

## *An Unshakable Mind*

*June 6, 2016*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Watch it all the way in and all the way out. Try to stay with each breath as it comes in, as it goes out.

You try to make the mind steady because your life is shaped by your mind. And if the mind gets shaken up a lot, then it's like taking someone who's writing something and shaking their arm so that their writing gets shaken all over the place. It gets so you can hardly read it.

In the same way, when the mind is shaken we start making decisions that we can't really trust. So you've got to make the mind unshakable. No matter what comes by: You know it, you see what's going on but you don't have to be shaken by it. That's the kind of mind we want to develop.

So, stay right here with the breath. No matter what other noises come, what other thoughts come, the breath is always there and you can always be there with it.

This gives the mind a sense of security, a sense of safety not only with regard to things that come from outside, but especially with regard to things that come from within the mind itself. All kinds of ideas can come up, and you know lots of urges cannot be trusted. So you need a place in the mind where you can step back and watch them go past and decide: Are these things we want to get involved with or not?

The breath provides a good place for that. In this way, we get more control of our lives. Our lives have more security, more safety, because the mind itself becomes safer. It's less likely to do dangerous things.

This is where our happiness as human beings lies: in our ability to handle whatever comes up. Because life comes with all kinds of things. When we sign on the contract, we usually don't look at the fine print but we discover that once you get born there's going to be aging, there's going to be illness, there's going to be death, there's going to be separation.

These things are happening all over the world, all the time. They say that 200,000 or 300,000 people die a day. That's an awful lot. Then there are all the people in the hospital with diseases, people with diseases who can't make it to hospitals. There's a lot of suffering going on around us.

We look and we have to realize that that kind of suffering lies in wait in our own bodies. So we need our protection.

As the Buddha said, when you see someone else who is sick or aging, aged or

dying or dead, you have to realize that you're going to have to go that way, too. And the question is, are you prepared?

Meditation is one of the ways we prepare ourselves so that we're not shaken around by these things. The mind can maintain its awareness and still be solid, with a sense of security, a sense of safety in this life in spite of the dangers around us and the potential dangers inside the mind. We learn how to bring those inside dangers under control, and then it turns out that the outside dangers don't really have any impact on us.

So focus on getting some control over your mind. Think of all the good qualities you've got and how you can develop those good qualities even further.

That's the work that's really worthwhile in this life. Other things go, even our own bodies eventually go from us, but the qualities we develop in our mind: Those stay. So make sure you're developing good ones and not developing bad ones. Meditation is one of the best ways to develop the good qualities you need.