

Without Blemishes - Anangaṇa Sutta

DSMC August 07 Series 10-AUG-07

MN:

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

2. "Friends, there are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world. What four? Here some person with a blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself.' Here some person with a blemish understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself.' Here some person with no blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish in myself.' Here some person with no blemish understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish in myself.'

BV:

Now, these are, we're talking about the subtler observations in the meditation. When you don't see that you have a blemish, that means you're caught up in the craving and clinging cycle. So, you don't see it as it actually is. You're identifying with it. "This is me, this is mine, this is who I am right now, and I don't like it and I want it to change", and then we get into our thoughts to try to control the feeling.

Now, a person that has no blemish, but doesn't understand it, this is where the neutral feeling is found and you don't really see neutral feelings very often. I mean you look at the dog, and it's a dog, and you don't, it's not pleasant, it's not unpleasant. So, what happens is a very subtle attachment to the ignorance arises. And what is ignorance? Not seeing and understanding the Four Noble Truths. That's what ignorance is. And that means that you're not seeing the subtle cravings that arise.

MN:

"Herein, the person with a blemish who does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself is called the inferior of these two persons with a blemish. Herein, the person with a blemish who understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself is called the superior of these two persons with a blemish.

BV:

Now, what are we talking about here? The sharper your awareness of the distractions that occur. People have distractions all day. Their mind is going a thousand miles away quite often when you get caught in all kinds of different things and not paying attention to what's happening. And they don't realize that that is a hindrance in itself. So they're considered inferior because they're not aware of what is mind is doing in the present moment. And when you notice that you have these kind of things, and you 6R them, you turn into a superior kind of game. Your mind is much more alert, you start seeing all of these things that arise and pass away as being impersonal. And there's relief in that.

The more you let go of craving, the more you start directing your mind to your wholesome object. What is that? Your object of meditation and having uplifting, happy thoughts. You are a superior type of person. Have you ever walked into a room where there's somebody that's depressed? What do you feel like when you walk in?

Heavy.

{5:13}

BV:

Heavy. That's being inferior. Going into a room where there is a person or a bunch of people that are depressed and recognize it as being like that, and you just start letting it go and start radiating loving kindness, now you've turned into a superior being. And the people that are depressed will start to come up to the level of your mind. If you're not really aware of that, it's very easy to get caught by it.

I used to spend a lot of time going into the hospitals, ah, two or

three times a week actually. And I was seeing people that were suffering greatly, physically and mentally, and I got in a habit of when I'm walking down the hallway, I'm telling myself it doesn't matter what they are experiencing, it's ok for them to experience it. I can love them no matter what. So, generally by the time I get to that person's room, I'm feeling pretty good. And I walk in and I sit down, and they quite often will go "Hah". There's relief because I'm giving them the space to be the way they want to be, at that moment or the way they are at that moment. It doesn't have anything to do with wants quite often, and allowing it to be ok in my mind. And as I allow them that space and send them love and kind thoughts, then the pain that they experience starts to go away.

Now, this is a definition of compassion. An awful lot of people, we have, we have some articles about compassion come through here in magazines and they talk about getting burned out from practicing compassion. Why in the world would you get burned out practicing compassion? Well, I'm trying to take some of their pain away. Stop right there. I can't take your pain away, you can't take my pain away. But I can be happy in the present moment, and guess what happens what that happens? And that's how you turn into a superior type of being. And don't get prideful about it. (laughs) 6R that too.

MN:

"Herein, the person with no blemish [25] who does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish' is called the inferior of these two persons with no blemish. (omits: Herein, the person with no blemish who understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish' is called the superior of these two persons with no blemish.)"

BV:

So, being aware that there is a blemish, we are talking about hindrance. It's always better to notice when there is a hindrance because then you can start 6Ring it and let go of the attachment to it. So, your mind becomes uplifted when you do that. And that way...

Now, one of the things that happens with a lot of teachers that are teaching vipassana right now, straight vipassana, is that they take

the hindrance to be an enemy to fight with and to try to stop from happening. And that's a real different kind of perspective than what the Buddha was talking about. Now, I'll give you an example: in the Satipatthana sutta, the discourse on mind objects, it talks about the five hindrances. First thing, these are the mind objects.

(switches to MN10.36)

... Here there being sensual desire in him, a bhikkhu understands: 'There is sensual desire me':

BV:

So, right now you're talking about a superior kind of person.

MN10:

... or there being no sensual desire in him, he understands: 'There is no sensual desire in me',

{10:01}

BV:

Again, the superior kind of person because you're aware of what's there and what's not.

MN10:

... and he also understands...

BV:

Now this gets tricky...

MN10:

... how there comes to be the arising of unarisen sensual desire, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen sensual desire, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned sensual desire.'

BV:

Now this is, I don't care which one of the hindrances you want to put in there. Now, this is really interesting because they're saying "Practice the 6Rs guys, that takes care of it". Right effort. Remember the four kinds of right effort: Recognize when an unwholesome state is there, let it be, Relax, bring up a wholesome, and keep the wholesome going. That's what it says, right there. Isn't that interesting? So when you do that you are actually a superior kind of being. You're not muddled up by the hindrance itself, you're seeing it as part of the process to 6R it and let it be and relax. And as you do that, you let go of the personal belief that those feelings are yours.

Now, why do these feelings arise? Because the conditions are right for them to arise. I mean, somebody that you love very dearly dies, is there going to be sadness? You bet, there's going to be sadness. And it's all right for the sadness to be there. It has to be all right because that's the truth. It is a painful feeling. As you relax into that feeling and allow the space for that feeling to be, without trying to control it or do anything with it in particular, and you come back and smile and send your loving kindness to your object of meditation, you will always know what sadness is, but you'll let go of the pain of it.

Now, you'll always remember that person that died, even if they died a very cruel kind of death, they were killed in a car accident or whatever, but you'll remember them kindly and not have the grief. What is grief? It manifests in all kinds of different ways. It can manifest as sadness, it can manifest as anger, it can manifest as anxiety. Ah, take your pick. It doesn't matter. But it's always very painful because we take those thoughts and feelings personally.

As we continually use the 6Rs, then we start to see how we hold on to these things, how we cause our own suffering. And you'll get to a state, and you'll go what am I doing that to myself for? I don't need to do that. And then that pain is, ah, the feeling is still there, but the suffering is not anymore. It takes practice, but you're starting to really understand it now because you're going through it.

And that's, ah, I love the hindrances. I do because they're the ones

that are teaching you. They're the ones that are teaching you how you cause your own suffering. And they're teaching you the way to the cessation of the suffering, if you remember to 6R it. And you'll get caught sometimes, and it's ok to get caught for periods of time. Just as soon as you notice it, "Ha, got caught again". Developing your sense of humor about getting caught is an essential part of the practice because it changes your perspective every time.

{14:59}

ST:

Is it ok to... when I often think when I notice I get caught is I keep thinking...

SK:

I think it's mind that got caught.

ST:

Right.

BV:

Well, of course it is.

ST:

So, I, you know I think something like "What a silly one."

{15:13}

BV:

Yeah, mind is crazy. It is absolutely bonkers. And that's how you can start to have fun. Because it's going to try to do all kinds of things that are going to try to pull you down because of your old habitual tendencies. And I'm not talking necessarily just in this lifetime. You might have been having this habitual tendency for five hundred life times. Ok, but as you see it now, it goes from "This is me. This is who I am.", to sssht (gestures) "Look at how crazy this mind is!" That's perfect.

I had a student, that one time, he got to a certain place in his meditation and he started giggling while he was sitting. Remember

that? And everybody around him started feeling really happy because he was doing that. And he couldn't stop himself. He was just giggling... (interruption) Oh, four or five... (interruption) ... It's great stuff. It was, it wasn't any loud thing, it was just little snickers, you know.

ST:

I did too, and I didn't feel bad about it. I just said "Well, Bhante wouldn't ask me to sit still. ~~~"

{16:41}

BV:

No, I would allow you to do that 'cause look at how much clearer your mind is when you're doing that. Look at how much more alert your mind is. I have no problem with that at all. But, if you go to a vipassana retreat and you sit there and you start giggling, they're going to want to know what you're doing 'cause it's not right. (laughs) Ok.

(returns to MN05)

3. When this was said, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Friend Sāriputta, what is the cause and reason why, of these two persons with a blemish, one is called the inferior man and one is called the superior man? What is the cause and reason why, of these two persons with no blemish, one is called the inferior man and one is called the superior man?"

4. "Herein, friend, when a person with a blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself,' it can be expected that he will not arouse zeal, make effort, or instigate energy to abandon that blemish,

BV:

Why? Because you are so caught up in it.

ST:

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BV:

Well, they just don't understand and they take it personally. That's the whole point of the ah, the inferior and superior. One takes it personally, the other one doesn't. Whether they truly see it as it actually is depends on their attachment to what arises in the present moment and their old habitual tendencies.

Now, you can have something happen when you were five or six years old. Um, let's say, ah, you were in a dark room and something happened to cause fear come up. So, every time you got into a dark room after that, fear came up. After you get a little older you start overcoming it, but because of not noticing that grip that your mind has on that and the attachment to the fear, you just go about your business but you never really like being in dark places. And it can affect you all the way into your fifty's, and sixty's, and seventy's. And by that time you've got that habit so well ingrained, and that is just because of the attachment to the first time being scared in a dark place.

I used to have that fear of lightening, used to scare the heck out of me. And my father sat me down and he talked about the lightening and what it is, and how it works, and all of that sort of thing. And I said "Yes, and I've seen a cow that got hit by it and I don't want it anywhere close to me!" (laughs) (interruption & laughter) But eventually it got so that I lost the attachment to it after doing the meditation. I've been meditating since I was twenty-eight years old, so I've learned to actually rather enjoy it.

I can remember one time in San Francisco, there was a lightening shower and there was, they, they said in the newspaper the next day, after they had pictures of it, that there was something like three thousand strikes of lightening in like fifteen minutes or something like that. I mean, the light, the light show was unbelievable, and it woke me up out of a dead sleep, and I went "Whoa, this is great"! And I started to go outside and the lighting hit the street right in front of me, and I went "Well, maybe we'll watch it from inside. (laughs)

Well, let's go over this one again.

{21:20}

MN:

(repeats: "Herein, friend, when a person with a blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself,' it can be expected that he will not arouse zeal, make effort, or instigate energy to abandon that blemish,) and that he will die with lust, hate, and delusion, with a blemish, with mind defiled. Suppose a bronze dish were brought from a shop or a smithy covered with dirt and stains, and the owners neither used it nor had it cleaned but put it away in a dusty corner. Would the bronze dish thus get more defiled and stained later on?"—"Yes, friend."—"So too, friend, when a person with a blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself,' it can be expected...that he will die...with mind defiled.

BV:

Now, there's the importance of being around someone as they're dying can never be overstated. There are certain visions that happen, ok? They can be very close to death and you can be talking with them and ask them what they see. Now, they might have enough consciousness to be able to speak. But you can also put your hand either on their forehead or on their heart and you can talk with them mind to mind. What kind of vision do you see?

Now, if they see a vision of fire, that is the symbol of the hell realm. If they see a vision of black beings, sometimes they're hairy and you can't see, it's like a bigfoot, you know completely, but all black. Sometimes it's black animals. Now, this is a vision that happens when you have greed in your mind. You can have a vision of animals, like going to the zoo or seeing animals in the forest. Let's step back, when you have a vision of fire, if you die at that moment, you will be reborn in the hell realm.

If you have a vision of ogres or black animals of some kind dragging

you off, you will be reborn as one of these kind of beings. You can have a vision of animals and you will be reborn as an animal. That corresponds with delusion.

You can have a vision of past relatives, seeing them that have already died, but now you see them. That means when you die at that time, you will reborn a human being.

Or you can see devas coming down in a chariot and there's devas in the chariot that'll come and take you away. They're going to take you to the heavenly realms.

But the last moment, if you haven't developed your mind very much, you will have the tendency to have your old habitual thinking arise. Do you remember that statement, "What we think and ponder on, that's the inclination of our mind"? Well, if we have a whole lifetime of thinking and pondering of something in the same way, if we haven't got enough energy, and effort, and clarity of mind, then it will revert back to your habitual tendency. So, the last moment before death is very important.

Now, a friend of mine in India wrote a small book on this. And he was called to someone that was dying, and he would chat for a little while, and then he would be quiet for a little while, and say "Are you seeing any visions?" and they corresponded just like I was talking about with all these different mental states, and he'd have a thought about material things.

Now, in India when you die on a mattress, that mattress is supposed to be burnt, or actually it's Bangladesh. But this was a new mattress, and he wanted to be taken off of this mattress, and put on another mattress, so that this could be given to one of the family members. And then he started feeling like he was being pulled by his feet by this big monster, black things. So, the monk would start chanting again and then that vision would go away.

In America, this kind of thing is definitely not understood. And the chanting, unless they understand what the chanting actually is, it can be helpful or not.

When I spent time in a nursing home, my mother ran a nursing home, and I was there for almost a year. And I would go to my mother and I would say "Do you see the signs of anybody that's going to die, in the next few days?" And she was great at being able to recognize all of these signs because there was about fifty people a year that died. So, she would tell me, ah, this person is gonna, is going to die in three or four days, so I would spend three or four days with them.

I was reading from the Bible because I don't care, anything to keep your mind uplifted. And then before they died, if the family wasn't there, I would have them take the five precepts in their mind. Quite often they were too weak to be able to do it verbally. So, I told them just to take this precept right now, "I'm not going to kill any living beings on purpose, I'm not going to steal anything, I'm not going to have any wrong sexual activity". Now, when you take the five precepts that makes your mind incredibly uplifted, and pure.

And then what I would do, would tell them to remember the times when they were happy and giving to other people. It didn't matter whether it's to their family, it doesn't matter. And I would see people die with these beautiful smiles on their face. It was great stuff! And it's real interesting, and I got to learn a lot being there a whole year.

And at that time I was starting to help set up hospice, and I was teaching people how to be with somebody when they were dying because everybody when they start in hospice they wanted to take the pain away, and it just doesn't work. So, it was a real interesting period of time.

Now, I was working at the hospital, I was making \$100 take-home. I was paying \$50 a week room-and-board. One of the patients I thought would benefit a lot from getting acupuncture. So, I got permission to take this person to an acupuncturist, but the family said "You can do that if you want, but we're not going to pay for it", and I said "I don't care, I'll pay for it". And that was \$35 a week. I gave \$10 to my mother, I gave \$10 to a monastery. Add that up,

you'll find out that it's more than a \$100 a week, and that's all I made. And I had a magic pocket. Any time I needed money it was in my pocket, and I knew that I didn't put any money in there. You know, it was one of those kind of things.

I was spending my time going from... every place I went, I walked. So, I was in great shape. And I spent my time with people that were getting close to death at the hospice. I spent my time in the nursing home with people that were dying, and I was teaching meditation. And this is where I learned that when you take care of Dhamma, Dhamma takes care of you. People were giving me clothes, people were giving me new shoes, people were giving me rides wherever I wanted to go. It was amazing! And I didn't really care whether they did or not. That was the thing that was most amazing because Dhamma gives you what is necessary. Not necessarily what you want, but it'll give you what you need. And I learned a great lesson from that.

And when I became a monk, I had no worries. And when Michael and I started out, driving across country at the meditation centre, we, I had, we had \$10 between us, something like that. (laughs) (ST: interruption) And we went across the country and back again. What me worry? (laughs).

{31:51}

MN: (see footnote for the link to 'Five Visions of a Dying Man')

5. "Herein, when a person with a blemish understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself,' it can be expected that he will arouse zeal, make effort, and instigate energy to abandon that blemish, and that he will die without lust, hate, and delusion, without blemish, with mind undefiled. Suppose a bronze dish were brought from a shop or a smithy covered with dirt and stains, and the owners used it and had it cleaned and did not put it in a dusty corner. [26] Would the bronze dish thus get cleaner and brighter later on?"—"Yes, friend."—"So too, friend, when a person with a blemish understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have a blemish in myself,' it can be expected...that he will die...with mind undefiled.

6. "Herein, when a person with no blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish in myself,' it can be expected that he will give attention to the sign of the beautiful,

BV:

The sign of the beautiful is your object of meditation.

MN:

that by his doing so lust will infect his mind, and that he will die with lust, hate, and delusion, with a blemish, with mind defiled. Suppose a bronze dish were brought from a shop or smithy clean and bright, and the owners neither used it nor had it cleaned but put it in a dusty corner. Would the bronze dish thus get more defiled and more stained later on?"—"Yes, friend."—"So too, friend, when a person with no blemish does not understand it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish in myself.' it can be expected that he will die...with mind defiled.

BV:

Why? This is not being aware of what's happening in the present moment, is not practicing the 6Rs. This is something that happens with a lot of people, especially when they overestimate their attainment. Then they think "I've already done the work. I don't have to do anything", and then they act in the way that they normally act and they don't try to purify their mind. And therein lies the problem because you start dirtying that dish up really a lot, and your old habitual tendencies have not been cleaned up. So, you would have a tendency to die with a mind that tends more towards the hell realms than the heavenly realms.

{35:15}

MN:

7. "Herein, when a person with no blemish understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish in myself,' it can be expected that he will not give attention to the sign of the beautiful, that by his not doing so lust will not infect his mind, and that he will die without lust, hate, and delusion, without blemish, (omits: with mind undefiled.)

BV:

In other words, he's staying in the present moment, he's not caught up. (ST: ~~) Right.

MN:

Suppose a bronze dish were brought from a shop or smithy clean and bright, and the owners used it and had it cleaned and did not put it in a dusty corner. Would the bronze dish thus get cleaner and brighter later on?"—"Yes, friend."— "So too, friend, when a person with no blemish understands it as it actually is thus: 'I have no blemish in myself,' it can be expected...that he will die...with mind undefiled. [27]

8. "This is the cause and reason why, of these two persons with a blemish, one is called the inferior man and one is called the superior man. This is the cause and reason why, of these two persons with no blemish, one is called the inferior man and one is called the superior man.

9. "'Blemish, blemish,' is said, friend, but what is this word 'blemish' a term for? 'Blemish,' friend, is a term for the spheres of evil unwholesome wishes.

BV:

I would probably change that to 'evil unwholesome thoughts'. It's craving, but it makes it easier (to) understand that way.

MN:

10. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'If I commit an offence, let the bhikkhus not know that I have committed an offence.' And it is possible that the bhikkhus come to know that that bhikkhu has committed an offence. So he is angry and bitter thus: 'The bhikkhus know I have committed an offence.' The anger and bitterness are both a blemish.

BV:

Trying to keep secrets. One of the definitions of being an arahat is a person with no secrets. What are secrets? They're the quiet

attachments. Don't want anybody else to know about it.

MN:

11. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'I have committed an offence. The bhikkhus should admonish me in private, not in the midst of the Sangha.' And it is possible that the bhikkhus admonish that bhikkhu in the midst of the Sangha, not in private. So he is angry and bitter thus: 'The bhikkhus admonish me in the midst of the Sangha, not in private.' The anger and bitterness are both a blemish.

12. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'I have committed an offence. A person who is my equal should admonish me, not a person who is not my equal.'

BV:

In other words, someone that is younger in the Order than they were.

MN:

And it is possible that a person not his equal admonishes him, not a person his equal. So he is angry and bitter thus: 'A person not my equal admonishes me, not a person my equal.' The anger and bitterness are both a blemish.

13. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that the Teacher might teach the Dhamma to the bhikkhus by asking a series of questions of me, not of some other bhikkhu!'

BV:

This is where your pride stuff starts to really get strong.

MN:

And it is possible that the Teacher teaches the Dhamma to the bhikkhus by asking a series of questions of some other bhikkhu, [28] not of that bhikkhu. So he is angry and bitter thus: 'The Teacher teaches the Dhamma to the bhikkhus by asking a series of questions of some other bhikkhu, not of me.' The anger and bitterness are both a blemish.

{40:26}

BV:

So, were talking about all of the hindrances. The want to hide, the want to have high status and keep that status, and when the present moment doesn't happen in the same way as you want it to happen. It causes anger and dissatisfaction to arise. Now, these are all blemishes. There's no getting around it, these are all blemishes. Why are they blemishes? Because "I want, I want this to be this way." And when it's not, look at the suffering you cause yourself. And how do you let go of that suffering? That's it, 6Rs.

MN:

14. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that the bhikkhus might enter the village for alms putting me in the forefront, not some other bhikkhu!'

BV:

I always wanted to be in the back. But the people that are in the front, they always get the best food and they always get the most food. And they were continually putting me in front, in front of even the, the Abbott. Sometimes I go out on the alms round and they were showing me off because we have a Western monk here. And I was continually being embarrassed like that, and I didn't want that to be like that. I wanted to be back...

I had been a monk for six months. In that six months, I went to a festival at the monastery where I ordained and the king of Thailand came, and he bowed to all of the monks. And then he saw I was an American, and he was educated in America, and he started talking to me. Do you have any idea the problems I had after that, with the jealousy and the bitterness? Oh, terrible! But I was always so much bigger than any of the Asians, and I didn't have brown skin and I didn't have black hair. So, I always got put in front, and I absolutely did not want that to happen. (laughs)

MN:

And it is possible that the bhikkhus enter the village for alms putting

some other bhikkhu in the forefront, not that bhikkhu. So he is angry and bitter thus: "The bhikkhus enter the village for alms putting some other bhikkhu in the forefront, not me." The anger and bitterness are both a blemish.

15. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that I might get the best seat, the best water, the best almsfood in the refectory, not some other bhikkhu!' And it is possible that some other bhikkhu gets the best seat... (and so on)

BV:

And again, that seemed to happen to me because they wanted to show me off, always.

MN:

16. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that I might give the blessing in the refectory after the meal, not some other bhikkhu!' (omits: And it is possible that some other bhikkhu gives the blessing...)

BV:

'Who wants to get ~~' There's quite often competition of who's going to give the Dhamma talk after everybody eats, and does the chanting and that sort of thing. And they would ask me to do it and I would decline. I'd say "Enough is enough. I don't want to do that anymore. Let some other monks do it." And they stopped asking me after a while, which was a good thing. But the competition can be fairly, fairly, ah, stiff. Intense for giving... everybody wants to show off their Dhamma, how they can give Dhamma talks and that sort of thing.

MN:

17-20. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that I might teach the Dhamma to the bhikkhus...that I might teach the Dhamma to the bhikkhunis...men lay followers...women lay followers visiting the monastery, not some other bhikkhu!' (And it is possible that some other bhikkhu teaches the Dhamma [29]...)

{45:41}

BV:

Generally you allow the Abbott of the place will say "Please, you give the talk here", and this happened while I was in Malaysia with (Ven Dr) K Sri Dhammananda. He asked me to give a talk to army personnel. It was like Memorial Day or something like that, and I didn't know what to say to people that practice killing. You know, "Well you gotta keep you pre...", eh that's not a good one. (laughs) So, I focused on their generosity and how they could help.

But he wanted me to talk about a half an hour and after about six minutes that was it. I didn't have anything more to say to 'em. I just didn't know how to do it. (laughs) But they perform a vital thing that happens for every country. Every country needs to be able to defend the citizens. And it is a noble job, and yes they do kill, but they don't have to be cruel about it. But how do you tell 'em that? Difficult. Anyway...

MN:

21-24. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that the bhikkhus...bhikkhunis...men lay followers...women lay followers might honour, respect, revere, and venerate me, not some other bhikkhu!' (And it is possible that they honour...some other bhikkhu...)

BV:

And they can happen with some other monk, and they don't like that. And my attitude to that has been, if you can't earn the respect of people then don't expect it from people. If you don't respect them, they're not going to respect you. I've been to some monasteries where you go to bow the senior monk, I'm a junior monk, I'm going to bow the senior monk, and the senior monk will turn around and completely ignore me. He has no respect for me as an individual or me as a monk, and he thinks that he deserves a lot of respect because he's senior.

We had one friend that was a bhikkhuni that she said "When the monk doesn't...", she wasn't as bhikkhuni was she? (SK: ~~~) ... Samanera. Well, what she would do if the monk didn't pay any attention she would bow one time and get up. And it's always a

special thing, and the bowing is very foreign to this country. And there's some monks that rather insist that they get bowed to, but you're not bowing to me as an individual, you're bowing with respect to what I represent as a monk. So, it takes it away from the individual aspect and the person that's being bowed to they have a responsibility of radiating loving kindness to the person that's doing the bowing. That is their responsibility, not ignoring, ever.

MN:

25-28. "It is possible that a bhikkhu here might wish: 'Oh that I might be the one to get a superior robe, [30]...superior alms-food...a superior resting place...superior medicinal requisites, not some other bhikkhu!' (omits: And it is possible that some other bhikkhu is the one to get superior medicinal requisites, not that bhikkhu. So he is angry and bitter thus: 'Another bhikkhu is the one to get superior medicinal requisites, not me.' The anger and the bitterness are both a blemish.)

BV:

That's just a monk that is very much caught up in "I want the best of everything". And being a monk means being content with what you got, making do with whatever. This robe was made in 1995. It's twelve years old. It's like an old pair of levis (interruption) Right before they start falling apart they're just perfect. Just the starting fall apart. (laughs) But being content with that, I have a lot of robes that are given to me that are very high quality, much higher quality than this, but so what? It doesn't matter how the double-thick robe, we use that for blankets and for laying down on and things like that.

Somebody gave me a very special double-thick robe, and that was nice that they did it, but I had spent about six weeks with U Silananda every night, being up all night... Was it that long? No, in the hospital it was, it was two weeks and before that I had to stay in his room, and any time he got up I had to get up with him. And it freed up other monks to do other things. And they really appreciated it, so they gave me this double-thick robe, is very special. But to lust after it? No, it's nice to get special robes.

In Burma they have these robes that are made out of lotus stem. They very difficult to make, and you see people wearing these robes occasionally, but they're not very practical, I don't think, because they fall apart fairly easy. (laughs) So, one person's superior robe is another person's throw-it-away. And I like to throw away robes best, they seem to work best.

{51:34}

MN:

"'Blemish.' friend, is a term for the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes.

29. "If the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes are seen and heard to be unabandoned in any bhikkhu, then for all he may be a forest dweller, a frequenter of remote abodes, an almsfood eater, a house-to-house seeker, a refuse-rag wearer, a wearer of rough robes, still his fellows in the holy life do not honor, respect, revere, and venerate him. Why is that? Because the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes are seen and heard to be unabandoned in that venerable one.

BV:

Now, there's certain practices that are called dhutānga practices for monks. And they're special discipline that we can do without going overboard in laying down on nails and things like that.

The forest dweller means that he always stays in the forest, ah, sleeps at the foot of a tree, that sort of thing, doesn't sleep with a roof over his head.

The frequenter of remote abodes means that you gotta walk a long ways to get your alms. (laughs) That's what it boils down to. Kind of like living here, if I had to walk for my alms, it would be brutal. That's about four miles one way. That's a long ways to walk especially because you're supposed to be walking barefoot. Anyway.

An almsfood eater means that he only eats what's in his bowl, and

there are practices that it's kind of fun to do every now and then. Only eat in a bowl, you get to see exactly how much food you need, and you get to mix up all of the foods. It's really funny watching some monks eat in a bowl because they put one food here, one food there, one food there, and they try not to mix 'em up at all. And I get my food in the bowl and I just start stirring it up. I did that in Asia because a lot of the food I had no idea what I was eating, and when I mixed it all up, it made it edible. If I knew what I was eating a lot of times I would have backed away from that.

And I found out a secret, if I had a banana I could chop up that banana very finely and put it in the food. It didn't matter what it was, it was good. It really made a difference. But this kind of practice is to only eat what is accepted into the bowl.

Now, when somebody's doing that practice, and everybody goes out on almsfood, and you run across something and you know this monk particularly likes this kind of food, then we would start putting that in his bowl. And one of the things that, it was kind of a strange phenomena, they found out that I liked the laphet, it's fermented tea leaves. And it's great stuff. It has a sour taste to it and I like to mix it in with the food and whatever. But all of the monks would wait until I was done eating and then they would start putting it in my bowl, and it's like "No, I don't want it! I'm done, I don't want any more". But they always waited, it was kind of like a test to see if I would overindulge in the food, and I was full, I didn't want anything more.

So, a house-to-house seeker is somebody that does the almsround house-to-house. They don't in... when I was in Burma in Rangoon there were some people that saw me at the monastery and they ask if I would go out on almsround to their house, and there was three or four people, and I would go to their house, and then other people would see us walking around, and they say "Well, come to my house", and then "Come to my house".

And I started going out on almsround at 7:30 in the morning and I wasn't getting back 'til 10:30, because the number of people that kept asking me to come to their house kept increasing. We started

with four and we had close to twenty, I was with another monk. And finally I said "I gotta do the retreat. I don't want, I don't want to spend three hours on an almsround". But I was bringing in huge amounts of food for everybody at the monastery, and it was kind of fun doing that because I just... I have one or two bags that I was carrying and everything in the bowl and I would just drop it off at the, at the dining hall and say "Ok guys, it's all yours".

But I, I learned to practice the loving kindness meditation when I was doing that, and my face would get very bright, and then somebody would see that and they go "Oh, I want you to come to my house". (laughs) And the monks that didn't go on almsround that day, they would all be standing watching me come into the dining hall. And then they, I'd hear them talking in Burmese about how I was shining. (laughs)

Anyway, a refuge (sic) rag wearer, during the time of the Buddha when someone died, they would wrap that person up in cloth and then they would take him to the charnel ground. Now, if the family was there they would cremate the body right away, but sometimes a family was a long distance away, and the body would start rotting and the cloth would just, there'd be pieces here and there. That's a refuge (sic) rag wearer.

Now, it's real formalized how you wear the robes. They used to have a lot of patches on 'em, but now they don't have so many patches. And a rough robe wearer, they will wear rough, course materials. Generally it was very hot. Ok...

{58:55}

MN:

(omits: "Suppose a bronze dish were brought from a shop or a smithy clean and bright; and the owners put the carcass of a snake or a dog or a human being in it and, covering it with another dish, went back to the market; then people seeing it said: 'What is that you are carrying about like a treasure?' Then, raising the lid and uncovering it, they looked in, and as soon as they saw they were inspired with such loathing, repugnance, and disgust that even those

who were hungry would not want to eat, not to speak of those who were full.

"So too, if the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes are seen and heard to be unabandoned in any bhikkhu, then for all he may be a forest dweller...[31]...unabandoned in that venerable one.)

30. "If the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes are seen and heard to be abandoned in any bhikkhu, then for all he may be a village dweller, an acceptor of invitations, a wearer of robes given him by householders, yet his fellows in the holy life honor, respect, revere, and venerate him. Why is that? Because the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes are seen and heard to be abandoned in that venerable one.

BV:

And that's how you always get the superior amount of food by abandoning the desire for it. And I was staying just outside of Kuala Lumpur, in a town called Subung Jaya. That's where the international airport is now. And when I got there, they were just starting up a monastery and they wanted a monk. and they had about forty people that were coming together and trying organize and make it bigger, and bigger, and bigger.

And while I was there, the number of people that came to that monastery got up into the hundreds, and then into the five hundreds, and that sort of thing. And they would all get together and decide that they wanted to give a meal. Now, I would sit down at a table that was as long as this room that had no square inch left alone. I mean, it was all covered with food, and I was the only monk. It was so much food that I was intimidated and I generally always went away hungry because it was just too much. It was overwhelming. And then they would have a party and eat all the food after that.

But not longing those things is the best way to get those things.

{01:00:58}

MN:

(omits: "Suppose a bronze dish were brought from a shop or a smithy clean and bright; and the owners put clean boiled rice and various soups and sauces into it, and, covering it with another dish, went back to the market; then people seeing it said: 'What is that you are carrying about like a treasure?' Then raising the lid and uncovering it, they looked in, and as soon as they saw they were inspired with such liking, appetite, and relish that even those who were full would want to eat, not to speak of those who were hungry.

"So too, friend, if the spheres of these evil unwholesome wishes are seen and heard to be abandoned in any bhikkhu, then for all he may be a village dweller abandoned in that venerable one.")

31. When this was said, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna said to the venerable Sāriputta: "A simile occurs to me, friend Sāriputta."—"State it, friend Moggallāna."—"On one occasion, friend, I was living at the Hill Fort at Rājagaha. Then, when it was morning, I dressed, and taking my bowl and outer robe, I went into Rājagaha for alms. Now on that occasion Samīti the cartwright's son was planning a felloe and the Ājivaka Pandu-putta, son of a former cartwright, was standing by. Then this thought arose in the Ājivaka Paṇḍuputta's mind: 'Oh that this Samīti the cartwright's son might plane this bend, this twist, this fault, out of the felloe

BV:

So, ah we're talking about they're cartwrights. That means ah different parts of the wheel, and making things fit on the oxen so they can pull it.

MN:

so that it would be without bends, twists, or faults, and come to consist purely of heartwood.' [32] And just as this thought came to pass in his mind, so did Samīti the cartwright's son plane that bend, that twist, that fault, out of the felloe. Then the Ājivaka Paṇḍuputta, son of a former cartwright, was glad and he voiced his gladness thus: 'He planes just as if he knew my heart with his heart!'

32. "So too, friend, there are persons who are faithless and have

gone forth from the home life into homelessness not out of faith but seeking a livelihood, who are fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, loose-spoken, unguarded in their sense faculties, immoderate in eating, undevoted to wakefulness, unconcerned with recluseship, not greatly respectful of training, luxurious, careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion, lazy, wanting in energy, unmindful, not fully aware, unconcentrated, with straying minds, devoid of wisdom, drivellers. The venerable Sāriputta with his discourse on the Dhamma planes out their faults just as if he knew my heart with his heart!

"But there are clansmen who have gone forth out of faith from the home life into homelessness, who are not fraudulent, deceitful, treacherous, haughty, hollow, personally vain, rough-tongued, or loose-spoken; who are guarded in their sense faculties, moderate in eating, devoted to wakefulness, concerned with recluseship, greatly respectful of training, not luxurious or careless, who are keen to avoid backsliding, leaders in seclusion, energetic, resolute, established in mindfulness, fully aware, concentrated, with unified minds, possessing wisdom, not drivellers. These, on hearing the venerable Sāriputta's discourse on the Dhamma, drink it in and eat it, as it were, by word and thought. Good indeed it is that he makes his fellows in the holy life emerge from the unwholesome and establish themselves in the wholesome.

33. "Just as a woman—or a man—young, youthful, fond of adornments, with head bathed, having received a garland of lotuses, jasmine, or roses, would take it with both hands and place it on the head, so too there are clansmen who have gone forth out of faith...not drivellers. These, on hearing the venerable Sāriputta's discourse on the Dhamma, drink it in and eat it, as it were, by word and thought. Good indeed it is that he makes his fellows in the holy life emerge from the unwholesome and establish themselves in the wholesome."

Thus it was that these two great beings rejoiced in each other's good words.

{01:06:19}

BV:

That's more of a monk sutta than a layman sutta, but I changed it around a little bit so it was more layman. (laughs) But any time you start to get prideful and want things to be the way you want them to be, that is the fastest way to get slapped down that I know of.

And there are some people that they think they have some kind of attainment, and they have misread that, and they get such strong pride that there's no way that you could even talk to them about it. So, you just leave that kind of person alone, they go on your merry way, I... I've got other things that I gotta do.

That's why it was so unusual when that one person was writing to me my email about their attainment that they found out that wasn't right, and what I was saying was right, and they became all of a sudden very easy to talk with again. Admonishing is a difficult thing. Nobody likes to be corrected, everybody like to be right. And even when you show someone "There's a problem here", then you have to back off. I mean, this is the skill of the teacher. It's just showing where the problem is and then backing off and seeing if the problem can be solved by the student.

But it's real easy to get attached to some people and want to over help. And when that happens, nobody benefits from that. So, it's learning how to skillfully give short, sweet hints and then see how somebody does with it and if it's not right, sometimes it has to be forceful the next time because "You're not paying attention to what I'm saying. Listen to this". But then to back off again and just lightly go at it and see how things go.

It's real interesting, it's an interesting process. And that's one of the things that makes teaching so much fun because it's never boring. But to see somebody come in and they have cloud around their face and they, and when they walk away they're radiant. That makes it all worthwhile.

And there are some people that'll come here that have done a lot of

meditation in the past, and they don't buy what I'm showing them in the suttas, but they'll say "Well, we'll try it and see". And then they start seeing and then they start going "Oh, OH, that's what you're talking about! I never saw it like that before." So, it's a real interesting process, at least for me.

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 . . .

Footnote:

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