

Anguttara Nikāya

The Numerical Discourses

Sattakanipāta
(Book of the Sevens)
AN 7.49

Dutiya Saññā Sutta

“On Perceptions – Part 2”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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“Bhikkhus, there are these seven perceptions which when developed and cultivated continuously, bring you many fruits and benefits, for they culminate in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless. And what are these seven?

“The perception of the repulsive; the perception of death; the perception of the foulness of food; the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world; the perception of impermanence; the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence; and the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering.

Bhikkhus, these are the seven perceptions which when developed and cultivated continuously, bring you many fruits and benefits, for they culminate in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.”

1. “Now, Bhikkhus, why was it said that the perception of the repulsive, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the repulsive, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts about sexual intercourse, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to whatever is attractive, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Just like a rooster’s feather or a strip of fatty sinews, when tossed into a burning fire would quickly be pulled in and shrink away from it, no longer stretching nor expanding, in the same manner, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the repulsive, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts about sexual intercourse, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to whatever is

attractive, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practicing the perception of the repulsive, constantly training and dwelling in it, still continues to be drawn towards thoughts about sexual intercourse, instead of pulling in and shrinking away from them, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of the repulsive, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the repulsive, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts about sexual intercourse, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to whatever is attractive, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable. Then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of the repulsive, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of the repulsive, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

2. “And why was it said, Bhikkhus, that the perception of death, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of death, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of being attached to one’s life or to rebecoming, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to life or to rebecoming, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Just like a rooster’s feather or a strip of fatty sinews, when tossed into a burning fire would quickly be pulled in and shrink away from it, no longer stretching nor expanding, in the same manner, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of death, constantly training and dwelling in

it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of being attached to one's life or to rebecoming, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to life or to rebecoming, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practicing the perception of death, constantly training and dwelling in it, still continues to be drawn towards thoughts of being attached to life or to rebecoming, instead of pulling in and shrinking away from them, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of death, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of death, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of being attached to life or to rebecoming, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor drawn to being attached to life or to rebecoming, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable. Then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of death, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of death, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

3. “And why was it said, Bhikkhus, that the perception of the foulness of food, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the foulness of food, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of attachment to flavors and tastes, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to flavors and tastes, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Just like a rooster’s feather or a strip of fatty sinews, when tossed into a burning fire would quickly be pulled in and shrink away from it, no longer stretching nor expanding, in the same manner, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the foulness of food, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of attachment to flavors and tastes, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to flavors and tastes, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practicing the perception of the foulness of food, constantly training and dwelling in it, still continues to be drawn towards thoughts of attachment to flavors and tastes, instead of pulling in and shrinking away from them, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of the foulness of food, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the foulness of food, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind then is protected from any thoughts of attachment to flavors or tastes, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor drawn to being attached to flavors and tastes, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable. Then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of the foulness of food, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from the way it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of the foulness of food, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

4. “And why was it said, Bhikkhus, that the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of attachment to the many beautiful things offered by the world, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to them, the

heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Just like a rooster’s feather or a strip of fatty sinews, when tossed into a burning fire would quickly be pulled in and shrink away from it, no longer stretching nor expanding, in the same manner, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of attachment to the many beautiful things offered by the world, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn into attachment to them, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practicing the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, constantly training and dwelling in it, still continues to be drawn towards thoughts of attachment to the many beautiful things offered by the world, instead of pulling in and shrinking away from them, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of attachment to the many beautiful things offered by the world, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor drawn to being attached to them, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable. Then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of non-attachment to all things related to the world, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

5. “And why was it said, Bhikkhus, that the perception of impermanence, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?”

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of gain, honor, fame, and renown, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to them, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Just like a rooster’s feather or a strip of fatty sinews, when tossed into a burning fire would quickly be pulled in and shrink away from it, no longer stretching nor expanding, in the same manner, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of gain, honor, fame, and renown, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor being drawn to attachment to them, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practicing the perception of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, still continues to be drawn towards thoughts of gain, honor, fame, and renown, instead of pulling in and shrinking away from them, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of impermanence, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, his mind is then protected from any thoughts of gain, honor, fame, and renown, by pulling in and shrinking away from them. Thus, by not sliding into nor drawn to being attached to them, the heart calmly settles down, as it gets established within equanimity, even while perceiving or facing whatever is undesirable. Then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of impermanence, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of impermanence, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

6. “And why was it said, Bhikkhus, that the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, then a strong and keen perception of danger gets established in him, as he develops an unprecedented alertness against laziness, negligence, drowsiness, and absent-mindedness, while becoming determined to stay fully alert and reflective, as if standing next to a murderer who is about to slay him with his raised sharp blade.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practicing the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, yet a strong and keen perception of danger does not get established in him, nor does he develop an unprecedented alertness against laziness, negligence, drowsiness, and absent-mindedness, nor he becomes determined to stay fully alert and reflective, as if standing next to a murderer who is about to slay him with his raised sharp blade, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, constantly training and dwelling in it, then a strong and keen perception of danger gets established in him, as he develops an unprecedented alertness against laziness, negligence, drowsiness, and absent-mindedness while becoming determined to stay fully alert and reflective, as if standing next to a murderer who is about to slay him with his raised sharp blade. Then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of the suffering connected to the fact of impermanence, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

7. “And why was it said, Bhikkhus, that the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless?”

“Here, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, constantly training and dwelling in it, then his mind becomes empty of any further ‘I-making’ and ‘mine-making,’ as well as the conceit that results from adherence to the sixfold conscious body, in relation to all external signs and stimuli, whereby all distinctions such as being ‘superior to’, ‘inferior to’, or ‘equal to’ are silenced and appeased, as the heart gets Fully Released.

“Now, Bhikkhus, if it so happens that the Bhikkhu practices the perception on the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, constantly training and dwelling in it, and his mind still does *not* become empty of any further ‘I-making’ and ‘mine-making,’ nor freed from the conceit that results from adherence to the sixfold conscious body, in relation to all external signs and stimuli, whereby all distinctions such as being ‘superior to’, ‘inferior to’, or ‘equal to’ continue on within, un-silenced and un-appeased, as the heart does not get released, then he should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is not yet developed in the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, for I do not see any distinction nor difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have not yet reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“However, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu practices the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, constantly training and dwelling in it, then his mind becomes empty of any further ‘I-making’ and ‘mine-making,’ as well as the conceit that results from adherence to the sixfold conscious body, in relation to all external signs and stimuli, whereby all distinctions such as being ‘superior to’, ‘inferior to’, or ‘equal to’ are silenced and appeased, as the heart gets Fully Released, then, the Bhikkhu should immediately know what is taking place as:

‘My mind is now developed in the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, for I do see there being the distinction and difference between the quality of the mind, from how it was in the past to how it is now. Therefore, it is clear to me that I have reached a noticeably superior distinction in the heart’s development.’

In this manner, he is fully aware of what is truly taking place in his heart.

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore why it was said, that the perception of the lack in any substantiality of a self, to be seen within suffering, when developed and cultivated continuously, brings you many fruits and benefits, for it culminates in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.

“Bhikkhus, these are the seven perceptions which, when developed and cultivated continuously, bring you many fruits and benefits, for they culminate in the Deathless, allowing you to dive deep into the Deathless.”

Sādhū

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