

## PBA Sutta Class for February 2<sup>nd</sup>

### **Buddhadasa Bhikkhu writing about the 5<sup>th</sup> paccaya in his book “Mindfulness with Breathing” (Wisdom Publications):**

“paccaya are those things that are absolutely necessary for life; thus, they are sometimes translated as ‘the necessities, or requisites, of life’. The paccaya are factors that support the existence of life. These necessities, the foundation of our lives, must be correct if we are to study Dhamma and practice meditation successfully ...

Generally, most people only pay attention to the four material or bodily conditions: food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. However, it is equally important that we understand the fifth necessity, the paccaya for the heart-mind. The first four conditions are for the body alone. The paccaya for the mind is what amuses and coaxes the mind into contentment ... Without this condition there would be death – mental death. When the bodily necessities are lacking, the body dies; when the mental necessity is missing, the mind dies...

The fifth necessity, which is so often neglected, is more important than the other four, so let’s consider it in detail. The fifth paccaya is that which cajoles and entertains us, making us content, easing our anxiety and agitation, so that we are no longer hungry to the point of death. Amusing the heart, making it satisfied and pleased, is crucial. This is the mental paccaya or necessity... The important point is that whatever we call it, it must be right for the mind. It must be nourishment, food for the mind, just as the other four are food for the body.”

**Questions:** What are your thoughts on this? Does it make sense to you that we need Dhamma food to keep our mind amused and content?

MN 36  
PTS: M i 237

## Maha-Saccaka Sutta: The Longer Discourse to Saccaka

translated from the Pali by

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Vesali, at the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest. And on that occasion he had finished dressing in the morning and was carrying his bowl and outer robe, planning to enter Vesali for alms.

Then Saccaka, a Nigantha (Jain), while walking and wandering around to exercise his legs, went to the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest. Ven. Ananda saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, here comes Saccaka the Nigantha: a debater, a sophist, well-regarded by people at large. He is intent on the disparagement of the Buddha, the disparagement of the Dhamma, the disparagement of the Sangha. It would be good if the Blessed One would sit down for a moment, out of sympathy ...

"Then these three similes — spontaneous, never before heard — appeared to me. Suppose there were a wet, sappy piece of timber lying in the water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll light a fire. I'll produce heat.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to light a fire and produce heat by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy timber lying in the water?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is wet & sappy, and besides it is lying in the water. Eventually the man would reap only his share of weariness & disappointment."

"So it is with any brahman or contemplative who does not live withdrawn from sensuality in body & mind, and whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is not relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving [for Awakening], he is incapable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the first simile — spontaneous, never before heard — that appeared to me.

"Then a second simile — spontaneous, never before heard — appeared to me. Suppose there were a wet, sappy piece of timber lying on land far from water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll light a fire. I'll produce heat.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to light a fire and produce heat by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the wet, sappy timber lying on land far from water?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is wet & sappy, even though it is lying on land far from water. Eventually the man would reap only his share of weariness & disappointment."

"So it is with any brahman or contemplative who lives withdrawn from sensuality in body only, but whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is not relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving, he is incapable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the second simile — spontaneous, never before heard — that appeared to me.

"Then a third simile — spontaneous, never before heard — appeared to me. Suppose there were a dry, sapless piece of timber lying on land far from water, and a man were to come along with an upper fire-stick, thinking, 'I'll light a fire. I'll produce heat.' Now what do you think? Would he be able to light a fire and produce heat by rubbing the upper fire-stick in the dry, sapless timber lying on land?"

"Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because the timber is dry & sapless, and besides it is lying on land far from water."

"So it is with any brahman or contemplative who lives withdrawn from sensuality in body & mind, and whose desire, infatuation, urge, thirst, & fever for sensuality is relinquished & stilled within him: Whether or not he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings due to his striving, he is capable of knowledge, vision, & unexcelled self-awakening. This was the third simile — spontaneous, never before heard — that appeared to me ...

**Note from Bill:** Later in MN 36, after almost killing himself with austerities multiple times (no breathing and then no eating), the Buddha had this thought:

"I thought: 'Whatever brahmans or contemplatives in the past have felt painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None have been greater than this. Whatever brahmans or contemplatives in the future will feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None will be greater than this. Whatever brahmans or contemplatives in the present are feeling painful, racking, piercing feelings due to their striving, this is the utmost. None is greater than this. But with this racking practice of austerities I haven't attained any superior human state, any distinction in knowledge or vision worthy of the noble ones. Could there be another path to Awakening?'

"I thought: 'I recall once, when my father the Sakyan was working, and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, then — quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful mental qualities — I entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Could that be the path to Awakening?' Then following on that memory came the realization: 'That is the path to Awakening.' I thought: 'So why am I afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities?' I thought: 'I am no longer afraid of that pleasure that has nothing to do with sensuality, nothing to do with unskillful mental qualities, but that pleasure is not easy to achieve with a body so extremely emaciated. Suppose I were to take some solid food: some rice & porridge.' So I took some solid food: some rice & porridge. Now five monks had been attending on me, thinking, 'If Gotama, our contemplative, achieves some higher state, he will tell us.' But when they saw me taking some solid food — some rice & porridge — they were disgusted and left me, thinking, 'Gotama the contemplative is living luxuriously. He has abandoned his exertion and is backsliding into abundance.'

"So when I had taken solid food and regained strength, then — quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful mental qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, I entered & remained in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the fading of rapture I remained equanimous, mindful, & alert, and sensed pleasure with the body. I entered & remained in the third jhana, of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain. With the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — I entered & remained in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of recollecting my past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two...five, ten...fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion: 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-rose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-rose here.' Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes & details.

"This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away & reappearance of beings. I saw — by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human — beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings — who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, & mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views — with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But these beings — who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech & mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views — with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.' Thus — by means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human — I saw beings passing away & re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior & superior, beautiful & ugly, fortunate & unfortunate in accordance with their kamma.

"This was the second knowledge I attained in the second watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain.

"When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the ending of the mental fermentations. I discerned, as it was actually present, that 'This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are fermentations... This is the origination of fermentations... This is the cessation of fermentations... This is the way leading to the cessation of fermentations.' My heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, was released from the fermentation of sensuality, released from the fermentation of becoming, released from the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there was the knowledge, 'Released.' I discerned that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"This was the third knowledge I attained in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose — as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute. But the pleasant feeling that arose in this way did not invade my mind or remain ...

MN 61  
PTS: [M i 414](#)

Ambalatthika-rahulovada Sutta: Instructions to Rahula at Mango Stone  
translated from the Pali by

Thanissaro Bhikkhu  
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I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rajagaha, at the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground.

At that time Ven. Rahula<sup>[1]</sup> was staying at the Mango Stone. Then the Blessed One, arising from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to where Ven. Rahula was staying at the Mango Stone. Ven. Rahula saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, set out a seat & water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat set out and, having sat down, washed his feet. Ven. Rahula, bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side ...

"What do you think, Rahula: What is a mirror for?"

"For reflection, sir."

"In the same way, Rahula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection.

"Whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action,

with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Whenever you want to do a verbal action, you should reflect on it ...

"While you are doing a verbal action, you should reflect on it ...

"Having done a verbal action, you should reflect on it ...

"Whenever you want to do a mental action, you should reflect on it ...

"While you are doing a mental action, you should reflect on it ...

"Having done a mental action, you should reflect on it ...

"Rahula, all those brahmans & contemplatives in the course of the past who purified their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, did it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way ...

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Rahula delighted in the Blessed One's words.

## Notes

1.

Rahula: the Buddha's son, who according to the Commentary was seven years old when this discourse was delivered to him.

See also: [MN 62](#); [MN 147](#).



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Alternate format: 

**Comments from the translator, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, on the Buddha's instructions to his son Rahula in MN 61. These comments are taken from a Tricycle article "The Joy of Effort" which was written by Thanissaro Bhikkhu in summer 2008 and is available on line:**

"Meditation is a skill and mastering it should be enjoyable in the same way mastering any other rewarding skill can be. The Buddha said as much to his son, Rahula [MN 61]: 'When you see that you've acted, spoken, or thought in a skillful way – conducive to happiness while causing no harm to yourself or others – take joy in that fact and keep on training.' ... This joyful attitude is a useful antidote to the more pessimistic attitudes that people often bring to meditation"

I included the quote from the translator because it makes explicit a point that is only implied in the actual sutta which we just read.

**Questions: What do you think? Is finding joy in our spiritual practice helpful? Is it necessary? What is your experience with the importance of joy?**

MN 14  
PTS: M i 91

## Cula-dukkhakkhandha Sutta: The Lesser Mass of Stress

translated from the Pali by  
Thanissaro Bhikkhu  
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I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Park. Then Mahanama the Sakyani<sup>[1]</sup> went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "For a long time now, lord, I have understood the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One thus: 'Greed is a defilement of the mind; aversion is a defilement of the mind; delusion is a defilement of the mind.' Yet even though I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One that greed is a defilement of the mind, aversion is a defilement of the mind, delusion is a defilement of the mind, there are still times when the mental quality of greed invades my mind and remains, when the mental quality of aversion... the mental quality of delusion invades my mind and remains. The thought occurs to me: What mental quality is unabandoned within me so that there

are times when the mental quality of greed invades my mind and remains, when the mental quality of aversion... the mental quality of delusion invades my mind and remains?"

"Mahanama, that very mental quality<sup>[2]</sup> is what is unabandoned within you so that there are times when the mental quality of greed... the mental quality of aversion... the mental quality of delusion invades your mind and remains.<sup>[3]</sup> For if that mental quality were abandoned in you, you would not live the household life and would not partake of sensuality. It's because that mental quality is not abandoned in you that you live the household life and partake of sensuality.

"Even though a disciple of the noble ones has clearly seen as it actually is with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, still — if he has not attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that<sup>[4]</sup> — he can be tempted by sensuality. But when he has clearly seen as it actually is with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, and he has attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that, he cannot be tempted by sensuality.

"I myself, before my Awakening, when I was still an unawakened bodhisatta, saw as it actually was with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, but as long as I had not attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that, I did not claim that I could not be tempted by sensuality. But when I saw as it actually was with right discernment that sensuality is of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks, and I had attained a rapture & pleasure apart from sensuality, apart from unskillful mental qualities, or something more peaceful than that, that was when I claimed that I could not be tempted by sensuality ...