

**Majjhima Nikaya 118**  
**Anapanasati Sutta**  
**Mindfulness of Breathing**  
**Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.**  
**with minor changes by Jeff Brooks**  
**For free distribution only.**

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi in the Eastern Monastery, the palace of Migara's mother, together with many well-known elder disciples -- with Ven. Sariputta, Ven. Maha Moggallana, Ven. Maha Kassapa, Ven. Maha Kaccana, Ven. Maha Kotthita, Ven. Maha Kappina, Ven. Maha Cunda, Ven. Revata, Ven. Ananda, and other well-known elder disciples. On that occasion the elder aspirants were teaching & instructing. Some elder monks were teaching & instructing ten monks, some were teaching & instructing twenty monks, some were teaching & instructing thirty monks, some were teaching & instructing forty monks. The new monks, being taught & instructed by the elder monks, were discerning grand, successive distinctions.

Now on that occasion -- the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full-moon night of the Pavarana ceremony -- the Blessed One was seated in the open air surrounded by the community of monks. Surveying the silent community of monks, one addressed them:

"Monks, I am content with this practice. I am content at heart with this practice. So arouse even more intense persistence for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. I will remain right here at Savatthi [for another month] through the 'White water-lily' month, the fourth month of the rains."

The aspirants in the countryside heard, "The Blessed One, they say, will remain right there at Savatthi through the White water-lily month, the fourth month of the rains." So they left for Savatthi to see the Blessed One.

Then the elder monks taught & instructed even more intensely. Some elder monks were teaching & instructing ten monks, some were teaching & instructing twenty monks, some were teaching & instructing thirty monks, some were teaching & instructing forty monks. The new monks, being taught & instructed by the elder monks, were discerning grand, successive distinctions.

Now on that occasion -- the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full-moon night of the White water-lily month, the fourth month of the rains -- the Blessed One was seated in the open air surrounded by the community of monks. Surveying the silent community of monks, He addressed them:

**Silent Practice:**

"Monks, this assembly is free from idle chatter, devoid of idle chatter, and is established on pure heartwood: such is this community of monks, such is this assembly. The sort of assembly that is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, an incomparable field of merit for the world: such is this community of monks, such is this assembly. The sort of assembly to which a small gift, when given, becomes great, and a great gift greater: such is this community of monks, such is this assembly. The sort of

assembly that it is rare to see in the world: such is this community of monks, such is this assembly -- the sort of assembly that it would be worth traveling for leagues, taking along provisions, in order to see.

**(Levels of Attainment:)**

"In this community of monks there are monks who are Arahants, whose mental effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis: such are the aspirants in this community of monks.

"In this community of monks there are aspirants who, with the total ending of the first five fetters, are due to be reborn [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world: such are the aspirants in this community of monks.

"In this community of monks there are aspirants who, with the total ending of [the first] three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, are once-returners, who -- on returning only one more time to this world -- will make an ending to stress: such are the aspirants in this community of monks.

"In this community of monks there are aspirants who, with the total ending of [the first] three fetters, are stream-winners, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening: such are the aspirants in this community of monks.

"In this community of monks there are aspirants who remain devoted to the development of the four frames of reference... the four right exertions... the four bases of power... the five faculties... the five strengths... the seven factors for Awakening... the noble eightfold path: such are the aspirants in this community of monks.

**{the Four Brahma Viharas (divine abodes)}**

"In this community of monks there are aspirants who remain devoted to the development of **good will... compassion... appreciation... equanimity...**[the perception of the] **foulness** [of the body]... the **perception of inconstancy**: such are the aspirants in this community of monks.

"In this community of monks there are aspirants who remain devoted to mindfulness of in-&-out breathing.

"Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit. Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, brings the four frames of reference to their culmination. The four frames of reference, when developed & pursued, bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination. The seven factors for awakening, when developed & pursued, bring clear knowing & release to their culmination.

## Mindfulness of In-&-Out Breathing

"Now how is mindfulness of in-&out breathing developed & pursued so as to bring the four frames of reference to their culmination?"

"There is the case where an aspirant, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding one's legs crosswise, holding one's body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, one breathes in; mindful one breathes out.

- "[1] Breathing in long, one discerns that one is breathing in long; or breathing out long, one discerns that one is breathing out long.
- [2] Or breathing in short, one discerns that one is breathing in short; or breathing out short, one discerns that one is breathing out short.
- [3] **One trains oneself to breathe in sensitive to the entire body**, and to breathe out sensitive to the entire body.
- [4] **One trains oneself to breathe in calming bodily fabrication** (the breath), and to breathe out calming bodily fabrication.
  
- "[5] One trains oneself to breathe in **sensitive to ecstasy**, and to breathe out sensitive to ecstasy.
- [6] One trains oneself to breathe in **sensitive to joy**, and to breathe out sensitive to pleasure.
- [7] One trains oneself to breathe in **sensitive to mental fabrication** (feeling & perception), and to breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.
- [8] One trains oneself to breathe in **calming mental fabrication**, and to breathe out calming mental fabrication.
  
- "[9] One trains oneself to breathe in **sensitive to the mind**, and to breathe out sensitive to the mind.
- [10] One trains oneself to breathe in **satisfying the mind**, and to breathe out satisfying the mind.
- [11] One trains oneself to breathe in **steadying the mind**, and to breathe out steadying the mind.
- [12] One trains oneself to breathe in **releasing the mind**, and to breathe out releasing the mind.
  
- "[13] One trains oneself to breathe in (mindful of) **inconstancy**, and to breathe out focusing on inconstancy.
- [14] One trains oneself to breathe in mindful of **dispassion** [literally, fading], and to breathe out mindful of dispassion.
- [15] One trains oneself to breathe in mindful of **cessation**, and to breathe out focusing on cessation (emptiness).
- [16] One trains oneself to breathe in focusing on **relinquishment**, and to breathe out focusing on relinquishment.

## The Four Frames of Reference

"[1] Now, on whatever occasion an aspirant breathing in long discerns that one is breathing in long; or breathing out long, discerns that one is breathing out long; or breathing in short, discerns that one is breathing in short; or breathing out short, discerns that one is breathing out short; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out sensitive to the entire body; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out calming bodily fabrication: On that occasion the aspirant remains focused on the body in & of itself -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. I tell you, aspirants, that this -- the in-&-out breath -- is classed as a body among bodies, which is why the aspirant on that occasion **remains focused on the body in & of itself** -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

"[2] On whatever occasion an aspirant trains oneself to breathe in... &... out **sensitive to ecstasy**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out **sensitive to joy**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out **sensitive to mental fabrication**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out **calming mental fabrication**: On that occasion the aspirant remains **focused on feelings in & of themselves** -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- **subduing greed & distress** with reference to the world. I tell you, aspirants, that this -- close attention to in-&-out breaths -- is classed as a feeling among feelings, which is why the aspirant on that occasion remains focused on feelings in & of themselves -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

"[3] On whatever occasion an aspirant trains oneself to breathe in... &... out **sensitive to the mind**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out satisfying the mind; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out steadying the mind; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out releasing the mind: On that occasion the aspirant remains focused on the mind in & of itself -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- subduing greed & distress (anxiety) with reference to the world. I don't say that there is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing in one of confused mindfulness and no alertness, which is why the aspirant on that occasion remains focused on the mind in & of itself -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- putting aside greed & distress (anxiety) with reference to the world.

"[4] On whatever occasion an aspirant trains oneself to breathe in... &... out focusing on **inconstancy**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out focusing on **dispassion**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out focusing on **cessation**; trains oneself to breathe in... &... out focusing on **relinquishment**: On that occasion the aspirant remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- **subduing** greed & distress (**grasping and aversion**) with reference to the world. One who sees clearly with discernment the abandoning of greed & distress (grasping and aversion) is one who oversees with equanimity, which is why the aspirant on that occasion remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.

"This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to bring the four frames of reference to their culmination.

## The Seven Factors for Awakening

"And how are the four frames of reference developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination?

"[1] On whatever occasion the aspirant remains focused on the body in & of itself -- ardent, alert, & mindful -- putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world, on that occasion one's mindfulness is steady & without lapse. When one's mindfulness is steady & without lapse, then **mindfulness** as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

"[2] Remaining mindful in this way, one examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment. When one remains mindful in this way, examining, analyzing, & coming to a comprehension of that quality with **discernment**, then analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

"[3] In one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, unflagging persistence is aroused. When unflagging persistence is aroused in one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then **persistence** as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

"[4] In one whose persistence is aroused, a **joy not-of-the-flesh** arises. When a joy not-of-the-flesh arises in one whose persistence is aroused, then joy as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

"[5] For one who is joyful, the body grows calm and the mind grows calm. When the body & mind of a joyful aspirant grows calm, then **serenity** as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

"[6] For one who is at ease -- one's body calmed -- the mind becomes absorbed. When the mind of one who is at ease -- one's body calmed -- becomes absorbed, then **absorption** as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

"[7] One oversees the mind thus concentrated with equanimity. When one oversees the mind thus absorbed with equanimity, **equanimity** as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. One develops it, and for this one it goes to the culmination of its development.

[Similarly with the other **three frames of reference: feelings (sensation), mind, & mental qualities.**]

"This is how the four frames of reference are developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination.

(Clear Knowing & Release)

"And how are the seven factors for awakening developed & pursued so as to bring clear knowing & release to their culmination? There is the case where an aspirant develops mindfulness as a factor for awakening dependent on **seclusion... dispassion... cessation**, resulting in **relinquishment**. One develops **analysis of qualities** as a factor for awakening... **persistence** as a factor for awakening... **joy** as a factor for awakening... **serenity** as a factor for awakening... **absorption** as a factor for awakening... **equanimity** as a factor for awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in relinquishment.

"This is how the seven factors for awakening, when developed & pursued, bring clear knowing & release to their culmination."

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

Revised: Sat 5 July 2003

with minor changes by Jeff Brooks (8/25/03)

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/canon/majjthis onea/mn118.html>

Other relevant suttas:

Maha-satipatthana Sutta (DN 22)

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/canon/digha/dn22.html>

Satipatthana Sutta (MN 10)

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/canon/majjhima/mn010b.html>

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I wish for you long life, good health and freedom from suffering,

Jeff Brooks

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