

## MN111 One by One as They Occurred - Anupada Sutta

Talk given by Bhante Vimalaramsi 13th July 2003

BV: So, we're going to do one of my favorite suttas, or my favorite sutta, as the case may be. This is sutta number 111 in the Middle Length Sayings, called the 'Anupada Sutta', and the English translation of 'Anupada' in this book is: 'One by One As They Occurred'.

This is very important to realize, that when you're in the jhāna, a lot of times you'll hear the description of the jhāna, and people get the idea that they all happen at the same time, and actually they don't. It's part of a process too.

So...

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 monks thus: "Monks."—"Venerable, sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:  
2. "Monks, Sāriputta is wise; ...

BV: Now, Sāriputta is second in wisdom to the Buddha.

MN: ... Sāriputta has great wisdom; Sāriputta has wide wisdom; Sāriputta has joyous wisdom; ...

BV: Interesting to put those two words together because people think that wisdom is serious, and you're not able to see how things work when your mind is over serious. You have to have that joy, because the joy makes your mind very quick and agile, and alert.

MN: ... Sāriputta has quick wisdom; Sāriputta has keen wisdom; Sāriputta has penetrative wisdom. During half a month, monks, Sāriputta gained insight into states one by one as they occurred. Now Sāriputta's insights into states one by one as they occurred was this:

BV: Another side note: Venerable Anuruddha was the foremost in using the divine eye. He could see a thousand world systems at one time. Like standing on a mountain and overlooking a valley that has a thousand little villages in it; he could see all of them. And he was running, as he was developing this, he was running into problems in his meditation and Sāriputta came around. And he told Sāriputta what was happening, and Sāriputta - although he never practiced that kind of meditation - through his wisdom in understanding how mind works, he saw that there was some ego attachment, and there was too much effort, and these kind of things. And he told Anuruddha, this is why this is happening. Now, he never did that meditation, but because of his wisdom he understood how mind worked so well that he was able to help people with other kinds of meditation than he had practiced. That's the kind of wisdom Sāriputta had.

MN: 3. "Here, monks, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, ...

BV: Being secluded from sensual pleasures means what?

S: ~~

BV: It's not secluded from the sense doors. It's not getting involved in the story about the sense doors. Ok, that's what being secluded really means here. It means that when a beautiful sight or an ugly sight arises, you see it for what it is, you relax tension and tightness caused by the "I like it. I don't like it" mind. And that way you don't have thoughts about it. Ok? So, you don't get into your habitual tendency. So, it's the same with sound.

If there's some real strange sounds that happen here in this area, especially at night, you wake up because you heard a sound of some kind of beastie, probably a raccoon or a possum, running around bumping into things and getting into trouble. But what does your mind do when that sound arises? Immediately, it doesn't like that and then there's all kinds of thoughts of fear, of anxiety, of wanting that sound to go away, and the cause of that sound to be different than it is, and all of those thoughts lead to suffering. Why? Because you have craving: "I like it. I don't like it."

A sound arises then a feeling arises. Right after the feeling - right on its tail- is the craving, and the craving manifests as tension and tightness in your mind, in your body, both. Right on its tail are those little thoughts that get bigger and bigger of: "Why does it have to be there, and I don't like it, and I'm afraid of it, and I want it to be different that it is", and all of these thoughts. And you get into a habitual tendency of when these kind of thoughts arise, it just brings on more old stuff. So, when the sound arises, when your mindfulness is sharp, it recognizes it as just sound. There's a feeling that arises: it's a pleasant sound, it's an unpleasant sound, it's neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

One of the things I've found that people in this country really get into is emotion. They don't see emotion as it really is. They don't see it as a feeling, and craving, and clinging. They don't see that. So a sound occurs, there is dislike, and then you get into the fear of the sound, or what can happen to you because of the sound, but the sound is just a sound. Now, there's actually, in one presentation the Buddha said there's five kinds of feeling: there's unpleasant physical feeling; there's pleasant physical feeling; there's unpleasant mental feeling, emotion; there's pleasant mental feeling, emotion; and there's equanimity.

So when the feeling... when a sound occurs: the craving is very fast and it's there; and the clinging is very fast and it's there; and the habitual tendency of thinking, thinking particular kinds of thoughts, depending on the situation. This is where the fear is, and the more you indulge in trying to control the feeling with your thoughts, the bigger and more intense the feeling becomes, the bigger and more intense the thoughts become, not seeing things the way they really are.

What is sound when it arises? Sound is a vibration that hits the inner ear, and that's all. If it's a pleasant sound, or an unpleasant sound, it doesn't really matter. It's only just a sound, and it's all right for that sound to be there. Has to be all right because the truth is it's there. Whatever arises in the present moment has to be all right because that's the truth. So when there's sound that arises, watch how your mind moves, watch how it gets involved, watch how those thoughts arise, and they put all kinds of weird ideas to it.

I've told this story before: I was in Thailand, and I got up around two o'clock in the morning to do walking meditation. It was in the forest, it was dark. And what you do is you light a candle at one end of the walking area, and one end at the other walking area, so you can walk without tripping over things. And as I was doing my walking meditation, out of the corner of my eye I saw other lights, and it scared me. My mind really grabbed onto that sight. Now, there's a lot of belief in ghosts and that sort of thing in Thailand, and just being there you kind of pick up on those kind of stories. You don't know whether they're true or not, but when a situation like that arose, I was sure that there were some ghosts out there.

So, the instructions on when fear arises, what are you supposed to do? Whatever posture you're in, stay there, stay with that posture. I happened to be standing still at the time. So, don't move, just stand still until the fear goes away. And what are you doing with that? You're trying to relax into it, but it's real strong emotion. And I was standing still, and out of the corner of my eye, I saw lights blink again: "Oh, man." The hair on the back of my neck stood up, and I was ready to calmly run back into the cabin, and close the door, and dive under the covers, but before I did that I turned my head to see if I could see what that light was, and it was fireflies. Now, what happened in my mind? Because of the craving, and the clinging, and the habitual tendency of thinking when these kind of

things arise, I built those fireflies up into some kind of ghost that was going to eat me, but did that have anything to do with reality? It had to do with my imagination, and it had to do with being taken a long ways away from being in the present moment.

So when a sight, or a sound, or a smell, or a touch, or thoughts arise, we have to see them for what they really are, and allow them to be and relax, come back to your object of meditation. So when emotions arise, the thing that happens is: it's an unpleasant feeling, and it's an emotional feeling, and it's a physical feeling, and all of these thoughts arise about what you think that sense door is, and getting caught by it, and being pulled completely away from the present moment, and so much into your thinking and dislike of the situation that you want it to change, and then that makes it worse. So what we need to do is realize that these kind of things occur: there is pleasant feeling; there is unpleasant feeling; there is unpleasant emotional feeling; there's pleasant emotional feeling, but what we're working for is seeing the way it is with equanimity, with a balanced mind.

So when a sound arises late at night, it can wake you up even, what do you do with a sound? You stay in the posture you're in, and then you start watching your mind move around. And you let go of the thoughts and relax, and let go of the tension in your body - which can be anywhere - but especially the tension in your head; relax. And then what? Always coming back to your meditation, whether it's sending love to yourself, or sending love to your spiritual friend, it doesn't really matter. But your mind is not going to stay on that very long because mind is agitated, and it's going to move back to that distraction. And there's going to be tightness, and there's going to be thoughts, and all of these imaginations that occur, but as you do it over a period of time ... you let go relax and come back ... you let go relax and come back ... you let go relax and come back. When you do that over a period of time, and you do it many times, you start to see that there's a pattern to this. And as you start noticing the pattern, you start noticing where the tensions and tightnesses are, and you can let go and relax a little bit more easily. Now, what's happening? You're letting go of that sound, of whatever it happens to be, you're letting go of taking it personally: "This is who I am. This is mine. This is me." And you're starting to see: "Well, it's not me. It's not mine. It's just part of this process." So you're letting go of that personal belief that what arises is 'you', and you're starting to see it in an impersonal way as: "There's just this little part, and this little part, and this little part, and that little part, and that's all it is."

So that's what being secluded from sensual pleasures is all about. By being secluded, I'm wondering whether the word 'secluded' is a good word or not, but it's letting go of sensual pleasures. Letting them be without trying to control them. You can't control sounds when they hit the ear. Why did that arise at that time? Because conditions are right for it to be there, that's all. There's a beastie out there that's making noise, fine. That's the condition for the sound. Let the sound be, see it for what it really is, it's just noise. Come back to your object of meditation.

You can get pulled back and forth for awhile, but every time you let go of the distraction caused by the sense pleasures or the sense doors, and you relax that craving, that tightness that manifests in your body as tension, and in your mind, and you relax. As soon as you relax, mind is clear, your mind is alert, and you bring that mind back to your object of meditation. So it goes again, fine. Doesn't matter how many times it goes away, what matters is that you see it for what it really is. And every time you bring back that clear mind to your object of meditation, that thing that was pulling it away, pulling your mind away, starts to weaken a little bit. So all of these different kinds of distraction are your friend helping you to develop your mindfulness, your observation power of how the process works. Ok?

So I just covered both of those, being secluded from sensual pleasures and secluded from unwholesome states.

[MN: ... Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the first jhāna, ...](#)

BV: Now, when you... when you've let go enough, your mind doesn't grab onto it anymore, there's relief, and with that relief, there's clarity of mind. And ...

MN: ... {repeats: Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the first jhāna}, which is accompanied by thinking and examining thought, with joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

BV: ... born of letting go. So what happens? You have thoughts about this and your thoughts are: "Oh, it's only that. It's no big deal." And you're examining how your mind moves, and when it gets to a certain place, then that relief arises and there's joy that arise.

There are five kinds of joy. You have the kind of joy that arises that brings goose bumps. It's there for a very short time and fades away. There's a kind of joy that's like a flash of lightning, that lasts a little bit longer, it's very intense, but it fades away too. There's a kind of joy like you're standing in the ocean, and you have waves of joy just kind of come over you. That lasts for a little bit longer, very pleasant. These three kinds of joy will happen for anyone at any time. You don't have to be a meditator to have these kinds of joy. The next two kinds of joy only arise through mental development.

So when you have that relief, the relief of letting go of a suffering, and not identifying with the suffering any more, the kind of joy that arises when you get into a jhāna is called: "uplifting joy." This joy, your body feels very light, and your mind feels very light, and there's some excitement in it: "This is really great stuff. I like this."

Now always, after any five kinds of joy arise, after that there's always a feeling of comfort and tranquility. The feeling of comfort, where joy is like ripples in the water, this is when the water is still. You feel comfortable in your mind, you feel comfortable in your body. And after that your mind becomes very peaceful and very calm, and it stays on your object of meditation pretty easily; there's no effort. Now, you can still have a distracting thought occasionally, but your mindfulness is so sharp that you see it. Sometimes you have a whole thought, sometimes it's only the start of a thought. You see it, you let it go, you relax, you come back to your object of meditation, you stay on your object of meditation again.

Now, the last kind of joy is the enlightenment factor of joy. This is called "the all pervading joy", and that's when you have a really pleasant feeling kind of pouring out of every cell in your body. It's like I take this cup and I start pouring water, and I keep pouring and pouring and it finally it overfills and it just starts running down the side, on all sides. That's what the joy feels like. The enlightenment factor of joy doesn't have near as much excitement in it. The uplifting joy has quite a bit of excitement in it; feels really good. But you feel your mind kind of quavering and kind of moving. So your mind becomes very calm and collected when you get into the first jhāna.

MN: 4. "And the states in the first jhāna—the thinking, the examining, the joy, the pleasure, the unification of mind; ...

BV: These happen one at a time. Sometimes they don't last very long, but quite often they can. The joy can last for quite awhile and it can be quite intense. I was teaching a monk loving-kindness meditation in Burma, and he had all of this joy come up, and he started having tears of joy coming down his face. And he went to me and he started saying: "You know, I have a lot of tears." And I said: "Fine. Don't stop them, let them be there." And he said: "But it's starting to burn my face a little bit. It's really coming down and my robes are getting wet. What am I supposed to do?" I said: "Well get a towel, and let the tears come." And after a day or so, he had these great big red streaks running down his face from the tears, but he was so happy he didn't care. "When is this going to stop?" "Whenever it does."

Now, when joy arises, what is your object of meditation? Do you start focusing on the joy and hold on to it because it feels so good? No. You let the joy be there because that's only a feeling. It's a pleasant feeling, it's still only a feeling, relax. When your mind goes to the joy, you see it for what it is, you let it be there, you relax, and you come back to your object of meditation. Don't forget that, come back to your object of meditation, always. Don't try to control or make things different than they are, allow it to be. It's just like an unpleasant feeling. You allow the unpleasant feeling to be there, so allow the pleasant feeling to be there.

So when joy arises it's going to be there as long as it's going to be there. You stay with your object of meditation, and eventually that joy fades. And when it fades, there's a very, very strong feeling of comfort in your body, and this is what the Buddha called "happiness", or "bliss" it's translated sometimes. But there's not much tension in your body, you feel comfortable; there's not much tension in your mind, you feel comfortable. And you feel your mind become unified, it comes together, it stays on your object of meditation very nicely. There are some other things that can arise in your... while you're in the jhāna.

MN: ... the contact (body), feeling, perception, thought or volition, and mind; ...

BV: The five aggregates are there. Are the five aggregates affected by clinging at that time? They are, you're not in the jhāna anymore. But you see these things, you see them arise, they're there, they fade, and they happen one by one. They don't necessarily all happen in the same order. Sometimes they move around, that's fine.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, the decision, the energy, the mindfulness, the equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: All of these things arise while you're in the jhāna. Your enthusiasm is definitely there, it feels good. The decision, what is the decision? The decision is to allow the feeling to be there, and the decision to let it be, relax, and come back to your object of meditation. That's your choice at that time. And you can find out what happens when you don't make that decision - and you make the decision to stay with the joy - because the joy will fade away real quick. Ok? The energy, your energy is in balance. The mindfulness, the equanimity; these are balanced. And your attention stays naturally on your object of meditation.

MN: ... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, ...

BV: Unattracted, trying to hold on; unrepelled, trying to make it go away; independent, he's seeing it as part of a process, he's not attaching to it, he's not saying: "This is me. This is who I am."

MN: ... {independent}, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. ...

BV: All of these things happen while you're in the jhāna.

MN: ... He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: There's more to do.

MN: 5. "Again, monks, with the stilling of thinking and examining, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the second jhāna which has self-confidence and stillness of mind without thinking and examining, with joy and pleasure born of collectedness.

BV: So when you get into the second jhāna, what happens when you're practicing loving-kindness is, it gets very difficult to make a wish because that's part of the thinking and examining, and if you make a wish, you start to feel this tension and tightness in your head. What to do? Drop the wish, drop the verbalizing of the wish. Now you know when you're making the wish for your spiritual friend, you don't have to say: "May you be peaceful and calm" and feel that feeling. All you have to do is feel that feeling, and it's there, and surround your friend with that feeling.

An interesting thing with loving-kindness is, you can't give loving, kind thoughts and feelings to other people unless you have them yourself. It's not sincere otherwise. So you have to bring that feeling up yourself, and you have to feel it, and it has to really be there. And then you wrap your friend in that feeling, and radiate that feeling out.

Now, the self-confidence, what happens is: when you get into the second jhāna, you start to feel like you're really starting to understand how this process works, and you get confident. You don't have doubt come up so much anymore. The doubts kind of leave you alone because you're starting to get confidence in your own practice. You're starting to say: "I know how to do this, and I know what leads to suffering, and I know what leads to no suffering." So you get real confident, and you have... your mind becomes even more still.

Now, a thing that happens with people that begin the meditation is, they think the wish needs to be said over ... and over again, and it doesn't. You use the wish to reinforce the feeling so you can radiate that feeling out. So you only use the wish when the feeling starts to fade a little bit. That's how this doesn't have anything to do with a mantra. Actually, in the suttas, the Buddha never taught mantra. Mantra is a Brahmin meditation.

And a lot of Buddhists have got things confused a little bit, and they say: "Well you have to do your mantra", repeating something over and over again. That leads to one-pointed concentration. That leads away from seeing the insight into the way mind actually works. That leads away from seeing dependent origination. As a result, I don't teach mantra, ever. And there's advantages to doing mantras. You can get really deeply concentrated; it's really interesting; you can get into a kind of jhāna - but only the first jhāna - you can't get any deeper than that; and you get peaceful and calm. And if that's the end result of what you want, then go ahead and do it, but there's so much more to this practice than that.

MN: 6. "And the states in the second jhāna—the self-confidence, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, thought, and mind; ...

BV: Five aggregates again.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, the decision, the energy, the mindfulness, the equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So you still know that there's more to do. Basically that's what the last sentence is all about. You know that there's deeper states that you can get into. Now, when you're in the first jhāna, and your mindfulness fades and the hindrance arises, and you get to work with that for a little while, it improves your mindfulness much more sharply. And when that hindrance fades away, you go deeper into your practice. You get into the second jhāna, and it's the same with every one of the jhānas, until much later. Ok?

MN: 7. "Again, monks, with the fading away of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he entered upon and abided in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.'

BV: Now, what happens when you get into the third jhāna is, you don't feel any more joy. And I've said this before - it's always kind of comical to me - because people will come up and they say: " My meditation was really great and all of a sudden I don't have any more joy." "Ok, fine, you don't have any more joy." "But you don't understand!" "Yeah, I understand. Do you feel like you have kind of a balanced mind, yes?" "Yeah, yeah." "And you feel comfortable in your body, yes?" "Yeah, yeah." "And your mind doesn't waver away and get knocked off your object of meditation?" "Yeah." "And you still hear sounds?" "Yeah." "You still feel things in your body?" "Yeah, but sometimes my body starts to disappear. Different parts, my legs can disappear, my arms can disappear, my shoulders can disappear."

Well, what's happening when you get into the third jhāna, is your mind is starting to become so collected, and so peaceful and calm, that there's no tension in your mind. If there's no tension in your mind, you don't feel any tension in your body. You don't feel any tension in your body, you don't feel it. Now, some... an ant or a fly comes along and lands on you, you feel it. You have full awareness. Your body doesn't disappear because you still feel comfortable in your body - very strong comfort, very nice. The equanimity is experienced in the first jhāna and its experienced in the second jhāna, but it's not really strong until it gets to the third jhāna, when you have that very strong feeling of balance.

8. "And the states in the third jhāna—the equanimity, the happiness, the mindfulness, the full awareness, and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, thought, and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention— these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: They don't all happen at the same time, and this is important to realize.

S: ~~

BV: You feel balance in your mind, you feel comfort in your body and mind. They don't happen exactly at the same time. You feel mindfulness, your observation is very strong, the full awareness of what's happening around you. You hear the wind in the trees, you feel a mosquito jump on you, you have that awareness, and you feel your mind pull together and very calm; it's unified. You still have a body, so you still feel contact, and whenever there's contact in any of the sense doors, there's feeling. And when there's feeling, there's perception, and there is... there is a thought that's there.

But, see the difference between clinging thoughts and observation thoughts is different. Clinging thoughts have identification in them: "I am this. I like this. I don't like that. I want this to change." Observation thoughts are about what's happening in your mind and body at the present moment. Observation thoughts don't have craving in it. It's just an observation and there is some mental activity with that, there is a thought. Ok?

S: They don't happen at the same time?

BV: They don't happen at the same time, and if you're settled enough and your mind is still enough, you can see that they are happening one at a time; they are. Ok?

Ok...

MN: ... {known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus:...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.}  
9. "Again, monks, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, ...

BV: Now, we're talking about mental pleasure and pain.

MN: ... with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, ...

BV: The joy doesn't arise anymore. The grief that arises when the joy fades away and you want it to be there; not there anymore.

MN: ... Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV: So where you've been radiating from your heart, all of a sudden that fades away, and you start to feel a very strong balance in your mind. And then you start to notice that you're radiating loving-kindness with mind. Very subtle state, but that balance of mind becomes very strong at this time. And you don't really have much tension arising in your mind, so you don't have much feeling arising in your body, but you still have that full awareness. When something bumps into you, you feel it while you're sitting.

MN: 10. "And the states in the fourth jhāna—the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquillity, ...

BV: Your mind becomes so peaceful and calm, whatever arises is just there: "Ok." It's not wobbling and running to things anymore.

MN: ... the purity of mindfulness, and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Here, the volition, I changed... it was thoughts before and I changed it to volition because now we're talking about your observation thoughts.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention these - states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: ' So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' ...

BV: What are we talking about right there? Impermanence, while you're in the jhāna. Seeing all of these different things change, they're there, they disappear. See, when people practice vipassanā, the definition of developing wisdom is seeing impermanence, suffering, and not-self. And they don't realize that while you're in the jhāna - it says right here - while you're in the jhāna, you are seeing all of these things, but we don't make a big deal out of it. You realize it though. Little by little it becomes more and more clear.

MN: ... Regarding these states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So when you get to the fourth jhāna... which, when you get to the fourth jhāna, that's where I really consider you've lost your rookie status and now you become a pro. Now, you've become an advanced student when you get to the fourth jhāna. Up until then there's still little emotional things and things that become more and more distracting, but when you get into the fourth jhāna, your

mind has that sense of balance, so anything that occurs at that time doesn't waver, doesn't jump around.

S: ~~

BV: Well, you're going through different stages all the time. Now, what my job is as a teacher is to open up your mind so that you can experience all of the different jhānas. And you'll be able to, with practice, go in and out of a jhāna very quickly, but it does take practice. My job is just to open up those pathways so you have the opportunity to do it. Now, when you get to the fourth jhāna, this is where the Buddha praised this state a lot. Your mind is wieldy, and manageable, and unperturbable, and all of these different things.

So...

MN: 10. ... {repeats: "And the states in the fourth jhāna—the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquillity,} the purity of mindfulness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention ...

BV: When you get to the fourth jhāna everything starts becoming real interesting. Now, another thing that you want to consider is, we're not talking only about sitting. You can be in any one of the jhānas while you're doing your daily activity. And it is quite desirable to be in the fourth jhāna while you're doing your daily activity. Then you have this balance no matter what you're doing. There's not these: "I like it. I don't like it. Oh, I hate this job. I want it to be different than it is." There's none of that, there's just doing, with balance.

MN: ... {repeats: the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention} - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barrier. He understood, 'There is an escape beyond this', and with the cultivation of that attainment he confirmed that there is.

BV: So you know you've still got more to do even though now you are quote "an advanced mediator."

MN: 11. "Again, monks, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with the non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite,' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.

BV: Now, what happens is, when you go deep enough into your meditation, you start to feel that the feeling of loving-kindness changes, becomes different, and this is a mental feeling. And you also feel an expansion in all directions, just expanding out without any boundaries, no limits. What you are experiencing when you get into this state is compassion, infinite compassion. That's a big one for most of the Mahāyana. They like to really talk a lot about compassion, they don't like to talk so much about loving-kindness. They think compassion is better and higher. It's not better, it is higher because the feeling of compassion is much more subtle. And with that, there's this continual expanding out all around, but the interesting thing is, you feel this expansion, you have this feeling of compassion, but there's no center point.

MN: 12. "And the states in the base of infinite space—the perception of the base of infinite space and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: You still have the five aggregates here. Somebody comes up and they say something to you while you're in that state, you can still hear them. Somebody touches something, you can feel it. The six sense doors are still there and able to work, but it takes the contact to make them work. Ok?

Now, in the Saṃyutta Nikāya I ran across a sutta - I was digging around looking for stuff - and the sutta was... it really jumped out at me, and it said that when you practice looking at the five aggregates, that is the same as looking at the four foundations of mindfulness. They're the same thing, it's just different ways of saying the same thing.

S: ~

BV: It is interesting, there's no getting around it.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: You're seeing everything as process now, and you see these things arise and pass away.

MN: ... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states he abided unattracted, unrepelled, ...

BV: Still not holding on to anything. Just seeing them the way they are, when they arise.

MN: ... independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood, 'There is an escape beyond this', and with the cultivation of that attainment he confirmed that there is.

BV: You know that there's still more to go. As you... still your mindfulness slips, you have a hindrance arise, but now it's not so shocking to have hindrances anymore, it's no big deal. Now, you're seeing process, you're seeing it quite easily now. So you let it go, and relax, and come back, and start to see little more things about how it arises, then you go deeper into your meditation.

And...

MN: 13. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite consciousness.

BV: When you get to this state, the feeling of compassion changes to a feeling of joy. This is more like the enlightenment factor of joy. And you start to see consciousnesses arising and passing away ... arising and passing away ... arising and passing away ... arising and passing away. And I had some students in Malaysia that they got into this state, and they came to me and they said: "When is this going to stop? It's tiresome always seeing these different consciousnesses at any of the sense doors." But your awareness becomes so alert that you can start to see little changes arising and passing away, and it gets tiresome, but what are you seeing when you see consciousnesses arise and pass away? You're seeing impermanence, and the tiresomeness of it is suffering. And you're seeing that you have no control over this stuff at all. You're seeing it as impersonal.

Yeah?

S: ~

BV: Consciousnesses.

S: ~~

BV: You're seeing me, and you're listening to me, and those are two different consciousnesses arising and passing away quickly. Right?

This is quite interesting, and the feeling does change from compassion to joy, which is a different kind of feeling again.

Oh, let's see, and...

MN: 14. {"And the states in the base of infinite consciousness—the perception of the base of infinite consciousness and the unification of mind;} the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates there.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; {known to him those states arose,} known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' ...

BV: You really see that. Not a process, it's not a philosophy, it's not your imagination, you're really... your awareness becomes so sharp that you can see these things.

MN: ... Regarding those states he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood, 'There is an escape beyond this', and with the cultivation of that attainment he confirmed that there is.

BV: So you still know there's more, you have that feeling that there's more happening here.

MN: 15. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of nothingness.

BV: Now, what happens when you get to this, the feeling changes again to equanimity. Now, this is the four Brahmavihāras that you're experiencing, and that's in agreement with other suttas. When you get to the base of nothing, mind does not look outside of itself anymore, there's nothing there. Now you start to see factors arising and passing away. You still have your seven factors of enlightenment, you still have your five aggregates, you still have equanimity, and all of these things arise and pass away by themselves.

But it's real interesting... I've had some students that when it first happened they come and say: "I feel like a fool. I'm sitting there and there's nothing to watch!" But there is, there's still some slight movement of mind. Now, you still have the five aggregates. I come up and I talk to you and say: "It's time to... I need your help to do this." You hear me, you don't feel anything in your body unless you're touched. You can be in this kind of a jhāna while you're doing your walking meditation, but it's kind of weird because you feel the bottoms of your feet where it's touching the ground, and you have feeling in your head, but you don't feel anything else. It's really kind of weird, and it's kind of fun too.

MN: 16. "And the states in the base of nothingness—the perception of the base of nothingness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention— ...

BV: Now, when you're in this state, this turns into be some of the most interesting meditation you can get into. Isn't that odd? "But there's nothing." "Oh there's plenty." There's plenty to see, but not outside of mind. And it's like walking a very, very thin tightrope. You put a little bit too much effort in trying to watch; you're restless. Now you have to work with the hindrances, the restless feeling and

the dislike of the restless feeling. You have to let that go and relax, come back to your object of meditation. Or if you don't put quite enough effort into it, your mind gets dull. You don't get into sleepiness so much anymore, it's dullness. And this is where you're fine tuning, and you're starting to see how these things arise, and it has to do with fine tuning your energy. It's really pretty interesting.

MN: ... {repeats: the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention} - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: Still seeing things moving around and changing.

MN: ... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood, 'There is an escape beyond this', and with the cultivation of that attainment he confirmed that there is.

BV: Now, this is the state... this is a different kind of meditation than the Buddha did when he was a bodhisatta, but this is kind of the state that he got into. It is the state of nothingness, and he went to the teacher and he said: "There's still something there." And teacher said: "Nothingness is as high as you get." When you get to nothingness, and you see it clearly, you really realize that there is no god.

Now, in the Hinduism or Brahminism, everything to them is God, and that translates into consciousness. They think everything is conscious - including the ether - is conscious. But when you go a little bit deeper into your meditation, you go beyond that kind of consciousness - in neither perception-nor-non-perception - and when you see that, you don't know whether there's anything there or not because you can't perceive it, or you can perceive some things, but it's so fine at that moment, you can't. Then you're going beyond God. You're going beyond the concept of consciousness.

MN: 17. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

BV: Now, this is where the sutta changes a little bit. It says:

18. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he contemplated the states that had passed, ceased, and changed, thus: ...

BV: So what happens when you get into neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the perception... you start to feel your mind become smaller, and smaller, and smaller, and smaller, until you can't really tell whether it's there or not. Now, in every one of these states, you're still relaxing ... you're still relaxing ... and you do this in that state too. But when you come out of that state, it says you contemplate - I like "silent observation" - you start remembering what happened while you were in that state, and how you relaxed continually.

Now, what's happening with your meditation? When you first start your meditation, your mind has real big movements, and as you get into the fourth jhāna, it doesn't have such big movements anymore. You start getting into these higher realms, then it starts vibrating. And you keep on relaxing, and keep relaxing, and it stops vibrating quite as much with each one of these different states. When you get to neither-perception-nor-non-perception, there's a little tiny bit of vibration.

Ok...

MN: ... 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barrier. He understood: There is an escape beyond this ...

BV: Because there's still that little bit of vibration there.

MN: ... and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: It's not complete and total happiness and peace because there's still that feeling of the vibration, even though the perception isn't so sharp at that time.

19. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the cessation of perception and feeling. ...

BV: So where there was just little tiny vibration, it stops. Just like turning, "click."

MN: ... And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

BV: Now, what this statement means is when the perception and feeling come back - because it was turned off - when it comes back, you're able to see it, and you're seeing dependent origination.

You see ignorance; because ignorance arises, formations arise; because formations arise, consciousness arise; because consciousness arises, mentality and materiality arise; because mentality and materiality arise, six sense doors arise; because six sense doors arise, contact arises; because contact arises, feeling arises; because feeling arises, craving arises; because craving arises, clinging arises; because clinging arises, becoming arises; because becoming arises, there's birth; because there's birth, there's sickness, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

And that's only half of what you see. Then when you see: when ignorance doesn't arise, the formations won't arise; if the formations won't arise, consciousness won't arise; if there's no consciousness, there's no mentality or materiality; if there's no mentality or materiality, there's no six sense doors; if there's no six sense doors, there's no contact; no contact, no feeling; no feeling, no craving; no craving, no clinging; no clinging, no being; no being, no birth; no birth, no sickness, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief or despair. And when you see that, Nibbāna occurs.

S: ~

BV: Everything physical, in the physical world, sankhāra.

So...

MN: 20. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he recalled the states that had passed, and ceased, and changes, thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barrier. He understood: 'There is no escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is not.

21. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He has attained mastery and perfection in noble virtue, attained mastery and perfection in noble collectedness, attained mastery and perfection in noble wisdom, attained mastery and perfection in noble deliverance,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

22. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He is the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material things,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

23. "Monks, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set rolling by the Tathāgata is kept rolling rightly by Sāriputta."

That is what the Blessed One said. The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

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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