AN 3.27 — Jigcchitabba Sutta (Offensive)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

27. Jigcchitabba Sutta (Offensive) Bhikkhus, there are three types of beings found in existence. What three?

The one who is disgusting to look at, not worthy to be associated with, nor attended to or followed; the one who is looked upon with equanimity, yet not worthy to be associated with or attended to, nor followed; and finally, the one who is associated with, attended to, and followed.

a. And who, Bhikkhus, is that person who is disgusting to look at, not worthy to be associated with, nor attended to or followed?

Here, someone is impure, non-virtuous, immoral, with suspect behavior, who is not a true recluse at all, but simply is pretending to be one; secretive in his actions, dishonest, unscrupulous, depraved and inwardly perverted, engaging in non-celibate acts, although claiming to be celibate.

It is such a person who is disgusting to look at, not worthy to be associated with, nor attended to or followed. And why do we say this?

It is because even if one were to not follow the example of such a person, there would still be a bad report spreading about oneself, as a result of associating with such a character, that states:

“So and so has such bad companions and associates, which means that he too must be like them. Otherwise, why would he be around or associating with such people?”

It is just like a snake that slithers its way through a pile of wet feces. Now, even if the snake were to not attack or bite anyone, it would still carry on the smell and the residue of the feces its body came in contact with, which it passes onto whatever and whomever it touches.

Similarly, even if one were to not follow the example of such a person, there would still be a bad report spreading about oneself, as a result of associating with such characters, that

states:

“So and so has such bad companions and associates, which means that he too must be like them. Otherwise, why would he be around or associating with such people?”

It is for this reason that such a person is disgusting to look at, not worthy to be associated with, nor attended to or followed.

b. And who, Bhikkhus, is that person who is looked upon with equanimity, yet not worthy to be associated with, nor attended to or followed?

Here, someone is irritable and easily prone to getting enraged. Even if he were to receive a minor criticism, he quickly becomes infuriated, resentful, angry, and bitter. In addition, much like an open wound, he stays inflamed and easily provoked at the slightest contact, whereby more pus and nasty stuff would ooze out from such a wound when touched, just like for such a person who, with his underlying hatred and rage, forces others around him to ‘walk on egg-shells,’ simply to avoid accidentally provoking another outburst from him.

Just like the incendiary timber of the Tinduka tree, which begins to crackle even if barely touched, so too is such a person, irritable and prone to easily getting enraged. Even if he were to receive a minor criticism, he quickly becomes infuriated, resentful, angry, and bitter. In addition, much like an open wound, he stays inflamed and easily provoked at the slightest contact, whereby more pus and nasty stuff would ooze out from such a wound when touched.

Just like a pile of wet feces that if struck or accidentally stepped into, releases its foul smell, so too is such an irritable person, who is prone to easily getting enraged, much like an open wound. Even if he were to receive a minor criticism, he quickly becomes infuriated, resentful, angry, and bitter. In addition, much like an open wound, he stays inflamed and easily provoked at the slightest contact, whereby more pus and nasty stuff would ooze out from such a wound when touched.

Therefore, such a person happens to be the one who is to be looked upon with equanimity, yet not worthy to be associated with, nor attended to or followed. And why do we say this?

It is because, sooner or later, one will consider:

“If I were to associate with, attend to or even follow such a bitter person, then at the slightest opportunity, he might insult and abuse me, or even do harm to me.”

It is for this reason that such a person is to be looked upon with equanimity, yet not worthy to be associated with, nor attended or followed, at all.

c. And who, Bhikkhus, is that person who is to be associated with, attended to, and followed?

Here, someone is found to be of a virtuous behavior and pure conduct.

It is such a person who is to be associated with, attended to, and followed. And why do we say this?

It is because even if one were to not follow the example of such a person, there would still be a good report spreading about oneself, due to associating with him, that states:

“So and so has such good companions and associates, who must also be like him. Otherwise, why would they be around him?”

It is for this reason that such a person is to be associated with, attended to, and followed.

These, therefore, Bhikkhus are the three types of beings found in existence.

‘By associating with the inferior person, you regress; By associating with an equal person, you don’t regress; But it is by attending to a superior person, that you advance quickly; So, follow the one superior to you, And never look back!’