TITLE: When To Go Into Seclusion?  
DATE: 5 April 2023  
LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJmutiITt6E  
  
Unknown Speaker 0:15   
Question: is seclusion, is that an activity or is that a result of practice?  
  
BTT 0:35   
Both depending how you look at it. So it has to start as an activity has to start something you actively seek, but then if you practice rightly, your mind becomes secluded from unwholesome things, and that's then the result. And that's why the Buddha did say that the true seclusion is when mind is free from greed, aversion, delusion, not when one is away from people. Although he might be alone, he still dwells in company of sensual desire and unwholesome states. But, that, the resulting seclusion would not just come magically, if you have not, if you can't even like live alone be all be by yourself, at least for some time of the day. So, so that's why you have to do it as a practice that can then lead to the actual seclusion. And it's kind of a balance of both in a sense, because sometimes people try to justify non-physical seclusion would say: well see, the true seclusion is just being free from unwholesome states; thus, doesn't matter if I just spend my days with people all day long. And then you have the other group of people who just hates all the people and just wants to be alone, because it's an easier mode of existence and then they just call the suttas of the activity aspect of seclusion. But that aspect of gradual training comes much later you don't start with it. If you're starting with it, there's usually something else there, some other kind of ulterior motive you have.  
  
Unknown Speaker 2:11   
Yeah, so so basically, the Buddha's teaching is actually be very easily wrongly grasped to actually enforce your version.  
  
BTT 2:20   
Easy, easy of course. Anything, anything the Buddha himself giving instruction, if you're not, if you don't attend to rightly, you just use it for your own sake of your own wrong views. Yeah.  
  
BM 2:30   
It's interesting in the suttas, like, is to be content in solitude, or to delight in seclusion, is considered quite a high achievements. [work] Just it's really work just to get there [Yeah] and, I mean, one thing to consider in regard to that is: like, you know, if for a monk at the at that, at that time, dwelling in solitude wouldn't necessarily mean quite the same thing, as it would today, as in it would not just be okay: I'm in a room on my own, but like, whenever I want, I can contact somebody or I can, you know, access some distraction, whichever is like, really, I'm in my own on a forest. And even if I want to [yeah] there is no [...], so it's like, to be content within that environment is quite a high achievement. [Yeah] So it's not just like: Oh, I'll go on my own, and I can do whatever I want and, you know, go back and contact people or, you know, wherever I want. It's like, you have to kind of put yourself into that mind, mental state, even if you're not in that state, you can't you don't have to kind of I don't know, I'll go up on a mountain and forsake everything, but like into that, you know, that that's, mental state of, okay, isolation, and complete isolation. Ultimately, I mean, that's obviously then a training that you have to work towards.  
  
BTT 4:06   
[Difficult thing to do, to delight in solitude. But once there's a light and solitude the goals quickly achieved]. Yeah [there's that discourse], yeah, because it's the whole, the whole gradual training we talk about that really leads to delight in solitude, [And it's like] preferring it.  
  
BM 4:29   
Just to be literally alone, even without anything to do with like anything...  
  
BTT 4:36   
Yeah, yeah, of course. Yeah. The non-activity, the true non-activity.  
  
BM 4:39   
To be alone with yourself which is the most, it's and it's also like the worst punishment you can give to somebody in the world: you put them in solitary confinement.  
  
BTT 4:51   
Without any [anything] visible activity they can engage with and it just becomes unbearable [confining, to confine].  
  
Many others around there's, there's an opportunity for distraction.  
  
But again, like you do have to emphasize that it's not just something: okay, so I'll just train for so that...you train by keeping the precepts, guarding the sense doors, don't giving arise to unwholesome states, certainly don't act out of them. And then delight in solitude become as a result of that, then you can actively develop further. If you're trying to jump the queue, before you have been established in the right view, established in virtue, all those all those things that the Buddha lists that monk they want to go in solitude who wasn't ready, well, you won't be ready, you will be going for wrong reasons and just dwell there either with mind infested with lust or hatred, or whatever else bothers you. And you'll fail in that sense. And also what can easily happen: see, like, people who are whose minds are easily bothered by sight, sound, smell, taste, touches. It can kind of play into the natural tendency to just just avoid things that bother me. Because you know, the Buddha said seclusion is the, the utmost goal. So I feel justified then in sitting in my kuti not seeing not talking to anybody not doing anything, because the slightest act will just disturb my mind, make it fill with ill will flooded with passion, and so on. So then your seclusion becomes your coping mechanism, whereby you're super hyper extra sensitive even before when you were a layman, you were not that sensitive, you could actually endure more. But now like the ticking clock is driving me nuts. The blow of wind, the water river, I just can't bear this noise. My meditation is suffering, I can't, I need to change a kuti I need to change a monastery, I need to change a country I need to change a place I need to change a place - quiet, quiet, earplugs, soundproof room. That's not seclusion. That's absolute complete, kind of like extreme way perversion of avoidance, avoiding things that bother you, because your view still thinks the bother comes from those things. So you haven't even abandoned the mundane, wrong views of where the suffering comes from. While you sit in your padded cell, where nothing can come through when you're at peace - that's not the peace. Highway robbers chopping your limbs, your mind doesn't move - well, that's the peace. Yeah. Elements, enduring elements, discomfort. I mean, you can read, you'd read the kanthaka stories around, you know, Vinaya and then how the monks lived, the engagement and the exposure and the people and stuff is, some of it was quite hectic but there were arahants with supernatural powers and stuff like that. So it's like, okay, so there is probably some balance there that today's average Buddhist would not necessarily see. So like, okay, so let me then start in the right order, as the Buddha described in the gradual training. Yeah, you know, simplify your life don't sit amidst of a loud crowd, avoid, obviously, unwholesome, but don't get too precious about it because it's gonna go too much the other way. And it's like, you start enjoying seclusion, because you start feeding the bother even more, because you don't know how to deal with it. And it's like a dog tied, tied around the post, tries to get get himself free and ends up being even more tied to the post, even even shorter leash. So ultimately, the bother the disturbances, doesn't, it doesn't come from the world - comes from that craving, comes from that resistance. So same goes with the company. And even the mind moves pleasantly, unpleasantly towards the company, it's all because of your own resistance towards it, not because of that person or these people and so on. So that's where the true solitude is, when that has been calmed and tamed and extinguished, that that movement that craving that resistance. And that's why the Buddha said: well, the suttas say Arahant, he's as in private, so in public, as in public, so in private, there's no difference. His behavior does not change. There's no different reference point to that. And like the Buddha said, the Tathagata he's at ease, whether he's assembly of the gods, or villages, one person, thousand, nothing changes in terms of his mental composure. So that's the true solitude.  
  
Unknown Speaker 9:55   
So it's more in regard to how jhanas are usually describe basically seclusion from unwholesome states, but to see what those are, it's beneficial to go into physical seclusion. So what kind of other say, decrease the intensity of things around the world?  
  
BTT 10:17   
Yeah so that you can see these things. And the step, the necessity of going into physical seclusion that we ourselves talked about in the past many times, comes after you have been taming your senses properly, thoroughly, not giving rise to unwholesome states which comes after you've been thoroughly established in virtue and precepts. Not like over a weekend or something, and now you're gonna go into seclusion so that by the end of the week, you enter Jhana. So becoming established in precepts, well, how many years have you spent not being established in precepts? So divided by half, depending on your effort give or take.  
  
Plus the previous lives.  
  
ANT 11:00   
So it's gonna take a while for that mind to tame. Sure, you're gonna have minor releases, so to speak, insights, and so on. But it's not a race really. Like: oh I'll just do this. If it is, it's because you're still acting out of your craving. Because well, whether I get it or not, it's still a preferable mode of existence. Taming and sense restraint, is factually better, even according to your own central values. The only reason people turn sensuality is because it hurts if they don't. So first, you touched by pain, that's why then you seek delight and pleasure and so on. And that's why you would not, you would also want to not be touched by that pain in the first place. So if you tame your senses, the desires will fade, the pressures will lessen, and you will be factually more content and happier.  
  
BTT 12:00   
So you need like 80% Physical seclusion, not 100%. No point. And so just so that you have a basis for seeing your mind, having things calmed down. So like this, like this monastery is probably like an 80% Physical seclusion place. So that you can actually do that. Try and get into the real solitude of 100% mental seclusion.  
  
ANT 12:29   
Well that's the thing: the real solitude will be that mental. [Yeah] So there is no like 100% physical solitude. I mean, you can aim for it but that means you're overshooting the mark now. You know, there are empty rooms, empty huts, empty roots of a tree, go there monks and contemplate things, basically. So, as I said, there is somebody who starts that way can become too precious, but he won't be hard to see if you're honest that that preciousness comes from: oh, I don't want to be bothered, like I resist it, I'm averse to the idea of...so that's why I'm secluded. So like: well, no, then I should be bothered, not by something terribly unwholesome, but by duties or answering a question and so on. Like, well, if that bothers me, when the body starts breaking a path and illnesses in hospitals and so on, my practice will go out of the window, because I've been practicing it on a wrong field. That's not where you play this.