

Study Material for the Deeper Harmony Retreat

Madhupindika Sutta: The Honeyball

MN18

Venerable sir, how does the Blessed One assert and proclaim [his teaching] in such a way that he does not quarrel with anyone in the world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and its people? And, venerable sir, how is it that perceptions no more underlie the Blessed One, that brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasures, without perplexity shorn of worry, free from craving for any kind of being?"

"Bhikkhu, as to the source through which perceptions (*saññā*) and notions (*sankhāti*: to appear, calculate) [born of] mental proliferation (*papañca*) beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency (*anusaya*) to lust (*rāga*), of the underlying tendency to aversion (*paṭigha*), of the underlying tendency to views (*diṭṭhi*), of the underlying tendency to doubt (*vicikiccha*), of the underlying tendency to conceit (*māna*), of the underlying tendency to desire for being (*bhavarāga*), of the underlying tendency to ignorance (*avijja*); this is the end of resorting to rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malicious words, and false speech; here these evil (*pāpa*) unwholesome (*akusala*) states (*dhamma*) cease without remainder."

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Sublime One rose from his seat and went into his dwelling.

Then, soon after the Blessed One had gone, the bhikkhus considered: "Now, friends, the Blessed One has risen from his seat and gone into his dwelling after giving a summary in brief without expounding the detailed meaning. Now who will expound this in detail?" Then they considered: "The venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and esteemed by his wise companions in the holy life. He is capable of expounding the detailed meaning. Suppose we went to him and asked him the meaning of this."

Then the bhikkhus went to the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, they sat down to one side and told him what had taken place, adding: "Let the venerable Mahā Kaccāna expound it to us."

"Then listen, friends, and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, friend," the bhikkhus replied. The venerable Mahā Kaccāna said this:

"Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises... Dependent on the ear and sounds...Dependent on the nose and odours...Dependent on the tongue and flavours...Dependent on the body and tangibles...Dependent on the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact (*phassa*). With contact as condition there is feeling (*vedanā*). What one feels, that one perceives (*saññā*). What one perceives, that one thinks about (*vitakka*). What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates (*papañca*). With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man with respect to past, future, and present forms cognizable through the eye [etc].

"When there is no eye, no form, and no eye-consciousness... When there is no ear, no sound, and no ear-consciousness... When there is no nose, no odour, and no nose-consciousness... When there is no tongue, no flavour, and no tongue-consciousness... When there is no body, no tangible, and no body-consciousness... .When there is no mind, no mind-object, no mind-consciousness... it is impossible to point out the manifestation of contact. When there is no manifestation of contact, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of feeling. When there is no manifestation of feeling, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of perception. When there is no manifestation of perception, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of thinking. When there is no manifestation of thinking, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of besetment by perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation.

"Friends, when the Blessed One rose from his seat and went into his dwelling after giving a summary in brief without expounding the detailed meaning, that is: 'Bhikkhu, as to the source through which perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome, and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency to lust, of the underlying tendency to aversion, of the underlying tendency to views, of the underlying tendency to doubt, of the underlying tendency to conceit, of the underlying tendency to desire for being, of the underlying tendency to ignorance; this is the end of resorting to rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malicious words, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder,' I understand the detailed meaning of this summary to be thus. Now, friends, if you wish, go to the Blessed One and ask him about the meaning of this. As the Blessed One explains it to you, so you should remember it."

Then the bhikkhus, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Mahā Kaccāna's words, rose from their seats and went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, they sat down at one side and told the Blessed One all that had taken place after he had left, adding: "Then, venerable sir, we went to the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and asked him about the meaning. The venerable Mahā Kaccāna expounded the meaning to us with these terms, statements, and phrases."

"Mahā Kaccāna is wise, bhikkhus, Mahā Kaccāna has great wisdom. If you had asked me the meaning of this, I would have explained it to you in the same way that Mahā Kaccāna has explained it. Such is the meaning of this, and so you should remember it."

When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, just as if a man exhausted by hunger and weakness came upon a honeyball, wherever he would taste it he would find a sweet delectable flavour; so too, venerable sir, any able-minded (*dabbajātika*: fit for, able, worthy, good; tamed, controlled, restrained) bhikkhu, wherever he might scrutinize (*upaparikkhati*: to investigate, ascertain, test, examine) with wisdom (*pañña*) the meaning (attha) of this discourse on the Dhamma, would find satisfaction (*attamana*: delighted, pleased, enraptured) and confidence of mind (*ceta pasāda*: clearness, brightness, purity; referring to the colours of the eye; joy, satisfaction, happy or good mind, virtue, faith). Venerable sir, what is the name of this discourse on the Dhamma?"

"As to that, Ānanda, you may remember this discourse on the Dhamma as The Honeyball Discourse.'" That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Abhayarājakumāra Sutta: To Prince Abhaya MN58

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

Then Prince Ahaya went to Nigantha Nātaputta (*a Jain*), and after paying homage to him, sat down at one side. Thereupon the Nigantha Nātaputta said to him: "Come, prince, refute the recluse Gotama's doctrine, and a good report of you will be spread to this effect: 'Prince Abhaya has refuted the doctrine of the recluse Gotama, who is so powerful and mighty.'"

"But how, venerable sir, shall I refute his doctrine?"

"Come, prince, go to the recluse Gotama and say: 'Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata utter speech that would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others?' If the recluse Gotama, on being asked thus, answers: 'The Tathāgata would utter speech that would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others,' then say to him: "Then, venerable sir, what is the difference between you and an ordinary person? For an ordinary person also would utter speech that would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others.' But if the recluse Gotama, on being asked thus, answers: "The Tathāgata would not utter speech that would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others,' then say to him: 'Then, venerable sir, why have you declared of Devadatta: "Devadatta is destined for the states of deprivation, Devadatta is destined for hell, Devadatta will remain in hell for the aeon, Devadatta is incorrigible"? Devadatta was angry and dissatisfied with that speech of yours.' When the recluse Gotama is posed this two-horned question by you, he will not be able either to gulp it down or to throw it up. If an iron spike were stuck in a man's throat, he would not be able either to gulp it down or to throw it up; so too, prince, when the recluse Gotama is posed this two-horned question by you, he will not be able either to gulp it down or to throw it up."

"Yes, venerable sir," Prince Abhaya replied. Then he rose from his seat, and after paying homage to the Nigantha Nataputta, keeping him on his right, he left and went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to the Blessed One, he sat down at one side, looked at the sun, and thought: "It is too late today to refute the Blessed One's doctrine. I shall refute the Blessed One's doctrine in my own house tomorrow." Then he said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, let the Blessed One with three others consent to accept tomorrow's meal from me." The Blessed One consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Blessed One had consented, Prince Abhaya rose from his seat, and after paying homage to him, keeping him on his right, he departed.

The next morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, he went to Prince Abhaya's house and sat down on the seat made ready. Then, with his own hands, Prince Abhaya served and satisfied the Blessed One with various kinds of good food. When the Blessed One had eaten and had withdrawn his hand from the bowl, Prince Abhaya took a low seat, sat down at one side, and said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, would a Tathāgata utter such speech as would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others?"

"There is no one-sided answer to that, prince."

"Then, venerable sir, the Niganthas have lost in this."

"Why do you say this?"

Prince Abhaya then reported to the Blessed One his entire conversation with the Nigantha Natāputta. At that time, a young tender infant was lying prone on Prince Abhaya's lap. Then the Blessed One said to Prince Abhaya: "What do you think, prince? If, while you or your nurse were not attending to this child and if he were to put a stick or a pebble in his mouth, what would you do to him?"

"Venerable sir, I would take it out. If I could not take it out at once, I would take his head in my left hand, and crooking a finger of my right hand, I would take it out even if it meant drawing blood. Why is that? Because I have compassion (*anukampa: to have pity on, to com-miserate, to pity, to sympathise with, lit. to shake, tremble, waver with*) for the child."

"So too, prince, such speech as the Tathagata knows to be untrue (*abhūta*), incorrect (*ataccha*), and unbeneficial (*anatthasamhita*), and which is also unwelcome (*appiya: unpleasant, unagreeable, disliked*) and disagreeable (*amanāpa: unpleasing, unpleasant, not charming*) to others: such speech the Tathagata **does not utter**.

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others: such speech the Tathagata **does not utter**.

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others: the Tathagata **knows the time** to use such speech.

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, but which is welcome and agreeable to others: such speech the Tathagata **does not utter**.

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others: such speech the Tathagata **does not utter**.

Such speech as the Tathagata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others: the Tathagata **knows the time** to use such speech. Why is that? Because the Tathagata has compassion for beings."

"Venerable sir, when learned nobles, learned brahmins, learned householders, and learned recluses, after formulating a question, then go to the Blessed One and pose it, has there already been in the Blessed One's mind the thought: 'If they come to me and ask me thus, I shall answer thus'? Or does that answer occur to the Tathagata on the spot?"

"As to that, prince, I shall ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. What do you think, prince? Are you skilled in the parts of a chariot?"

"Yes, venerable sir, I am."

"What do you think, prince? When people come to you and ask: 'What is the name of this part of the chariot?' has there already been in your mind the thought: 'If they come to me and ask me thus, I shall answer them thus'? Or does that answer occur to you on the spot?"

"Venerable sir, I am well known as a charioteer skilled in the parts of a chariot. All the parts of a chariot are well known to me. That answer would occur to me on the spot."

"So too, prince, when learned nobles, learned brahmins, learned householders, and learned recluses, after formulating a question, then come to the Tathagata and pose it, the answer occurs to the Tathagata on the spot. Why is that? That element of things has been fully penetrated by the Tathagata, through the full penetration of which the answer occurs to the Tathagata on the spot."

When this was said, Prince Abhaya said: "Magnificent, venerable sir! Magnificent, venerable sir! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear in many ways. From today let the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

factual and true	×	√	√	×	√	√
beneficial	×	×	√	×	×	√
endearing and agreeable	×	×	×	√	√	√
Would the Buddha say it?	×	×	√	×	×	√

The main factors are three: whether or not a statement is true, whether or not it is beneficial, and whether or not it is pleasing to others. The Buddha himself would state only those things that are true and beneficial, and would have a sense of time for when pleasing and unpleasing things should be said. Notice that the possibility that a statement might be untrue yet beneficial is not even entertained.

The Five Conditions for Speech

"Monks, a statement endowed with five factors is well-spoken, not ill-spoken. It is blameless and unfaulted by knowledgeable people. Which five?"

"It is spoken at the right time (*kālena*). It is spoken in truth (*bhūta*: *that which is, natural, genuine, true. From natural law*). It is spoken affectionately (*saṇha*: *smooth, soft, gentle, mild, delicate, exquisite*). It is spoken beneficially (*atthasaṃhita*: *interest, advantage, gain; (moral) good, blessing, welfare; profit, prosperity, well-being*). It is spoken with a mind of good-will (*mettacitta*).

"A statement endowed with these five factors is well-spoken, not ill-spoken. It is blameless and unfaulted by knowledgeable people."

(eg Vaca Sutta, AN5.198, Kakacūpama Sutta, MN21)

Codanā Sutta: Repeating AN 167

There Sāriputta addressed the bhikkhus: “Reverends, a bhikkhu who wants to reprove (*codeti: to urge, incite, exhort; to reprove, reprimand, to call forth, to question*) another should first establish five things in themselves.

What five? I will speak at the right time, not at the wrong time. I will speak truthfully, not falsely. I will speak gently, not harshly. I will speak beneficially, not harmfully. I will speak with a mind of loving kindness, not from secret hate. A bhikkhu who wants to reprove another should first establish these five things in themselves.

Take a case where I see a certain person being reprovved at the wrong time, not being disturbed at the right time. They’re reprovved falsely, not disturbed truthfully. They’re reprovved harshly, not disturbed gently. They’re reprovved harmfully, not disturbed beneficially. They’re reprovved with secret hate, not disturbed with a mind of loving kindness.

The bhikkhu who is reprovved improperly should be reassured (*avippaṭisāra [a + vipaṭisāra] absence of regret or remorse*) in five ways. ‘Venerable, you were reprovved at the wrong time, not at the right time. There’s no need for you to feel remorse (*vippaṭisāra [vi+paṭisāra] bad conscience, remorse, regret, repentance*). You were reprovved falsely, not truthfully. ... You were reprovved harshly, not gently. ... You were reprovved harmfully, not beneficially. ... You were reprovved with secret hate, not with a mind of loving kindness. There’s no need for you to feel remorse.’ A bhikkhu who is reprovved improperly should be reassured in these five ways.

The bhikkhu who makes improper accusations should be chastened (*vippaṭisāra*) in five ways. ‘Reverend, you made an accusation at the wrong time, not at the right time. There’s a reason for you to feel remorse. You made an accusation falsely, not truthfully. ... You made an accusation harshly, not gently. ... You made an accusation harmfully, not beneficially. ... You made an accusation with secret hate, not with a mind of loving kindness. There’s a reason for you to feel remorse.’ The bhikkhu who makes improper accusations should be chastened in these five ways. Why is that? So that another bhikkhu wouldn’t think to make a false accusation.

Take a case where I see a certain person being reprovved at the right time, not being disturbed at the wrong time. They’re reprovved truthfully, not disturbed falsely. They’re reprovved gently, not disturbed harshly. They’re reprovved beneficially, not disturbed harmfully. They’re reprovved with a mind of loving kindness, not disturbed with secret hate.

The bhikkhu who is reprovved properly should be chastened in five ways. ‘Venerable, you were reprovved at the right time, not at the wrong time. There’s a reason for you to feel remorse. You were reprovved truthfully, not falsely. ... You were reprovved gently, not harshly. ... You were reprovved beneficially, not harmfully. ... You were reprovved with a mind of loving kindness, not with secret hate. There’s a reason for you to feel remorse.’ The bhikkhu who is reprovved properly should be chastened in these five ways.

The bhikkhu who makes proper accusations should be reassured in five ways. ‘Reverend, you made an accusation at the right time, not at the wrong time. There’s no need for you to feel remorse. You made an accusation truthfully, not falsely. ... You made an accusation gently,

not harshly. ... You made an accusation beneficially, not harmfully. ... You made an accusation with a mind of loving kindness, not with secret hate. There's no need for you to feel remorse.' The bhikkhu who makes proper accusations should be reassured in these five ways. Why is that? So that another bhikkhu would think to make a true accusation.

A person who is reproved should ground (*patitthita: established in, settled, fixed, arrayed, stayed, standing, supported, founded in*) themselves in two things: truth (*sacca: real, true*) and an even temper (*akuppa: not to be shaken, immovable; sure, steadfast, safe*). Even if others reprove me—at the right time or the wrong time, truthfully or falsely, gently or harshly, with a mind of loving kindness or with secret hate—I will still ground myself in two things: truth and an even temper. If I know that that quality is found in me, I will tell them that it is. If I know that that quality is not found in me, I will tell them that it is not."

[The Blessed One said:] "Even when you speak like this, Sāriputta, there are still some foolish (*mogha: empty, vain, useless, stupid, foolish*) people here who do not respectfully (*padakkhiṇa: mode of reverential salutation, keeping to the right; lucky, auspicious, turning out well or favourable*) take it up (*ganhati: to take, take up; take hold of; grasp, seize*)."

"There are those faithless (*asaddha*) people who went forth from the lay life to homelessness not out of faith but to earn a livelihood. They're devious, deceitful, and sneaky. They're restless, insolent, fickle, gossipy, and loose-tongued. They do not guard their sense doors or eat in moderation, and they are not dedicated to wakefulness. They don't care about the ascetic life, and don't keenly respect the training. They're indulgent and slack, leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion, lazy, and lacking energy. They're unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds, witless and stupid. When I speak to them like this, they don't respectfully take it up.

"There are those who went forth from the lay life to homelessness out of faith. They're not devious, deceitful, and sneaky. They're not restless, insolent, fickle, gossipy, and loose-tongued. They guard their sense doors and eat in moderation, and they are dedicated to wakefulness. They care about the ascetic life, and keenly respect the training. They're not indulgent or slack, nor are they leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion. They're energetic and determined. They're mindful, with situational awareness, immersion, and unified minds; wise, not stupid. When I speak to them like this, they do respectfully take it up."

"Sāriputta, those faithless people who went forth from the lay life to homelessness not out of faith but to earn a livelihood ... Leave them be. But those clansmen who went forth from the lay life to homelessness out of faith ... You should speak to them. Sāriputta, you should advise your spiritual companions! You should instruct your spiritual companions! Thinking: 'I will draw my spiritual companions (*Sabrahmacarin [sa+brahmacārin] a fellow student*) away from false teachings and ground them in true teachings.' That's how you should train (*sikkha*)."