

Anguttara Nikāya

The Numerical Discourses

Navakanipāta
(Book of the Nines)

AN 9.3

Meghiya Sutta

“The Venerable Meghiya”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

Copyright © Bhikkhu Candana 2023

This is what I personally heard.

Once, The Blessed One was living in Cālīka, on the Cālīka mountain, when the Venerable Meghiya, who at that time was The Blessed One’s attendant, approached and after paying homage to Him, stood to one side and said:

“Bhante, I wish to go for alms at my native village of Jantu.”

“Meghiya, you may do so at whatever time you deem to be appropriate for you.”

Then, when morning came, the Venerable Meghiya put on his robes, and while taking his alms bowl and outer robes with him, he walked to his native village of Jantu to obtain his alms food. Once he had finished collecting his alms food, on his return, and after the meal was over, he went to the bank of the river Kimikālā.

Now, as he kept walking up and down the Kimikālā’s river bank, he came upon a lovely mango orchard that was delightful, and the thought occurred to him:

‘This mango orchard is quite beautiful and lovely. In fact, it’s just the perfect spot for the son of a clansman to apply himself by putting in the effort for his spiritual striving. Let me now go and get permission from The Blessed One, to use this mango orchard as my very place for striving and apply myself in my practice.’

So, the Venerable Meghiya went back and approached The Blessed One, and after paying his respects, he sat to one side and said:

“Bhante, this morning I put on my robes, and while taking my alms bowl and outer robes with me, I walked to my native village of Jantu to obtain my alms food. Once I had finished collecting my alms food, on my return, and after the meal was over, I went to the bank of the river Kimikālā.

Now, as I kept walking up and down the Kimikālā’s river bank, I came upon a lovely mango orchard that was delightful, and the thought occurred to me:

‘This mango orchard is quite beautiful and lovely. In fact, it’s just the perfect spot for the son of a clansman to apply himself by putting in the effort for his spiritual striving. Let me now go and get permission from The Blessed One, to use this mango orchard as my very place for striving and apply myself in my practice.’

“So, Bhante, if The Blessed One would permit me, then I can go and continue my practice by meditating in that lovely mango orchard.”

And The Blessed One said:

“Meghiya, wait for now! I am by Myself, at the moment. Wait until another Bhikkhu comes.”

But for a second time, the Venerable Meghiya addressed The Blessed One with his request, while also adding:

“Bhante, The Blessed One has nothing more left for Him to do. There is no need for The Blessed One to continue on improving Himself, unlike me Bhante, for I still have much work to do.

“So, Bhante, if The Blessed One would please permit me, I wish to go and continue my practice by meditating in that lovely mango orchard.”

And for a second time, The Blessed One said:

“Meghiya, wait for now! I am by Myself, at the moment. Wait until another Bhikkhu comes.”

And for a third time, the Venerable Meghiya said:

“Bhante, The Blessed One has nothing more left for Him to do. There is no need for The Blessed One to continue on improving Himself, unlike me Bhante, for I still have much work to do.

“So, Bhante, if The Blessed One would please permit me, I wish to go and continue my practice by meditating in that lovely mango orchard.”

At this point, The Blessed One replied by saying:

“Well, Meghiya, if you continue insisting like this to go off and strive in your practice at this particular time, then what would I say to that other than, you may leave and do as you deem to be appropriate.”

Then, the Venerable Meghiya got up from his seat and after paying his respects to The Blessed One, he left and went straight to the mango orchard, where he found a tree to sit under and spend the day.

Now, as the Venerable Meghiya was sitting there in that mango orchard, he kept having a series of three types of recurring thoughts, which were evil and unwholesome in nature, whereby he was being harassed by thoughts of sensuality, angry thoughts, and thoughts of harming others.

Then, it occurred to the Venerable Meghiya:

‘Well, this is very strange and quite a spectacle, indeed! For, how is it that having left the lay life and gone forth into homelessness, willingly and out of faith, yet here I am, being tossed around and hassled by these evil and unwholesome thoughts of sensuality, angry thoughts, and thoughts of harming others!’

Then, the Venerable Meghiya went back and approached The Blessed One, and after paying homage to Him, he sat down to one side and said:

“Bhante, something unusual happened! When I left and went to that mango orchard and sat meditating under a tree, I kept having a series of three types of recurring thoughts, which were evil and unwholesome in nature, whereby I was being harassed by thoughts of sensuality, angry thoughts, and thoughts of harming others.

“Then, I thought to myself:

‘Well, this is very strange and quite a spectacle, indeed! For, how is it that having left the lay life and gone forth into homelessness, willingly and out of faith, yet here I am, being tossed around and hassled by these evil and unwholesome thoughts of sensuality, angry thoughts, and thoughts of harming others!’”

“Meghiya, when the heart has not yet experienced Release, not having reached a deep level of contentment, five things are necessary for it to reach maturity, whereby the heart experiences Release. Now, what are these five?

1. “Here, Meghiya, the Bhikkhu becomes a true spiritual friend himself, and as such, associates with others who are also true spiritual friends.

This is the first crucial condition that must be cultivated, which serves as an aiding factor, leading to Awakening.

2. “Again, Meghiya, the Bhikkhu becomes virtuous while restraining himself according to the higher code of rules, as he trains himself in a manner where he is always cautiously considering if there is even the slightest possible fault in his behavior, seeing danger in it.

This is the second crucial condition that must be cultivated, which serves as an aiding factor, leading to Awakening.

3. “Again, Meghiya, the Bhikkhu is very eager and open to listening to a discussion or advice, that deals with restraint and incorporating austere practices, whereby his heart opens up, without compulsion or resistance, whenever exposed to explanations of living life while wanting little, contented and satisfied with whatever the Bhikkhu is provided for.

Thus, Meghiya, the Bhikkhu is always welcoming of talks that discuss the joy of seeking seclusion, always preferring a life without companionships, arousing persistent effort, living with virtue, cultivating and deepening one’s samādhī, the gaining of more wisdom, the attainment of Release and the Knowledge and Vision of Release.

This then, is the third crucial condition that must be cultivated, which serves as an aiding factor, leading to Awakening.

4. “Again, Meghiya, the Bhikkhu is always engaged with aroused and persistent energy, to abandon and dissolve all evil and unwholesome bad merit-making qualities in his heart, while striving to not give up, but to further cultivate and amass more wholesome and good merit-making qualities in his heart, which he does with firm resolve.

This is the fourth crucial condition that must be cultivated, which serves as an aiding factor, leading to Awakening.

5. “In addition, the Bhikkhu is constantly becoming wise, for he is always keenly observing with his detached discernment the appearing and disappearing nature of the five aggregates one tends to grab on to, all of which he carefully scrutinizes with his noble penetrative insight, that takes him straight to the very ending of suffering itself.

This is the fifth crucial condition that must be cultivated, which serves as an aiding factor, leading to Awakening.

“Now, Meghiya, when the Bhikkhu associates with true spiritual friends, being surrounded by such good companions in the Holy Life, then it follows naturally that he will benefit from their support, as he becomes more virtuous, while restraining himself according to the higher code of rules, as he trains himself in a manner where he is always cautiously considering if there is even the slightest possible fault in his behavior, seeing danger in it.

“Further, Meghiya, when the Bhikkhu associates with true spiritual friends, being surrounded by such good companions in the Holy Life, then it follows naturally that he will become welcoming of talks that discuss the joy of seeking seclusion, always preferring a life without companionships, arousing persistent effort, living with virtue, cultivating and deepening one’s samādhī, the gaining of more wisdom, the attainment of Release and the Knowledge and Vision of Release.

“Also, Meghiya, when the Bhikkhu associates with true spiritual friends, being surrounded by such good companions in the Holy Life, then it follows naturally that he will be engaged with aroused and persistent energy, to abandon and dissolve all evil and unwholesome bad merit-

making qualities in his heart, while striving to not give up, but to further cultivate and amass more wholesome and good merit-making qualities in his heart, which he does with firm resolve.

“And, when the Bhikkhu associates with true spiritual friends, being surrounded by such good companions in the Holy Life, then it follows naturally that he will become wise, for he is always keenly observing with his detached discernment the appearing and disappearing nature of the five aggregates one tends to grab on to, all of which he carefully scrutinizes with his noble penetrative insight, that takes him straight to the very ending of suffering itself.

“Now, having built this strong foundation by establishing himself in these five factors, the Bhikkhu must further work on cultivating these four things:

6. “In order to shun and get rid of passion or greed, he must develop in his heart the capacity to see the repulsive and disgusting nature of the very object of his passion or greed.

7. “And, to shun and get rid of anger or irritation, he must develop in his heart the capacity for benevolent loving kindness towards the very object of his anger or irritation.

8. “Also, Meghiya, to completely cut off his incessant thoughts and stop their flow, he must develop his mindfulness of the in- and out-breathing.

9. “And, to fully remove and shake off from its very roots the false sense of a substantial self, he must constantly look at himself through the lens of impermanence, which sees everything as changing and never being the same.

“Now, Meghiya, by having developed the perception of the non-substantiality of a self, and with nothing to hold on to any further, he completely destroys the conceit ‘I am,’ and with his heart appeased and no longer agitated, he then experiences Nibbāna, here, in this very birth!”

Sādhū

Sādhū

Sādhū