasting it—it would destroy the actual direct experience of the taste of wine. Not that I do it these days—it's only an example.

So when we understand that, there's this real effort in the meditation to draw the attention, to draw this intelligence that we have out of its confusion with the intellect. Most of us would, before we come to meditation, think of ourselves as being the intellect. "I think, therefore I am," that sort of thing. But actually, what the meditation primarily has to do is to bring us out of it.

And it does that by centering upon the body. And the body is giving you sensations and feelings, and they don't lie. They're not comparing themselves to anything. They're direct experience of sensations and feelings coming into that intelligence. And what we have to do is put this question mark in the mind.

And this question mark, this curiosity, is not coming from this place of "Oh, I know—yeah, everything is impermanent, I know that, so I'll see if I can see it. Of course I can see it. The breath rises and falls away." That's a problem, because the thing is, to do that is again coming from this conceptual level of transiency. It's not actually drawing us into the fact that this me is also arising and passing away.

The mind is capable of joining all these things together to give us this sense of continuity. We have that example in a film. I mean, we know—well, in the old films, we don't have DVDs, but in the old films when you had those little frames and they all shot off at different speeds—we know that they're all separate frames, but we don't see that. What you see is continuous action and continuous sound. That's the magic of the mind.

But unfortunately, it confuses us at this very deep level of thinking that I'm always existing. So I know my body's changed. I have pictures of me as a little baby, so I know it's changed, but I haven't changed. And my emotions are not the same as they were when I was three, but I haven't changed. My thoughts are not the same as they were even a few years ago, but I haven't changed. There's always something in me that says, "Well, I haven't changed."

So where's that coming from? Where's this sense of "I" coming from? This idea that, well, in the midst of all this change, it's quite obvious to me I'm not changing. I'm there all the time. Where is it? Where are you going to find this "I"? By investigating, by really looking into what we're actually experiencing, we're also undermining the way that we create out of these experiences this continuous sense of "I."

So that radical sense of impermanence is achieved through very closely observing everything which arises and recognizing that, in fact, even the process of cognition, the process of moment-to-moment consciousness, only arises with an object. You can't be conscious of a non-object. So if there's a non-object, where's consciousness gone? Now that's one thing that we very much associate with—our act of cognition, our act of consciousness.

So that's one way of achieving it. The other way, of course, where we see transience and it really hits deep within us, is when somebody dies—especially when somebody close to us dies and it really hits us hard. As the Buddha says, people don't really wake up until it hits you hard, until the doctor says you've only got six weeks to go. And then you hit this business of "Well, who am I?"

So this "Who am I?" is a very deep question which is actually one of the core questions of Korean Zen Buddhism. That's the koan for those of you who know the koan system of asking a question. That's their question. They don't do all that funny stuff about "What's the sound of one hand clapping?" They're just happy with saying "Who am I?" If the mind answers, you know it's deluded—that's the point. As soon as the mind tells you who you are, you know it can't be that. But you're really stuck.

So the actual grasp of impermanence is one way of breaking through the delusion of the world we create as something constant, something continuous, something substantial. And it is said that even that would take us to the end. Even just constantly being aware of impermanence would actually bring us to the end of our suffering and unsatisfactoriness.

In fact, there's a nice little tale which I'm sure some of you know about a monk who was so dull-minded that when, in those days—remember, they had to learn the teachings; there was nothing written; it's very hard to understand because the Buddha was illiterate—whenever he learnt a phrase of the Buddha's teaching, it would knock the one he'd just learnt out of his mind. So his brother said to him, "Look, you're just not going to get anywhere. You'd better go back and dig the fields."

And when the Buddha heard this, he went to see him and he said to him, "Look, don't worry about that. You stay a month." And he said, "Just take a piece of cloth, a clean cloth, and just keep wiping the sweat off your face and rubbing it. And as you do that, just keep looking at the cloth and saying '*Anicca*, impermanence, impermanence.'" Well, he was fully liberated just by doing that. Now it didn't work for me—I didn't last long enough.

But that's a little story that tells us that actually, just to see one of these characteristics and take it to its depth, to its real depth, you'll come across the others. By seeing *anicca*, by seeing impermanence, you see it's ridiculous to hold on to anything. And the Buddha says that's one of his greatest gifts: when we see *anic ca*, when we see impermanence in its real deepest sense, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—in the world worth holding on to. That's the Buddha's word.

That's the liberation that comes with seeing *anicca*. And by not holding on to something, you release

yourself from a lot of suffering. But also, by seeing *anicca*, by seeing this impermanence, we also grasp that it can't be substantial. If it can't be substantial, then it can't be me, it can't be mine, etc. So *anicca*, impermanence, is a gateway into the other two characteristics of existence.

The second one is concerned with the second noble truth. So the first noble truth is a very simple, straightforward statement: there is *dukkha*, there is suffering. And the second one is that the cause of it is desire. The psychological level is desire. And this is not all desire—we have to be careful here. The desire to meditate, the desire to be liberated, is not an unwholesome desire.

But the desire which is an expression of our deep delusion is something that we have to recognize. And that deep delusion is that we're seeking happiness in the sensual world. We think this world will deliver, so long as I've got the right partner, right job, right car, and so on. And once you've got it all set up, you think, "Well, that's it. I'm going to be happy forever." And then it all corrupts.

So it's a case of recognizing that whenever we're seeking happiness in the sensual world, it's going to cause us problems. And that's really what we were doing in the meditation when I asked you to observe your resistance to what you don't want—so that's a desire, that's the negative desire, not wanting—and your desire to hold on to and to develop what was pleasant.

So you're watching that process of wrong desire. And even that, if you see that to its very end, you catch this grasping nature. You grasp what it is that's actually grasping, and what we're actually seeing is this relationship we have with the world now.

This relationship we call the self. See, this is the problem with concepts. They coagulate something into an object which seems to be impervious. It seems to be permanent. Even with things like, you know, you say, "Well, this is a dog," and you have a picture of a dog and it has a sort of stillness about it, a substantiality about it. But we know that the dog is in a process of change. We know that something which is very long-lasting is also in a process of change. We know that these mountains that we see are actually moving. I mean, I've tried to see that, but it's very difficult. But they say they're actually moving.

And it's grasping that that makes us realize: anytime we conceptualize the self, actually what we're doing is we are substantiating, making into something real, which is actually a fluid relationship. If you take, for instance, marriage, you say "marriage"—that points to a type of relationship as though it was something static, a marriage. But you know it's a moving animal. It moves, and it's constantly—this relationship, what the word "marriage" is describing, is a relationship that is in a continual state of change between two people. It describes a certain type of relationship.

This self is the relationship that the knowing has with the world it finds itself in. It thinks, "This is it." And as we meditate, what we're doing is we're relocating. We're relocating out of the body. So the body, a body self, which perhaps we experience most as little children, is something that we find very difficult. Something really big has to happen to get us back into a body self, like, you know, if you catch your finger

in the door. See, for that one ecstatic moment there is only the body, and then you shoot out of it and "my finger is hurting." You've lost that identity with the body. So there is a body self.

The one that we find easy to lose ourselves into is, of course, the emotional self. Very quickly: "I am angry," "I am depressed," "I am happy." See, we're quite happy disappearing into an emotion, becoming an emotion. In meditation, we're pulling ourselves out. Instead of saying "I am depressed," we're saying "there is depression."

There's some separation, there's some dislocation from it. And that dislocation means that we must be relocating, so we must be finding another place within us to observe an emotion. So in the same way with thoughts and images. Normally speaking, we are lost completely in those. I mean, just consider: from the moment you wake up to the moment you fall asleep, does the mind ever stop? After all these years of my meditation...

So the mind is in a constant state of offering us thoughts, offering us images, etc. And when we are in this meditation and we see an image, so we're saying we can see imaging, imaging. Or we can—you have to have good concentration—but sometimes you can see a thought actually comes like a neon light just passing through your head. And even when we do that, you see, somehow we've relocated out of the thinking process.

So we've relocated three times, which we can do by an act of will. This is within the power of the self, the so-called self. We've come out of the body, we've come out of emotions, we've come out of thoughts and images, and we've made them objects to observe within us. And we've discovered this very peaceful place. See, when you're in that place, really ask yourself: what does it feel like up here? We're in the position of the observer—the objective observer, the objective feeler, the one who knows, the one who experiences. But there still is the sense of self. We are still aware of yourself being the observer, so you can't be that either, can you? There is another object, you see. So there is yet one more relocation to go, but that becomes completely out of our power. Because as soon as you try and get rid of a self, there has to be another self trying to get rid of it.

You're into a double bind. You can't go any further. So we get out of that double bind by attending entirely to what's happening, and the sense of self-awareness disappears. Now we do that quite naturally when we're very interested in something. It's very easy to lose your sense of self in a film or DVD, and you wake up afterwards and you know that you weren't aware of yourself. You were just watching the DVD.

So why is it that after all these DVDs that I've watched, I've not enlightened? Because I keep losing myself, see? And I lose a sense of time—that's another thing about self. As soon as you lose your sense of self, you lose a sense of time. And it's because we enter into those situations with the wrong intention. So we enter into a DVD saying to ourselves, "I'm going to enjoy this," you see? I'm seeking happiness in a DVD. I'm seeking happiness in ice cream, so I can lose myself in all these wonderful things. But it's actually reinforcing a sense of self. I'm saying, "Now I am happy when I watch a DVD. I'm happy when I have Costa

coffee," see? And it's constantly reinforcing a sense of self around an experience.

Now what we're doing through meditation is letting go of all that as a place to find happiness, as a place where we can really seek peace, etc.

And so now, from this position of the observer, from this position of the feeler, the experiencer, we have a very different attitude. Our attitude is to really begin to see that everything that I'm experiencing—which is the world—the Buddha is quite clear about that. He says this world that I'm experiencing is completely made up by me. You have to consider that. You know, what comes into my eyes, what I see, is only what I see. It's not what you see. We can agree on certain things, but basically I experience the world different from you, and this is my world, and I'm creating it. And when I separate out of that world that I'm creating and it becomes an object of my knowing, see, then by putting my attention entirely on that and to see it very clearly as being something which is ephemeral, which has no substance, which is just being created all the time by my mind, I'm beginning to... that investigation, that curiosity draws me into a concentration whereby I become absorbed in the process of investigation. That's a very different experience because that's liberating.

And in that absorption into the process, I lose that sense of self, lose a sense of time. And when I come out of it, if it's been a proper absorption, there's always a reflection. You'll always find a reflection coming on because—and this is where one of the mysteries... this knowing, this intelligence we have, this Buddha nature within us, doesn't know what it knows until it tells itself. And that's the purpose of the intellect.

So when the Buddha had this amazing experience under that tree, he then spent three nights thinking about it. Three nights he went through the dependent origination one way—those of you who know dependent origination, it's the psychology of the Buddha. He went through it the other way, and then the next night he did it up and down to make sure that he got it right. And then he went out and began to teach. So there's always this reflection about what it is you've actually seen.

And these moments of absorption, they don't have to be days long or something. They can be just snippets, they can be just little moments. Sometimes, especially in the beginning of our meditations, we're not even aware we've done it. But these are little turnings in consciousness, these are little turnings which eventually begin to accumulate into something that begins to penetrate deeper into our psyche by way of an attitude. And it's these little seeings that make us begin to question our attitudes, change our attitudes. And these attitudes then manifest in the way we speak, the way we act, and what we do with our lives. And there's your Eightfold Path. It manifests naturally as the insights come to us through the meditation. So that's what we're trying to do.

Now, in the attempt to do this, we have Mara. Mara is the evil one. Mara is all the hindrances that arise that drag us away from our meditation. And you can generally split it into two types: there are those which make us very excited, and there are those which send us into a black hole.

Now the ones that make us very excited are things like planning my holiday, lovely desires, sex, drugs, rock and roll—great stuff. And then there's all the aversion stuff: the hatred, the irritations, want to wring their necks, all that sort of stuff. Depressions and anxiety: can't do this, can't do that. Self-doubt.

Self-doubts you have to be very careful of because remember that doubt—sceptical doubt—is very undermining. What sceptical doubt does is it stops you from action. It arises from a lack of confidence, a lack of self-esteem. And if you think about that in your daily life, it can really be quite paralyzing. You know, if you have a relationship: is this the right person, wrong person? Right way, the other person goes—you've missed it. This is the right job, right? The job goes, somebody else gets it. So this sceptical doubt is rooted in fear, it's rooted in aversion, self-aversion.

And when you have that sort of doubt, make sure that you let go of all the fabrications of the mind, all the thinking, and just go into the feel of it. Go into the feel of it. Real doubt—well, not real doubt, proper doubt—wonder, is of course the emotion of the philosopher. It's the philosopher within us that wants to know. And that wonder manifests as statements such as, "Well, I know the Buddha was enlightened, but really I don't know, you know, and maybe... who knows? It's not a cock and bull story. He just wanted to make a new religion and be famous. Who knows what he was doing?" So it's a case of wonder.

The Buddha wants us to investigate what he says because all he's offering us is a hypothesis. He's not saying that he can liberate us. He's saying, "Well, this is what I did, and if you want to try it, this is the way to do it."

So these hindrances which draw the mind away—the real thing that we have to grasp is that every time the mind manufactures a dream based on an emotional state, it is developing itself, whether you intended it to or not. Because as soon as the emotion arises, whether it's some craving, some irritation, some depression, whatever it is, as it comes out of the heart and touches the mind, it wants to express itself. And there's a moment there when we are unaware—and that's why it happens so quickly—when the old habit jumps in and you have a conditioned response. And before you know it, you're off into a dream world. And in that dream world, this emotion is developing itself.

That's why the mind is so pernicious. The more you think about how depressing the world is, the more depressed you become. It's very simple, isn't it? The more angry you get about how the world is and all this business of climate change and all that, the more angry you become. The more you allow the mind to run away on its thoughts, the more it is developing the emotional state, which is the attitude, the attitude that you're developing.

So in our meditation, as soon as you wake up from the thought sequence, the dream sequence, it's telling you what is in the heart. Is it anger? Is it fear? Is it frustration? Whatever it is. Is it boredom? See? As soon as you know that, you come into the body and you contact directly the feeling of your emotion. You bury yourself in it. You feel it.

I often come across people who've done lots of meditation who seem to have been instructed to see impermanence and to see the not-self, and somehow the teaching around *dukkha* has been missing. I've had enough responses from people to begin to perceive that somewhere along the line in the teaching of Vipassana, people are not being taught to actually feel their emotions and experience them. Because I get reports that suddenly something's come up like grief or depression or something, and the person didn't know what to do with it, you know. And then they go to therapy, which is fine—I mean, therapy is very helpful—but this is much cheaper, and all you've got to do...

All you've got to do is just sit with the stuff. That doesn't mean to say that if something comes up very violent, very... you know, where it's actually making you afraid, that you shouldn't seek help. Of course you should. But the healing, the psychological healing, the therapy of Vipassana is in the bearing with, is in the sufferance, the open-hearted sufferance of the emotional state that's arising. And it may be that as you turn inward and you feel your depression and you feel your fear, it becomes much greater. And that's because you're allowing it to manifest. Now you're in control of the process. All you have to do is stop meditating and have a cup of tea, which is the great panacea, as you know.

So it's a case of really, really grasping that. You see, every time—and this is not just in meditation, this is in your daily life. This is while you're having a cup of tea, while you're watching, you know, while you're talking—every time the mind wanders, it's developing a particular attitude. See? And when you know that, when you really grasp what you're doing, then, you know, you get more and more quick about bringing your mind back into the present moment.

And remember, everything you attend to is an act of intention. You know these billboards on the street? Why do they still have them? We've got all sorts of ways of advertising. Why do they still have these silly billboards all over the street while you're riding on the bus? Years ago there was a doubt as to whether they had any effect whatsoever. So I don't know if some of you might remember way back in the eighties—actually, if I remember rightly, early eighties—to prove... the people who had owned these billboards, to prove they worked, they introduced this perfume, and it was from Australia, and it had, you know, the Australian hat with the corks all around it. Does anybody remember that? And it had a special name, and everybody thought, "That's fantastic," and everybody wanted to know where it came from. It didn't exist.

What it proved is that every time you look at a billboard, it goes in. An act of attention is an act of intention. It has an effect. That's why you don't think so much about what you're going to buy when you walk into the shop. You already know. The billboards have told you. The adverts have told you.

So keeping that very clearly in mind: that whatever goes into the mind is conditioning it. And every time the mind goes off on its little dreams, it's reinforcing that conditioning. So there is this instruction from the Buddha to be very careful about what we put into the mind and to practice the virtue of restraint, you see, of not feeding that desire, not feeding into it.

So that's just as a general instruction about what you do when the mind wanders. You just come off it. You acknowledge exactly what the mind is doing—not in terms of its subject. You're not worried about what it's actually doing. You're worried about the attitudinal force behind it. Is it anger? Is it depression? Whatever it is. And you come back into the body, you feel it in the body, and stay with it as best you can, and recognise that that turbulence in the body is actually blowing itself out. See, that's the point. It's blowing itself out. There's a lot of it.

And the other side of the equation is this business of the black hole, you see, the pit, the dullness and lethargy. So again, that's a mental state. We don't tend to think of it like that. It's a mental state, and it's been developed in two ways. First of all, we like sleeping, especially that one on a Sunday morning where you wake up and you're on that little level, and you just about wake up to get a cup of tea, and then you come back down and you lie out and you look at the newspapers, and you... you know that one?

So that's this lovely subliminal state of sleep, which is very pleasant. Then you come and sit here, you see, and you are very still. Well, what does the mind want to do? It wants to get into this lovely subliminal state, and off it goes. So you have to resist that. You have to keep waking up. That's why I say these three basic things about lifting the spine, open the eyes a bit, let the light in, stand up, refuse—you see, just refuse to be annihilated. That's the basic... that's the commandment.

And the other side of it is that we've used sleep to escape things, you know. So when you feel a bit fed up, feel a bit depressed, well, you lay out on the couch, you know. If it gets too bad, this neon light comes on, doesn't it? Head for the bed, and that's it. Lay out for a few hours, you know. And you wake up and it's all been nicely suppressed. Sometimes it doesn't happen like that. You feel even worse. But for the most part, we use sleep to suppress. Remember, all suppression is aversion or fear—aversion or fear.

So that's why in daily life, if you have something come up and you know it's the wrong time to deal with it—you don't want to be at work telling everybody how depressed you are—you can put it to the side. Your attitude is, "I'll just put that to the side and deal with it later." That's not the same as suppression. Suppression has to be something negative. And that force is actually adding more turbulence to the system. Whereas just to say, "I can't handle it at the moment," and just to leave it to the side, is no danger, as long as you give it time later on in the day to actually contact it.

So that's the other side of the hindrances. There's only two actually, dullness and lethargy, which draws us into this topic of the black hole. So all we have to do is just keep making the effort to wake up, and if you can, to make those feelings the object that you are investigating.

One way is to just keep the attention moving up and down the body and just try to find out where you feel the heaviness. If it's in the head, if it's this dullness, you just wander about. The more you keep the attention moving, the more it stays awake. And you may surprise yourself to find that you can be as awake in the most dull states as you would be in one of the brightest of states, because you're drawing your energy back into the process of observing. The motivating force of that is this interest, is this wanting

to know.

So just to bring it all together, we have to get ourselves into position in the meditation where we can observe. So we use the breath to establish that sense of the observer, the feeler, the knower. And once you're there, you bring in that quality. I forgot to say that to make the breath somewhere where you want to go, begin to experience it as something pleasant. It's actually relaxing. When we experience something pleasant, not something that we have to do, then you see you want to go there. You want to actually still yourself on the breath more. It becomes a pleasant place to be.

Then you raise this curiosity, and you find this observation post that's still. I think it was reviewed actually in what's that newspaper from America? The Inquiring Mind, do you know it? Yes, it's very good. There's a review there by Joseph Goldstein of The Heart of Buddhist Meditation by Nyanaponika, and it still is the classic book on meditation if you want one that's easily readable.

You find yourself in this position of the observer, and if you want you can consciously raise the intention to observe impermanence, or to be more aware of the process of wanting and not wanting, or to investigate the sense of not me, not mine. The noting is very good at that because as soon as you note something, there has got to be an object there.

Within that process, we get dragged away. So we have to be very clear that every time we're dragged away on something, we know what to do, and we re-establish the process by going back to the breath. That's it.

Remember that if the whole of your regular two-hour morning meditation is this continuously coming back into the present, coming back, coming back, that's the practice. That's not bad meditation. If you say to yourself in the meditation, if you sit there and say to yourself "I'm a little bit fed up with this, I think I'll just relax," that's bad. You ought to feel really guilty. If you sit there and say "I'm going to do a bit past the meditation" and you think "Oh no, what am I going to do this evening? I'll just think about this," that's really bad. You should really feel deeply guilty.

But if the whole of meditation is wandering, thinking, planning, coming back, coming back gently, coming back, make a resolution, stay here, coming back, that's it, that's the practice. You congratulate yourself after a practice like that. If you sat there all day long... well, you've done this before, I'm sure. That's good practice. That's good practice. That's what it's about. It's about waking up.

But if you're down there and you think... then you should really, really feel very bad about it. You've got a confession.

So that's it in a nutshell. What we could do now is some walking meditation, and with those people who are helping out, would they like to go over and help? Then we'll come and do a sit at one o'clock. I've left it a bit late now. Is that alright? Is that alright Paul? One o'clock and we'll do a short sit before we take our meal at half past one. Then we come back about... what would it be? Two? Half past one, half past two is it? You need a bit more than an hour, do you? About a quarter to three. I prefer to work in the morning

because after lunch it's good enough for doing loving kindness, just about.

So yes please, I'd like to do some walking meditation. If there's any questions about the practice, just stay behind and ask me them. It's always unique. There's always something. Yes, because I find I learn as I go along a little bit. And the jokes are wonderful. Don't forget the jokes.

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