

MN 4

Majjhima Nikāya

The Middle Length Discourses

Bhayabherava Sutta

“Threats and Fears”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana
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I have personally heard this.

At one time, while The Blessed One was living at the monastery offered by Anāthapiṇḍika in Jeta’s Park in Sāvattthī, the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi came by to visit The Blessed One. After having exchanged friendly greetings, he sat down to one side and spoke these words:

“Good Sir, Gautama, all those good sons of various families who have gone forth from the safety and security of the lay life into homelessness, by choosing to put on the Bhikkhus’ robes, did so freely and through the strong faith in their hearts towards the Good Master Gautama.

“This means they must have considered Master Gautama as the very best among teachers; the *only* one able to give them the support, encouragement, and guidance they need; looking up to and reaching out to Him as the One who has already done it, having already completed the Task. Thus, they now dedicate themselves to the same task, to accomplish it as well, following in His footsteps.”

The Blessed One then said:

“So it is, o brahmin! For, all that you just exclaimed is true! So true, indeed!

“Truly, all those good sons of various families have gone forth from the safety and security of the lay life into homelessness, and chose to put on the Bhikkhus’ robes, through their free will and strong faith in their hearts towards The Tathāgata.

“This means that they have taken Me as the very best among teachers, the only One able to give them the support, encouragement, and guidance they need; looking up to and reaching out to Me as the One who has already done it, having already completed the Task.

“And to this end, they now dedicate themselves to the same task, in order to accomplish it as well, by following in My footsteps.”

Then, the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi continued speaking:

“However, having said that, Master Gautama, the fact remains that living in far-off and utterly secluded locations, as in the wilderness or desolate and uninhabited areas of forests or jungles, can be truly difficult, if not impossibly challenging for most.

“So, one could only imagine how terribly difficult it must be for someone to attain *samādhi* once having moved away from the world into the seclusion of remote jungles, because such wilderness might very well drive a person mad, as the mind could easily be plagued with agitation due to imagining things that aren’t true or real, while being so alone!”

The Blessed One then responded:

“And so it is, o brahmin! For, all that you just exclaimed is true, brahmin! So true, indeed!

“For, there is the fact that living in far-off and utterly secluded locations, as in the wilderness or desolate and uninhabited areas of forests, *can* indeed be truly difficult, if not impossibly challenging for most.

“This, because it can be terribly difficult for some to attain *samādhi* once having moved away from the world into the seclusion of remote jungles, because such wilderness might very well drive a person mad, as the mind could easily be plagued with agitation due to imagining things that aren’t true or real, while being so alone!

“After all, brahmin, back when I was still struggling, not yet having attained to Awakening, I also used to think:

‘How terribly difficult it must be for someone to attain samādhi once having moved away from the world into the seclusion of remote jungles, because such wilderness might very well drive a person mad, as the mind could easily be plagued with agitation due to imagining things that aren’t true or real, while being so alone!’

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BUDDHA & OTHERS

(WHEN RESORTING TO THE SECLUSION OF REMOTE WILDERNESS)

1. “But later, brahmin, I began reflecting carefully how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners living with unclean hearts, who behave without any virtue, whether through their thoughts, words, or bodily actions, who do go into seclusion, by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of non-virtuous behavior and impure hearts, they attract to themselves lower states of being such as guilt, worrisome thoughts, and unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I went and removed myself from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, I was *not* dwelling with an unclean heart.

“Therefore, I saw that unlike those individuals, I lived and behaved with virtue, whether through my thoughts, words, or bodily actions. Thus, I lived with purity in my heart.

“So, as a result of my virtuous behavior and the purity of my conduct, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in peace and an abounding sense of safety within.

“This, because I saw that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living with virtue and purity in every aspect of my behavior, living comfortably in peace while having gone into seclusion within those remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

2. “Furthermore, brahmin, I continued reflecting on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, engaging in an unclean livelihood, obtaining their support through an impure lifestyle, even though they go on resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of non-virtuous livelihood and impure hearts, they attract to themselves lower states of being such as guilt, worrisome thoughts, and unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, I did *not* engage in any kind of non-virtuous or impure livelihood.

“Therefore, I saw that unlike those individuals, I obtained my livelihood and support through a pure lifestyle that was virtuous, and thus I lived with purity in my heart.

“So, as a result of my livelihood being virtuous and the purity of my heart, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in peace and an abounding sense of safety within.

“This, because I saw that I too was one of the Noble Ones, engaging in clean livelihood and purity in every aspect of my life, and thereby living comfortably in peace while having gone into

seclusion in those remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness, where I kept experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart, remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

3. “Then, brahmin, I pondered further on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who live with a fervent desire for sensuality; remaining covetous in their hearts for experiencing sensual pleasures, even though they go on resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of covetousness and deep desire in impure hearts, they attract to themselves lower states of being such as guilt, worrisome thoughts, and unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, I did not live with a heart that was impure nor drenched in desire for sensual pleasures, at all.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, I lived without any coveting for things, for no desires were left in me for sensuality, there being only virtue and purity in my heart.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart, which was free from any desire for sensual pleasures, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in peace and an abounding sense of safety within.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity and without any desire to be experiencing sensuality or coveting anything. And thereby, I lived comfortably in peace while in seclusion in those remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness, while experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart, remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

4. “Then, brahmin, I pondered further on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who live with avaricious minds; with hatred and evil dwelling in their hearts, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of ill-will and impure hearts, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as guilt, worrisome thoughts, and unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the

wilderness, I was *never* evil-minded nor did I seclude myself with a heart that was impure, with hatred or contention, at all.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who dwell with hearts that are sullied by ill-will, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was in the virtuous presence of universal benevolent loving kindness, as purity in my heart was radiating with *mettā*.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was full of universal benevolent loving kindness, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in peace and an abounding sense of safety within.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity, while radiating the powerful presence of *mettā* throughout. And thereby I dwelled comfortably in peace as I went into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness, while experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

5. “Then, brahmin, I reflected further how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, whose minds are overwhelmed by drowsiness and absent-minded dullness; dominated by the powerful grip that these two hindrances of sloth and torpor have on their practice, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of the strong presence of drowsiness and absent-minded dullness, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as guilt, worrisome thoughts, and unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, I was free from those two obstacles that hinder one’s progress, as I secluded myself with a heart that was sharply alert and thus completely untouched by either drowsiness or absent-minded dullness.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who dwell with hearts that are hindered by sloth and torpor, I was living with a heart that was bright with full awareness, sharp and clear, throughout.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched nor obstructed by either of those two hindrances, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in peace and an abounding sense of safety within.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity and with full awareness, free from both drowsiness and absent-mindedness. And thereby, I lived comfortably in peace while having gone into seclusion, resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of

the wilderness, while experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart, remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

6. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, whose hearts are agitated and thus they live in a constantly restless state of mind, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of unsettled minds dwelling in such a restless state, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as guilt, worrisome thoughts, and unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart remained free from and immune to restlessness; the mind was settled and balanced, as I secluded myself with a heart that was sharply alert and thus completely untouched by agitation.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who dwell with a heart that was agitated and a mind thus unsettled and anxious, I, on the other hand, was living at peace, with a heart that was settled and contented, throughout.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched by either agitation or restlessness, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in peace and an abounding sense of safety within.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity and peace, with the mind perfectly settled and tranquil, and without any agitation or restlessness in the heart. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness, while experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

7. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who live with doubts and uncertainties in their hearts, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of skeptical doubts and dwelling in a state of uncertainty, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other

unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was free from all doubts and uncertainties. Therefore, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was beyond all doubt, confident, and secure.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who dwell with hearts that were uncertain and full of doubts, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was free from such qualities, completely.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched by skeptical doubts, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the peaceful state of having gone beyond all doubt and uncertainty.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity, having gone beyond all doubt with direct understanding; where the mind was also immune to all kinds of skeptical doubts, without any uncertainty in the heart. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart, remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

8. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who live to denigrate others but while, at the same time, seeking to gain fame and glory, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of having a demeaning and contentious attitude towards others, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was free from all contentious thoughts or longing to criticize or belittle others. Therefore, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was free from contention or the desire to demean or denigrate others.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who dwell with hearts that were full of contention and disapproval of others, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was free from such qualities of contention or wanting to place myself above all others.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched by contention or the desire to demean or denigrate others, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the peaceful state of having gone beyond all such negative tendencies.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity, having gone beyond all bitter contention, or the desire to elevate oneself, while demeaning or belittling others. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

9. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who only pretend to be so, for they are, in fact, complete cowards, lacking the spine to live truthfully and to state what is truth, without fear of an unpleasant outcome, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of having a cowardly essence and disingenuous nature, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those so-called recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was free from all cowardly thoughts and fear. Therefore, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was beyond cowardice.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who in truth are cowards and disingenuous, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was free from such cowardly qualities, nor did I get shaken or become startled by anything or any situation, whatsoever.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched by cowardice, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the peaceful state of having gone beyond all such negative tendencies.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity and courageously, without fear of anything or anyone, anywhere. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

10. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who live while seeking fame, prestige, gain, renown, wealth, while also delighting in and enjoying having many possessions and wants, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of the lust for fame and gain, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was free from desire for possessions, fame, or gain, altogether. Thus, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was free from desire to obtain fame or gain.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who were lusting after gaining renown, fame, or possessions, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was free from such desires. In fact, I had very few needs, let alone any wishes, at all.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched by greed or lust over anything, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the peaceful state of wishing for very little, having gone beyond all desire to obtain fame or gain.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity, and with fewness of wishes in my heart. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

11. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who are lazy and live without any effort or genuine motivation to apply themselves, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of the lack in effort and laziness, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was free from laziness, nor did I lack in effort. Therefore, I lived without

any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was free from laziness or lack in effort.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who were lazy and not driven at all, lacking in effort, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was brimming with energy, fully driven to practice with an abundance of genuine effort.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was untouched by laziness or lack in effort, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the peaceful state of applying myself, with full effort.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity, driven and engaged with full effort. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and the uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

12. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who are not mindful at all, nor possess full awareness of themselves and the world, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of the lack in mindfulness and full awareness, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was always supported my ever-present mindfulness and full awareness. Therefore, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was supported my ever-present mindfulness and full awareness.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who were unmindful and lacking full awareness, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was always mindful and fully aware.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was supported by ongoing mindfulness and full awareness, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the peaceful state while applying myself, and with full effort.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity, possessing great mindfulness and great full awareness. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and the uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

13. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who were constantly lost in wondering thoughts, utterly at the mercy of their ever-distracted minds, who could not attain to *samādhi*, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of distracted minds and inability to attain any states of *samādhi*, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness, my heart was always under control, never tormented by thoughts, in addition to attaining to the various states of *samādhi*. Therefore, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was not tormented by thoughts.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who lived with distracted and uncontrolled minds, while being unable to attain any *samādhi*, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was still, and able to attain *samādhi* anytime, anywhere.

“So, as a result of the purity of my heart that was calm and collected, by attaining *samādhi* and thus never falling victim to distracting thoughts, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I enjoyed the stability of heart, remaining in *samādhi*.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in purity and free from distracting or wondering thoughts, while also attaining to the various states of *samādhi*. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

14. “Furthermore, brahmin, I reflected on how –

“There are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners, who are inept, stupid, clumsy, and quite dumb, even though they may go and resort to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the wilderness.

“Now, as a result of foolishness and ineptitude, they attract to themselves similar lower states of being such as confusion, worrisome thoughts, and other unwholesome states, which manifest in the form of threats and fears that come to haunt them, night and day.

“However, I saw that in contrast to those recluses or brahmin religious practitioners, whenever I moved away from the world by resorting to remote jungles or uninhabited parts of the

wilderness, wisdom dominated my heart. Therefore, I lived without any confusion in the mind, as I secluded myself with a heart that was dominated by wisdom.

“Thus, I saw that unlike those individuals, who were clumsy, stupid, and foolish, I, on the other hand, was living with a heart that was beaming with the light of wisdom.

“So, as a result of the purity of true wisdom in my heart, I did not attract to myself any lower states of being, as the case was with those other individuals. Instead, I dwelled in the security and imperturbability of wisdom.

“This, because I saw, that I too was one of the Noble Ones, living in the purity of wisdom and its unshakeability. Thus, I lived comfortably at peace while having gone into seclusion; resorting to remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful non-agitation in the heart; remaining still, supremely confident, and secure.

“In this manner, brahmin, while witnessing the absolute power of wisdom in my heart, that is truly unshakeable in its supremacy, I remained for long stretches of time in the seclusion of those remote jungles and uninhabited parts of the wilderness; experiencing restful and non-agitated gladness in my heart, throughout.

CHALLENGING THE THREATS & FEARS (HEAD ON)

“Then, brahmin, I had the thought –

‘There are those special nights, on certain days of the month, that are known as being especially difficult for most to be spent in the wilderness, all alone; dates, such as the fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight.

‘Now, what if I intentionally head out into the wilderness and remote uninhabited places in the forests, where there are abandoned fear-inducing temples, hidden within the darkness of the woods and the trees?

‘Perhaps, then, while pushing myself into those areas on such ominous times, I might be able to encounter threats and fears.’

“So, later, I did resort to those areas deep in the forests, on those specific days of the month.

“Now, while I was staying alone and secluded in the darkness of the forest, I would hear certain sounds or screeching noise, such as twigs being broken or dry leaves being stepped on, as if there was someone approaching. But, upon looking at what it was, I would notice merely a dead branch that had fallen from the trees, or some wild animal or a peacock that would simply be passing by or visiting me there in that remote place.

“Then, brahmin, I would ask myself –

‘So, is that what is called the approach or experience of feeling threats and fears?’

“Then, I probed further the matter, while thinking –

‘Why is it that I’m always anticipating or inviting towards me, and almost expecting, some type of a threat or fear to come up and overwhelm my heart?’

“And I determined –

‘It would be so much better to simply get rid of that threat or fear the very moment it comes up! So, let me simply stay with what is happening, without adding anything to it, neither anticipating nor inviting towards me any thoughts of fear. And if it so happens that it does arise, then I will face it at that time, but not before, otherwise fear would dominate my heart!’

a. “Late, while I was practicing walking meditation, I noticed that threat and fear suddenly came up. But this time, I resolved not to go and sit somewhere, or to lie down, or to even stand still. Instead, I determined to keep walking back and forth in meditation, observing that threat and fear closely, until they disappeared.

b. “Then, while I was practicing standing meditation, I noticed that threat and fear suddenly came up. This time also, I resolved not to go and sit somewhere, or to lie down, or to even start walking, trying to push the fear away. Instead, I determined to continue standing up, still in meditation, observing that threat and fear closely, until they disappeared.

c. “Then, while I was practicing sitting meditation, I noticed that threat and fear suddenly came up. However, this time again, I resolved not to go and lie down, or to get up and start walking, or to stand up, still in meditation, in an attempt to try and push the fear away. Instead, I determined to continue sitting in meditation, unmoved, while observing that threat and fear closely, until they disappeared.

d. “Later, while I was lying down on my side in meditation, I noticed that threat and fear suddenly came up again. However, this time also, I resolved not to get up and sit in meditation, or to start walking back and forth, or to stand up, still in meditation, in an attempt to try and push the fear away. Instead, I determined to continue lying on my side in meditation, unmoved, while observing that threat and fear closely, until they disappeared.

MEDITATIVE ATTAINMENTS

“Now, brahmin, there are recluses and brahmin religious practitioners out there in the world, who are quite delusional in their thinking and practice of meditation. While holding onto

a wrong and lopsided view of life, when it is nighttime, they look upon and perceive it as if it was ‘daytime’, and when it is in fact daytime, they perceive it as ‘nighttime’!

“Therefore, I declare such thinking and mode of meditative practice utterly delusional!

“For this reason, when it is nighttime, I do not look upon it as something else, other than nighttime! Similarly, when it is daytime, I experience and know it as daytime, which is what it factually is!

“So, you see, brahmin, if there has ever been someone, who can accurately and unmistakably be declared as The Singular Being, The One who appears in this world for the welfare and benefit of countless people; bringing good fortune, happiness, and joy to the many throughout existence; pervading a sense of soothing contentment and delight upon both Devas and humans, then the only one deserving of that declaration is none other than Me!

“In this way, brahmin, my relentless effort and persevering energy have been undaunting, non-stop, with ever-present mindfulness firmly established, as it lucidly streams through everything being experienced, with the body constantly relaxed in its tranquility and always at ease, while my heart is constantly collected and settled, as it permeates that singular flavor, throughout.

a. “Thus, brahmin, by secluding the mind from all things dealing with sensuality, I turned my attention inwards and became secluded from sensual pleasures. Secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and remained in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by thinking and pondering, while experiencing a strong flood of spiritual joy and ecstasy, all resulting from such seclusion.

b. “Then, brahmin, by stilling the mind further and without struggling, I turned my attention away from discursive thought by not engaging with them any further, as I came to experience the disappearance of both thinking and pondering. In this way, I entered upon and remained in the second *jhāna*, which continued to be accompanied by a strong flood of spiritual joy and ecstasy, that are the result of the growing and stable collectedness of heart, of *samādhi*.

c. “Then, brahmin, by going deeper in meditation and without holding on to anything, including the experience of spiritual joy, I witnessed it begin to vanish and totally cease. Thus, I abided in a state of equanimity, while being mindful and fully aware, still feeling a subtle ecstasy throughout, as I entered upon and abided in the third *jhāna*, for which reason the Noble Ones declare:

‘It is such a person indeed who is serenely mindful; abiding in happiness; with an ever-present sense of equanimity.’

d. “Afterwards, by giving up both pleasure and pain, and having already gone beyond joy and anguish, I remained in a state of purifying mindfulness, with the ever-growing sense of equanimity, while experiencing neither pleasure nor pain, having gone beyond both, as I attained to the fourth *jhāna*.

e. “And when the heart was thus collected and concentrated, purified, without any blemish, malleable and in an imperturbable state, I directed the mind to recollect the manifold past lives I had lived. Thus, I recollected my many past lives in all their details and features; that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty, forty, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world contractions, many eons of world expansions, many eons of world contractions and expansions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance; such was my food and sustenance; such were my experiences of pleasure and pain; such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance; such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain; and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

“Brahmin, this was the first True Knowledge that occurred in the first watch of the night, wherein the darkness of ignorance completely vanished and the brilliant light of True Knowledge arose in me, as I remained diligent in my perseverance with aroused energy, and resolute in my practice, which is what would happen in the case of any meditator, who is equally diligent, resolute, and dedicated.

f. “Further, with the heart that had become so purified and collected, free from any defilements and without any blemishes in it, workable, flexible, soft but steady, and also imperturbable, I directed it to know the disappearance and reappearance of beings.

“Thus, by utilizing the Divine Eye, which is pure and far superior to those of human and other beings, I applied the psychic power of knowing the destination of beings, as they die and reappear into the different realms of existence. Thus, I clearly saw all types of beings dying at the end of life, whether being reborn into exalted or miserable states, beautiful or ugly, fortunate, or unfortunate, as I witnessed by seeing directly, and therefore understanding clearly how beings pass on to different states according to their actions, and thus I knew that:

‘These beings who behaved badly through their bodily actions, their speech, and their mental actions, being disrespectful towards the Noble Ones, while grasping onto their wrong views, on account of their wrong views in action, with the breakup of the body, after death, are now reborn into a state of misery, utter deprivation, in a bad destination, in evil states, and in the hells. But these worthy beings who behaved virtuously through their bodily actions, their speech, and their mental actions, being respectful towards the Noble Ones, being right in their views, and on account of their right views in action, with the breakup of the body, after death, they are now reborn in a state of happiness, in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.’

“Therefore, with the Divine Eye, which is far superior to those of human beings and other animals, I saw clearly beings dying at the end of their life and being reborn into either exalted or miserable states, beautiful or ugly, fortunate or unfortunate, as I witnessed by seeing directly and understanding clearly, how beings pass on to different states according to their actions.

“Brahmin, this was the second True Knowledge that occurred in the middle watch of the night, wherein the darkness of ignorance completely vanished, and the brilliant light of True Knowledge arose in me, as I remained diligent in my perseverance with aroused energy, and resolute in my practice, which is what would happen in the case of any meditator, who is equally diligent, resolute, and dedicated.

g. “Later, as the heart continued dwelling in that purified and collected state, free from any defilements and without any blemishes in it; workable, flexible, soft but steady, and also imperturbable, I guided it towards directly knowing and seeing the very destruction and elimination of all contaminants of the heart (*āsavas*).

“Thus,

“I directly and finally knew and saw clearly, as it truly is: *‘This is suffering.’*
I directly and finally knew and saw as it truly is: *‘This is the origin of suffering.’*
I directly and finally knew and saw as it truly is: *‘This is the cessation of suffering.’*
I directly and finally knew and saw as it truly is: *‘This is the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.’*

“Also,

“I directly and finally saw as it truly is: *‘These are the contaminants.’*
I directly and finally saw as it truly is: *‘This is the origin of the contaminants.’*
I directly and finally saw as it truly is: *‘This is the cessation of the contaminants.’*
I directly and finally saw as it truly is: *‘This is the Path leading to the cessation of the contaminants.’*

“And when I knew and saw directly in this manner, my heart was liberated from the contaminant of sensual desire, from the contaminant of the desire to rebecome, and from the contaminant of ignorance.

“When it was released thus, there arose the sublime knowledge in me: *‘I am Liberated!’*

“And I directly knew, immediately:

*‘Birth is now finally destroyed.
The Holy Life has been fully lived.
What had to be done has now been done.
There is nothing more to be done,
Nor there is any further state of rebecoming waiting for me.’*

“Therefore, brahmin, this was the third True Knowledge that occurred in the last watch of the night, wherein the darkness of ignorance was finally and completely destroyed and gone! The brilliant light of True Knowledge, surpassing everything, arose in me, as I remained diligent in my perseverance with aroused energy, and resolute in my practice, which is what would happen in the case of any meditator, who is equally diligent, resolute, and dedicated.

“Now, brahmin, you might start thinking that perhaps the recluse Gautama is still not free from lust, hatred, or delusion even today, as he may seclude himself in some remote forest, jungle, or uninhabited part of wilderness. However, that would not be a wise or fair way of looking at it. And why is that?

“It is because, as far as I am concerned, brahmin, there are only two possible reasons to seclude oneself in remote forests, jungles, or uninhabited parts of the wilderness:

- a) Whenever I feel the need, it offers me quite a lovely opportunity for seclusion, simply to get away from the crowds and their distractions. And secondly:
- b) To extend my compassion towards future generations of practitioners, who will also seek to attain The Deathless, by encouraging and showing them the right way of practice.

When this was said, the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi exclaimed in the presence of The Blessed One:

“Truly, Master Gautama certainly is showing such an enormous compassion towards all future generations of practitioners, indeed! The Blessed One most surely is The Self-Awakened Buddha, The Arahant Himself!

“It is marvelous! It truly is wonderful! Master Gautama has clarified the Dhamma in many ways, as though He were to turn upright what had been turned upside-down, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see.

“Bhante, I go to The Blessed One for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of Bhikkhus. May The Blessed One accept me as his lay disciple, who has taken refuge in Him from today, until the end of life.”

Sādhu

Sādhu

Sādhu