

Reflections of Goodness

January 12, 2016

As we meditate, we're looking for a happiness that's not only reliable but also harmless. Of course, the two qualities go together: If your happiness causes harm to yourself or someone else, it's not going to last. So you want to make sure that this happiness is harmless to yourself, harmless to others, and then try to carry this quality all the way through your life.

When the Buddha talks about a person of integrity, there are basically three qualities that he focuses on: discernment, harmlessness, and truthfulness. These three go together. If we want to live a life of integrity, this is what we want to work on.

We look at the way we relate to other people: We want to be true in what we say and how we act, harmless in how we act. And we want to use some discernment to figure out what is actually for our own true well-being and would be conducive to their well-being as well. Because even though each of us have our own separate karma, we do have influences on one another. We want to make sure those influences are good because they rebound back to us. What we send out comes back.

So we ask, "What do I want to have come back at me?" Well, send that kind of thought, that kind of action, those kind of words out to other people. In this way, our happiness is not a threat to anybody. That's why it's safe.

So make the most of the fact that you can find happiness inside. This is where the true happiness lies: in the qualities of the mind we develop. The aspects that go out into world are the things that we gain from the world: Those are the shadows or the reflections of what you've sent out. So make sure that the original image is good: that your mind is stable, your mind is solid. You have goodwill for all, yourself and other people. It's with attitudes like this that the mind can find genuine peace, genuine rest.

So think about these things as you settle down with the breath. Because sometimes it's very easy for the mind to wonder, "Why am I with the breath coming in, going out. It hasn't done anything new, it's still just going in, going out. It doesn't do anything else." Well, it does the going in and out in different ways. But also the whole purpose of this is to stay with something that the mind finds restful and so that it can settle down and be in the present moment and then turn around and look at itself clearly, to see itself for what it is.

That way, we get to dig in to deeper and deeper layers of the mind, to dig up

things that we may not like about ourselves. But we can dig them up in an atmosphere where they're not so threatening. We just look at them and we don't feel overwhelmed by them. We can actually deal with them from a position of power, a position of strength.

Ajaan Suwat, when he would start his meditation instructions, would always talk about the attitude you're bringing to the meditation before he would get to the actual technique. So as you sit down, sometimes before you focus on the breath, remind yourself of why you're here, why it's good that you're here with the breath, meditating, working on your mind. Think of the good influences that should come from that in your own life and that ripple out into the lives of others.

You make up your mind you don't want to do anybody any harm: because again that would ripple back, disturb your meditation, disturb your original state of mind here.

This is how peace gets spread around. It has to start here and continue out through our thoughts, our words, and our deeds.

So this place we're focused is a good place. Make it a good place if it's not yet a good place. It has more potential for true happiness than any other spot where we could focus our attention.