

Developing Inner Wealth

March 31, 2017

Close your eyes and watch your breath. As the breath comes in, just stay with the sensation of breathing. As it goes out, just stay with that sensation.

As for any thoughts that may come through the mind, just let them go for the time being. Think of them as visitors that you're not ready to receive at the moment, because you've got work to do. You want to learn how to bring your mind under your control so that you can be more mindful, more alert.

After all, the state of the mind is one of your treasures. There are a lot of things we gain in life that people can take away. But the state of your mind is something nobody else can take away from you. You're the one who can develop it, and you're the one who can destroy it: by the way you think, by the way you talk to yourself. So you want to learn how to get the mind under some control so that it really does become a treasure inside: a source of well-being, a source of clarity that allows you to see what's going on in life and figure out what's right, what's wrong; what you should do, what you shouldn't do.

That sense of what's right and what's wrong is something hard to find in the world today, because there are so many different rights and so many different wrongs. But as the Buddha said, if anything harms yourself or harms others, why do it? That harm's going to come back to you.

So you want to be clear enough about what you're doing to see what your intention is, along with what you expect the result of your action's going to be. You also need the strength to say No to unskillful things and to say Yes to things that are skillful.

We do all that—we develop the clarity, we develop the strength—by getting the mind in concentration, focused on one object with a sense of well-being, with a sense of clarity. So try to stay with the breath with that sense of clarity. When you've developed the mind in this way, then it really does become your treasure.

All the good things in life have to do with the good qualities of mind. Things outside are good only when the mind is in good shape. You've probably seen people who are very poor but are happy; and people who are rich but miserable. Happiness doesn't depend on material wealth. It depends on inner wealth, the wealth of a well-developed mind. That doesn't necessarily mean a mind that's got a lot of education outside. It's a mind that's alert to itself and sees itself clearly—and has a sense of inner strength: that whatever is skillful, you're going to be up to doing it. And whatever's not, you're going to be up to saying No. In that way you

protect yourself. That's one of the virtues of having this kind of wealth inside: It's protection.

So focus your attention on inner wealth. As for outer wealth, learn to use it in a way that gives rise to more inner wealth. Because the inner wealth is where all the true happiness and security lie.