

MN 2

All the Taints - Sabbāsava Sutta

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MN:

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Bhikkhus, I shall teach you a discourse on the restraint of all the taints. [7] Listen and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, venerable sir," the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

(SUMMARY)

3. "Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see. Who knows and sees what? Wise attention and unwise attention. When one attends unwisely, unarisen taints arise and arisen taints increase. When one attends wisely, unarisen taints do not arise and arisen taints are abandoned.

4. "Bhikkhus, there are taints that should be abandoned by seeing. There are taints that should be abandoned by restraining. There are taints that should be abandoned by using. There are taints that should be abandoned by enduring. There are taints that should be abandoned by avoiding. There are taints that should be abandoned by removing. There are taints that should be abandoned by developing.

(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY SEEING)

5. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by seeing? Here, bhikkhus, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for noble

ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, does not understand what things are fit for attention and what things are unfit for attention. Since that is so, he attends to those things unfit for attention and he does not attend to those things fit for attention.

6. "What are the things unfit for attention that he attends to? They are things such that when he attends to them, the unarisen taint of sensual desire arises in him and the arisen taint of sensual desire increases, the unarisen taint of being arises in him and the arisen taint of being increases, the unarisen taint of ignorance arises in him and the arisen taint of ignorance increases. These are the things unfit for attention that he attends to.

BV: Now, what does all of that mean? "There are things which he should attend to, which when he attends to them, the unarisen sensual desire arises in him, and the arisen sensual desire increases." Wanting mind. "I want to be happy. I want this particular kind of food." It all has to do with desire. And as you get more involved in desire, you naturally tend to want more. The more you get, the more you want. "The unarisen taint of being arises in him and the arisen taint of being increases."— "Being", what are we talking about here?

S: Habitual tendencies.

BV: Well, we're talking about habitual tendencies, but also identifying with these desires personally.

S: Hum?

TT: 4:47

BV: Identifying with thoughts and feelings personally. See, when you started to laugh, all of a sudden you started seeing how absurd, your mind is when it takes things personally, and when you laugh, then you say: "Ah, it's only these thoughts, it's nothing." Right? That's what we're talking about here. And our habitual tendency, our habitual habit, of taking all of our thoughts and feelings and running

with them and getting serious with them and letting these run around, in our minds and in our actions is the cause of a lot of suffering. The habitual tendency of not liking a feeling when it arises because it's a painful feeling, and getting involved indulging in the feeling, and feeling sorry that it's there, and not wanting it to be there, and wanting it to be different. And then been being involved in that, makes the feeling bigger and more intense. Taking it seriously, worrying about it, wanting it to just be different, wanting it to go away, all of those desires, and identifying with those desires, causes a lot of suffering, a lot of suffering.

"...the unarisen taint of ignorance arises in him and the arisen taint of ignorance increases." Always when the Buddha talks about ignorance, he's talking about not seeing and understanding the Four Noble Truths. Always.

When you have a cold, you know the First Noble Truth very intimately, but because that unpleasant feeling arises, it has a tendency to sneak by the attention, and get caught in the cause of the suffering is craving. The cause of the suffering is identifying with the suffering, taking that suffering personally.

One part of clinging, or thinking about, is having opinions. Getting caught in concepts, opinions, ideas and when a painful feeling arises, we almost always say: "Well, that's terrible, that's not right. That's wrong. That's bad." In truth, there's nothing wrong or bad about a painful feeling. It's just there. And the more you get involved in judging it, and trying to control the feeling, with your thoughts, with your desires, with your wants, and taking all of those thoughts and feelings personally, it's going to cause that feeling to get bigger and more intense. So, because of that, we don't really see or understand the Third Noble Truth, the cessation of the suffering, because of getting involved in the concepts and ideas about good and bad and like and dislike, and all of those opinions that we wind up having. Pain has a way of causing mind to dull out, especially if you're not being extremely watchful. And the old habitual tendency is real strong in coming up. The old habitual tendency of fighting with a pain, instead of seeing it as it truly is. It's just a sensation. No big deal. There's these concepts and ideas of: "I have to change it. This is no good. I don't want it to be like this." Now you're fighting with reality, because the reality is: when that pain is there, it's there. And

it's ok for it to be there. The more you try to resist the present moment, the more the present moment pushes back at you, and forces you to look at it. So we all have colds here, but that doesn't mean that we have to indulge, because there's a cold. It means you see how the dislike of that situation arises and causes your mind to get tight and tense, and how you get involved in the whole drama of the cold.

TT: 10:09

Your habitual tendency is always to act in the same way when the cold arises. But even during the time of the Buddha, the Buddha caught a cold. He got pretty sick sometimes. It didn't change his perspective of the world at all. It's just there's sometimes when there's painful feeling, and that's the truth. And it's ok for the painful feelings to be there. It has to be, because it's the truth. So he developed his equanimity. He had this balance of mind that says: "Ok, it's there." No resistance to it. No trying to change it. No trying to make it better than it is. There is just this acceptance. So when you're indulging, in the taint of ignorance, ignorance tends to increase. In other words, the more you indulge in not seeing the Noble Truths, and indulging your own suffering, the more that suffering lasts, the more it stays around.

S: And the harder it is to see the process at that point, yes?"

BV: Definitely. The easier it is to identify with it and then go into the "poor me's" and excuses.

S: And you notice that the way your mind is...

BV: Mmmheh.

S: You don't really see what's happening at all, do you?

BV: No.

S: So, it becomes harder and harder to...

BV: Right. But you started doing it. I mean you came, told me yesterday that when you sat down and meditated, all of a sudden you were able to relax into that, and your mind was very clear. But look what happens when you indulge in it, just even a little bit. (Laughs) These are part of the lessons. You know these are the hindrances when they come up, they're real things. They're real. When your mind is more at ease, it's easier to watch these things as individual little steps, little processes instead of all of a sudden getting caught by it. You don't see that. But remember this one statement: "What you resist, persists." And the more you resist it, the more it's going to persist. So, what to do? One, stop taking it so seriously. Two, stop trying to control. Because, who wants to control? Who wants reality to be the way we want it to be? "I do." But the truth is, this is here because conditions are right for it to be here. What are you doing with it right now? So you want your cold to last longer? Resist it. Fight it. Power your way through it. Try to ignore it. When it comes up get angry at it. Oh, we got a big tree out there. If you want you could go kick the tree. And you do that, and you're sure to suffer quite a bit more than you need to. So, it always feels better to laugh, that it does to cry. It feels a lot better. So, choose your style. Either laugh with it or cry with it. Because you're going to do one or the other. Either accept it or don't accept it, your choice. That doesn't mean it's going to change it, except to make it more painful if you don't accept it. You can't ignore it, so why don't we try changing our perspective a little bit with it? And allowing it to be instead of resisting it.

TT: 15:25

MN:

And what are the things fit for attention that he does not attend to? They are things such that when he attends to them, the unarisen taint of sensual desire does not arise in him and the arisen taint of sensual desire is abandoned, the unarisen taint of being does not arise in him and the arisen taint of being is abandoned, the unarisen taint of ignorance does not arise in him and the arisen taint of ignorance is abandoned. These are the things fit for attention that he

does not attend to. By attending to things unfit for attention and by not attending to things fit for attention, both unarisen taints arise in him and arisen taints increase.

BV: Yes

S: I know that if I get up and walk, my legs won't be asleep. So, what's wrong with getting up and walking?

BV: If you haven't sat for half an hour, a lot. When a sensation arises, whether it's a feeling of going to sleep or pain or whatever, we have a tendency to identify with it. When we identify with it, then we have a tendency to want to control it. And we try to control it with our thoughts, by trying to push the feeling and make it different than it is. You get very clouded by your desire at that time. And it goes from just a little uncomfortableness to major pain because of the want to control. So, if you'll remember the instructions, the instructions say when a sensation arises, the first thing you'll notice is that your mind begins to think thoughts about it: "Why is this here? Why does it have to happen now? I don't want it to disturb me", all of these kind of thoughts. So the first thing you have to let go of, is the thoughts about the sensation, and then relax. And then you'll notice a tight mental fist, the "I don't like it.", wrapped around that sensation. But the truth is, that sensation is there. It has to be alright for that sensation to be there in your mind. So you let go and you say: "Ok, that sensation is there, and it's ok for it to be there." And then you relax, and then you come back to your object of meditation. But your mind goes back to that and it plays the same number over and over again. Thoughts about it, let it go, relax. Tightness around the sensation, let it be. The sensation will either go away, or your mind will get to a sense of balance with it and it doesn't even pull your attention to it anymore. Takes a while to do that. These are important lessons for you to learn in how your mind works. First you have to learn how to recognize the thinking and the more thoughts you have about it, the more intense the pain becomes, so you have to let go of those thoughts, and relax. And then you notice that tight mental fist around that, and you have to let that go, and relax. Now especially with something like your legs going to sleep, if you can

smile into that and just keep light with it, then you're starting to change your perspective, and it doesn't turn into such a big emergency: "I have to get up and move now." After thirty minutes, yeah, you can get up and move. But sometimes that will happen fifteen minutes into the sitting.

TT: 19:41

See, your mind knows where all of your weak spots are, and it will start throwing up these hindrances. Now what I would recommend is the next time you go to sit, don't sit in exactly the same way. I mean you can sit on your bench one time, sit on a chair the next time. You can put a towel or a blanket or something so you change the angle a little bit and that will be enough so the legs won't go to sleep. But that's what I found with these kind of benches, is that you have a tendency to have your legs go to sleep because you're putting a lot of pressure on your knees when you sit that way. And sometimes just putting a pillow on is enough to change the angle so that you don't have that problem. Sometimes you have to reconsider on other ways of doing it. Ok?

S: So it's not bad to not have this discomfort?

BV: Well, the truth is, discomfort arises, whether you want it to or not. It's a painful feeling.

S: Pain is one thing, but when your legs go asleep and then they get gangrene, that's not as good.

BV: Well, it's still pain, isn't it? It's just different levels of pain. But that's ok.

There's all kinds of different pains that can arise in your body at different times. But if you sit every time, and you have the same pain coming up every time, then I don't want you to sit that way any more. Sometimes, when your legs are like this, and they start to go to sleep, all it takes is just a turn of one leg, and the circulation is there. Don't sit so tight. Sit with one leg here and one leg here. They don't have to be crossed like that. Or sit up higher. I can't sit flat on

the floor for any length of time. My legs go to sleep continually. But I can sit up a little higher on a cushion, so I'm sitting more like this, and I don't have that problem.

S: And the break through for me was when I was beginning to feel sorry for myself on that cushion out there, and I started to give up, as I was walking up the hill just realizing that I'm not the only one who suffers, and then that's when I can laugh.

BV: Ah. Good one. Did you see how the laugh changed your perspective and it stopped the "poor me's"? Ok, you can do that with any thing, any mental state that comes up, can do that.

S: The "poor me" is similar to any other thing?

BV: Yes. It's still a painful feeling, and there's still a craving "I don't like it", and there's still all of the thoughts about why you don't like that feeling, and that gets into the "poor me's" and all of that, and when you laugh, all of a sudden it's not me anymore, it's just this thing. That's all it is, just this feeling. No big deal. But it's so easy to get involved in the seriousness of the problem, and the problem starts to get huge, and it gets overwhelming and you don't know what to do, so you just indulge in it more. But when you laugh with it, that huge problem is just a little inconvenient thing, it's not any big deal. Have you heard me give a lot of talks saying that your sense of humor is very important, and now you're starting to realize it. This stuff is real. Don't take this stuff seriously. It's not worth it. There's nothing worth being serious about.

Ok...

MN:

7. "This is how he attends unwisely: 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what did I become in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I become in the future?' Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the present thus: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come

from? Where will it go?'

TT: 24:40

BV: Now it isn't necessarily talking about past lifetimes, it's just past experiences, too. When you start getting involved in: "Well, I have sadness now, was I like that in the past? How did that happen in the past?", indulging in thinking in the past. The Buddha says that this is unwise attention. Why? Because you're working with concepts, you're working with ideas that don't have anything to do with what is here right now in the present moment. See, this is the major difference between Buddhism and other religions. Other religions, they say: "Well, just give your problem to God, and he'll take care of it." This isn't like that. This is: you have to be responsible for watching out for yourself. There's no other being that can help you to be happy; you have to learn how to be happy yourself.

S: What's the difference between reaching into the past for pain, or reaching into the past to find a joyous moment to hold onto that feeling?

BV: Because, what he's talking about here: "Was I in the past? Was I not in the past?", it's talking about concepts: "When I was three, my mother got angry at me and locked me in the closet. Was that the cause of my fear of darkness now? Or was it something else that happened?" Ok, you're trying to work with concepts instead of... You can pull up a memory, a memory of joy, that's an uplifting feeling; that's a wholesome kind of feeling. And with negative mental states and emotions and these kind of things, there's always very, very heavy identifying with those: "This is me. This is mine. This is who I am." When you bring up the feeling of joy, you're not necessarily taking that joy personally and saying: "This is me." You're just saying: "Oh, this is that pleasant feeling." There's a little bit of a difference there. And how many times do you hear: "What am I here for? What's the point of life?" Now all of these are concepts, and it takes you out of the present moment, and it causes a lot of mental gymnastics in thinking that, but when you laugh at yourself for getting caught by thinking about these kind of things, all of a sudden

you see very clearly what you are here for. You're here to learn. Here to learn what? You're here to learn how this process works and how to be happy, because when you see how the process works, you will be happy. And this is not a giddy kind of laughing and you can't stop; this is a deep kind of contentment.

MN:

8. "When he attends unwisely in this way, one of six views arises in him. The view 'self exists for me' arises in him as true and established; or the view 'no self exists for me' arises in him as true and established; or the view 'I perceive self with self' arises in him as true and established;

BV: This is what the psychotherapists are really into, very much. I have to heal the self, before you can see that there is no self.

MN:

or the view 'I perceive not-self with self' arises in him as true and established; or the view 'I perceive self with not-self' arises in him as true and established, or else he has some such view as this: 'It is this self of mine that speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and bad actions; but this self of mine is permanent everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and it will endure as long as eternity.' This speculative view, bhikkhus, is called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of views, the fetter of views. Fettered by the fetter of views, the untaught ordinary person is not freed from birth, ageing, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair; he is not freed from suffering, I say.

9. "Bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, understands what things are fit for attention and what things are unfit for attention. Since that is so, he does not attend to those things unfit for attention and he attends to those things fit for attention.

10. "What are the things unfit for attention that he does not attend to? They are things such that when he attends to them, the unarisen

taint of sensual desire arises in him...(as §6)...and the arisen taint of ignorance increases. These are the things unfit for attention that he does not attend to. And what are the things fit for attention that he attends to? They are things such that when he attends to them, the unarisen taint of sensual desire does not arise in him...(as §6)...and the arisen taint of ignorance is abandoned. These are the things fit for attention that he attends to. By not attending to things unfit for attention and by attending to things fit for attention, unarisen taints do not arise in him and arisen taints are abandoned.

BV: So indulging in your thoughts about, whatever you think is so important that you need to think about it. That is the cause of ignorance. That is the cause of identifying with your thoughts and feelings personally. That is the cause of sensual desire. That is the cause of immeasurably amounts of suffering. Indulging in those things does not lead to the cessation of suffering. Speculating about whether there's a self or not-self, or how does the self recognize not self and all of these kind of things... All of these kind of views, all they are for is philosophical discussion, and nobody can ever agree on those kind of things. But even coming up with some kind of reasonable solution doesn't lead to the cessation of suffering. What leads to the cessation of suffering is seeing that pain arise and seeing how your mind's attention moves, how it starts thinking about this, and how you let that be and relax, how the tight mental fist occurs around that sensation and let that be and relax. This is how you let go of the arisen sensual desire, the being, the ignorance. This is how you let go of all of that.

Now the tension and tightness that arises in your mind, in your body is craving. Craving always manifests as tension and tightness in your body, and in your mind. So every time you let thoughts go and you relax, what have you done? You've let go of the craving. There's a brief moment where there's no thoughts, there's very clear mind, and then you bring that mind back to your object of meditation. It's only a brief moment, but, as you get more familiar with doing that, that moment starts to expand a little bit more and a little bit more and then you start staying on your object of meditation without so many distractions pulling you away. Today, because it's the first day of retreat, your mind is real active just like it normally is. That's only

natural. But you're starting to teach your mind how to let go of these thoughts and relax and come back to your object of meditation. As your mind starts to get the idea of how this happens, it becomes easier and easier, especially when we don't take things so personally and get so involved in concepts and ideas, get involved in our thinking about, as we start letting go of that more and more the suffering becomes less and less. Every time you let go of that pain, every time you let go of that tightness in your mind and in your body you are experiencing the cessation of craving. And how do you do that? Laugh. The whole Eightfold Path is involved in the laugh. But you have to let go of the indulging in. That's the trick. That's the deep holding on, that you have to be able to see and say: "Ah, it doesn't matter whether it's there or not; it really doesn't."

S: Is craving the prime culprit or is...

BV: Craving is the culprit.

S: Oh, ok.

BV: The whole of the Eightfold path, the whole of all of the Four Noble Truths is about craving and letting go of craving. Craving is the biggie. You can't stop feeling from arising. Feeling is going to be there whether you like it or not. I mean you stub your toe, there's going to be painful feeling. And feeling arises because the conditions are right for it to arise, but right after the feeling, then craving arises. And that's that tension and tightness and that's the start of the identification with that feeling. "I like it", "I don't like it". Right after that brief instant where everything's tightens up then you start having all kinds of thoughts and concepts and ideas about why you like it and why you don't like it and that goes into your habitual tendencies. So the way you learn how to let go of your old habits of re-acting, in the same way you always act when you stub your toe, is by watching that process, and then letting go of the craving. And instead of indulging in the dissatisfaction of that painful feeling, you start pulling up a pleasant feeling of love and putting into that painful feeling and that balances things out.

S: You catch it before you say "Oh, damn that hurts." Or you say "That's..."

BV: Well, sometimes you do; sometimes you don't. There's the pain, and there's recognition of the pain, and then there's dislike of the pain, and they happen real fast. And sometimes you get caught for a little while with: "I really hurt. Boy that hurts and I don't like it", and then you catch yourself with that and you just kind of laugh with it. And once you start laughing that changes your perspective, and then you can put love into that pain, and that balances everything. And there's a physiological thing that happens with that too. The brain is like two sections, and there's a membrane that goes right down the middle of it. Right in the middle of the brain, there's what's called the pineal gland. This produces all of the endorphins for your body. Endorphins is the pain pill. It's ten times stronger than morphine. Now when there's anger, it stops the endorphins from coming because all of the little blood vessels, all the little muscles around there, they tense up. They don't let those endorphins release into the body, so the pain actually intensifies, gets bigger. When you start sending love into that, everything starts relaxing. And the endorphins just start flooding your body and before long, you forget that you did it.

S: Well, people get so quick that they can stub their toe and immediately respond...

BV: You respond with loving-kindness.

S: by laughing first and then...

BV: Well, if you need to. I was a carpenter. I hit my fingers all the time. Pinch myself, all kind of crazy things would happen. And it was like there's shock: "Ow! That hurt!", and then I sent some love into it and just go back to doing what I was doing. And then, two or three hours later I see this great big purple thing underneath my nail, you know: "Where did that come from? It doesn't even hurt anymore. It's not even tender." So you're practicing the observation of the Four Noble Truths. You see when there's suffering. You see the cause of

suffering. You let go of the cause; that's the cessation of the suffering. And the way to do that is to laugh, and keep your mind on a wholesome object, loving-kindness, into that pain. And it doesn't necessarily even have to happen with something as big as stubbing your toe, any kind of physical pain. I mean you wake up in the morning and you're stiff. Start sending loving-kindness into that stiffness instead of your dislike, and before long, you don't feel it. Real easy to pop up. You don't know about this, you kids.

S: And this works the same way with mental or emotional pain?

BV: Yes, exactly the same. And the thing with the Buddha that's so amazing, is that this is simple. He came up with the simplest, most direct method for the cessation of suffering: having a happy mind. How do you have a happy mind? Well, smile and laugh. Changes your perspective. Every time you see yourself getting serious, smile and laugh. I used to have a tape of, oh it must have been five people that got together, and they had belly laughs, and they put it on the tape, for fifteen minutes. That's all it was, was laughing. Well you talk about changing your mood. All you had to do was listen to that and before long you were laughing right along with them. I lost the tape, darn it.

Ok,

MN:

11. "He attends wisely: 'This is suffering'; he attends wisely: 'This is the origin of suffering'; he attends wisely: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; he attends wisely: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' When he attends wisely in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: personality view, doubt, and adherence to rules and observances. These are called the taints that should be abandoned by seeing.

BV: Now what he's talking about is getting to the first stage of enlightenment. The first stage is the one where you let go of seeing everything in a personal way and you start seeing things in an impersonal way. Because of doing that, you don't have any more doubt as to whether this is the right thing to be doing or not. And

you let go of the belief that rites and rituals will lead to nibbāna. There's an awful lot of people that have that belief. And they're like the Jews. They are really stuck in tradition, and if it's not traditional, they don't want anything to do with it. But some of their tradition is just wrong view according to the Buddha's teaching. And I can say that because I found out when I was thirty five I was Jewish. I didn't know until then. I didn't know anything about it.

MN:

(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY RESTRAINING)

12. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by restraining? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, abides with the eye faculty restrained. While taints, vexation, and fever might arise in one who abides with the eye faculty unrestrained, there are no taints, vexation, or fever in one who abides with the eye faculty restrained.⁴⁴

BV: When you're sitting in meditation, you close your eyes. When you close your eyes, you have restrained your eye faculty, haven't you? You're not seeing anything. When you close your eyes, that faculty is restrained at that time. You're not seeing colors, you're not getting involved in thinking about things that you see. And I kind of like when he was talking about this, the "taints, vexation, or fever". The fever is the desire; it's burning. Now one of the suttas that the Buddha gave in the Vinaya is called "The Fire Sermon".(1) And he said: "Monks, everything is burning. The eye is burning. Color and form is burning. Eye consciousness is burning." And he goes through eye-contact and all of these kind of things, and he said: "It's burning with what? It's burning with desire. It's burning with craving." It's burning with identification, and that's what causes fever. It causes your mind to get hot. And it causes your mind to become confused, very easily – vexation. You don't know. And you get so involved in thinking about what you're seeing, you're no longer seeing, you're just caught in your thinking, and that causes all kind of questions to arise in your mind.

So, it's that way with the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, the body faculty, and the mind faculty.

Now the mind faculty is by far the most difficult to restrain. But you're learning how to do it every time you see that your mind is thinking this or that and letting it go, and relaxing. Right at that relaxing, there is restraint in the thinking. And then you bring that clear mind back to your object of meditation. What's your object of meditation? Smiling, having that smile here, in your heart.

MN:
{...}

(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY USING)

13. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by using? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, uses the robe only for protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things, and only for the purpose of concealing the private parts.

BV: Now this is mostly for monks, but really, it's for modesty. And I wished it worked on creeping things, but (laughter) and you can be sitting in meditation where there's some ants and they have a way of creeping in.

S: Nobody told them about ~

BV: Nobody told them. But these guys I think would help with that. I'd like put one of these by one of the big fire ant hill and see what happens.

MN:
14. "Reflecting wisely, he uses almsfood neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: Thus I shall terminate old feelings without arousing new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort.'

BV: Once you get used to eating once a day, you really don't need to eat very often after that.

MN:

15. "Reflecting wisely, he uses the resting place only for protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things, and only for the purpose of warding off the perils of climate and for enjoying retreat.

BV: So it's basically the same thing for the robes as it is for your shelter. And there's one ascetic practice that we can do, and that's never sitting under a tree or any place that has a roof. And what we wind up doing is having our robes and build a little thing, kind of like a tent. And you stay under that for protection from getting out of the... I did all of the dhutānga practices, all of the ascetic practices I have practiced at one point. And that's one of them. And it is somewhat difficult. Not being in the shade of trees is particularly difficult.

S: You have to avoid getting under trees?

BV: Being out in the open.

S: Imagine living in a country like this is, where it gets really cold.

BV: Yeah, that's difficult. But monks are allowed to light fires. So you can have some heat that way.

S: And rain?

BV: Have a tendency to get wet. And I have to say, I didn't do it very long because it was a very difficult practice.

S: What would be benefited by a practice like that?

BV: Being content with little. Just watching how your mind starts craving for being in a shady spot. I mean I avoided going into

buildings. I avoided being underneath trees. I just stayed out in the open.

S: Did you get sunburn?

BV: Well, I used a robe for that, so I didn't get sunburned, but it was a very difficult practice. I think I only did it for about a month. I saw my desire coming up wanting to go underneath that tree, but no giving into that desire.

S: Could you laugh at that?

BV: Oh yeah. I was not unhappy doing it. But I saw how difficult it was, and I didn't really see that as beneficial for me at the time. So, you see, developing your sense of humor into every situation is the thing that helps keep your balance of mind, and you'll start to notice as you start laughing with things, heavy emotional things don't pull you down very far. They still are going to happen but you're going to see them more easily, more quickly, let them go: "Ah this is nothing. This is crazy mind taking off with this one again."
Ok,

MN:

16. "Reflecting wisely, he uses the medicinal requisites only for protection from arisen afflicting feelings and for the benefit of good health.

17. "While taints, vexation, and fever might arise in one who does not use the requisites thus, there are no taints, vexation, or fever in one who uses them thus. {...}

(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY ENDURING)

18. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by enduring? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, bears cold and heat, hunger and thirst, and contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things; he endures ill-spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily feelings that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing, and menacing to life. While taints, vexation, and fever

might arise in one who does not endure such things, there are no taints, vexation, or fever in one who endures them. {...}

S: ~

BV: Well, I mean, go up to Alaska, right now, you can have optimal health, still walk outside, it's going to be cold. One of the hell realms, in the Jataka tales there's this story about past lives of the Buddha, and he remembered he was king, and he had to make a lot of decisions over other people's lives. And some of them he did it in a just way, and some of them he did it in kind of an unwholesome way or unrighteous way. And because of that unrighteousness he was born in a freezing hell. And I thought: "You know, I better be good because I hate the cold so much, that that's where I'm going to be reborn if I'm not good." (laughter) So I don't ~cold as much as we can. But you bear all of these things, the mosquitoes, the creeping things, the mice and rats, and snakes, and things like that. I call them dirty rats, but it's just more or less a joke when they come and steal my toothbrush. I've never known a rat to come and steal a toothbrush.

S: We have a spider in the kuti.

BV: Learn to endure. (laughter) It's only a spider

S: (I) keep watching it. We'll see what happens.

BV: Watch your mind while you're watching it. But this is why catching them does not bother me at all. I had monk friends that had a kuti right beside mine, within calling distance. And in the middle of the night I hear: "Bhante, come here for a minute, would you? There's a snake in my kuti." And I said: "Well thanks for waking me up in the middle of the night to take care of this you know. Well just go back to sleep. You'll be fine."—"Naw, I can't go back to sleep. The snake is really bothering me."—"Ok." So I go over there and I had a little broom, and what I did was just kind of broomed him right on out. He could have done that himself. Why did he have to call me to do that? I'm not sure. But taking care of those kind of things – ok,

just learn to endure, no problem. But you also realize that there's some aversion in that?

S: Maybe a little.

BV: (laughs) Yeah.
So,

MN:
(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY AVOIDING)

19. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by avoiding? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, avoids a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild bull, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspit, a sewer. Reflecting wisely, he avoids sitting on unsuitable seats, wandering to unsuitable resorts, and associating with bad friends, since if he were to do so wise companions in the holy life might suspect him of evil conduct. {...}

BV: So avoiding certain things is a good thing.

S: At least the cold is not in there.

BV: Hun? (laughter) Well you're right. Cold weather is to endure. But I did find out some interesting things about cold weather, That when I notice my dislike of the cold weather, all of the muscles in my body were tight, and when you relax, all of a sudden you're not near as cold.

S: So it's just weather.

BV: Yeah.

S: ~

BV: Not in this lifetime. There are things to be avoided. Just because it didn't say that this is one of the things, I'll avoid it just like a wild elephant. One of my teachers was a very good absorption

concentration yogi, and he sat for three days one time without moving. And he went into the forest in Thailand and he sat out in the open and he started hearing animals coming around him, and he opened up his eyes and there was six elephants in a circle around him. They were curious (about) what he was doing, and he was throwing off a lot of very positive energy. But it shook him up pretty bad.

But it's real wise to avoid sitting by sewers of cesspools or things like that, dead bodies. If you do a cemetery meditation, it's very much recommended that you are upwind from them, so the wind is blowing away from you, because it really gets ripe.

Ok,

MN:

(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY REMOVING)

20. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by removing? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, does not tolerate an arisen thought of sensual desire; he abandons it, removes it, does away with it, and annihilates it. He does not tolerate an arisen thought of ill will...He does not tolerate an arisen thought of cruelty...He does not tolerate arisen evil unwholesome states; he abandons them, removes them, does away with them, and annihilates them.⁴⁷ While taints, vexation, and fever might arise in one who does not remove these thoughts, there are no taints, vexation, or fever in one who removes them. These are called the taints that should be abandoned by removing.

(TAINTS TO BE ABANDONED BY DEVELOPING)

21. "What taints, bhikkhus, should be abandoned by developing? Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, develops the mindfulness enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

BV: That's a better word: "relinquishment", than annihilate.

MN:

He develops the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor...the

energy enlightenment factor...the rapture enlightenment factor...the tranquillity enlightenment factor...the concentration enlightenment factor...the equanimity enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment. While taints, vexation, and fever might arise in one who does not develop these enlightenment factors, there are no taints, vexation, or fever in one who develops them. These are called the taints that should be abandoned by developing.

BV: One of the things when the Buddha was really sick, was Moggallāna and Sāriputta, his two chief disciples would go visit him and they would recite the sutta called the Bojjhanga(2)... "bojjhanga" means seven factors. Anyway when one listens to that attentively, and they start putting their enlightenment factors in balance, the illness will go away. So, indulge in it or not, up to you. But if you want to consider deeply the enlightenment factors and how they work and put them into balance, that's the fastest way to overcome a cold; that's the fastest way to overcome major illness, cholera, bubonic plague, all of those kind of things, and it sounds like it's superstition but it's not. And we go back to the thing about the water and the flash freezing of the water with different mental states - I think it would be real interesting to have the seven enlightenment factors... considering that while you're holding the water and see what the water looked like under a microscope. I think that could be real interesting.

S: How do you flash freeze?

BV: (Liquid) nitrogen. But they were saying that even just writing on the container changes the water.

MN:

(CONCLUSION)

22. "Bhikkhus, when for a bhikkhu the taints that should be abandoned by seeing have been abandoned by seeing, when the taints that should be abandoned by restraining have been abandoned by restraining, when the taints that should be abandoned by using

have been abandoned by using, when the taints that should be abandoned by enduring have been abandoned by enduring, when the taints that should be abandoned by avoiding have been abandoned by avoiding, when the taints that should be abandoned by removing have been abandoned by removing, {...} that should be abandoned by developing have been abandoned by developing—then he is called a bhikkhu who dwells restrained with the restraint of all the taints. He has severed craving, flung off the fetters, and with the complete penetration of conceit he has made an end of suffering." That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

BV: So the whole thing comes down to watch what your mind is doing while it's doing it. Watching how you indulge in feelings, sensations, try to control those sensations and make yourself suffer more than is needed. Just like this is how depression arises, the indulging in a feeling causes more want for control, which makes the feeling bigger and more intense, which makes the want for control bigger and more and more forceful and finally there's a real fight with that happens inside you. That leads to big time suffering. Accepting the fact that these feelings are there without resisting, without fighting them, without trying to control them, just allow them to be. Eventually there gets to be an equanimity and then that's where healing occurs.

Ok, 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 . . .

Footnotes:

1 Burning - <http://www.dhammasukha.org/Study/Reference/SN-35-28.htm>

2. Bojjhanga Sutta –
http://www.dhammasukha.org/Study/Reference/bojjhanga_sutta.htm

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