

Laziness

October 24, 2017

This may not be a perfect day to meditate but it's the day we've got. You learn to make allowances for it. With the heat, it's good to make sure you get plenty of salt and drink plenty of liquids. But then the mind is always there to be trained, whether it's hot outside or not. The heat is a matter of the body. The mind doesn't have to make the heat an object of concern.

There are lots of other things you could focus on. You can focus on the breath; you can focus on the parts of the body. Whatever meditation theme gets the mind in the present moment, gives it good work to do: Allow yourself to settle there.

And make sure you don't make excuses. One of the ways to the lower realms, the Buddha said, is laziness. What's the nature of laziness? Complaints that things are too hot, things are too cold, it's too early, it's too late to really do the practice. But if you keep thinking in those ways, the practice never gets done, because you can always find something that's too much of something. But actually the possibility is already there, always there. You've got your breath; you've got your mind. You've got what it needs to practice.

So it's just a matter now of dedicating yourself, realizing that the results may come quickly, they may come slowly—but that doesn't matter. As long as you're putting good energy into the practice, good results will have to come. You can't set the timer for them. They don't come with microwave instructions saying, you know, "In three minutes you get to eat it." But you do know that good energy will give good results.

When the Buddha talked about his awakening and boiled it down to the shortest phrases, it was just a principle of causality. Suffering comes from causes, and its end can be brought about by putting an end to those causes. It's a very practical approach. But you want to be able to see the causes first and understand how they lead to suffering. So you have to look at your mind very carefully. And even though those causes are showing themselves all the time, they don't display themselves fully. Often they're hidden behind different layers, layers that you've put on top of them. You have to be patient in uncovering them, but they're there.

This is why the practice is both gradual and sudden: gradual in the sense that it takes a while to uncover the various layers, sudden in the sense that once you really see it, you drop it immediately. You see, "Oh, my gosh. This is causing suffering and it's totally unnecessary." Once you really see it in action, then the mind drops it.

As Ajaan Suwat used to say, it's like darkness. Even though the darkness may have been there for many millions of years, you can bring in a candle and end the darkness right away. The darkness doesn't have the right to say, "Well, I've been here much longer than you have." As soon as the candle comes, the light has to beat out the darkness, in the same way that as soon as your discernment gets sharp, it's going to see through the darkness of the mind right away.

But to get to that point of “right away” requires a gradual approach. So be patient and stick with it, with confidence that the results are going to be good, and whatever effort you put in is going to be more than repaid.