

RIGHT VIEW by Sayadaw U Tejaniya

Before we can effectively practice mindfulness meditation, we must understand right view.

By simple observation with a calm and aware mind, we will soon see the mind as nature, not "I," not self, not personal. No one is there.

The mind is a natural phenomenon.

You are practicing to discover this nature.

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The attitude we must adopt when working with feelings is one of objectivity.

We see that the feelings, although being experienced in the moment, are there because of past causes and conditions that are having an impact on the present moment.

We need to remind ourselves that it is a process. It is natural and we need to just recognize and allow ourselves to observe it. What we need to appreciate is that we are actually aware of it, to initiate awareness rather than to complain about the experience.

We want to recognize that we are practicing and practice is happening, because we are aware and we know we are aware.

My teacher introduced me to this concept when he said to me one day, "When you know things as they are, this is right view."

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"We meditate to develop right view.

This cannot be achieved by the ego. Meditation must proceed naturally by watching any experience just as it is.

This is the way to develop right view."

(From Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw, Sayadaw U Tejaniya's teacher)

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It may take a while to have the ability to reconcile your experience with right view. But by being aware and investigating what is happening in your mind, you will begin to see the nature aspect of all experience.

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In the beginning, when we don't really understand right view, it is borrowed wisdom.

This means that we need to apply the appropriate information intellectually to help us in a particular situation. After doing this repeatedly over a long period of time the mind will remember the right view more and more easily and eventually it will understand. It becomes your wisdom.

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Some yogis say they find it easier to recognize wrong view than right view.

Of course! Because when you have right view, then wrong view is not there. So when it does raise its head it is easy to recognize—that is, if you have the interest and awareness to be looking for it.

What is required is strength of awareness and steadiness of mind kept in check for longer periods. If we can do this as well as investigate our experience and ask the hard questions, the answers will come.

Practicing in this way, we see things as they really are. This is right view and when we have this, the other factors of our practice will naturally fall into place.

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It is so crucial to have right view, I cannot repeat it enough.

It is probably the most important aspect of the practice, because when we don't have right view, then wrong view is automatically there.

Wrong view is delusion. Wrong view is attaching to experience.

If we view what we are experiencing as personal, as "I," then that is wrong view.

The mind needs to relate to all experience in the same way.

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Think of experience as nature.

Nature is not personal.

Nature is just a process of cause and effect.

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Nature is not out to get us.

Anything we experience is natural. It is just happening.

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A foreign yogi arrived to practice at our center. It was just before the rainy season. The heat was very intense with the temperature at about 105 degrees.

On the day he arrived, he went into the dhamma hall in the middle of the afternoon to sit. The men's dhamma hall is on the second floor, so it was even hotter up there. At the moment he sat down to meditate, his mind said: "I can't do this. I'm going to melt into the floor. I will die."

Before he had even stopped thinking this, he realized that his mind was cool; it was only his body that was hot. A separation had occurred in his mind. He knew that if he kept hydrated, then there would be no problem.

He saw heat as an object, just nature, not personal. An understanding into causes and conditions had arisen. Conditions were ripe for this insight to arise.

This yogi had right view and right thought arise in his mind.

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Which is better, when it is quiet or when it is noisy?

When the mind judges or has a preference for something to be better, then it will automatically develop a reaction if the opposite happens.

So right view is to not have a preference.

Sound is just sound, nature.

When we rationalize the sound, aversion and attachment will come in. Sound is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, but the feeling (the reaction) in the mind is pleasant or unpleasant.

When you understand sound is just sound, whether loud or soft, it will no longer be a problem for you.

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Pain, whether it is physical or emotional, can be classed as an object.

It's just sensation, nature arising and passing away.

Right view is to check and notice the reaction the mind is having to the pain or emotion.

I was suffering from a knee injury and the pain would come and go very quickly—sometimes intense and the next minute no pain at all.

I quickly came to realize there was no difference between pain and non-pain.

It was just the one object, sensation or no sensation, just nature, the only difference being the mind's attitude toward the pain.

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Wisdom never gets involved in experience, it always steps back from it.

It is right view to detach from experience to better understand it.

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Wisdom is freedom.

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Anything can come, and anything can be the experience.

Whatever it is, is fine.

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We need to be aware of where our attention is and not get caught in focusing on or putting too much energy on any particular object. Spread your attention so you are seeing the full picture, both inside and out, emotionally and physically.

When we practice in this way it is called vipassana, "Seeing what is and letting it be."

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In meditation, it is only important to recognize when there is identification with an object and when there is not.

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Right view is to take the attitude that the body is in fact nature and can only be nourished by nature.

When we look deeply into this, we see that within the body-mind dynamic there is nobody there, nobody home—it is just nature.

Taking this objective point of view gives us the freedom to be the observer and use wisdom to make choices that support the overall health of our bodies and minds.

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Say somebody opens the door and it's noisy and you think "Why is that person making noise?"

That's wrong view.

If you think, "There's a sound, I am conscious of it," that's right view.

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What is the cause of samadhi? What causes samadhi to be present?

Right view and continuity of awareness.

Persistence, or sustaining the awareness, together with right view naturally make the mind stable.

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When right view is present the mind does not react and it therefore retains its stability.

That is samadhi.

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You must have right view. This is nature, this is not my mind. Not mine.

Then it's easier to watch, to understand its nature.

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Because we want to learn about the nature of the mind and objects, we don't try to calm the mind down or try to remove objects. We don't interfere or control but observe, because we want to understand the mind and objects in their natural state, as they are happening.

This is right view.

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Always ask yourself if you know the causes and conditions that are necessary to achieve the result you want. Then work on fulfilling those causes and conditions. You need to have this right view.

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The mind only has the nature of arising or happening. The right way to view the mind is to see that the thoughts are just arising of their own nature. Only through

realizing the right view that the mind just arises, arises, and arises will wisdom begin to understand the nature of impermanence.

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YOGI: Sometimes I get lost in the story, and sometimes I can see that it is just a memory.

SUT: You need to keep practicing the right view and clearly recognize any wrong views. Your object of awareness must be the mind, not the story. You need to cultivate a keen interest in the state of your mind.

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For the yogi, there's not a lot of work you need to do because you are not trying to achieve anything. You are just trying to do three things. Have right view, be conscious, and sustain it.

It's very simple work.