

Resilient Heart

Akkoso Sutta: Abuse - Pali Canon, The Buddha

... At one time, Akkosaka was angry and displeased with the Buddha. He went to see the Buddha, overwhelming him with abuse and reproaches. At these words the Buddha said:

“What do you think, Akkosaka ? Do you receive visits from friends and colleagues, blood-relations and others?”

“Yes, Gotama, sometimes such people come.”

“What do you think? Do you serve them with solid food, soft food and savories?”

“Yes, Gotama, sometimes.”

“But supposing, Akkosaka, they do not accept what you offer, whose is it?”

“If they do not accept, Gotama, then it belongs to us.”

“So it is here, Akkosaka. The abuse, the scolding, the reviling you hurl at us who do not abuse or scold or revile, we do not accept from you. It all belongs to you, brahman, it all belongs to you! If a man replies to abuse with abuse, to scolding with scolding, to reviling with reviling, brahman, that is like you joining your guests for dinner. But we are not joining you for dinner. It is all yours, brahman, it is all yours!”

Akkosaka:

“The king and his court believe that Gotama the recluse is an Arahant (enlightened). And yet the good Gotama can get angry!”

[The Blessed One said in verse:]

How could anger rise in him who is free,
Wrathless, all his passions tamed, at peace,

Freed by highest insight, by himself,
So abiding, perfectly serene?
If one is abused and then answers back,
Of the two he shows himself the worse.

One who does not answer back in kind,
Celebrates a double victory.
From one's action both sides benefit,
Oneself and one's reviler too:
Understanding the other's angry mood,
One can help the other clear it and find peace.

One is the healer of them both, because
One and the other both benefit thereby.
People think one like that is a fool,
Because they cannot understand the truth.

Kakacupama Sutta - Pali Canon

The Great Earth

“Suppose, monks, a person were to come to you, holding a hoe and a basket and he were to say: ‘I shall make this great earth earthless.’ Then he would strew the earth here and there, spit here and there, and urinate here and there, and would say: ‘Be earthless, be earthless.’ What do you think, monks, would this person render this great earth earthless?”

“No, indeed not, most venerable sir.”

“And why?”

“Because this great earth, most venerable sir, is deep and without measure. It cannot possibly be turned earthless. On the contrary, that person would only reap weariness and frustration.”

“In the same way, monks, others may use these

five modes of speech when speaking to you — speech that is timely or untimely, true or false, gentle or harsh, with a good or a harmful motive, and with a loving heart or hostility. In this way, monks, you should train yourselves: ‘Neither shall our minds be affected by this, nor for this matter shall we give vent to evil words, but we shall remain full of concern and empathy, with a mind of love, and we shall not give in to hatred. On the contrary, we shall live projecting thoughts of universal love to that very person, making him as well as the whole world the object of our thoughts of universal love — thoughts that have grown great, exalted and measureless. We shall dwell radiating these thoughts which are void of hostility and ill will.’ It is in this way, monks, that you should train yourselves.

Empty Space

“Suppose, monks, a person were to approach you, carrying paints of lacquer, turmeric, indigo or carmine, and he were to say: ‘I will draw this picture, I will make this painting appear on this empty space.’ What do you think, monks, could he make this painting appear on empty space?”

“No, indeed not, most venerable sir.”

“And why not?”

“Because this empty space, most venerable sir, is formless and invisible. He cannot possibly draw a picture or make a painting appear on this empty space. On the contrary, that person will only reap weariness and frustration.”

“In the same way, monks, others may use these five modes of speech when speaking to you — speech that is timely or untimely, true or false, gentle or harsh, with a good or a harmful motive, and with a loving heart or hostility. In this way, monks, you should train yourselves: ‘Neither shall our minds be affected by this, nor for this matter shall we give vent to evil words, but we shall remain full of concern and empathy, with a mind of love, and we shall not give in to hatred. On the contrary, we shall live projecting thoughts of universal love to that very person, making him as well as the whole world the object of our

thoughts of universal love — thoughts that have grown great, exalted and measureless. We shall dwell radiating these thoughts which are void of hostility and ill will.’ It is in this way, monks, that you should train yourselves.

Release Ill Will -Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo

Don’t allow yourself to carry hate with you. It’s only normal that when people live together, their behavior isn’t going to be on an equal level. Some people have good manners, some people have coarse manners — not evil, mind you, just that their manners are coarse. Physically, some people are energetic, industrious, and strong; others are weak and sickly. Verbally, some people are skilled at speaking, others are not. Some people talk a lot, some people hardly talk at all; some people like to talk about worldly things, some people like to talk about the Dhamma; some people speak in unwholesome ways, some people speak in a wholesome way. This is called inequality. When this is the case, there are bound to be conflicts and clashes, at least to some extent.

When these things and ill will arise among us, we shouldn’t hold onto grudges or keep score. We should forgive one another and wash away that stain of ill will from our hearts. Why? Because otherwise it turns into animosity and enmity and turns toxic.

The resilient heart that forgives is truly a gift for all concerned. It turns you into the sort of person who doesn’t hold onto things, doesn’t carry things around, doesn’t get caught up on things, living in the past — the sort of person who doesn’t bear grudges and spread around more disharmony.

There will always be misunderstandings, missteps or mistakes from time to time and we should continuously forgive one another. A sense of acceptance and kindness for everyone around us is to be cultivated as much as we can. This is the kind and resilient heart of our practice as Buddhists, both for householders and for contemplatives.
