

SN 36.6
Vedanā Saṃyutta
(Connected Discourses On Feelings)
Sagāthā Vagga
The Section with Verses

Salla Sutta
“The Arrow”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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“Bhikkhus, the *putujjana*, or the undisciplined, ignorant person feels a pleasant feeling, a painful feeling, and a neutral feeling, whereas the *ariyasāvaka*, the Trained Noble Disciple, also feels a pleasant feeling, a painful feeling, and a neutral feeling.

“Well, Bhikkhus, what then is the difference or distinction that exists between them? What sets the Trained Noble Disciple apart from the undisciplined, ignorant person?”

“Bhante, our understanding of the Dhamma is rooted in The Blessed One, who helps us see the tangible and relevant nature of the Dhamma, as we find the true meaning through the explanations given to us by The Blessed One Himself.

“It would, therefore, be wonderful if The Blessed One would clarify the meaning of the question raised for us, because once we hear it from Our Teacher, we Bhikkhus, will remember it and carefully contemplate and ponder its depth of meaning.”

“Then, Bhikkhus, listen carefully and pay close attention to what I’m going to say.”

“Yes, Bhante,” the Bhikkhus replied, and The Blessed One said:

“Bhikkhus, when the *putujjana* or the undisciplined, ignorant person (with any of his senses) makes contact with a painful feeling, he sorrows, grieves, and begins sobbing; he cries in anguish, beating his chest and becoming completely agitated.

“Such a person feels two kinds of feelings: a bodily feeling and a mental feeling.

“You may think of a man here, who is struck by an arrow, and then immediately after, he is struck again by a second arrow, so that the man would now experience a feeling that is caused by two arrows.

“In much the same manner, when the *putujjana* or the undisciplined, ignorant person (through any of his senses) makes contact with a painful feeling, he sorrows, grieves, and begins sobbing; he cries in anguish, beating his chest and becoming completely agitated.

“Such a person feels two kinds of feelings: a bodily feeling and a mental feeling.

“Further, once being touched by that same painful feeling, the person now adopts an angry and contentious attitude towards it. When he resists it by holding a hostile attitude towards that painful feeling, it can be said that the underlying tendency to anger towards that very painful feeling exists in him.

“So, while experiencing a painful feeling, the *putujjana* runs the other way by seeking its opposite, that is, looking for ways to have pleasurable sense experiences.

“And what is the reason for such a person to do this? It is because the *putujjana* or the undisciplined, ignorant person does not understand that there could be any way of escape from feeling pain, other than running after its opposite, which is the experiencing of sensual pleasure.

“Now, because he seeks the delight in experiencing sensual pleasure, it can be said that the underlying tendency to lust towards having that very pleasurable feeling exists in him.

“Therefore, it can be stated that such a person does not understand how feelings originate and arise, how they cease and pass away, how there is the constant attempt at wanting to gratify them; thus, they do not understand the danger in this, but especially, they do not understand or know anything about the true escape *from* these feelings.

“Now, because he does not truly understand these things, it can be said that the underlying tendency to ignorance, in regard to neutral feelings, exists in him.

“And if such a person feels a pleasant feeling, he becomes identified with it, and gets stuck to that feeling. And when he feels a painful feeling, he becomes identified with it too, and gets stuck to that feeling. And while having a neutral feeling, he again becomes identified with it, and gets stuck to that feeling, as well.

“This, Bhikkhus, is called a *putujjana* or an undisciplined, ignorant person, who is stuck to repeated births, aging, and death; someone who is stuck to repeatedly experience sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and anguish; someone who is stuck to re-experiencing suffering, I declare.

“On the other hand, Bhikkhus, when the Trained Noble Disciple (through any of his senses) makes contact with a painful feeling, he does not sorrow, does not grieve, nor begins sobbing; he does not cry in anguish, nor beats his chest or becomes agitated.

“Such a person feels only one kind of feeling: a bodily feeling, with no mental feeling joining it.

“You may think of a man here, who is struck by an arrow, but he is not struck again by a second arrow, so that the man would now only experience a feeling that is caused by a single arrow.

“In much the same manner, when the Trained Noble Disciple (through any of his senses) makes contact with a painful feeling, he does not sorrow, does not grieve, nor begins sobbing; he does not cry in anguish, nor beats his chest or becomes agitated.

“Such a person feels only one kind of feeling: a bodily feeling, with no mental feeling joining it.

“Further, once being touched by that same painful feeling, the person now does not adopt an angry or a contentious attitude towards it. When he no longer resists it by holding a hostile attitude towards that painful feeling, it can be said that the possibility for an underlying tendency to anger towards that very painful feeling, no longer exists in him.

“So, while experiencing a painful feeling, the Trained Noble Disciple does not run the other way by seeking its opposite; that is, he does not go looking for ways to have pleasurable sense experiences.

“And what is the reason for such a person to do this? It is because the Trained Noble Disciple does understand that there is a way of escaping from feeling pain, other than running after its opposite, such as the experiencing of sensual pleasure.

“Now, because he does not seek the delight in experiencing sensual pleasure, it can be said that the possibility for an underlying tendency to lust towards having that very pleasurable feeling, does not exist in him.

“Therefore, it can be stated that such a person does understand how feelings originate and arise, how they cease and pass away, how there is the constant attempt at wanting to gratify them; thus, they do understand the danger in this, and especially, they do understand and know directly the true escape *from* these feelings.

“Now, because he does truly understand these things, it can be said that the underlying tendency to ignorance, in regard to neutral feelings, does not exist in him.

“And if such a person feels a pleasant feeling, he does not become identified with it, he does not get stuck to that feeling. And when he feels a painful feeling, he does not become identified with it, he does not get stuck to that feeling either. And while having a neutral feeling, he does not become identified with it, he does not get stuck to that feeling, as well.

“This, Bhikkhus, is called a Trained Noble Disciple, who is liberated from repeated births, aging, and death; someone who is freed from experiencing sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and anguish; someone who is released from re-experiencing suffering, I declare.

“This, Bhikkhus, is the difference and distinction that exists between the *putujjana*, the undisciplined, ignorant person, and the Trained Noble Disciple. This is what sets apart the Trained Noble Disciple from the undisciplined, ignorant person.

*“When feeling a sensation,
Be it pleasurable or painful,
The very wise and learned person,*

*Does not get stuck, nor becomes identified with it.
This itself is the great difference between
The wise one and the putujjana.*

*For, the very learned and wise person,
Who has pondered and comprehended the Dhamma,
Intuitively sees the distinctions between this world, and the next,
As a result, experiences that are desired
Do not come to dominate nor agitate his heart,
Same is true with those experiences that are unwanted,
For, they too could neither dominate nor agitate his heart,
Due to the absence of anger in him,
Towards those painful feelings.*

*Yearning and loathing are no more
To be found in his heart;
As both of these
Have been seen for what they are and brought to an end.*

*Now, by seeing for himself the stainless, sorrowless state,
The one thus understanding it correctly and fully,
Crosses over and passes beyond all forms of rebirth.”*

Sādhū

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