

MN - 4

Fear and Dread

Bhayabherava Sutta

Dhamma Talk presented by Bhante Vimalaramsi

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Bhante Vimalaramsi.

Majima Nikāya Number 4.

Bhayabherava Sutta.

Fear and Dread.

BV: This is how to overcome fear and dread.

MN 4:

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattihī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

2. Then the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi went to the Blessed One, exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said: "Master Gotama, when clansmen have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of faith in Master Gotama, do they have Master Gotama for their leader, for their helper, and guide? Do these people follow the example of Master Gotama?"

"That is so, brahmin, that is so. When clansmen have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of faith in me, they have me for their leader, their helper, and guide. And these people follow my example."

"But, Master Gotama, remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are hard to endure, seclusion is hard to practice, and it is hard to enjoy solitude. One would think the jungles must rob the monk of

his mind, if he has no concentration.”

“That is so, brahmin, that is so. Remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are hard to endure, seclusion is hard to practice, and it is hard to enjoy solitude. One would think that the jungles must rob a monk of his mind, if he has no concentration.

3. “Before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I too considered thus: ‘Remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are hard to endure...the jungles must rob a monk of his mind, if he has no concentration.’

4. “I considered thus: ‘Whenever recluses or brahmins unpurified in bodily conduct resort in remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest, then owing to the defect of their unpurified bodily conduct these good recluses and brahmins invoke unwholesome fear and dread. I do not resort in remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest unpurified in bodily conduct. I am purified in bodily conduct. I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones with bodily conduct purified.’ Seeing in self this purity of bodily conduct, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest.

5-7. “I considered: ‘Whenever recluses or brahmins unpurified in verbal conduct...unpurified in mental conduct...unpurified in livelihood resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest...they evoke unwholesome fear and dread. But...I am purified of these things. I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones with purified verbal conduct, mental conduct and livelihood.’ Seeing in myself this purity, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest.

{04:50}

BV: A lot of people, especially Asians, they get terrified of being alone when it's dark. They want to be around...they'll sleep with the lights full blown like this all night. Because if they turn the lights out then the ghosts can come and get them! That's what they think.

But, I went to a monastery that was in the forest in Thailand. I had a kuti that was a long way from anybody else. The only light I had was a candle and I think I might have had a flashlight at that time, but I'm not sure. Flashlights seemed to come and go depending on the batteries and that sort of thing. And what they told us to do if you don't have any light when you're walking in the forest, just stop where you are and stay there until it gets light. Now, if you're out walking and you don't have any flashlight, or your flashlight battery gets so weak that you can't use it anymore, following that kind of instruction can make all kinds of little noises into big scary noises. And they have quite a few bats in Asia in the forest. And the bats will come around and brush your face. It really is frightening, it can be.

But, basically what would happen...that only happened to me twice that I got caught without any light...I'd find a fairly nice place to sit down and just sit there for the rest of the night and do the meditation. I didn't really have much problem with that. I prefer to be alone. I like being by myself. I'm not afraid of being by myself in the dark. So it wasn't any big deal. I wasn't raised to think that ghosts are going to come and eat me alive. In Asia, you get raised that way. You get raised and your parents start scolding you for doing this or that and they tell you that if you do that one more time the ghosts are going to come and eat you! And they really have a lot of superstitions. And, of course there are a lot of snakes that like to come out at night because that's when little animals come out at night so they get something to eat.

One day, it was about dusk, I was doing a standing meditation, and I felt something coming up my leg! And I'm thinking, "Ohhh, if he gets half way up to my knee and he doesn't seem like he's going to stop I've gotta do something!" So I opened up my eyes and I looked down and it was a non-poisonous snake, but it was still a snake! And I went, "You have to stop. You have to go turn around and go back."...like that. And he stopped and he didn't crawl up my leg anymore and went away. But, whew! [laughs] If that would have happened when it was real dark and I didn't have a light that would've been a very trying time!

{09:30}

But, when you purify yourself by keeping the precepts you don't have unnatural fears arising. It's a protection for you. There's a lot of advantages of keeping the precepts. Your mind tends to become uplifted. You start to be able to develop your collectedness very easily; you don't have a lot of restlessness and that sort of thing coming up. Another advantage of keeping the precepts is you will die a natural death. You won't die from an accident or being killed. So, the more closely you can keep your precepts, the more this aura of non-fear arises and you know what to do in an emergency type of situation.

{10:57}

MN:

8. "I considered thus: 'Whenever recluses or brahmin who are covetous and full of lust...go into the forest they have a rough time. But I am uncovetous...'

9. "'...with a mind of ill will and intentions of hate...I have a mind of loving-kindness...'

10. "'...overcome by sloth and torpor...I am without sloth and torpor...'

11. "'...overcome by restlessness and unpeaceful in mind...I'm peaceful in mind...'

{11:42}

BV: See, when he was a bodhisatta, he was always working. He was always developing his mind. I mean, he started out going to meditation teachers and developing this great one-pointed concentration. But he knew that that wasn't the end result so he started looking for other ways. But he had great concentration, so he didn't have so much problem with the hindrances and that sort of

thing because he had practiced the absorption concentration. And he tried to keep it going all of the time so he didn't have hindrances arising so much.

{12:37}

MN:

12. "'...uncertainty and doubting...I have gone beyond uncertainty and doubting...'

13. "'...given to self-praise and disparage of others...I am not given to self-praise and disparage of others...'

14. "'...subject to alarm and terror...I am free from trepidation...'

15. "'...desirous of gain, honor, and renown...I have few wishes...'

16. "'...lazy and wanting in energy...I am energetic...'

17. "'These other monks are...unmindful and not fully aware...I am established in mindfulness and fully aware...'

18 "'Other monks are...unconcentrated and with straying minds...I am possessed of strong collectedness...'

19. "I considered thus: 'Whenever recluses or brahmin devoid of wisdom, drivellers, resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest, then owing to the defect of their being devoid of wisdom and drivellers these good recluses and brahmins invoke unwholesome fear and dread. But I do not resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest devoid of wisdom, I'm not a driveller. I am possessed of wisdom. I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones possessed of wisdom.'

{14:41}

BV: Now, this gives you the impression that he had already started looking at dependent origination and how it worked. We don't have

any clear text that tell when he started doing that. He might've started it before he started his ascetic practices, he might not have. We just don't know. But, this particular sutta gives you the impression that he already understood dependent origination and how it worked.

{15:24}

MN:

Seeing in myself this possession of wisdom, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest.

20. "I considered thus: 'There are the especially auspicious nights on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight. Now what if, on such nights as these, I were to dwell in awe-inspiring, terrifying abodes as orchard shrines, woodland shrines, tree shrines?

{16:02}

BV: I have been to some places in Asia where you just didn't feel comfortable being there. That might be because there were beings that were hanging around there, I don't know. I wasn't sensitive enough to pick that up. I just knew that I wasn't comfortable being there so that's where I would stay.

{16:38}

MN:

Perhaps I might encounter that fear and dread.' And later, on such especially auspicious nights as the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight, I dwelled in such awe-inspiring, terrifying abodes as orchard shrines, woodland shrines, and tree shrines. And while I dwelt there, a wild animal would come up to me, or a peacock would knock off a branch, or the wind would rustle leaves. And I thought: 'What now if this is the fear and dread coming?' I thought: 'Why do I dwell always expecting fear and dread? What if I subdue that fear and dread while keeping the same posture that I am in when it comes upon me?'

"While I walked, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither stood nor sat nor lied down nor ran away till I had subdued that fear and dread. While I stood, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither walked nor sat nor laid down till I had subdued that fear and dread.

{18:06}

BV: That's a bad word, "subdued". "Let go of" is better.

{18:12}

MN:

While I sat, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither walked nor stood nor laid down till I had let go of that fear and dread. While I lied down, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither walked nor stood nor sat down till I had let go of that fear and dread.

{18:41}

BV: So...and I think you've all heard me talk about when I was in the forest doing walking meditation about two in the morning. I had a...it was a real nice walking spot; very flat, very fine sand. And I put a candle on one stump and a candle on another stump and I would just walk back and forth. And out of the corner of my eye I saw something. And it happened to be right as I had stopped walking and I was getting ready to turn around and come back, so I just stood there. And, it's amazing how your mind builds these things up. All of a sudden you got these big hungry ghosts that are going to come eat you alive! And I considered, "Well, maybe I'll go back into my cabin and they won't bother me, and jump under the covers and try to go to sleep." And then I remembered this sutta; what do you do? You don't change your posture until you have overcome that fear and dread.

And as I was standing there pondering that, out of the corner of my eye I saw it again. "Oh man, it looks like it's getting closer!" And the fear and dread was very, very strong at that time that I decided

whatever it was gonna be I didn't care. If it's gonna get me it's gonna get me, that's okay. So I just kept standing there and I turned my head a little bit and I looked and I saw, again, some lights flicker. And I turned my head all the way and I waited for a minute and I saw the lights flicker again...and it was fireflies! Well, as soon as you see that there's nothing to be afraid of any more. "Aww, it's only fireflies! What am I doing with my mind?!" So then I just resumed walking again not being distracted by the fireflies. But, before I found out what it was, it really had me concerned.

{21:43}

Now, there was a guy that...a monk in Burma...that he always got up at three o'clock in the morning and he would do his walking meditation in the forest; walking back and forth. And he had his candles set up like I had mine set up, and about half way through his walk he always felt a little uncomfortable. And then he'd walk a little bit and come back and feel uncomfortable in that spot...and come back. So, he moved the candles closer together so he didn't have as long a walk. And it turns out that...and this happened for a few days in a row, maybe like a week or something like that...it turns out that there was a lion that was sitting about in the middle of his walk and he was just sitting there watching the monk walk back and forth. He didn't hurt him. But that would make me want to find another walking spot, that's for sure!

And, then the lion...after he found out what it was he just kept doing his walking meditation. I don't know how he had any collectedness of mind. But, one day he was out on his alms round and he was going back to his kuti to eat and this lion came up to him and he had done something, and he caught his tongue on one of his teeth. [laughs] And the tongue was starting to swell very badly and he didn't have anything to drink and he was really hurting. And he came up in front of the monk and laid down in front of him and showed him. So the monk put down his bowl and grabbed on his tongue and pulled up real fast and he got it unstuck. And then, he went into his bowl...someone had given him a container of water and he put the container of water down...put a little bit of food down for him. And

the lion drank the water and ate a couple small pieces of meat and went back into the forest.

That would be hard to do. That would be real hard to do. I might be able to do it for one of these guys, but I don't know if I could do it for a lion. But he saved the lion's life...I mean, it was extremely compassionate and the lion wasn't gonna hurt him. And he suspects that it was the same lion that was sitting, watching him do the walking meditation. He didn't know for sure.

{25:25}

MN:

21. "There are, brahmin, some recluses and brahmins who perceive day when it is night and night when it is day. I say that on their part this is an abiding in delusion.

{25:45}

BV: Now, the Tibetans, it is said...I've only talked to one monk that said he knew about it but he doesn't know anybody that practiced it...you dig a hole in the ground. You have to sit there for one year. People bring you food and you use the visualization of the stars all the time, daytime, nighttime, doesn't matter. After one year, they go through a ceremony and then they start to run. And they'll run 150 miles a day. Now, this is going from being in a hole for a year without getting any exercise at all outside of you have to get out of the hole to go to the bathroom, and that's about it, to all of a sudden being able to run. And, you run fast. I have seen a picture of somebody that had practiced something like that. I'm not sure, but I saw them running. A lot of American Indians, they ran wherever. The whole tribe would get up and say, "Okay, we're gonna go!" And they'd throw stuff on their backs and drag stuff along behind them and take off running and they might run 100 miles in a day. They ran faster than the horses could. And that's how they caught their horses. They would catch deer.

So, I believe that this kind of stuff is real and it can happen. And

even now you have these guys that go on these super-marathons that are a hundred miles. But, this picture of this guy running, it was like...he didn't leave any footprints...he was barely touching the ground at all. It was pretty amazing to watch. Yeah, anyway, the Buddha says that that...

{28:20}

MN:

I say that on that their part, [when they're doing that kind of visualization] this is an abiding in delusion. But I perceive night when it was night and day when it was day. Rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'A being not subject to delusion has appeared in the world for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans,' it is of me indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

22. "Tireless energy was arose in me and unremitting mindfulness was established, my body was tranquil and untroubled, my mind collected and unified.

23. "Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and abided in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of seclusion.

24. "With the stilling of thinking and examining thought, I entered upon and abided in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and stillness of mind without thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of collectedness.

25. "With the fading away of joy, I abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling happiness with the body, I entered upon and abided in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.'

26. "With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, I entered upon and abided in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of

mindfulness due to equanimity.

27. "When my collected mind was thus purified,...

{30:58}

BV: Now, he's talking about getting into the fourth jhāna.

MN:

27. "When my collected mind was purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfections, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of recollection of past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two..., three..., four..., five..., ten..., twenty..., thirty..., forty..., fifty..., a hundred..., a thousand..., a hundred thousand..., many aeons of world-contraction, many aeons of world-expansion, many aeons of world-contraction and expansion: "There I was so named, of such a clan, such was my appearance, such my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; passing away from there, I reappeared here.' Thus with their aspects and particulars I recollected my manifold past lives.

{32:43}

BV: That's how you do it. But you also remember who your husband or wife was or who the kids were. And you'll have memories of some of the people kind of popping up every now and then whenever you're reborn here or there then they're here or there and they turn out to be a next door neighbor or a friend in the village or something like that. Or it can be a family member again.

{33:27}

MN:

28. "This is the first true knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished, true knowledge arose,

darkness was banished, and radiance arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute.

29. "When my collected mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfections, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings. With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. I understood how beings pass on according to their actions:

{34:42}

BV: See, the whole thing with the...doing the past lifetimes and then going to these other realms...is it makes karma absolutely real to you. You see how, "I did this in a past lifetime and I had that happen to me," maybe ten lifetimes later. But it's real! I mean it's not any kind of fake stuff. After you've developed and gone deeply enough into your past lifetimes, your mind all of a sudden become very peaceful and calm. Nothing arises. And then all of a sudden your divine eye opens up and you start seeing beings that...flying around. There's beings in the room right now.

ST: ~

BV: Ah, yeah, huh? It's very interesting! These are devas around here.

ST: I'm feeling scared, though. In this...~

BV: Why would you feel scared?

ST: Well, because it's a jungle, as you said in the past. But I don't feel that around here, I feel safe. Except for the snakes, which I'm watching... [laughs]

BV: We don't say that shouldn't be careful.

ST: Yeah.

BV: But it's nothing to be afraid of here. That's why we have these guys around. They make you feel at ease, especially this guy.

ST: That's right. They comforted me today. They came up ~~

BV: But when you start seeing beings in other realms, in hell realms, in heavenly realms, in the brahma locas, the deva locas, you see people reborn as animals, you see with your divine eye hungry ghosts, things like that. Then you start reflecting on how dependent origination still works with everything. You start seeing how they are experiencing on a finer level but still they're experiencing dependent origination. And that realization that karma is real and then you're starting to see how the process works in all levels of...doesn't matter whether it's a hell realm or heavenly realms, it all works the same. Which reminds me of a joke:

There is a guy that died and he was in an in between place. He could have gone to a heavenly realm or he could have gone to a hell realm. So he has a guide and the guide takes him over and he says, "This is a heavenly realm here." And there's people sitting around. They're playing music and drinking and just generally chatting and having fun. And then he takes him down to the hell realm and says, "This is the hell realm", and he shows him this room, it's about this size. All he sees are just heads from about the bottom of the lip up, that's all he saw. The rest of it was really, really foul smelling excrement. And these people are walking around and they're whispering something. So the guide says, "Okay, which one do you want to go to? Do you want to go to the heavenly realm or do you want to go to the hell realm?" The guy started thinking about it and he said, "You know, the heavenly realm really looked good, but it's driving me crazy, I gotta find out what these people are whispering to each other in the hell realm. So I want to go in the hell realm." So he winds up being in the hell realm and he walks up to the first person and that person says, "Don't make waves!" [laughs]

See, curiosity will get you! [laughs]

{39:55}

ST: So craving got him in the end!

BV: Craving got him in the end! Had to find out, then he found out, then he got to stay there for a long time, until that karma wore off. But even if you're reborn in the...let's say you get very high in your meditation and then you die but you don't attain nibbana, so you're reborn in a brahma loca. Let's say you only get to the fourth jhāna. That brahma loca, there's two realms that you can go in. One of them is you have...it's a very pleasant realm but it's some...what do they call it...look on that card. I can't remember what it says about the fourth realm.

ST: ~~

BV: Oh no, that's deva locas. Those...

ST: ~

BV: Fourth...fourth jhāna, there's two of them.

ST: ~

BV: What's it say about it?

ST: It says...~

ST: See, the purple section is the one you're in. So I don't understand which one you want to do because there's so many.

BV: No, there's only these two.

ST: Oh, really?

BV: Yeah. The lowest of the two is called "The Realm Of Great

Reward". It lasts for 500 maha kappas. These are where the anagamis go. ~~~ with the anagamis. But, then there is the one that is The Realm Of The Mindless Beings. You don't have a mind, you have a body. You're like a statue. And that lasts for 500 maha kappas. A maha kappa is a long time. Anyway, when you die out of this realm you'll be reborn in one of these realms and these are the deva locas. Now, you could be reborn in a lower jhāna plane depending on your merit but then you'll be reborn in one of these realms and then you die from these realms and then you'll be reborn in either the human realm or the hell realms or animal realms...these realms here.

So, that's called being on the wheel of samsara. You're on that wheel. And being on the wheel of samsara is...we've been on it for a long time. We've all experienced the highest highs and the lowest lows and that's what the Buddha was trying to show us; that there is something beyond the highest highs. But you'll be able to visit all of those different realms. You'll be able to visit those four...the two fourth jhāna realms, the third jhāna realms, the second jhāna realms, the first jhāna realms. The six deva locas, you'll be able to visit all of those. You'll be able to visit the hell realms, the hungry ghost realms, the asura realms, all of those. And when you go and visit those with your divine eye and divine ear, you'll be able to find out, "What did you do to get reborn here?"

{45:00}

There was a tree spirit that was.... (See Footnote)

[Tape break at 45:11]

MN:

...fortunate and unfortunate. I understood how beings pass on according to their actions: 'These worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, revilers of noble ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in the state of deprivation, in a bad destination, even in hell; but these worthy

beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not reviler of noble ones, right in their views, giving effect to right view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a good destination, even in the heavenly realm.' Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and I understood how beings pass on according to their actions.

30. "This is the second knowledge attained by me in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and radiance arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent and resolute.

{46:59}

BV: When you develop your divine eye, and you're able to see beings in other realms, you can develop it further and you can not only see beings in other realms but you can see...all you have to do is direct your mind, like right now you want to see what your husband is doing. You direct your mind towards your husband and with that divine eye you'll be able to see it.

ST: That would be nice! [laughs]

BV: And with...when you develop your divine ear you'll be able to hear what he's talking about.

ST: ~~ [laughs]

BV: Don't be nosy!

ST: Yeah! [laughs] But when I have this thing, I don't know, it's like kind of ~~ that I don't want to see the scary stuff. That's why I don't watch scary movies. ~~ choice like that.

BV: Well, you don't have a choice when you...which past lifetime you're going to be seeing. Right?

ST: Right.

BV: And some of that stuff is pretty scary.

ST: Right.

BV: But, this is...see, this is the thing with past lifetimes. You really need to have your fourth jhāna, and you have to be able to go into your fourth jhāna and stay in your fourth jhāna while you're seeing these things because it has the equanimity and it's not so frightening. When you start developing your mind and you start working with mastery of going in and out of the jhānas, something frightening can start to happen and if your mastery is good you go into the fourth jhāna and there's no fear, there is only this equanimity and then you'll know what to do at the right time. The problem is keeping your fourth jhāna going all the time. It takes practice but that's one of the things that we try to do here is show you that your daily activities are not just daily activities, they're part of the practice so that you can develop this skill of keeping your practice going no matter what's happening around you. Then the fear and the dread won't come and knock you off balance.

See, what he was talking about was keeping your virtue very high. And then going into the forest and you won't be so afraid, but there can still be some things that can get you. But, when you start developing your jhānas and you start developing the skill of being able to do things while you're in the jhāna, while you have this balance of mind, fear will not ever knock you off balance. You'll see it for what it is. "Oh, it's only this." You can 6R it very easily.

{50:55}

Now, the 6Rs are the thing that's going to help you immeasurably! When your mind finally...I've had students call me up and they say, "I think I'm going to die! I'm so afraid! And my mind is telling me I'm going to die!" And I start laughing when that happens, because your mind finally understood that there is no self! And when it really understands, your mind goes, "Well, if I can't be in control I might as

well just die!" [laughs] That's what happens. But when you have your equanimity and your mind starts doing that, you keep your equanimity going and you go, "Ah! Never mind. It's nothing."

But, in the time we've been here I've had three or four people call me up to talk to me about their meditation and how they were really afraid that they were going to die soon. And it's just a sign that the meditation is going well. That's all. Not anything to worry about. Been there, done that. Know about it. [laughs]

{52:50}

MN:

31. "When my collected mind was thus purified, bright and unblemished, rid of imperfections, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the destruction of the taints. I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is suffering'; I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the origin of suffering'; I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' I directly knew as it actually is: 'These are the taints'; I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the origin of the taints'; I directly knew as it actually is: 'This is the cessation of the taints'; I knew as it actually is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.'

{54:02}

BV: Now, what I just read to you was...he saw dependent origination through the eyes of the four noble truths.

{54:22}

MN:

32. "When I knew and saw thus, my mind was liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, from the taint of ignorance. When it was liberated, there came the knowledge: 'It is liberated.' I directly knew: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been

lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.'

33. "This is the third knowledge attained by me in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and radiance arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute.

34. "Now, brahmin, it might be that you think: 'Perhaps the recluse Gotama is not free from lust, hate, and delusion even today, which is why he still resorts to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest.' But you should not think thus. It is because of two benefits that I still resort in remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest: I see a pleasant abiding for myself here and now, and I have compassion for future generations."

{55:58}

BV: So, what he's saying there is he gets into all of the jhānas and he gets into the first arupa jhāna, the infinite space.

{56:10}

MN:

35. "Indeed, it is because Master Gotama is an Accomplished One, a Fully Enlightened One, that he has compassion for future generations. Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who is lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and Sangha of monks. From today let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

{57:05}

BV: The fourth jhāna is your protection. It is your protection from fear and dread so you can see past lifetimes with a balanced mind.

Anybody going into their past lifetimes without having the fourth jhāna, it can be a truly frightening experience, and it's not as skillful as it could be.

You need to have extreme caution because people can get so freaked out that I have heard of suicides occurring because of past lifetimes. They're trying to run away from it. They don't have strong equanimity. It's really kind of iffy. So, I just want to caution you on that.

If you're going to be teaching past lifetimes to other people and they don't have the fourth jhāna then you should be in the fourth jhāna the whole time that you're with them. Your balance will help them have balance.

Okay.

{58:53}

ST: If I remember correctly that even though he went to the third, which I assume would be the anagami, before going to nibbana, has to go to the forest and have to renounce.

BV: No

ST: ...become a monk or nun.

BV: After you become an arahat, you will renounce or die. You have seven days to make up your mind. You need the purity of the sangha.

ST: That's what I figured. Is said something about going to the forest.

BV: Forest doesn't matter. It can happen anywhere. But you have seven days to make up your mind what you're going to do. A lot of monks...a lot of people during the time of the Buddha, they became arahats and they said, "I don't want to hang around." And they died a very peaceful death. I mean the Buddha's father was one. He

became an arahat and said, "I don't want to ordain." Okay.

But, there's more stories about other arahats during that time that just decided, "I don't want to continue on. I've been around too long. I've seen too much. I remember too much other stuff." And let it go.

But your decision to stay or go is going to be very informed. You will know what you're doing. It's not an emotional kind of thing. An awful lot of people have this idea, "I don't want to be an arahat! I don't want to become a monk the rest of my life!" Okay, do you want to suffer some more? It's up to you! I don't care. Me? I prefer to be an arahat. Just...enough. No more becoming. Ahhh.

ST: You would prefer to be an arahat?

BV: Yeah!

ST: Yeah?

{1:01:50}

ST: Isn't it also, well with ~~ he reminded me, isn't it also a...what does he say?...craving for non-becoming?

BV: No. It's freedom.

ST: Okay.

BV: Complete and total...there is no more craving ever again arising in your mind.

ST: I mean, ~ become an arahat.

BV: Nope. That's not a craving. There is such a thing as wholesome desire. If you desire to go see your parents you know you have to get on an airplane and fly to Germany in order to do that. But then you let it go. Now you know you're going to go see your parents. You don't have to think about every little step that needs to happen so

you can go to Germany. All you do is point your mind in that direction and then you work towards that goal. It's called chanda.

ST: ~~ obsess about that. ~~

BV: Well, yeah, who obsesses? But you have to know where you're going to go in order to get there. Or else you're just wandering around and you're not going to get anywhere. It's called chanda, a wholesome desire.

So, do you have any questions?

ST: So, how do you develop this divine ear and divine eye?

BV: Practicing the way I'm showing you.

ST: Okay. [laughs] I'm try not to see but hearing would be nice. [laughs]

ST: Sometime, yeah.

BV: Sometimes it's okay and sometimes it's not.

ST: So, keep staying in the fourth jhāna then. Because I feel like the nothingness, the realm of nothingness, then the perception and perception didn't get me anywhere. I think. [laughs]

BV: Your lack of patience didn't get you anywhere.

ST: Oh, ~ myself.

BV: Is there a little longing for something?

ST: Longing for no becoming, no more rebirth.

BV: Gotta let that go, too.

ST: Yeah, that's what he reminded me about that.

BV: You have absolutely no control. [laughs] It will happen when the conditions are right. But one of the reasons that you start to have the sleepiness arise is you're out of balance with your energy. You're not putting enough energy into what you're doing. And you have to adjust while you're sitting, you have to adjust. You don't break your sitting and run away from it. [laughs]

ST: Thank you, Bhante. [laughs] I did that today, a lot. Yeah.

BV: You have to learn how to adjust. I want you to sit no less than an hour and a half. I don't care what you're going through. And you...an hour. Okay? So, you have to sit no less than six hours, and more if you can. Okay?

ST: Okay.

BV: Okay, let's share some merit then.

May suffering ones, be suffering free  
And the fear struck, fearless be  
May the grieving shed all grief  
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired  
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth  
Devas and nagas of mighty power  
Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.  
Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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Footnote:

The tree spirit story that was interrupted by the tape break can be found in the talk and transcript for MN-27, 14-Oct-05.