

# Dvedhavitakka Sutta

## Two Sorts of Thinking

Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. There he addressed the monks: "Monks!"

"Yes, lord," the monks replied.

The Blessed One said, "Monks, before my self-awakening, when I was still just an un-awakened Bodhisattva, the thought occurred to me: 'Why don't I keep dividing my thinking into two sorts?' So I made thinking imbued with sensuality, thinking imbued with ill will, and thinking imbued with harmfulness one sort, and thinking imbued with renunciation, thinking imbued with non-ill will, and thinking imbued with harmlessness another sort.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, and resolute, thinking imbued with sensuality arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with sensuality has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, and does not lead to Unbinding.'

"As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others... to the affliction of both... it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, and does not lead to Unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with sensuality had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, and resolute, thinking imbued with ill will arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with ill

will has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, and does not lead to Unbinding.'

"As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others... to the affliction of both... it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, and does not lead to Unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with ill will had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, and resolute, thinking imbued with harmfulness arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with harmfulness has arisen in me; and that leads to my own affliction or to the affliction of others or to the affliction of both. It obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, and does not lead to Unbinding.'

"As I noticed that it leads to my own affliction, it subsided. As I noticed that it leads to the affliction of others... to the affliction of both... it obstructs discernment, promotes vexation, and does not lead to Unbinding, it subsided. Whenever thinking imbued with harmfulness had arisen, I simply abandoned it, destroyed it, dispelled it, wiped it out of existence.

"Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking and pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with sensuality, abandoning thinking imbued with renunciation, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with sensuality. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with ill will, abandoning thinking imbued with non-ill will, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with ill will. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with harmfulness, abandoning thinking imbued with harmlessness, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with harmfulness.

"Just as in the last month of the Rains, in the autumn season when the crops are ripening, a cowherd would look after his cows: He would tap and poke and check and curb them with a stick on this side and that. Why is that? Because he foresees flogging or imprisonment or a fine or public censure arising from that [if he let his cows wander into the crops]. In the same way I foresaw in unskillful qualities drawbacks, degradation, and defilement, and I foresaw in skillful qualities rewards related to renunciation and promoting cleansing.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, and resolute, thinking imbued with renunciation arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with renunciation has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, and leads to Unbinding. If I were to think and ponder in line with that even for a night... even for a day... even for a day and night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking and pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, and resolute, thinking imbued with non-ill will arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with non-ill will has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, and leads to Unbinding. If I were to think and ponder in line with that even for a night... even for a day... even for a day and night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking and pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified,

and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"And as I remained thus heedful, ardent, and resolute, thinking imbued with harmlessness arose. I discerned that 'Thinking imbued with harmlessness has arisen in me; and that leads neither to my own affliction, nor to the affliction of others, nor to the affliction of both. It fosters discernment, promotes lack of vexation, and leads to Unbinding. If I were to think and ponder in line with that even for a night... even for a day... even for a day and night, I do not envision any danger that would come from it, except that thinking and pondering a long time would tire the body. When the body is tired, the mind is disturbed; and a disturbed mind is far from concentration.' So I steadied my mind right within, settled, unified, and concentrated it. Why is that? So that my mind would not be disturbed.

"Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking and pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with renunciation, abandoning thinking imbued with sensuality, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with renunciation. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with non-ill will, abandoning thinking imbued with ill will, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with non-ill will. If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with harmlessness, abandoning thinking imbued with harmfulness, his mind is bent by that thinking imbued with harmlessness.

"Just as in the last month of the hot season, when all the crops have been gathered into the village, a cowherd would look after his cows: While resting under the shade of a tree or out in the open, he simply keeps himself mindful of 'those cows.' In the same way, I simply kept myself mindful of 'those mental qualities.'

"Unflagging persistence was aroused in me, and un-muddled mindfulness established. My body was calm and un-aroused, my

mind concentrated and single. Quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful mental qualities, I entered and remained in the first jhana: rapture and pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought and evaluation. With the stilling of directed thought and evaluation, I entered and remained in the second jhana: rapture and pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought and evaluation -- internal assurance. With the fading of rapture I remained in equanimity, mindful and alert, and physically sensitive of pleasure. I entered and remained in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, he has a pleasurable abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure and pain -- as with the earlier disappearance of elation and distress -- I entered and remained in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the *knowledge of recollecting my past lives*. I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two... five, ten... fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction and expansion: 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-rose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-rose here.' Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes and details.

"This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was

destroyed; light arose -- as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, and resolute.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the *knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings*. I saw -- by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human -- beings passing away and re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings -- who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech and mind, who reviled the Noble Ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views -- with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But these beings -- who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the Noble Ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views -- with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.' Thus -- by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human -- I saw beings passing away and re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma.

"This was the second knowledge I attained in the second watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose -- as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, and resolute.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the *knowledge of the ending of the mental fermentations*. I discerned, as it was actually

present, that 'this is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are fermentations... This is the origination of fermentations... This is the cessation of fermentations... This is the way leading to the cessation of fermentations.' My heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, was released from the fermentation of sensuality, released from the fermentation of becoming, released from the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there was the knowledge, 'Released.' I discerned that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose -- as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, and resolute.

"Suppose, monks, that in a forested wilderness there were a large low-lying marsh, in dependence on which there lived a large herd of deer; and a certain man were to appear, not desiring their benefit, not desiring their welfare, not desiring their rest from bondage. He would close off the safe, restful path that led to their rapture, and would open up a false path, set out a male decoy, place a female decoy, and thus the large herd of deer, at a later time, would fall into ruin and disaster. Then suppose that a certain man were to appear to that same large herd of deer, desiring their benefit, desiring their welfare, desiring their rest from bondage. He would open up the safe, restful path that led to their rapture, would close off the false path, take away the male decoy, destroy the female decoy, and thus the large herd of deer, at a later time, would come into growth, increase, and abundance.

"I have given this simile in order to convey a meaning. The meaning is this: 'The large, low-lying marsh' is a term for sensual pleasures. 'The large herd of deer' is a term for beings. 'The man

not desiring their benefit, not desiring their welfare, not desiring their rest from bondage' is a term for Mara, the Evil One. 'The false path' is a term for the eightfold wrong path, i.e., wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration. 'The male decoy' is a term for passion and delight. 'The female decoy' is a term for ignorance. 'The man desiring their benefit, desiring their welfare, desiring their rest from bondage' is a term for the Tathágata, the Worthy One, the Rightly Self-awakened One. 'The safe, restful path that led to their rapture' is a term for the noble eightfold path, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

"So, monks, I have opened up the safe, restful path, closed off the false path, removed the male decoy, destroyed the female. Whatever a teacher should do -- seeking the welfare of his disciples, out of sympathy for them -- that have I done for you. Over there are the roots of trees; over there, empty dwellings. Practice jhana, monks. Don't be heedless. Don't later fall into regret. This is our message to you."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words.