

About the Author

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The present book 'REMOVAL OF HINDRANCES' is the compilation of talks given by Bodhidhamma. It has been published in the present form for the benefit of all and on the insistence of the listeners.

May all be benefitted with this noble effort and move on the onward path to peace and happiness.



Removal of Hindrances

A positive step towards happiness



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Dhammacāri Bodhidhamma
(Wg. Cdr. S. Rangaswamy)

REMOVAL OF HINDRANCES

A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS HAPPINESS

By
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"Sabba dānam Dhamma dānam jināti"

"Among all gifts the gift of Dhamma excels !

- The Buddha

With folded hands & salutations on the occasion of
1st death anniversary of

Ven. Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita

&

As a mark of gratitude to

Abhidhamma Teacher

Dhammacāri Bodhidhamma (Dadu)

(Wg. Cdr. S. Rangaswamy)

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May all beings share merits and be enlightened !

FOREWORD

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He who is fascinated by the principles of Dhamma, and is looking for guidance regarding workable and effective methods for putting those principles into practice, will find the *Satipatthana Sutta* to be a veritable gold-mine. The methodology is so meticulous systematic and logical, and the presentation is so inspiring that it generates in one, a reverential mood and confidence in undertaking the practice of Dhamma. This article is based on the section of the Sutta dealing with the Mental Hindrances. While compiling the details for the removal of mental hindrances, an attempt has been made to be unsparingly analytical and practical. The use of Pali terms has been avoided. Giving preference to word is common usage, for the benefit of common people. In describing the method, the various principles and details of practice have been touched upon only briefly. For a better understanding of law of moral causation, devotional meditation, the six contemplative meditation, the four brahma viharas, the 37 factors of enlightenment, the principle of dependent origination, the analysis and synthesis of phenomena, and the four noble truths, it is necessary to study the various sutras and the books written on them by great masters. For writing this article I have made extensive use of such books. Expressing gratitude to the masters, I give a list of the books I have referred to :

REMOVAL OF HINDRANCES

SCHEMATA

Introduction

How to Overcome Hindrances

Methodology

Analysis of Methodology

SENSE DESIRE

Characteristics of Sense - Desire

Causes of Sense - Desire

Suspension of Sence - Desire

Sila

Guarding of Sense - Doors

Concentration of Mind

'Asubha' Meditation

Moderation in Eating

Noble Frenship

Suitable Conversation

ILL-WILL

Characteristics of Ill - will

Causes of Ill - will

Suspension of Ill - will

Sila

Brahma Vihara

Kamma is My Own

Noble Friendship and Suitable Conversations.

“MAHA SATIPATTHANA SUTTA”

– By : Ven. Acharya Buddharakkhita Mahathera

“VISUDDHIMAGGA” – By : Bhadantacarya Buddhagosa

Translated by : Ven. Bhikkhu Nanamoli

“THE HEART OF BUDDHIST MEDITATION”

– By : Ven. Nyanaponika Mahathera

“THE BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHINGS”

– By Ven. Narada Mahathera

“BUDDHIST DICTIONARY”

– By : Ven.Nyanatiloka Mahathera

“MANUAL OF INSIGHT”

– By : Ven. Ledi Sayadaw

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Characteristics of Sloth and Torpor

Causes of Sloth and Torpor

Suspension of Sloth and Torpor

Sila

Light and Air

Change of Posture

Eight Stirring Objects.

Birth

Decay and Disease

Death

Suffering in the World of Misery

Past suffering

Future Suffering

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Honouring the Master

Spiritual Journey

Sympathetic Joy

Moderation in Eating

Noble Friendship and Suitable Conversation

RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY

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TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF

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The Importance of Concentration

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3. Becoming Egoless
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Energy Enlightenment - Factor

Enlightenment - Factor of Pure Joy

Tranquillity Enlightenment - Factor

Concentration Enlightenment - Factor

Equanimity Enlightenment - Factor

Balancing the Factors of Enlightenment

Prolongation of the Duration of Purity

Knowledge of Origination and Dissolution

Relinquishment of Hindrances.

FIVE MENTAL HINDRANCES

“And, monks, how does a monk live practising contemplation of the five Mental Hindrances ?

“Herein, monks, when Sense-Desire is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Sense-Desire in me; or when Sense-Desire is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Sense-Desire in me’; he knows how the arising of a non-arisen Sense-Desire comes to be; he knows how the discarding of the already-arisen Sense-Desire comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the discarded Sense-Desire comes to be.

“When Resentment is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Resentment in me’; or when Resentment is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Resentment in me’; he knows how the arising of a non-arisen Resentment comes to be; he knows how the discarding of an already-arisen Resentment comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of a discarded Resentment comes to be.

“When Sloth and Torpor are present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Sloth and Torpor in me’; or when Sloth and Torpor are absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Sloth and Torpor in me’; he knows how the arising of a non-arisen Sloth and Torpor comes to be; he knows how the discarding of an already-arisen Sloth and Torpor comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of a discarded Sloth and Torpor comes to be.

“When Restlessness and Worry are present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Restlessness and Worry in me’; or when Restlessness and Worry are absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Restlessness and Worry in me’; he knows how the arising

of a non-arisen Restlessness and Worry comes to be; he knows how the Discarding of an already-arisen Restlessness and Worry comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the discarded Restlessness and Worry comes to be.

“When Doubt is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Doubt in me’; or when Doubt is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Doubt in me’; he knows how the arising of a non-arisen Doubt comes to be; he knows how the discarding of an already-arisen Doubt comes to be; and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the discarded Doubt comes to be.

“Thus he lives practising contemplation of the hindrances internally; or he lives practising contemplation of hindrances externally; or he lives practising contemplation of hindrances internally and externally.

“Or he lives contemplating the origination factors in the hindrances; or he lives contemplating the dissolution factors in the hindrances; or he lives contemplating the origination and dissolution factors in the hindrances.

“Or the mindfulness that, ‘There is only this, the mental object’ is established in him in an impersonal manner essential for the arising of intuitive insight and mindfulness; and he remains completely independent, clinging to nothing in the world.

“Monks, thus indeed, a monk lives practising contemplation of hindrances.”

THE SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT:

“And, how does a monk live practising contemplation of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment?

“Herein, monks, when Mindfulness is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Mindfulness in me’; or when

Mindfulness is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no mindfulness in me’; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen Mindfulness comes to be; he knows how the perfection in the process of development of the already-arisen Mindfulness comes to be.

“When Investigation of Reality is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is the factor of Investigation of Reality in me’; or when Investigation of Reality is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no enlightenment factor of Investigation of Reality in me; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen factor of Investigation of Reality comes to be; he knows how the perfection in the process of development of the already-arisen factor of Investigation of Reality comes to be.

“When the enlightenment factor of Self-Effort is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is the factor of Self-Effort in me’; or when the factor of Self-Effort is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no factor of Self-Effort in me; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment factor of Self-Effort comes to be; he knows how the perfection in the process of development of the already-arisen factor of Self-Effort comes to be.

“When the enlightenment-factor of Rapture is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Rapture in me’; or when Rapture is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Rapture in me’; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen Rapture comes to be; he knows how the perfection in the process of development of the already-arisen Rapture comes to be.

“When the enlightenment-factor of Tranquillity is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Tranquillity in me’; or when Tranquillity is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Tranquillity in me’; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen Tranquillity comes to be; he knows how the perfection in the process of development of Tranquillity comes to be.

“When the enlightenment factor of Meditative Concentration is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Concentration in me’; or when Concentration is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no Concentration in me’; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen Concentration comes to be; he knows how perfection in the process of development of the already-arisen Concentration comes to be.

“When the enlightenment-factor of Equanimity is present within, the monk knows, ‘There is Equanimity in me’; or when Equanimity is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no equanimity in me’; he knows how the arising of the non-arisen Equanimity comes to be; he knows how the perfection in the process of development of the already-arisen Equanimity comes to be.

“Thus he lives contemplating the factor of enlightenment internally; or he lives contemplating the factors of enlightenment externally; or he lives contemplating the enlightenment-factors internally and externally.

“Or he lives contemplating the origination factors in the mental-objects; or he lives contemplating the dissolution-factors in the mental objects; or he lives contemplating the origination and dissolution factors in the mental-objects.

“Or the mindfulness that, ‘There is only this, the mental object,’ is established in him in an impersonal manner, essential for the arising of intuitive insight and mindfulness; and he remains completely independent, clinging to nothing in the world.

“Monks, thus, indeed, a monk lives practicing contemplation of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.”

- *Satipatthana Sutta*

REMOVAL OF HINDRANCES

The search for happiness is often frustrated by certain obstructive kind of emotions and thought-forms. Thus, for one's own welfare and the welfare of others, it is necessary that the way be cleared of these hindrances. There are five qualities which are obstacles to the mind, and blind our mental vision. The hindrances are Sense-desire, Ill-will, Sloth and Torpor, Restlessness and Worry, and Doubt.

It is said : "He whose heart is overwhelmed by the 'hindrances', will do what he should not do, and neglect to do what he ought to do." And, what is it that he ought to do, but neglects to do ? When there is no evil in his mind, he should keep evil away. This he neglects to do. When there is evil in his mind, he should discard that evil. This he neglects to do. When good is not present in his mind, he should generate good. This he neglects to do. When there is good, he should develop that good and make it grow. This he neglects to do.

And what is it that he does which he should not do? When there is no evil in his mind, he generates evil. When there is evil in his mind, he nourishes it and makes it grow. When good is not present in him, he makes no effort to generate good. When good is present he allows it to wither away. For these reasons they are called 'Hindrances'.

"But if the mind is freed from these five hindrances, it will be pliant and wisely, will have radiant lucidity and firmness, and will concentrate well on the destruction of mental defilements."

How the 'Hindrances' obscure mental vision is further illustrated by appropriate similes. Sense-desire is compared with

water mixed with several colours. In their presence water is no longer seen for what is really is. What is seen is a tinted view of water. Ill-will is compared to boiling water. Still water has the ability to mirror objects truthfully, but boiling turbulence destroys that quality. Similarly, sloth and torpor is compared to water completely covered by green mosses; restlessness and worry with ripples and waves whipped up by the wind; doubt with muddy water. Just as in such water one cannot perceive one's own reflection, so in the presence of these five 'Hindrances', one cannot clearly discern one's own benefit, nor that of others, nor that of both.

HOW TO OVERCOME HINDRANCES

In the Satipatthana Sutra, the Buddha teaches a system of meditation techniques by which one can turn every bodily, verbal and mental action into a meditational experience. So important is the task of the removal of the five mental hindrances that a separate section in the Sutta is reproduced below:

"When sense-desire is present within, the monk knows, 'There is sense-desire in me'; or when sense-desire is absent within, he knows, 'There is no sense-desire in me'; he knows how the arising of the sense-desire comes to be; he knows how the discarding of an already-arisen sense-desire comes to be; and he knows how to ensure that the discarded sense-desire can never arise again in the future.

When ill-will is present within, he knows, 'There is ill-will in me'; or when ill-will, is absent within, he knows, 'There is no ill-will in me'; he knows how the arising of ill-will comes to be; he knows how the discarding of the already-arisen ill-will comes to be; and he knows how to ensure that the discarded ill-will can never again arise in the future.

When sloth and torpor are present, within, he knows, ‘There is sloth and torpor in me; or when sloth and torpor are absent within, he knows. ‘There is no sloth and torpor in me’; he knows how the arising of sloth and torpor in me’; he knows how the arising of sloth and torpor comes to be; he knows how the discarding of the already-arisen sloth and torpor comes to be; and he knows how to ensure that the discarded sloth and torpor can never again arise in the future.

When restlessness, and worry are present within, he knows, ‘There is restlessness and worry in me; or when restlessness and worry are absent within, he knows, ‘There is no restlessness and worry in me’; he knows how the arising of restlessness and worry comes to be; he knows how the discarding of the already-arisen restlessness and worry comes to be; and he knows how to ensure that the discarded restlessness and worry can never again arise in the future.

When doubt is present within, he knows, ‘There is doubt in me’; or when doubt is absent within, he knows, ‘There is no doubt in me’; he knows how the arising of doubt comes to be; he knows how the discarding of the already-arisen doubt comes to be; and he knows how to ensure that the discarded doubt can never again arise in future.”

METHODOLOGY

A scrutiny of the quotation from the Satipatthana Sutta shows that five statements are made in respect of each of the five hindrances. The five statements pertain to:-

1. Examining the present state of mind to become aware of the existence of the hindrance.
2. Examining the present state of mind to become aware of the absence of the hindrance.

3. Knowledge of the conditions which cause the arising of the hindrance.
4. The method by which the hindrance is temporarily suspended.
5. Method by which the hindrance is permanently relinquished.

The five-fold methodological approach is adopted in respect of each of the five hindrances.

ANALYSIS OF THE METHOD

The first two parts of the exercise deals with the practice of Bare Attention. If one of the mental hindrances is present or absent in the meditator, he should be fully aware of the fact. Such clear and single-minded awareness serves as the indispensable preparation for the next phase. Now, it may be asked; what is the basis on which the presence or the absence of a hindrance is determined? Each hindrance has its special or unique characteristic of smoke, and a ranger noticing the smoke would infer the presence of fire; and contrarily infer absence of fire when smoke is absent. Likewise when a meditator, looking inwards at his mind, notices the characteristics of a hindrance, he becomes aware of presence of that hindrance. And when the characteristics of a hindrance are not discerned, he becomes aware of the absence of that hindrance. Thus a knowledge of the specific characteristics of each of the hindrances is essential for carrying out the first two parts of the exercise efficiently.

The third part of the exercise calls for clear, comprehension of the conditions which cause the arising of each of the hindrances. Why is the knowledge of causative conditions so necessary? It should be kept in mind that the purpose of the exercise is to abandon the hindrances. The hindrances cannot

be abandoned by indulging in them, nor can they be abandoned by battling with them. Avoiding these extremes, the pragmatic middle way should be followed. The pragmatic way is to remove the causative conditions. When the causative conditions are removed, the hindrance ceases to exist. Thus, an intimate knowledge of the conditions which are conducive to the arising and non-arising of the respective states of mind is indispensable. In the fourth and fifth part of the exercise the task of removing the hindrances enters the decisive operative phase. In the fourth part of the exercise, the hindrances are avoided or overcome temporarily, and in the fifth part they are annihilated finally.

We have so far been considering the hindrances, their insidious capacity to cause suffering, the need to abandon hindrances, and the formulation of a broad plan of action. Now several aspects have to be considered in detail. The questions that arise are (a) What are the characteristics of the five hindrances? (b) What are the conditions which are conducive to the arising of the respective hindrances? (c) What practical steps should be taken for avoiding or temporarily suspending the hindrances? and (d) What should be done to relinquish hindrances permanently?

SENSE-DESIRE

CHARACTERISTICS OF SENSE-DESIRE

Sense-Desire refers to the six senses-seeing, hearing etc. So there has to be an object of sense-desire-visible object, sound, etc. This object is perceived as a desirable object. When perceived in this manner there arises a pleasant feeling. The pleasant feeling is a pleasurable experience. So the mind, craving for this feeling, is attracted by the sense-object, and becomes attached to it, and does not want to let it go, and wants enjoyment to continue. The eye, nose, ear, which are called

sense-bases, are not sense-desire. It is the attraction, attachment and clinging of the mind to the sense-object which is called sense-desire. Sensuality or lust is also a strong form of sense desire. The practical application of this knowledge is as follows : the meditator observes the present state of his mind, and if he finds that there is a pleasant feeling, pleasure and enjoyment, greed or lust, an attraction and attachment to an object of the senses, he concludes that sense-desire is present. He just makes a mental note of it – ‘There is sense-desire in me.’ He becomes aware of the fact as it is, and refrains from passing a judgement approving or condemning the fact. If, on the other hand, he finds that the characteristics of sense-desire are absent, he concludes that sense-desire is not present. He, then, just makes a mental note of it, – ‘There is no sense-desire in me.’

CAUSES OF SENSE-DESIRE

Causes, whether of sense-desire or of anything else, are of two kinds—proximate, or immediate cause and remote or deep-rooted cause. The immediate cause of the arising of sense-desire is unwise reflection on a sense-object which has been perceived as pleasant. It is said that if the cause is known, the remedy becomes apparent. So in the case of sense-desire, immediate remedy seems to lie in reflecting wisely on the same object, and if it is found to be difficult to do, reflecting wisely on some other object. Now a question may be put “Instead of shifting from unwise reflection to wise reflection what will happen if there is no reflection at all?” In that case also sense-desire will collapse surely. But for doing this one has to develop a strong mind capable of stopping thought process.

Yet another question may be raised – Sense-desire arises because the object of sense-desire is perceived to be pleasant. What if this perception is corrected?” If perception is corrected

and reality is perceived as it really is, no sense-desire can arise. But our propensity to perceive things in a distorted manner is a propensity we have cultivated over countless aeons and it is so firmly ingrained in our psyche that distorted perception comes under the category of deep-rooted cause for the arising of sense-desire.

Having many desires, fondness of company, and delighting in things of the world are additional causes for the arising of sense-desire.

By removing the immediate causes of the hindrances, we can temporarily suspend the hindrances. But for a permanent relinquishment of hindrances, we have to free perception of all distortions by knowledge which removes ignorance of truth.

SUSPENSION OF SENSE-DESIRE

Sila : Sense-desire (as also the other hindrances) is an unwholesome state of mind, and when the mental impulse is strong, the hindrances manifest as verbal and physical actions. Any effort to curb the hindrances must start at this gross level. It calls for a voluntary adoption of a code of disciplined behaviour. Morality is the very foundation of all noble endeavour; and higher culture of mind (like concentration, wisdom, transcendence) can succeed only if such exercises are backed by a life of moral purity. Sila for lay persons is practiced in two ways.

A. Commitment to refrain from killing, harming, violence, theft of any category, sexual misconduct, telling lies, carrying tales, using harsh words, gossiping and consuming alcohol. On the contrary practice non-violence, friendliness, liberality, adherence to truth etc.

B. On special days, periodically, practice a stricter code of behaviour which is known as the eight fold sila.

There is a kind of meditation, called ‘Contemplation on one’s own conduct.’ In this meditation, usually done at the end of the day, one recalls all that he has done, all that he has said, and all thoughts that arose in him during the course of the day; evaluates each one of the actions recalled; takes delight if the act was in adherence to the code; and if the act was a violation of the code, stirs up will and resolves not to make the mistake again. If this meditation is practiced regularly, the quality of one’s conduct and behaviour will keep on improving. Perfect conduct is a quality of a sotapanna saint.

GUARDING THE SENSE-DOORS

The importance of this practice is stressed in many discourses of the Buddha. The practice is described thus: “Whenever the monk perceives a form with the eye, a sound with the ear, an odour with the nose, a taste with the tongue, an impression with the body, an object with the mind, he neither adheres to the appearance as a whole, nor to its parts. And he strives to ward off that through which evil and unwholesome things, greed, and sorrow, would arise, if he remained with unguarded senses; and he watches over his senses, restrains his senses”

This practice helps curbing all the hindrances.

CONCENTRATION OF MIND

Concentration of mind is also known as onepointedness of mind which is the fixing of the mind on a single object. When a visible object is seen with one pointed mind, there is only the process of seeing, and no thinking about the visible object. Since thinking about the visible object is absent, sense-desire for that visible object has to be absent. In this way, one makes sure that in the seen there is only the seen; in hearing a sound, there is

only hearing; in smelling there is only the smell; in touching there is only the awareness of touch; and cognizing a mental object there is only cognition. Since thinking about the sense-object is stopped, sense-desire does not arise.

“ASUBHA” MEDITATION

The perception of foulness refers to the contemplation of the 32 parts of the body. The contemplation of the body’s foulness is an antidote against the hindrances of sense-desire and the mental perversion which sees what is truly foul as pure and beautiful. “And what, Ananda, is the contemplation of impurity? Here, Ananda, a bhikkhu reviews this body, up from the sole of the feet, and down from top of the head, and contained in skin, as full of many kinds of filth: In this body there are hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bonemarrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestine, mesnastery, gorge, faeces, brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oily-fat, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid and urine. Thus he dwells contemplating foulness in this body. This, Ananda, is called contemplation of foulness.”

MODERATION IN EATING

Firstly one should know the measure of eating. Overeating as well as undernourishment cause the arising of hindrances. ‘Eat to live, and not live to eat’ is an old saying. Secondly one should not be finickly about food. Food is for nourishment only, and not for providing visual delight, sound delight, smell delight, taste delight, touch delight and thought delight.

NOBLE FRIENDSHIP

When there is a group of people, the group will have a group-mentality, And an individual member, in order to be acceptable to the group, has to adopt the mentality of the group. For this reason

it is said that a man is known by the company he keeps. One should cultivate friendship with wise persons. A person is called wise if he thinks good things, and does good things. In a higher sense, a noble friend is a senior monk who is the mentor and friend of his pupil, wishing for his welfare and concerned with his progress, guiding his meditation.

SUITABLE CONVERSATION

Understanding, thought, and speech are closely linked. Wrong speech strengthens wrong thought, and wrong thought strengthens wrong understanding. Only right understanding can abandon the hindrances. So Right speech must be cultivated in an attempt to suspend the hindrances. What is suitable conversation?

“Talk about austere life, talk suitable for unforing of the mind, talk which is conducive to complete detachment, to freedom from passion, to cessation, and to Nibbana – namely, talk about life of frugality, about contentedness, solitude, aloofness from society, about rousing ones energy, talk about virtue, concentration, wisdom, deliverance, about the vision and knowledge of deliverance – such like talk I shall entertain.”

ILL-WILL

CHARACTERISTICS OF ILL-WILL

Ill-will is a state of mind. And so it has to have an object. The object could be a thing, a person, sound, touch etc., It may be a situation or an idea. This object is perceived as undesirable and when it is so perceived there arises an unpleasant feeling. This feeling is an unhappy, sad or painful experience. So the mind, craving for the cessation of this feeling, repels the unpleasant object. The repulsion may manifest as resentment, dislike, anger, wrath, hate etc. There is a desire to harm, and the savageness may be that of a provoked snake. In the case of sense-desire there is pleasant feeling and attraction, but in the case of ill-will there is un-pleasant feeling and repulsion. When ill-will is present, the mind catches hold of the object mentally for the purpose of hitting it, and won't let the object go. In this regard the performance of the mind is similar whether there is sense-desire or ill-will. The mind gets attached to the object and refuses to leave it. The sense-organs are not ill-will; the sense-objects are not ill-will; it is the attachment, craving and clinging to the unpleasant object, which is called ill-will. This is the hindrance. The practical application of this knowledge is as follows: the meditator observes his present state of mind, and if he finds that there is an unpleasant feeling, that there is resentment or anger, that the mind is stuck to the object, then he concludes that ill-will is present. He just makes a mental note of it: 'There is ill-will in me. He becomes aware of the fact, as it is, and refrains from passing a judgement approving or condemning the fact. If, on the other hand, he finds that the characteristics of ill-will are absent, then, he concludes that

ill-will is not present in him. He, then, just makes a mental note of it: 'There is no ill-will in me.'

CAUSES OF ILL-WILL

The proximate cause for the arising of ill-will is unwise reflection on a sense-object which has been perceived as unpleasant. Remedy lies in reflecting wisely on the same object, or changing the object and reflecting wisely on the substitute object or by stopping reflection of any sort. There may also be a link between Sense-desire and ill-will. Frustrated Sense-desire may cause ill-will. The deep-rooted causes of ill-will are ignorance of truth and distorted perception.

SUSPENSION OF ILL-WILL

Sila : The importance of restraining one's behaviour in accordance to a code of conduct, has already been stressed. At the end of the day, during *Silanussati* meditation, the should recall every occasion during the day when he had become angry, and resolve never loose temper again. In this way the number of time he succumbs to ill-will, resentment, etc. will become less and less.

BRAHMA VIHARA

The four divine abodes, or boundless states, are *Maitri* (Loving-kindness), *Karuna* (Compassion), *Mudita* (Sympathetic joy, to be joyous at others success), *Upekkha* (Equanimity, a capacity to tolerate others weaknesses and failings). The development of these selfless emotions is as follows : "The monk with a mind full of loving-kindness pervading all directions; and everywhere identifying himself with all, he is pervading the whole world with mind of loving-kindness, with mind wide, developed, unbounded, free from

hate and ill-will.” The same theme applies to the development of compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

“KARMA IS MY OWN”

The volition behind action is what is called Karma. If the volition is evil, then the action is evil. Evil actions cause suffering. If the volition behind action is good, then the action is good. Good actions cause happiness. This is the law of moral causations. A person who desires to suspend his mental hindrances, particularly ill-will, is advised to contemplate again and again in this manner: “I am the owner of my karma, heir of my karma, karma is the womb from which I am born, my karma is my friend, my refuge, whatever karma I perform, good or bad, thereof I will inherit.”

NOBLE FRIENDSHIP & SUITABLE CONVERSATION

The importance of noble friendship and suitable conversation has already been stressed.

SLOTH AND TORPOR

CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOTH AND TORPOR

This is a dull and lethargic mind. It is a lazy mind which is lacking in energy, lacking in will to act, lacking in enthusiasm and lacking in a sense of urgency. It is neither a pleasant nor an unpleasant state of mind. The tendency is to ignore or postpone things. It is a distracted state of mind devoid of alertness. The practical application of this knowledge about indolence is as follows: If the meditator, observing his present state of mind, notices the presence of these characteristics, he, then, concludes that sloth and torpor are present. He, thus, just makes a mental note; “There is ‘sloth and torpor’ in me.” If the characteristics are absent, he concludes that sloth and torpor are absent. So, he makes a mental note of the fact: “There is no ‘sloth and torpor’ in me.”

CAUSES OF SLOTH AND TORPOR

The proximate cause of sloth and torpor is the perception of a sense-object as neither pleasant nor unpleasant and there upon deciding unwisely that the object may be ignored, and no action is required to be taken. Craving to ignore the sense-object, the mind grasps the object and clings to the object. It is this craving and clinging which constitute sloth and torpor. A temporary remedy is to stimulate the mind. But for a lasting solution, erroneous perception has to be corrected.

SUPENSION OF SLOTH AND TORPOR

Sila : The importance of restraining one’s behaviour in accordance with a code of ethical conduct has already been stressed.

Light and Air : Subdued light, droopy eyes and shallow breathing support mental laziness, Going out in the open, seeing bright light and deep breathing tend to make the mind alert.

Change of Posture : Sometimes the indolent mind is supported by the posture of the body. A change of posture, in such cases, may be very helpful to make the mind energetic. If sloth and torpor manifest when in a sitting positions, changing the posture of the body by getting up and walking could remove idleness of mind. For meditative purposes there are four postures of the body-sitting, standing, walking, and lying down.

Eight Stirring Objects : If one's mind is dull, then one should rouse it through reflecting on the stirring objects.

Birth : "It is extremely rare to be born as a human being. Life is short. I must not waste time, I must be up and doing, and achieve what should be achieved."

Decay and Disease : "Getting older and disease are inevitable things which make life increasingly difficult. I must arise. Now is the time to put forth effort."

Death : "To-day the effort should be made ! Who knows if tomorrow death will come?"

Suffering in the World of Misery: "For the indolent ones the gate to the four lower worlds of misery are wide and open. Now is the time to be energetic and thus avoid disaster."

Past Suffering : "Through countless lives, long have I wandered. The tears I have shed are more than the waters of the oceans. Now is the time for me to wake up and strive to make an end of suffering."

Future Suffering : "For an unwise man who is lethargic, long, indeed, will be the suffering in the future round of existence. Only the energetic can avert that calamity."

Present Suffering : The present life is steeped in suffering. The continual search is for food for the body and food for gratification of the senses. It is high time for me to endeavour feeding the nobler qualities which can help making an end of suffering."

HONOURING THE MASTER

One should contemplate in this manner: "Full application of energy was praised by the Master, and he is unsurpassed in his injunctions and is a great help to us. He is honoured by putting Dharma into practice, not otherwise."

Spiritual Journey : For removing laziness, contemplate in this manner: "For translating Dharma into action, I have to walk on the path, on which the Buddhas and the great saints have gone; but that path cannot be trodden by an indolent person."

Energy : Energy is the direct antidote for sloth and torpor. This hindrance disappears when energetic effort is made to avoid evil, to discard evil if present, to introduce good and to perfect the good.

Sympathetic Joy : The neutral feeling which accompanies sloth and torpor is devoid of joy. If joy is introduced laziness will wane. Practise of *mudita* meditation is recommended.

Moderation in Eating : Over-eating has a tendency to induce sleep. One should exercise moderation in eating.

Noble Friendship and Suitable Conversation

Their importance has already been stressed.

RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY

Restlessness is a state of excitement of the mind. It is an agitated mental state associated with all types of unwholesome consciousness. As a rule some excitement or restlessness will be present whenever evil is done. Restlessness of mind is closely associated with the hindrances of sense-desire and ill-will, but not with sloth and torpor because agitation and calmness are mutually exclusive. Worry is also a state of restlessness of mind, but this restlessness is caused by remorse, for having acted in a certain manner in the past or for having omitted to act in a certain other manner. Worry is subsequent regret. By observing the presence or absence of these characteristics, the meditator becomes aware; “There is restlessness (or worry) in me.” or “There is no restlessness (or worry) in me.”

CAUSES OF RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY

“There is unrest of mind, giving unwise attention to it is the cause of restlessness and worry.” So one should give wise attention which results in calming the mind. Impatience will also cause restlessness; over-exertion will also cause restlessness. The deep-rooted causes are the same as for the other hindrances – attachment, craving, clinging and mistaken perception.

SUSPENSION OF RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY

Sila : The importance of restraining one’s behaviour in accordance with a code of ethical conduct has already been stressed. Sila entails noble action in the present and it is difficult

for restlessness to arise. And secondly, since the actions are meritorious, sila gives freedom from remorse and regret.

Concentration of Mind : Concentration is one-pointedness of mind on a present object. As concentration deepens, the mind becomes calmer and calmer. In this way restlessness is replaced by calmness. There are many meditational techniques for achieving calmness. Mindfulness of breathing is one of the methods. If the mind is not permitted to take up an object, by way of memory, there can be no regret in the present.

The other conditions which tend to the eradication of restlessness and worry are (i) knowledge of the basic principles of Dharma and their practical application as a method of meditation and for guidance of all other activities. (ii) questioning the principles and practice of Dharma for better understanding and improvement of practice. (iii) cultivating a temperament of well-being and joyful interest in practices which suspend restlessness and worry. (iv) noble friendship and (v) suitable conversation.

DOUBT

CHARACTERISTICS OF DOUBT

Doubt is the inability to decide anything definitely that it is so. In other words it is indecision. It is uncertainty whether things are wholesome or not, to be practiced or not, whether things are of high or low value. Because of wavering, there is a divided attitude. With a mind so uncertain, one fails to initiate concerted action to abandon ill and to cultivate the good. On the other hand one who hesitates may become a victim to the illusive fascination of the evil. So a meditator, desirous of suspending the hindrances, observes his own mind, and depending on the presence or absence of the characteristics of doubt, he acquires factual knowledge: 'There is doubt in me'; 'There is no doubt in me.'

CAUSES DOUBT

"There are things causing doubt, Giving frequently unwise attention to them – that is nourishment for the arising of doubt which has not yet arisen and for increasing and strengthening of doubt which has already arisen. "So the solution lies in stoppage of nourishment. But how? "There are things which are wholesome or unwholesome, blameless or blameworthy, noble or low and contrasts of dark and bright. Giving frequent wise attention to them is the stoppage of nourishment for the arising, increasing and strengthening of doubt."

The deep-rooted causes of doubt are the same as those for the other hindrances, namely, distorted perception, ignorance of dharma, and ignorance of truth.

SUSPENSION OF DOUBT

Faith : Faith arises when there is a twin-encounter. Encounter with suffering and encounter with Dharma. The encounter with suffering creates a desire to search for a solution to the problem of suffering. If at that time Dharma is encountered, in which the fully enlightened one, the Buddha, points to a way, on which He Himself had traversed and achieved success, a desire would arise to give the method a trial. This desire is called the arising of faith. Faith impels one to put Dharma into practice. The dharma action is charity, morality and mental culture. As he practices in this manner devotion arises in him, and he comes to know by personal experience what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, what is to be practiced and what is not to be practiced, what is noble and what is ignoble. In this way, doubt is suspended.

Besides faith, the other conditions which tend to eradicate the hindrance of doubt, are the same as in the case of other hindrances. Those conditions are knowledge of Dharma, knowledge of the practice, discussion and questioning, noble friendship and suitable conversation.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF HINDRANCES

THE PRINCIPLE OF REPLACEMENT

Two methods are used for acquiring this skill; the method of avoidance or prevention and the method of substitution or replacement. Cultivating the company of good people, moderation in eating, taking up residence in a suitable locality, learning the basic principles of Dharma and living and behaving according to a code of good conduct all contribute to a way of living and to the development of such mental attitudes which deter the arising of hindrances.

Practicing *Maitri* an example of the method of substitution. Loving-kindness and ill-will cannot co-exist. So by practicing loving-kindness, ill-will is kept away. In the same way, compassion suspends cruelty, sympathetic joy suspends envy, equanimity suspends partiality, *asubha* meditation suspends lust, energy suspends laziness. Further, one is advised to develop concentration of mind, for it can suspend the hindrance sense-desire.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONCENTRATION

The importance of concentration of mind is such that it is specially mentioned as a factor of the path leading to cessation of suffering. Additionally, it is said that in the state of deep concentration, all the five hindrances are suspended.

There are many ways for concentrating the mind. Among them the method known as 'Mindfulness of breathing' is of great importance because it can, not only enable the mind to be concentrated, but it can be used for developing insight.

Preliminary Exercise : The meditator sits down cross-legged, with the body upright, and places his hands on his laps, one palm over the other. The eyes are closed. The correctness of posture enables him to sit for a long time without discomfort. Several minutes may be taken for repeatedly checking the correctness of posture. When an effort is made like this, to keep the body absolutely still, tension may develop in the body. So, the next step is to remove physical tension. Mentally direct attention to the tension-points one by one, consciously relax the muscles there. To give an examples, strained eyes will make meditation painful. so, become aware of the eyes and relax the eye-muscles. It may be helpful to say mentally-'Relax, relax'. The eye-muscles getting relaxed has to be actually experienced. Knowing that the eyes are now relaxed, direct mental attention, one by one, to the other tension-points, and in each case experience relaxation at those points. The other tension-points are, jaws, neck, shoulders, arms, abdomen and the legs. The checks may be done again and again for several minutes till the body is relaxed and in the correct posture.

The next step is the hindrances-check. All hindrances are mental, and the remedy lies in the mind only. He 'looks inwards', that is, mentally observes his own mind, to determine whether the hindrance of sense-desire is present or absent. He is able to determine this by his knowledge of the characteristics of sense-desire. If he notices the presence of those characteristics, he concludes that sense-desire is present. He is neither elated nor depressed, but objectively makes a mental note – "There is sense-desire in me." The hindrances prefer to do their nefarious job from the dark recesses of mind, and tend to wither away, when brought out in the open and exposed to be light of scrutiny. So, sense-desire may disappear as soon as its presence is discovered, in which case, he immediately makes a mental note

– “There is no sense-desire in me.” But, if sense-desire persists then he takes appropriate action to suspend sense-desire. When sense-desire is suspended, he makes a mental note – “There is no sense-desire in me.”

Now he ‘looks inward’ and repeats the same pattern of exercise in respect of the hindrance of ill-will. And then of sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt.

This exercise enables him to develop two skills; skill in identifying hindrances and skill in suspending hindrances. And, by repeated and diligent practice, he improves the quality of the two skills. He is now so skillful that he can identify hindrances immediately, and can suspend hindrances immediately.

Once a reasonable degree of skill is acquired, the meditation should move over smoothly to the next exercise. (If this is not done, the catalogue method of the preliminary exercise, may itself become the cause for restlessness).

Mindfulness of Breathing: If the preliminary exercise has been done properly, the meditator may experience moments when the hindrances are, by and large, absent. The mind is calm, and it adverts to the process of breathing. Now onwards, the aim of the exercise is to be continuously aware of process of breathing. Such undistracted awareness of an object is called ‘Concentration of mind’. But mind is so fickle and unsteady, so difficult to guard and control, that it does not remain fixedly on an object. So, the meditator finds that distracting thoughts prevent concentration of mind on the process of breathing; and he knows, because of preliminary exercise, that every distraction is due to the arising of one or the other of the five hindrances. So he tackles the hindrances as and when they arise, making full use of the skill acquired during preliminary exercise.

If, while maintaining mindfulness of breathing, that mindfulness is lost, because of the arising of a hindrance, say ill-will, he immediately becomes aware of the presence of ill-will, and promptly suspends ill-will. Having done this he again becomes mindful of breathing. Later if the same or another hindrance arises, he deals with it in the same manner. If this meditation is practiced ardently with keen mindfulness, the frequency of appearance of the hindrances will decrease. Eventually, the hindrances stop arising as they are all suspended, all distracting thoughts cease, the mindfulness of breathing is unbroken, and the mind is fully concentrated. This is a pure state. The purity of mind is not only due to the suspension of the five hindrances, but also because of the dominant presence of wise attention, joyfulness of practice, happiness due to freedom from hindrances, one-pointedness of awareness, and a state of equanimity.

PROLONGATION OF THE DURATION OF PURITY

When the hindrances are suspended, the mind is so pure as to merit the quality of the divine. But it should be remembered that the hindrances have been only temporarily suspended, and not permanently relinquished. So, after the session of meditation, when he busies himself with the chores and cares of humdrum daily life, the hindrances again start acting up, and the purity of mind declines. Since most of the day is spent in commonplace activities, the mind remains impure most of the day. It is, therefore, extremely important that such action be taken that preserves purity of mind throughout the day, to the extent possible.

On this count, the Satipatthana Sutta, continuing the instructions for the removal of the five mental hindrances, says: “He dwells contemplating the hindrances internally: or he dwells

contemplating the five hindrances externally; or he dwells contemplating the hindrances internally and externally.” The instruction consists of the three statements, the practical application of which needs to be understood.

(a) How does one dwell contemplating the hindrances internally? There are two methods of doing this.

(i) Early in the day having picked up one of the hindrances, say ill-will, decides to contemplate on it, internally. Mustering will power, he makes a strong resolution – “Today, throughout the day, I will not become angry; whatever I may be doing, whatever be the circumstances, I will not become angry; even if a situation is irritating. I will not become angry; even under strong provocation, I will not become angry”. Then, let us say, he attends to the daily routine of brushing his teeth. Most people brush their teeth mechanically and absent-mindedly. But, not so, our friend, who has taken a pledge. Remembering his pledge, he ‘looks inward’ to scrutinize his mind, and comes to know... ‘There is no anger in me.’ The scrutiny is repeated during washing his face, changing his dress etc., But while drinking coffee he comes to know... ‘There is anger in me. Instantly, he knows the object of anger and the cause of anger; and he knows... “I am angry with coffee, because it is hot.” Such clear appraisal makes suspension of the anger easy. Sometimes, it may not be so easy; in which case, generating thoughts of loving-kindness may be necessary for expelling anger. In this way, introspection and corrective action take place a very large number of times during the day. If this continuous daily practice of keeping anger away is extended day after day, the benefit would indeed be great. Likewise the other hindrances, one at a time, could be taken up for repeated introspection, throughout the day. Of such a person it can be said: ‘He dwells contemplating the hindrances internally.’

(ii) In the second method a hindrance is not singled out for special treatment throughout the day. The solemn resolution made in the morning is to keep the mind free of all hindrances throughout the day. As he goes on doing his work one after another, each action calls for mental attention, so that the work is done properly. Even then, he will find countless opportunities, in the course of his actions, to ‘look inwards, for the purpose of detecting the presence or otherwise of any of the five mental hindrances. Thus while getting out of bed he might detect laziness, greed while eating, impatience while searching for something, agitations while reading the newspaper, doubt whenever there is prevarication, and so on. Thus the presence of hindrances are identified innumerable times; and they are replaced by their opposites innumerable times during the day. So it is said: ‘he dwells contemplating the hindrances internally.’

(b) How does one dwell contemplating the hindrances externally? The affairs of ordinary life are such, that we have to enter again and again into relationship with others. In the course of the dealing, when we meet a person, we can see his actions and gestures, and we can hear his words. But when a person, skilled in contemplating hindrances internally, meets another person, he will not only see his actions, feature and gestures, but also ‘see’ his mind, and know: ‘There is sense-desire in him’. ‘There is no sense-desire in him’ etc. By repeated practice the ability to know the presence or absence of hindrances in others is sharpened. Of such a person it can be said: ‘He dwells contemplating the hindrances externally.’

(c) How does one dwell contemplating the hindrances internally and externally? He firstly contemplates internally and then externally. He takes a firm decision to act, and acts accordingly. Four situations are possible and these are described below, taking the hindrance of ill-will for example:

Situation (i)

He sees internally : ‘There is anger in me’.
 He sees externally : ‘There is no anger in him.’
 He decides : ‘I must immediately suspend my anger.’

Situation (ii)

He sees internally : ‘There is anger in me’.
 He sees externally : ‘There is no anger in him.’
 He decides : ‘I must immediately suspend my anger.’

Situation (iii)

He sees internally : ‘There is no anger in me’.
 He sees externally : ‘There is anger in him.’
 He decides : ‘I must not permit anger to arise in me. I must radiate thoughts of loving-kindness.’

Situation (iv)

He sees internally : ‘There is no anger in me’.
 He sees externally : ‘There is no anger in him.’
 He decides : ‘I must make this purity in me permanent.’

When a person dwells contemplating the hindrances internally, externally and in both ways, the purity of mind acquired during intense meditation, is extended to ordinary life. As a result of this, ordinary life gains a new meaning and a new goal. And ordinary life, lived lived in this purposeful way, in its turn helps meditative effort to be more efficient. Such harmony of endeavour is a necessary condition for initiating a concerted effort to relinquish the mental hindrances permanently.

PERMANENT RELINQUISHMENT OF HINDRANCES

DEEP-ROOTED CAUSES

Permanent relinquishment of mental hindrances is possible only by abolishing their deep-rooted causes. These causes are difficult to uproot, because their treachery is insidious and imperceptible. Ignorance of truth is such a cause. The truth is that every phenomenon in the universe is sustained only because of the necessary and sufficient conditions; and that the phenomenon collapses when those conditions do not obtain. The corollary is, that man, being a part of the universe, is just a creature of this universal law of casual genesis. But oblivious of this law, every man fancies himself to be a special entity standing apart. This standing apart is called the ego. And from this false position, he perceives the world in a distorted manner. It is the delusion tricking beings by making life appear to them as permanent, happy, substantial and beautiful; and preventing them from seeing that everything in reality is impermanent, liable to suffering, void of I and mine, and basically impure. Distorted perception, erroneous concepts and unwise reflection are the deep-rooted causes for the arising of the five hindrances.

The plan of action, for abolishing the deep-rooted causes, has these three steps:

- a) Introduction of liberating qualities.
- b) Development of those qualities.
- c) Relinquishment of mental hindrances.

SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

When hindrances are discarded, he knows: 'There is no hindrance in me,' This knowledge of absence, is only a negative knowledge of purity. For further progress, it is necessary to bring in positive liberating qualities. There are seven such qualities, and they are called 'Factors of Enlightenment,' because they conduce to enlightenment. The factors are: Mindfulness, investigation of Reality, Energy, Rapture, Tranquillity, Concentration, and Equanimity.

A person, intent to relinquishing the mental hindrances permanently, goes to a suitable place, sits down cross-legged, keeps his body erect, and his mindfulness alert. Just mindful he breathes in and mindful he breathes out. Because of the proficiency he had gained by previous practice, he experiences now and then, moments when his mind is free of hindrances. Seeing that the technique is efficacious, he now aims to live permanently in this happy state. So he introduces and develops the seven factors of enlightenment. Regarding this aspect of the practice, the Buddha says, in the *Satipatthana Sutta*:

"Herein, monks, when the enlightenment –factors of Mindfulness is present in him he knows, 'The enlightenment factor of Mindfulness is in me,' or when the enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness is absent, he knows, 'The enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness is not in me' And he knows how the arising of the non-arisen enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness comes to be; and how perfection in the development of the arisen enlightenment-factor of Mindfulness comes to be." Thereafter the same formula is repeated in respect of the remaining six factors of enlightenment. Four statements are made in respect of each factor. The first two statements call for bare awareness of the presence or absence of the factor of enlightenment.

Identification is facilitated by the knowledge of the characteristics of the factors. The third statement deals with arising of the factor of enlightenment. Arising takes place if the proximate cause is provided. The fourth statement deals with perfection in the development of the factor. Such perfection is possible only if the subtle cause for the arising of the factor of enlightenment is provided. Now, what follows is a description of the factors of enlightenment, and of the mode of practice.

MINDFULNESS ENLIGHTENMENT-FACTOR

The primary characteristic of mindfulness is selective advertence of the mind to an object. Instead of dwelling in the past or in the future, an object in the present is taken up for mental attention. This selectivity is the result of will and decision. Will is the desire to act. 'Act here means, 'To put Dharma into practice.' He asks himself "For relinquishing the mental hindrances, what should I do at this very moment?" Instantly he decides: 'I must be aware of the present, for the present is the only reality.' He recalls the Buddha's dictum: do not let the present slip away. He has no doubts about the correctness of his decision, and so he, confidently, directs his mind and becomes aware of an object in the present. According to *Satipatthana Sutta* only one of four things could be the present object. The four possible things are (a) Sensory objects, like sound, touch etc., (b) Feelings, (c) State of consciousness and (d) Mental things. These four cover all situations.

Having directed his mind to the present object, he does not permit his mind to wander away. Such mindfulness is called 'Bare Attention', devoid of any admixture. Now, can he make sure that his awareness is pure? For ensuring purity of awareness, he has to do six things (a) cut off, (b) advert, (c) give up nouns, (d) give up adjectives, (e) give up pronouns, and (f) see succession.

a) **Cut off:** The untrained mind delights in distracted flow of thoughts, instigated by feelings. For exercising mindfulness, it is firstly necessary that the current of distracted thoughts be arrested.

b) **Advert:** Having arrested the flow of distracted thoughts, attention has to be directed to the 'Present' object. Having focused attention on the present object, the awareness of the object should not be lost.

c) **Give up nouns:** We have a compulsive urge to give a name to everything we encounter. We want to attach tags to everything. The process of naming a thing, has a complicated psychological mechanism. Let us see how it works. When we see a visible object, we, instantly, carry out a search among the innumerable impressions stored away in our mind, to find if such a visible object was seen in the past. This is dipping into memory and comparison of present object. Suppose that the inquiry reveals that an object was indeed seen in the past and that, at that time it was called a 'Cat.' So the present object is cognized as cat. A name is given to the present object. This process of cognition by naming is not bare attention, because naming is the result of applied thought, after bare attention. So when there is in-breath, he should not comment mentally. 'This is in-breath,' but just be aware of in-breath. If there is touch, he should not comment mentally, 'This is touch,' but just be aware of touch. So the Buddha says: 'In the seen there should only be the seen' etc. Thus when it is said, "When there is ill-will within, he knows; 'There is ill-will in me.'" Does not mean that he gives a name to the prevalent state of consciousness, by calling it ill-will. It means; when there is ill-will he just becomes aware of it without giving it a name. This is how giving up nouns should be understood.

d) **Give up adjectives :** Use of adjectives involves a protracted mental process of comparison. The adjective 'Big' entails comparison with something which is small. While practicing mindfulness by bare attention. The mind should not be permitted to drift into processes of comparison. There should be awareness only without use of comparative vocabulary. So for ensuring purity of awareness, there should be no mental comments using adjectives like, good, evil, high, low, pleasant, unpleasant, real, unreal, etc., There should only be bare awareness. This is how giving up adjectives should be understood.

e) **Give up Pronouns :** The biggest pronoun is 'I' the Ego. It is by introducing the concept of 'I' that reality is perceived in a distorted way. Since the purpose of mindfulness is to ensure purity of awareness, it is logical that the pronoun 'I' be given up. So when the Buddha says that in the seen, there should be only the seen, it means, there should be only the bare awareness of the seen, and there should be no introduction of ego. Bare rolling on of phenomena should be perceived as an impersonal process. This is how giving up of pronouns should be understood.

f) **See Succession :** When nouns, pronouns and adjectives are all gone, the vital thing that is left is the verb. Verb means action, physical, verbal and mental. All the hopes of salvation lie in this. In the present context, when mindfulness has been cleansed of nouns, pronouns and adjectives, awareness of the present turns out to be becoming aware of succession of momentary arising and passing away of the objects and awareness of them.

Purification of mindfulness in the sixfold way prepares the mind for seeing reality as it is which is the function of the next factor of enlightenment called investigation of reality.

INVESTIGATION-OF-REALITY, ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR

The basic exercise is to be just aware of breathing. Breathing is the function of the body, and awareness of it is the function of the mind. Besides this body and this mind there should be no other thing. The mind should not get attached to any object; there should be only awareness. Concentration is the immediate cause of the purity of awareness. During the period of concentration, the hindrances are temporarily kept away. But deep down if there is ignorance of truth, the mind is liable to get attached to the object by way of egoistic linking, or dislike, or notions of I and mine or concepts. So there is need to cultivate knowledge of truth for relinquishing the hindrances permanently. For this purpose the meditation is now continued by adopting the technique of seven contemplations.

SEVEN CONTEMPLATIONS

1) Seeing Reality of Impermanence

Instead of being aware of breathing in general way, keen attention has to be given to the beginning, middle and end of in-breath; and to the beginning, middle, and end of out-breath. If this contemplation is repeated again and again, over long periods, knowledge will arise: "Everything is changing all the time; nothing is stagnant, everything is evanescent and impermanent."

For further development of meditation, the in-breath and out-breath are considered as a procession of a large number of moments, and effort is made to become aware of every one of these moments. A high degree of concentration of mind is needed. Knowledge will arise: "Every moment there is arising and passing away." Knowledge of impermanence is augmented. Awareness is momentary and every moment there is new

awareness. He becomes mindful of this. The notion of permanence is discarded.

2) Seeing Reality of Danger

In order to dwell in conformity with reality, there has to be fresh awareness every moment. But if at any moment there arises a liking for that moment the mind will get attached to the liked object of that moment, and this attachment will manifest as the hindrance of sense-desire. In this way it can be shown that the other hindrances also arise when mind gets attached to an object, ignoring the reality of impermanence. Because of this he views every arising of sense-perception as dangerous. This is called contemplation of danger.

3) Becoming Egoless

Everything in the universe is changing, the changes being determined by the laws of physics, laws of chemistry, biology, psychology, laws of moral causation and very many other laws. Conditioned by these laws phenomena roll on. Man is just a part of this flux. But each man imagines himself to be special entity standing apart from the flux. This is his ego. If mental hindrances are to be permanently relinquished, ego has to be given up.

Fair enough. But what should our friend do? He is sitting cross-legged, aware of in-breath and out-breath. He sees impermanence. And seeing danger, he is trying his best not to let his mind get attached to what he perceives. What should he do to cut his ego?

The problem of ego is linked with the problem of duality or dichotomy where there are two contrasting groups separated by a gap. If he likes something there is the danger of the hindrance of sense-desire; if he dislikes it there is danger of ill-will; if he is calm there is danger of laziness, and if he is energetic there

is danger of restlessness. To transcend these gaps of duality, he decides to make an end of all the hindrances. Accordingly he acts. While meditating, he feels: 'I am abandoning this hindrance.' So he creates a gap between himself and the thing to be abandoned. So he never succeeds in abandoning it. Then he feels: 'I am achieving that,' So he creates a gap between himself and the goal.' So he never achieves the goal. He continues to strive and when he experiences peace he feels: 'I am in peace.' Thus he creates a gap between himself and peace, so he fails to achieve true peace.

Contemplation of egolessness abolishes the gap. Dichotomy is transcended and the subject merges with the object, and the path merges with goal. Neither matter nor mind exist as eternal entities. Mementarily they arise and instantly they pass away, depending on causes and conditions. Mere phenomena roll on. So during contemplation of egolessness, he becomes just aware of this impersonal phenomena free of egoistic distortion.

4) Becoming Dispassionate

This is in consequence of the first three contemplations. Previously, when an object was cognized, it used to appear to be alluring and pleasurable and so the mind used to get attached to the object. Now he sees things without distortions, and the cognized object is seen to have an inherent danger. So he is not fascinated by, nor does he find it pleasurable. So he becomes dispassionate towards the object. By becoming dispassionate he abandons delighting. He just becomes aware of arising and passing away and takes no delight in it. So when mindful of breathing, without delighting in it, he sees impermanence, sees danger, and becomes egoless.

5) Causing Fading away

Mindfulness of breathing is to be aware of in-breath and out-breath. For facilitating comprehension of impermanence,

the in-breath and out-breath are viewed by dividing them into many parts or many instants. At moment 'A'. there is awareness of 'A'. At the next moment say moment 'B' there should be awareness of 'B' only. This is possible only when awareness of moment 'A' is given up and made to fade away. If this is not done, at moment 'B' the mind instead of becoming aware of 'B' would be with moment 'A', it would get attached to moment 'A', and this attachment would result in the arising of mental hindrances. To prevent this, there should be awareness of 'B' only at moment 'B'. So, becoming aware of moment 'B' means causing fading of awareness of moment 'A'; awareness of moment 'C' means fading away of awareness of moment 'B'. When analysed in this manner, mindfulness of breathing is a continual process of giving up. The result of this is that greed is abandoned. Psychologically, greed is attraction, and giving up is the exact opposite of greed. So it is said that by causing fading away, greed is abandoned. Mindfully he breathes in and mindfully he breathes out, without greed for the sense-object and without greed for the awareness of. With a mind freed of greed he contemplates impermanence, sees danger in attachment and dwells egoless.

6) Causing Cessation

Cessation is the completion of the process of fading away or giving up. So he breathes in and breathes out mindfully, making sure that at every moment there is cessation of awareness of the previous moment. Because awareness is cut off, the mind is not attached to it, and so the hindrances cannot arise, not carefully what has happened. Hindrances did not arise, but before they could arise. The possibility of their arising has been cut off. Let us say there is a poison-tree. If the leaves are plucked away, new leaves will sprout. If the branch is cut down, a new branch will grow. But if its root is cut, the tree

cannot grow. In a similar manner, causing cessation of awareness cuts away the hindrances at the root. So he practices mindfulness of breathing, causing cessation, so that there could be no origination of hindrances. Cessation abandons origination.

7) Relinquishing

Comprehending in the manner described above, he does not permit it his mind to get attached to sense-objects.

This prevents hindrances, and the resultant purity of mind enables improved comprehension of impermanence, danger and egolessness. Comprehension and purity are mutually supportive. With continued development of the practice, a time comes when he completely gives up or relinquishes wrong comprehension. Such relinquishment has two aspects a) abandoning and b) entering into. Hindrances are permanently abandoned and he enters the dimension of the Supramundane.

What has been described is a grand plan beginning with such an elementary function as breathing, but leading by stages to transcendental states of consciousness. But does it really happen that way? For finding an answer to this question, we should take a look at the hindrances and see what they have been doing in the mean time. We have been encouraging and nourishing the hindrances for such a long, long time that they have acquired an astonishing measure of tenacity. So much so, when we throw them out, they begin operating subtly from a deeper level. And if we discard them at that level, they start operating from a still deeper level. Our friend started off very well indeed by becoming aware of breathing and by comprehending reality. But because of the subtle machinations of a hindrance (say sloth and torpor) the effort put in by him slackens and progress in meditation becomes tardy and tends to decline. Enjoying peace, he becomes lazy. At this time, the most important thing to do is

to activate the mind. This is done by bringing-in the third factor of enlightenment which is energy.

ENERGY ENLIGHTENMENT-FACTOR

Energy, as factor of enlightenment, is the mustering of will and marshalling of energy, to act immediately with full vigour, and not letting that effort to wane. The proximate cause of energy is a sense of urgency. As a person whose turban is on fire would act with alacrity even so, one should endeavour to prevent the arising of hindrances; to discard hindrances immediately if they arise in spite of the effort to prevent them; to ennoble the mind by introducing in it the seven factors of enlightenment; and to develop those factors tirelessly and persistently till they dominate all actions.

So, knowing the characteristics of energy and the cause for the arising of energy, he activates his mind; and with renewed energy, he activates his mind; and with renewed energy, he practices mindfulness of breathing, sees the reality of impermanence, etc; and resolves not to slacken effort.

When he does so, there is an instant improvement in the quality of his meditation. His mindfulness, as also contemplation of reality becomes more acute. But after some time he notes that his effort is becoming sluggish. So once again he tries to activate his mind, but he does not seem to succeed. He should not give up effort, but introduce yet another factor of enlightenment, called Rapture or Pure Joy.

ENLIGHTENMENT-FACTOR OF PURE JOY

Rapture, here means 'Joyful Interest'. If a man is engaged in doing a work, he will do it well if he is interested in doing it, if he is enthusiastic in doing it, and if he does it joyously. Joyful interest refreshes the mind, provides thrill and elation. Its

proximate cause is contentment resulting from doing good things. So gladdening his mind, he practices mindfulness of breathing. Gladdening his mind, he contemplates impermanence. Gladdening his mind, he sees danger. Gladdening his mind, he abandons ego. And gladdening his mind, he puts forth energy .

By the introduction of enlightenment factor or rapture ,the quality of his meditation improves instantly and the progress becomes steady. He exerts to retain mindfulness of breathing to contemplate reality, to put forth effort and joyous interest encourages him to exert. But it may so happen that due to over-enthusiasm there is over-exertion. Over-exertion would result in restlessness, which is a hindrance. In order to correct this situation, if he tries to contemplate better or becomes more energetic or joyful, it only increases restlessness of mind. When this happens, he should not get up and go away, shaking his meditation mat. He should usher in the factor of enlightenment called Tranquillity.

TRANQUILLITY ENLIGHTENMENT-FACTOR

Tranquillity has the characteristic of quieting disturbance of the mind. It manifests as calmness of mind. Calmness is of three kinds. Calmness of body, of speech, and of mind. Calmness of body is absence of tension in the body. When mindfulness of breath is the method of meditation, calmness of body specifically means calmness of breath, that is, steady breathing-in and breathing-out any strain. Calmness of speech is stoppage of the process of thinking, for thinking is nothing but talking mentally. Calmness of mind, is mind without defilements. Calmness is directly opposed to agitation. So after inducing calmness of breath, after calming distracting thoughts, after calming his mind, he becomes calmly mindful

of in-breath and out-breath. Calmly he contemplates impermanence etc.,Calmly he puts forth effort, and becomes calmly joyous.

When he does this, there is an instant improvement in the quality of his meditation. But the hindrances exercise their corrupting influence from deeper levels and frustrate further steady progress of meditation. As a counter-measure , it is necessary to willfully introduce the factor of enlightenment called Concentration of Mind.

CONCENTRATION ENLIGHTENMENT-FACTOR

Concentration is steadiness of mind, like the steadiness of a lamp's flame when there is no draught. It is unification or on-pointedness of mind. Non-distraction is the characteristic. It is experienced as non-wavering and peace. Its proximate cause is happiness. When the mind is reinforced by concentration, it is not perturbed by agitation. The quality of concentration depends on the purity of mind and the intensity of zeal to make the fourfold effort energetically.

So, he develops concentration by becoming more intently aware of the process of breathing. How? He considers the in-breath to be made up of a large number of moments, and also the out-breath to be made up of a large number of moments. He, now, puts forth energy to become aware of every moment of in-breath and out-breath. With the decline of agitation, his mind becomes concentrated. And with a concentrated mind he sees impermanence, sees danger and becomes egoless.

At this stage the mental hindrances seem to have disappeared , but in reality ego now works from a very deep level, distorting perception, so that some things are liked and some disliked. The mental effort to pull things which are liked, and to push

things which are disliked, cause subtle strain and agitation in the mind. As a result of this further progress of meditation is impeded. Therefore, it is necessary to augment the purposiveness of meditation, by introducing into the practice yet another factor of enlightenment.....—...Equanimity.

EQUANIMITY ENLIGHTENMENT-FACTOR

Equanimity is to leave things as they are. One can meet the present reality by accepting it as it is. It is not a matter of withstanding an opposing force by digging in one's feet, and enduring or persevering in a situation. Equanimity is just to be in the present. What is seen, is just seen; what is heard, is just heard; what is cognized, is just cognized. The effort to remain in the present, is the biggest practice of 'Leaving things as they are.' Equanimity has the characteristic of being felt as neutral. It is to see fairly, without partiality or bias. Its function is not to intensify or wither what is perceived. It manifests as peace. It succeeds when it makes resentment and approval subside; and it fails when calmness is an attitude of indifference caused by ignorance. Its proximate cause is cessation of pleasure. Mindfulness is purified by equanimity.

So he causes equanimity to arise in him, and with that equanimous mind, he becomes aware of in-breath and out-breath. With an equanimous mind, he sees impermanence, sees danger, and becomes egoless. And, instantly, there is an improvement in the quality of his meditation.

With the introduction of equanimity, one by one, all the seven factors of enlightenment have been brought into play. But, a very important thing yet remains to be done. And that is to balance the factors of enlightenment.

BALANCING THE FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

While dwelling upon mindfulness enlightenment factor, a mention was made of its characteristics and functions. But it has one more important function; that of balancing the factors of enlightenment. If equanimity is excessively developed his consciousness may not be rightly concentrated for the destruction of the mental hindrances. Therefore, concentration has to be developed side by side. If concentration is excessive, his mind may conduce to idleness. Therefore energy has to be developed side by side. If energy is excessive, his mind may conduce to agitation. Mindfulness has the function of watching over the even development and balance of the other six factors of enlightenment. Three factors, namely, investigation of reality, energy, and pure joy make the mind energetic. Three factors, namely, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity tend to calm the mind. So while developing the factors of enlightenment, attention should be paid to them, (particularly to equanimity, concentration and energy) to ensure that there is neither excess nor deficiency.

The method is illustrated by the simile of the chariot. The chariot is hauled by six strong horses. For achieving maximum efficiency, it is necessary that all the six horses pull the chariot at the same speed. If one of the horses overexerts, or if one of the horses slackens, the efficiency of progress of the chariot will be impaired. So the skilled charioteer, watching over their performance, now he urges this horse, now he restrains that horse, to make sure that the efforts of the horses are balanced. And when that balance is reached, and the six horses pull the chariot at the same speed, he does not have to do anything. So he just looks on. In this simile the charioteer is mindfulness, and the six horses are the other six factors of enlightenment.

Similarly, our meditating friend, mindfully pays attention to the other six factors. When consciousness is to be restrained, he restrains it. When consciousness is to be energised, he energises it. When consciousness is to be encouraged, he encourages it. And when consciousness is to be looked on at with equanimity, he looks on at with equanimity.

At this stage the method of meditation becomes extremely simple. The method is just 'observing' and 'turning away' every moment. Observing or awareness is to experience the phenomenon as an object. Turning away is experiencing the phenomenon as non-delusion. Experiencing by observing is to note the specific characteristics of the phenomenon. Experiencing by turning away is to note the general characteristics (impermanence, danger and egolessness) of the phenomenon. By observing and turning away, one experiences a phenomenon according to reality. Experiencing according to reality, hits at delusions regarding ego and the world. These delusions are the deep-rooted causes of mental hindrances.

Meditating in this manner, he again and again experiences moments of peace, and moments of mental purity caused by the absence of hindrances. But when he gets up to busy himself with the affairs and cares of daily life, the hindrances would tend to reappear. So he must take action so that purity of mind is retained during the course of his daily chores.

PROLONGATION OF THE DURATION OF PURITY

Regarding this practice, the *Satipatthana sutta* says: "He contemplates the factors of enlightenment internally; and he contemplates the factors of enlightenment both internally and externally."

The method of practice has the same paradigm as in the earlier case, when the practice was for prolongation of purity

mind by contemplating of the hindrances. But there are two significant differences. Then the absence of hindrances was the purity of mind which was sought to be extended during the daily mundane activities. Now the purity of mind is of a higher order, purity caused by the presence of the factors of enlightenment. Secondly, the task then was to keep the hindrances away throughout the day, but now, the task is to ensure the presence of the factors of enlightenment throughout the day. Thus, contemplating the factors internally is done either by taking a factor and ensuring its presence during all activities, or by ensuring their presence generally. Contemplation of the factors externally is to develop the ability to know the presence or absence of the factors of enlightenment in others. Contemplation of the factors internally and externally entails a comparison of the mental states to ensure presence of the factors of enlightenment in oneself. In this way, the meditative life ennobles ordinary activities of the day, and the daily routine, assists successful meditation. Now he is ready for the next stage of development which is of momentous importance.

KNOWLEDGE OF ORIGIN AND DISSOLUTION

Giving instructions for the acquisition of this knowledge, the *Satipatthana Sutta* says: he lives contemplating the origination factors in the mental objects; he lives contemplating the dissolution factors in the mental objects; he lives contemplating the origination and dissolution factors in the mental-objects." This refers to the four truths which constitute the fundamental discovery of the Buddha. It is the ignorance of these four truths which is the deep-rooted cause of all mental hindrances and dilemmas; and it is the knowledge of these four truths which enables the total and permanent relinquishment of the hindrances.

The instructions given above, call for a personal experiencing of the validity of the four truths; and to let the four truths so permeate one's understanding, that all his actions are influenced by these truths. Now what are the four truths? The first truth is the existential reality of unsatisfactoriness and imperfection, and its latent or manifest pain and suffering. This reality cannot exist in insolation. It exists only because the necessary-and-sufficient causes-and-conditions exist. This causal fact is the second truth. According to this truth it is egoistic attachment of the mind to the objects of the senses, which is the cause of all pain and suffering. Now, it stands to reason, that if the cause is abolished, if egoistic attachment or craving is abandoned, the unsatisfactory state would vanish. In other words, if the second truth is thrown out, the first truth would disappear. Such an action would lead to a new dimension of reality, where unsatisfactoriness, imperfection, pain, sorrow and suffering cannot find a footing. This exalted state of freedom is the third truth. But how can one abandon craving? There must be a method, a way, a path. That path leading to cessation of suffering is the fourth truth.

Now, let us see what our meditating friend is doing. Being aware of this breathing, every moment he is observing and turning away. Breathing and the awareness of it constitute the first truth. Every moment there is a threat. If, instead of turning away he continues his interest in it, gets attached to it, hindrances will arise, and suffering will surely follow. This is the threat, this is the danger. But that danger will manifest only if there is attachment, not otherwise. So attachment is the second truth. Then he has put attachment aside by turning away, and because of that he is experiencing a moment of peace, this experience of peace is the third truth, the truth of freedom. And how did he manage to reject attachment? By the simple

method of observing and turning away. This is the fourth truth, the truth of the path. In this way he has personally verified the validity of the four truths.

What else is he doing? He is balancing the faculties. If concentration is excessive there arises idleness. This is the first truth. What is the cause? Excess of concentration and deficiency of energy. This is the second truth. So he acts. He restrains concentration and activates energy. This is the fourth truth. When balance is restored he looks on with equanimity. This is the third truth. In this way he relates every thing to four noble truths. Whenever anything happens, instantly turning attention to the cause, becomes a habit.

Even after meditation, when he is confronted with the vicissitudes of life, he continues to see causes. When there is a gain, he immediately knows "There must be a cause for this gain." When viewed in his way, it gives him no justification for becoming elated.

So when there is gain, he remains equanimous, without elation. When there is a loss, he immediately knows "There must be a cause." When viewed in this way, it gives him no justification for becoming depressed. He remains equanimous, without depression. So, whether there is gain or loss, fame or infamy, praise or blame, a happy situation or an unhappy situation, under all circumstances he maintains peace and equilibrium of mind.

RELINQUISHMENT OF HINDRANCES

As he keeps on practicing and developing the seven factors on enlightenment in this manner a momentous transformation takes place in him. His moral conduct becomes perfect. His faith becomes perfect. He knows exactly what to do every moment, and that he does with ardent mindfulness, continuing

to develop the factors of enlightenment. And the mental hindrance of doubt is relinquished permanently. It can never arise again. He has, thus, entered the order of saints. Now as a Sotapanna saint, his progress towards deliverance is irreversible.

By continuing to develop the seven factors of enlightenment, a time comes when he becomes an Anagami saint. At this stage the hindrances of sense-desire, ill-will, and worry are permanently relinquished, never to arise again. Still later, when he becomes an Arahant Saint, the remaining mental hindrances, namely sloth and torpor, and restlessness, are permanently relinquished. And none of the hindrances can arise again. He has known what is to be known (the first truth); he has abandoned what is to be abandoned (second truth); he has developed what is to be developed (fourth truth); and he has achieved what is to be achieved (third truth). And he enters that dimension where nothing remains to be done. Since there is nothing to do or develop, the fourth truth does not obtain. Since there is nothing to abandon, the second truth does not obtain. When the second truth goes, the first truth of suffering also goes. Only the third truth remains – the state of Total Freedom.

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NOTES ON THE SCHEMATIC CHART

What has been said, in this essay on 'Removal of mental hindrances', has been indexed and tabulated, to assist comprehension of the overall scheme for tackling the problem of mental hindrances. This essay is based on the instructions given by the Buddha in the *Satipatthana Sutta*. The hindrances to be overcome are listed in the first column. A knowledge of the distinguishing characteristics of the hindrances is essential for introspective detection of the presence or absence of the hindrances. Then only can further action be taken. If a hindrance is present, it should be got rid of; and if it is absent, action should be taken to ensure that it stays out. Hindrances arise because of genetic and supportive conditions. Hindrances are got rid of by eliminating the causes of their origination. So one should know what the causes are. The causes for the arising of the hindrances are listed in the third column of the chart. But, for eliminating the causes, and thereby abandoning the hindrances, there has to be a practical method. In the fourth column is listed the practical methods for temporary suspension of the hindrances. The practical methods for permanently relinquishing the hindrances, are listed in the fifth column of the chart. The chart is appended to this essay.