

MN 55 To Jivaka - Jivaka Sutta
Gainesville 16-Dec-05

BV: In order to kill, there has to be five things happen. There has to be a living being. You have to have then intention to kill. You need a weapon. You use the weapon. The being dies. Now, you walk into the grocery store, and there's some meat sitting there in the package. Do you have intention to kill? Is that being alive? No, you don't have intention to kill. You have intention to put food into your stomach so that you can continue on, because food equals energy. Ok. So, it's not alive. You don't have the intention to kill. You're not taking a weapon and using it. And you're not causing that death. You can say that you cause...(laughter) I know what you're going to say. From time immemorial people have been eating meat. By not eating meat, it's not going to stop beings from being killed. Just because you have a body, there's eighty different beings that die every day because you have a physical body. Can you stop that from happening? That's why the Buddha said you need to work to get off the wheel of samsara, then you don't have to do this anymore. But it all comes down to intention. It all comes down to intention. You can be walking around and an ant scurries right underneath your foot just as you're putting your foot down. Did you intend to kill that being? No, you didn't intend to. But that being died. There's no wrong doing if there's not the intention to have it happen.

S: Well, if I go into the store and buy meat, that meat's going to be part of a chain...

BV: Ok, and you go to the store and you buy vegetables, are you reinforcing people that are killing the ... oh...

S:~

BV: Oh..

S:~

BV: But how about the bugs on them?

S:~

BV: That is the same thing; they're being killed. They're being killed for the food that you're putting into your body. You can't live without that happening, honestly.

What you wind up doing when you say: "Oh, I'm a vegetarian", it's just like somebody comes up and slaps you really hard on the face. How dare you do something like that? They're going out of their way to do something nice and share with you, and you turn that gift into something that is not good. No. Don't do that.

S:~

BV: Let me tell you what the Buddha said about this. This is called "The Jivaka Sutta".

MN:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Rajāgaha in the Mango Grove of Jivaka Komārabhacca.

BV: Jivaka was the Buddha's doctor. He tended to him all the time.

MN:

2. Then Jivaka Komārabhacca went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One:

3. "Venerable sir, I have heard this: 'They slaughter living beings for the recluse Gotama; the recluse Gotama knowingly eats meat prepared for him from animals killed for his sake.' Venerable sir, do those who speak thus say what has been said by the Blessed One, and not misrepresent him with what is contrary to fact? Do they explain in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing

which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from their assertions?"

4. "Jīvaka, those who speak thus do not say what has been said by me, but misrepresent me with what is untrue and contrary to fact.

5. "Jīvaka, I say that there are three instances in which meat should not be eaten: when it is seen,

BV: Being killed.

MN:
heard,

BV: Hearing the animal die.

TT: 5:01

MN:
or suspected [that the living being has been slaughtered for oneself].

BV: If I go to a restaurant and somebody gives me lobster, I know that they killed that lobster for me. I can't eat it. Ok. These are the rules for the monks, too.

MN:
I say that meat should not be eaten in these three instances. I say that there are three instances in which meat may be eaten: when it is not seen,

BV: Being killed.

MN:
not heard,

BV: Being killed.

MN:

and not suspected [that the living being has been slaughtered for oneself]. {...}

BV: Going to the store and getting meat, that's an allowable thing. It's not slaughtered for me. It's slaughtered for somebody else. It's not killed for me personally.

MN:

6. "Here, Jīvaka, some monk lives in dependence upon a certain village or town. He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will. Then a householder or a householder's son comes to him and invites him for the next day's meal. The monk accepts, if he likes. When the night is ended, in the morning he dresses, and taking his bowl and outer robe, goes to the house of that householder or householder's son and sits down on a seat made ready. Then the householder or householder's son serves him with good almsfood. He does not think: 'How good that the householder or householder's son serves me with good alms-food! If only a householder or householder's son might serve me with such good almsfood in the future!' He does not think thus. He eats that almsfood without being tied to it, infatuated with it, and utterly committed to it, seeing the danger in it and understanding the escape from it. What do you think, Jīvaka? Would that monk on such an occasion choose for his own affliction, or for another's affliction, or for the affliction of both?"—"No, venerable sir."—"Does not that monk sustain himself with blameless food on that occasion?"

BV: You see it didn't say whether it was meat or not. It doesn't matter whether it's meat or not. It matters what the monk is doing with his mind at that time. And he is using that food to give his body energy and keep his mind alert so that he can practice meditation and get off the wheel. That's the whole point of food; you have to have food in your system. There are beings that die when food is raised. It doesn't matter whether it's a big being or a little being,

they're still beings. But it comes down to the intention.

MN:

7. {...} I have heard this, venerable sir: 'Brahma abides in loving-kindness.' Venerable sir, the Blessed One is my visible witness to that; for the Blessed One abides in loving-kindness."

"Jīvaka, any lust, any hate, any delusion whereby ill will might arise have been abandoned by the Tathāgata, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with so that they are no longer subject to future arising. If what you said referred to that, then I allow it to you." "Venerable sir, what I said referred to precisely that."... ..

10. "Here, Jīvaka, a monk lives in dependence upon a certain village or town. He abides...imbued with equanimity, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will. Then a householder or a householder's son comes to him and invites him for the next day's meal. The monk accepts, if he likes...What do you think, Jīvaka? Would that monk on such an occasion choose for his own affliction, or for another's affliction, or for the affliction of both?"... ..

TT: 10:02

BV: Do you understand what that means? He's just accepting a meal. I lived in a Theravada country. They are not vegetarians. I could not be a vegetarian and live there without offending people. I had to accept what ever they gave me. And some of the stuff is very hard to eat, but I ate it anyway. (laughter)

MN:

12. "If anyone slaughters a living being for the Tathāgata or his disciple, he lays up much demerit in five instances. When he says: 'Go and fetch that living being,' this is the first instance in which he lays up much demerit. When that living being experiences pain and grief on being led along with a neck-halter, this is the second instance in which he lays up much demerit. When he says: 'Go and slaughter that living being,' this is the third instance in which he lays

up much demerit. When that living being experiences pain and grief on being slaughtered, this is the fourth instance in which he lays up much demerit. When he provides the Tathāgata or his disciple with food that is not permissible, this is the fifth instance in which he lays up much demerit. Anyone who slaughters a living being for the Tathāgata or his disciple lays up much demerit in these five instances.”

BV: And because I depend on what other people give to me, I have to eat what they give. But if I suspect that they've killed that being directly for me, then I won't eat it. I'll go hungry that day. If I see them being killed, or I suspect that the being is killed specifically for me, I won't eat it. But the Buddha ate meat. He did it.

S: So it comes back to attitude.

BV: Yes, in the bible, it says something about it's more important what comes out of your mouth than what goes into it. And it's really true. It's really true.

I've seen more people be completely offensive that are vegetarians than people that eat meat. Because: "I'm vegan. I don't eat this, or this, or this, even though other vegetarians do. I'm more pure than that." Look at the pride that's in there. Are they really helping themselves by doing that? And when they go to a friend's house, how much do they offend that friend by not eating what's prepared for them, with love?

When I was a layman, I had a girlfriend that she not only was very much a vegetarian, but it had to be prepared by somebody that put a, quote, lot of energy into the food. And I saw her get upset stomach and throw up because, quote, the food wasn't prepared the way she thought it should be. Well that's ridiculous, to make yourself so over sensitive that one meal, one way or the other, it doesn't really matter whether you eat meat or not. But the whole thing with to be vegetarian or not be vegetarian, to be quite honest, I love vegetarian food. There's nothing wrong with it. Except now that I'm starting to read more and more about soy beans and how bad they

are for you, and that's the stable of vegetarianism, and soy is really not very good for you. It's definitely not good for you. And no soy bean that's grown in this country that is not genetically altered.

Many speaking at once: ~

BV: I'm sorry. (laughs)

Try almond milk. It's really good. Really good. Tasty.

S: ~

BV: You can't even get the seed that's not genetically altered. And one of the reasons that I don't go to McDonald's or a fast food place is the potatoes are all genetically altered.

S: Really?

BV: Yeah. But it's the quality of life that you have to be careful of because there's a lot of foods that you can eat that have almost no food value, and they affect your mind in a very negative way. See, there was a guy that he wanted to prove that McDonald's was good food.

TT: 15:12

S: I heard about that.

BV: And he could only last about two weeks before he had to get off that diet because he gained so much weight and his body was in such bad shape.

S: ~

BV: Well he was riding a bike for thirteen or twelve miles a day. I mean he's somebody that should have stayed in good health.

S: Yes

BV: And also there's an awful lot of the artificial sweeteners that are incredibly nasty. The soy that is reasonably ok to use is stuff that has been fermented. It's digestible. Even though it's genetically altered, you got to eat something. (laughter) There's so much nanotechnology that they're doing's really frightening. They're changing a lot of things. (sighs)

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 . . .

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