

# The Nature of Mind as Revealed in the Suttas of Pāli Majjhima Nikāya

Ven. Deliwala Buddharakkhitha Thero<sup>1</sup>

---

## සංකේපය

බුදුදහමෙහි මනස පිළිබඳ විග්‍රහය අතිශය ගාමිනීර මෙන්ම පෘථුල වුවකි. සාමාන්‍ය වශයෙන් එය සිත ලෙස ද ව්‍යවහාර කරනු ලබයි. සූත්‍ර, චිත්තය හා අභිධර්ම යන තුන්පිටකය තුළ පැතිර ඇති බුදුදහමෙහි මනස පිළිබඳ විග්‍රහය වටහා ගැනීමේ දී තුන්පිටකයටම අවධානය යොමු කිරීම වැදගත් ය. සූත්‍රපිටකයෙන් සිත හා සබැඳි ප්‍රායෝගික කාරණා ද, චිත්තපිටකයෙන් ශික්ෂණය හා එහි සිතට ඇති ප්‍රායෝගික සම්බන්ධතාවය ද, අභිධර්මපිටකයෙන් සිත පිළිබඳ විශ්ලේෂණාත්මක විග්‍රහය ද ප්‍රමුඛ වශයෙන් සාකච්ඡා වෙයි. මෙම ලිපිය මගින් අපේක්ෂා කරනු ලබන්නේ එකී සමස්තයට අවදානය යොමු කිරීමට නොව, සූත්‍රපිටකයට අයත් මජ්ඣිමනිකායාගත සූත්‍රයන්ගෙන් තෝරාගත් සූත්‍ර කිහිපයකට අවධානය යොමු කරමින් ඒවායින් හෙළිවන සිත පිළිබඳ වූ විග්‍රහය, හැඳින්වීම, භාවිත පර්යායපද හා සිතේ ස්වභාවය යන අනුමානාකා ඔස්සේ, බොද්ධ මනෝවිද්‍යා විෂය කෙරෙහි ඇල්මක් දක්වන පර්යේෂකයන් හට උපකාර වනු පිණිස, විමසීමක් සිදු කිරීමට ය.

ප්‍රමුඛපද: තුන්පිටකය, බුදුදහම, මජ්ඣිමනිකාය, මනස, සිත

---

1 Temporary Lecturer, Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

## Introduction

The mind holds a position of utmost prominence when compared to the other two faculties of the body and speech. The origins of physical and verbal activities are primarily located within the mind's cognitive processes while certain acts are not focused on the mind. The active engagement of the cognitive faculties plays a pivotal role in the generation of *kamma* and its subsequent outcomes.

Actions that fail to manifest as *kammapatha*, the decisive element in deciding the nature of rebirth, and instead exist solely as mere actions. The fundamental concept being discussed pertains to the classification of mental acts related to *kamma* as *mahāsāvajakamma*. The concept of *daṇḍa* is taken in Jainism as a means to address the consequences of one's actions, commonly referred to as *kamma*. The emphasis is placed on *kāyadaṇḍa*, which pertains to physical actions. The formation of *kamma* is not influenced by the repercussions arising from the unintentional trampling of tiny animals during travel, as there exists a lack of cognitive association between the mind and the action.<sup>2</sup> Certain cognitive processes are associated with the outcomes of both unwholesome and wholesome results even though those are engaged with no physical and verbal activities. The consequences of covetousness (*abhijjhā*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), and wrong view (*micchādiṭṭhi*) result in birth in hell; conversely, the meritorious dhamma of freeing oneself from covetousness (*anabhijjhā*), non-ill will (*avyāpāda*), and right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*) result birth in the heavenly world due to the presence of a *kammapatha* in specific mental actions.<sup>3</sup>

---

2 *Upālisutta, Majjhima Nikāya i* (PTS), p.372

3 *Sāleyyakasutta, M.N. i* (PTS), p.287

According to the teachings of the Buddha, it is believed that engaging in virtuous thoughts, even for a brief while, can lead to positive outcomes, even if one is unable to align their actions of body and speech. The mind is approached from a comparative perspective. This entails reflecting upon one's state of being devoid of transgressions within a universe that is subjected to negative attributes. An illustration of this concept can be seen in the act of reflecting on dhamma within a flawed world populated by individuals who disregard dhamma. Such an endeavour demonstrates the inherent benefits of engaging in introspection with a mind imbued with happiness.<sup>4</sup> This intervention has proven to be beneficial in enhancing the quality of religious practices and beliefs, emphasising the mind that is born from that delightful state is beneficial to be extended to both physical and verbal activities. The act of forsaking tangible possessions, such as offspring, descendants, and assets, does not constitute a genuine renunciation within the noble discipline.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, refraining from perceiving visual stimuli, auditory sensations etc., does not constitute a proper contemplation of the senses (*indriya-bhāvanā*) within the noble discipline. This is because renunciation and the meditation on senses (*indriya-bhāvanā*) are distinct practices, yet both involve mental factors and are the parts of the same path. True renunciation cannot be achieved until one mentally releases the attachment to the material world that is acquired through desire. Individuals who are blind and deaf, and thus lack the ability to perceive visual images or auditory sounds throughout their whole lives, do not arrive at this state of

---

4 "Cittuppādampi kho ahaṃ, cunda, kusalesu dhammesu bahūpakāraṃ vadāmi, ko pana vādo kāyena vācāya anuvīdhiyamānāsu", *Sallekhasutta, M.N. i* (PTS), p.43

5 "Aññathā kho tvaṃ, gahapati, vohārasamucchedaṃ vadasi, aññathā ca pana ariyassa vinaye vohārasamucchedo hoti", *Potaliyasutta, M.N. i* (PTS), p.360

renunciation due to the absence of the practice of sensory meditation (*indriya-bhāvanā*) in their lives. Nibbāna, which represents the ultimate goal in Buddhism, is not directly apprehended but rather examined via the lenses of *akata*, *asaṃkhata*, *ajāta*, and *abhūta*, as it arises from a route rooted in mental processes. The aforementioned information suggests that the mind serves as the antecedent to all the dhamma elucidated in the initial verses of the *Dhammapada*.<sup>6</sup>

The mind serves as a sanctuary for the five senses, namely eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. These senses interact with various objects and stimuli that can be perceived.<sup>7</sup> The aforementioned suttas provide additional evidence to support this assertion.

### **Synonyms Used in the Analysis of Mind**

The utilisation of the term '*mano*' in the examination of the mind is seen in the analysis of both virtuous and non-virtuous behaviours. Hence, acts are evaluated in terms of their virtues and vices, with a focus on the cognitive processes involved. In accordance with the principle of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, the mind is conceptualised as *manāyatanaṃ*, giving rise to the subsequent stages of contact (*phassa*), sensation (*vedanā*), craving (*taṇhā*), and clinging (*upādāna*). The phenomenon arises as a result of the interplay between mentality (*nāma*) and materiality (*rūpa*). *Manāyatanaṃ* signifies more than just a sensory experience, but rather a sustained process.

---

6 "Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā", *Dhammapada* (PTS), p.1

7 "Imesaṃ kho brāhmaṇa pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ nānāvisayānaṃ nānāgocarānaṃ na aññamaññassa gocaravisayaṃ paccanubhontānaṃ mano paṭisaraṇaṃ, manova nesaṃ gocaravisayaṃ paccanubhoti", *Uṇṇābhābrāhmaṇasutta*, *S.N. v* (PTS), p.218

The discipline of *manāyatana* pertains to *dhammāyatana*. *Manāyatana* is closely linked to the interior aspects (*ajjhata*). The concept of *dhammāyatana* involves the establishment of external associations, commonly referred to as *bahiddhā*. *Manoviññāṇa* is generated through the aggregation of both bases.<sup>8</sup> This refers to the introspective awareness of one's mental processes. The aforementioned factors give rise to *phassa*, *vedanā*, and other related phenomena. The mental activity that is independent of this ongoing process is referred to as individual mental activity. The term 'manindriya' refers to the fundamental phase of *manāyatana*. It is imperative to liberate the *manindriya* from mental unwholesome engagements, such as *abhijjhā* (covetousness) and *domanassa* (discontentment), among others. In essence, it is imperative that one's perception does not give rise to attachments, conflicts, or deviations. In situations where this condition does not apply, the act of releasing wounds (*vaṇaṃ*) does not occur. The term 'vaṇa' here refers to the process of seeing and interpreting indicators or signals.<sup>9</sup>

The term 'mānasa' can also be used interchangeably with the mind,<sup>10</sup> and it is employed within the context of Buddhist philosophy to denote both the concept of lust and its association with arahants. The numerical value provided

---

8 *Salāyatanaṅgavibhaṅgasutta*, M.N. iii (PTS), p.216

9 "Manasā dhammaṃ viññāya nimittaggāhī hoti anubyañjanaggāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇametamaṃ manindriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhā domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyayaṃ tassa saṃvarāya na paṭipajjati, na rakkhati manindriyaṃ, manindriye na saṃvarāya āpajjati. evaṃ kho bhikkhave, bhikkhu na vaṇaṃ paṭicchādetā hoti", *Mahāgopālakasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.221

10 "Mānasanti rāgopi cittampi arahattampi", *Papañcasūdanī*, *Mūlapariyāya-suttavaṇṇanā*, M.N.A. i (S.H.B), p. 39

by the user is insufficient to determine the context or subject matter for this and the sentence "*na bodhisattamātu purisesu mānasaṃ uppajjati kāmaguṇūpasamhitam....*" employs the term *mānasa* to denote the mind, serving as a synonym.<sup>11</sup>

The term '*citta*' is frequently utilised in the analysis of the mind within the sutta-s of the Majjhima Nikāya and subsequent texts. While the term '*mano*' is commonly utilised to express the correlation between virtues and vices within the mind, perhaps it is worth noting that the term '*citta*' is also used in a similar manner. The comprehension lies in recognising that a mind driven by desire is inherently characterised by lust (*sarāga*), while a mind devoid of lust is free from such desires (*vītarāga*). Consequently, one should possess an understanding of various states of mind with a relative function as an opposition, namely, those are afflicted with anger (*sadosa*) and those are free from anger (*vītadosa*), those are deluded (*samoha*) and those are free from delusion (*vītamoha*), those are contracted (*sankhitta*) and those are perplexed (*vikkhitta*), those are of great expanse (*mahaggata*) and those are not of great expanse (*amahaggata*), those are accompanied by higher qualities (*savuttara*) and those are not accompanied by higher qualities (*anuttara*), those are settled (*samāhita*) and those are not settled (*asamāhita*), those are liberated (*vimutta*), and those are not liberated (*avimutta*).<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that each pair of opposing viewpoints has articulated its respective advantages and disadvantages, all of them have been understood through the lens of consciousness. This can be seen as an example that fulfils a similar function as *mano*.

---

11 *Acchariyabbhutadhammasutta, M.N. iii* (PTS), p.121

12 *Mahāvaccagottasutta, M.N. i* (PTS), p.495

The term '*hadaya*' indicates the anatomical organ known as the heart, and it has also been employed to denote the mind, wherein it conveys the notion of a deep understanding and connection between individuals as if one's mind comprehends the thoughts and intentions of another.<sup>13</sup>

The term '*viññāṇa*' is synonymous with mind and it exerts an influence on the manifestations of '*nāma*' ((mentality): feeling (*vedana*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*), attention (*manasikāra*), and '*rūpa*' (form) including *upādāyarūpa*.<sup>14</sup> *Viññāṇa* represents the cognitive faculty associated with the acquisition and comprehension of information pertaining to various phenomena. *Viññāṇa* necessitates comprehension via the lens of wisdom, denoting the faculty of cognition. This cognitive understanding represents a distinct mental state; therefore, *viññāṇa* is commonly used as a synonym for the mind. There exist six distinct categories of *viññāṇa* based on their respective locations of occurrence. The aforementioned are the six types of consciousness: eye-consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*), ear-consciousness (*sotaviññāṇa*), nose-consciousness (*ghānaviññāṇa*), tongue-consciousness (*jivhāviññāṇa*), body-consciousness (*kāyaviññāṇa*), and mental-consciousness (*manoviññāṇa*) wherein *viññāṇa* is thus classified. The statement posits that there is an absence of six *viññāṇa*-s.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the elemental properties of fire remain consistent regardless of their point of origin. The nomenclature of fire is derived from the materials that

---

13 "Hadayā hadayaṃ maññe aññāya tacchati", *Anaṃgaṇasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.32

14 "Vijānāti vijānātī ti viññāṇanti vuccati", *Mahāvedallasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.292

15 *Mahātaṇhāsamkhayasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.259

contribute to its ignition, such as wood fire and straw fire. Consequently, the emotions associated with fire are designated based on the location where they manifest. *Viññāṇa* referred to as *viññāṇakkhaṇḍha*, encompasses a wide range of temporal manifestations, including the past (*atīta*), future (*anāgata*), present (*paccuppanna*), and *ajjhata*, *bahiddhā*, *oḷārika*, *sukhuma*, *hīna*, *pañīta*, *dūra*, and *santika* are utilised to aid in the understanding of clinging (*upādāna*). The *Majjhima Nikāya sutta-s* show a few terms, such as *mana*, *manindriya*, *mānasa*, *manāyatana*, *hadaya*, *viññāṇa*, and *viññāṇakkhaṇḍha*, as interchangeable expressions denoting the mind.

### **Nature of the Mind**

The inherent nature of the intellect is characterised by its luminosity. The substance has been compromised by additional impurities, sometimes referred to as extraneous defilements (*upakkilesa*). According to the *sūkavagga* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya i*, the mind of the monks is described as being bright and susceptible to defilements caused by external factors. Individuals whose cognitive faculties are afflicted by the impurities of desire (*rāga*), aversion (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*), as well as the impurities of envy (*issā*), vanity (*mado*), and conceit (*māno*), perceive the mind as inherently enveloped by these enduring impurities. The mind is perceived as encompassing unwholesome thoughts that arise within it. They do not consider the possibility of eliminating it. Instances of riots and infidelity, among other undesirable behaviours, have increasingly become common place in the lives of individuals, leading them to perceive these external negative notions as inherent aspects of human mind. Occasionally,



defilements are dormant that arise within the mind. The phenomenon referred to as the state of *anusaya*, also known as underlying inclinations, denotes the condition in which certain tendencies persist as dormant dispositions within the mind. The phenomenon of its progressive ascent is referred to as *parivutthāna*, whereas the condition of the full manifestation of defilements is known as *vītikkama*, wherein they serve as a driving force behind unwholesome physical and verbal conduct. Activities involving defilements can be observed to varying degrees in the thoughts of ordinary individuals in all three of these circumstances. The categorisation of defilements into three categories, namely *anusaya*, *parivutthāna*, and *vītikkama*, is based on the assessment of outward omens by individuals. The cognitive process involving the consideration of defilements is referred to as *papañcakaṛaṇa*, commonly known as proliferation. The emergence of *viññāṇayatana* is a result of the accumulation of both external and internal bases. Following this, a series of sequential events occur, including the process of contact (*phassa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), thoughts (*vitakka*), and proliferation (*papañca*).<sup>16</sup>

The initial state of the mind does not coincide with the occurrence of defilements. This outcome is a consequence of a gradual process. The general populace concludes the nature of impurities within the mind, pertaining to one's self and soul. If such circumstances exist, the discussion of nirvāna or the eradication of defilements becomes impossible due to the absence of any form of suppression or restraint. A comprehensive understanding on this particular circumstance

---

16 *Madhupiṇḍikasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.112

serves as a key foundation for the suppression of defilements. According to the teachings of the Buddha, it is emphasised that, cultivating an awareness on both the presence of defilements (*parivutṭhāna* and *vītikkaṃa*) and their absence (*anusaya*) is vital in our efforts to suppress these defilements. A gold pot, when corroded and rendered non-functional, does not retain its appearance as a pot of gold. No discernible value is observed. However, when the technology is utilised, it is perceived as a very valuable asset with a significant worth. When a rusted pot is actively utilised, it is plausible to perceive the pot and the rust as a unified entity. Similarly, individuals, who are not parts of any specialised group, also exhibit this behaviour. Upon recognising rust as an extrinsic factor, individuals are inclined to undertake the task of cleaning the pot. Likewise, esteemed practitioners, who possess the understanding that the impurities that manifest within the consciousness are external, and they are driven by the aspiration to eliminate them. By adopting the perspective of acknowledging the presence or absence of defilements in one's mind, individuals might experience progress within the Buddhist order.<sup>17</sup>

The below mentioned defilements that come from the outside impurify the mind:

- *abhijjhāvisamaḷobho* - the desire for what belongs to others
- *vyāpādo* - desire to destroy others
- *kodho* - anger
- *upanāho* - entrenched hate

---

17 *Anaṃgaṇasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.24-26

- *makkha* - destruction of others' qualities
- *palāsa* - being low and thinking that they are at the same level as the high
- *issā* - envy
- *macchariya* - craving
- *māyā* - delusion
- *sātheyya* - deceit
- *thambho* - hardness
- *sārambho* - taking revenge
- *māno* - conceit
- *atimāno* - arrogance
- *mado* - vanity
- *pamādo* - negligence

If the mind were a garment made of white, then the aforementioned factors would taint that garment. The application of essential colours to a garment that is soiled is unattainable. Additionally, the applied colour is distorted. When the colour red, green, blue, or any other is applied to a garment, that colour would then be flawlessly applied; likewise, the mind is identical. The state of having a contaminated mind is comparable to that of a tarnished garment. There is no superior object. It neither softens nor becomes active.<sup>18</sup>

Operating with efficacy is significantly facilitated by a mind devoid of sins. These impurities are referred to as obstacles (*nīvaraṇa*). *Kammaṭṭhāna* facilitates the

---

18 *Vatthūpamasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.36-37

alleviation of the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa-s*) how to achieve meditation diminishing the negative forces of lethargy and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), restlessness and remorse (*uddhaccakukkucca*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), and sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) distinguishing the intellect from desires and vices. Such examples demonstrate that negative qualities originate externally and develop within the mind, yet they can be repressed through the application of *kammaṭṭhāna*.<sup>19</sup> It is the doctrine of the Buddha that those advantages, which are inaccessible by an impure mind, can be acquired with a purified mind. An evil one (*māra*) crushes an impure mind like a stone hurled onto wet clay or fire igniting a piece of dried wood. An evil one cannot destroy pure minds in the same way that one cannot ignite raw timber. Similarly, the condition of an impurity-free mind is analogous to a paddy field flooded with water. Regardless of the source from which a watercourse emerges, water will travel. Similarly, a mind that has been purified and restored from impurities significantly facilitates the emergence of transcendental dhamma (*lokuttara-dhamma*) within the mind as three true knowledge (*tivijjā*). Similar to how water flows from a container that is filled, a noble chariot led by a skilled driver will traverse each direction with ease, thereby soothing the obstinate minds.<sup>20</sup> While not synonymous with Nibbāna, this condition may be characterised as a profound mental focus that arises spiritually via transcendental routes. While transient and subject to change, it is suitable to continue with the course of action. This mental development has been earned through

---

19 "So ime pañcā nīvaraṇe pahāya vetaso upakkilese paññāya dukkhalīkarāṇe vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi...", *Gaṇamoggallānasutta*, *M.N. iii* (PTS), p.4

20 *Kāyagatāsatisutta*, *M.N. iii* (PTS), p.96-97

effort. Such advanced realms are unattainable with one or two sessions of practice. This is an issue that the Buddha also encountered. He inquired during the Bodhisatta stage as to why his mind tended to negative aspects; subsequently, he came to the understanding that his consistent application of sensual desire (*kāma*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), and maleficence (*hiṃsā*) had rendered the psyche prone to drawbacks, and realised that the solution lay in the cultivation of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), non-ill will (*avyāpāda*), and harmlessness (*avihiṃsā*), which were diametrically opposed to them. When a mature heifer is traversing a vast paddy field, it will inherently direct its head in the direction of the field. A bovine that has been disciplined by the cowherd will not injure itself when it moves the domain.<sup>21</sup> A similar way in which this mind could be nourished with merits is through recurrent engagement in merit. Experience, or memorization, is gained by a trainee or learner through consistent practice. This is since the mind becomes intensely attached to the respective activity through repeated use. Such is the nature of *kusala-s* and *akusala-s* in the application. As one invests more effort into a particular subject, their intellect develops further into it. The world, which employs *akusala-s* excessively, equates the mind and *akusala-s* and attributes them to the very nature of impurity. This constitutes an impediment to the eradication of impurities.

The most severe consequence of a mental propensity to tarnish is that it will determine one's subsequent existence. For instance, when the dog-duty ascetic *Puṇṇa* and the ox-duty ascetic *Seniya* inquired about the merits of a particular subject,

---

21 *Dvedhāvittakkasutta*, M.N. i (PTS), p.115-116

the Buddha remained mute.<sup>22</sup> Despite persistent attempts to dissuade him otherwise, the Buddha demonstrated that an individual can attain complete and uninterrupted development of dog-like and ox-like conduct. Upon accomplishing this, he reappears in the company of dogs and oxen, respectively, after his demise. It is apparent from this that how the mind is nurtured influences the formation of the birth. An alternative interpretation of these analyses can be attributed to “*upādānapaccayā bhavo*”.<sup>23</sup> The determination of the next birth is autonomously assessed by the mind, which is constrained by desire (*kāma*), view (*diṭṭhi*), rules and observances (*sīlabbata*), and theories of the self (*attavāda*). Clinging is the foundation of both the propensity for *kusala* and *akusala* (*upādāna*). Therefore, training the mind should be predicated on *kusala* rather than *akusala*. However, the mind may refocus on the drawbacks repeatedly. Each individual possesses a unique kind of mind. While some minds are more closely associated with *kusala* than *akusala*, the opposite is true for some minds. Regardless of the approaches taken, the negative aspects of one's psyche may remain unrepressed.<sup>24</sup>

Five strategies are available for protecting the mind in order to strengthen the wholesome state of mind.

---

22 *Kukkuravatiyasutta, M.N. ii* (PTS), p.388-389

23 *Mahātāṇhāsaṃkhaṃhasutta, M.N. i* (PTS), p.261

24 "Atthi bhikkhave āsavā dassanā pahātabbā  
Atthi bhikkhave āsavā saṃvarā pahātabbā  
Atthi bhikkhave āsavā adhivāsanaā pahātabbā  
Atthi bhikkhave āsavā parivajjanā pahātabbā  
Atthi bhikkhave āsavā vinodanā pahātabbā  
Atthi bhikkhave āsavā bhaāvanā pahātabbā," *Sabbāsavasutta, M.N. i*  
(PTS), p.7

### 1. Aññanimittapabbam

That is, preoccupying one's thoughts with an opposing, wholesome portent while ignoring the unwholesome omen itself. This is equivalent to removing a large nail with a microscopic nail.

### 2. Ādīnavapabbam

Considering the gravity of the negative portent that emerged within one's mind and endeavouring to repress such portents, Furthermore, it considers the possibility that the omen that has materialised is immoral and unlawful, resulting in suffering as a consequence. The ramifications of bad omens are perceived similarly to how an individual, be it a woman, man, or young man, abhors the corpse of a human, dog, or serpent that has been bound around its neck and is enticed by the thought of dressing.

### 3. Asatiamanisikārapabbam

This entails disregarding the negative portent. That is to say, disregards the portent that a man closes his eyes upon observing an image.

### 4. Vitakkamūlabhedapabbam

The user inquires with discernment about the origins of the unfavourable omen. The acquisition of power is observed through its association with the factors of contact (*phassa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and formation (*saṃkhāra*). The phenomenon can be described as the gradual deceleration and eventual assumption of a prone position by an individual involved in a rapid locomotive activity.

## 5. Abhiniggaṇhatapabbam

This sermon has been delivered to individuals who exhibit a lack of cognitive control, despite the many approaches previously discussed. This practice involves the suppression of unfavourable omens by aligning the teeth and applying pressure to the roof of the mouth using the tongue. An analogy can be drawn between the manner in which a physically robust individual securely grasps the head, neck, or body of a physically feeble individual. In this context, the application of physical force is used as a means to subdue the unwholesome awareness.<sup>25</sup>

These five strategies facilitate the liberation of the mind from unwholesome states of consciousness and the cultivation of wholesome states of consciousness. The complexity of this matter is apparent due to the many approaches used in this investigation. If an individual engages in the aforementioned approaches to cultivate their mind, there is a tendency for their thinking to align with moral principles. The *Dvēdhāvitakkasutta* is a depiction of an experience attributed to a bodhisattva. The significance of consistently practising moral consciousness is evident in numerous instances, emphasizing the need for repeated engagement rather than sporadic efforts. There was a perception among certain individuals that refraining from contemplation of the objects in question was an honourable stance. Non-material contemplations, such as the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), are likewise established upon the same fundamental principle. ‘Emptying the mind’ in contemporary times is likewise derived from similar foundations. In Buddhism, the practice of meditation on the senses, also

---

25 *Vitakkasaṇṭhānasutta*, *M.N. i* (PTS), p.119-122



known as *indriya-bhāvanā*, is characterised by the absence of defilement roots associated with lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), hence preventing any form of contact with external objects. Uttara-mānavaka expressed to the Buddha his intention to engage in the practice of meditation focused on the senses, also known as *indriya-bhāvanā*. According to his perspective, the practice of meditation on the senses (*indriya-bhāvanā*) involves refraining from visually perceiving images and audibly perceiving noises through the eyes and ears, respectively. If this is indeed true, it might be argued that the Buddha demonstrated that those who engage in the practice of meditation on the senses (*indriya-bhāvanā*) are inherently capable of perceiving and understanding despite physical impairments such as blindness or deafness. The practice of meditation on the senses, known as *indriya-bhāvanā*, involves cultivating a discerning perspective towards the external objects of form, sound, odour, taste, tangibility, and dhamma. It entails recognizing that these objects are conditioned, gross, and subject to dependent origination, regardless of whether they are in agreement or disagreement.<sup>26</sup> By eliminating attachments to such agreements and disagreements, one can cultivate a state of equanimity. Maintaining a state of internal equanimity free from cognitive dissonance is noticeable in this context. An individual must attain a state of self-control while investigating the objective realities of mental phenomena, such as form (*rūpa*), while simultaneously recognizing the importance of regulating the mind. The ultimate objective of engaging in these many practices is to cultivate a state of mental stability.

---

26 *Indriyabhāvanāsutta*, *M.N. iii* (PTS), p.298-302

When considering the aforementioned set of information, it can be elucidated that the examination of the mind within the suttas of the *Majjhima Nikāya* encompasses various aspects, including the contamination of the mind's inherent nature, its state of purity, and its final culmination.

### **Bibliography**

*Dhammapada* (1994) PTS.

*Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* 1933, SHB.

*Majjhima Nikāya Vol. i* 1888, PTS.

*Majjhima Nikāya Vol. ii* 1896, PTS.

*Majjhima Nikāya Vol. iii* 1899, PTS.

*Samyutta Nikāya Vol. v* 1898, PTS.