AN 7.64 — Irritable

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Source: https://suttacentral.net/an7.64/en/sujato
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Text

Numbered Discourses 7.64

6. The Undeclared Points

Irritable

“Mendicants, these seven things that please and assist an enemy happen to an irritable woman or man. What seven?

Firstly, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only they’d become ugly!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have a beautiful enemy. An irritable individual, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, is ugly, even though they’re nicely bathed and anointed, with hair and beard dressed, and wearing white clothes. This is the first thing that pleases and assists an enemy which happens to an irritable woman or man.

Furthermore, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only they’d sleep badly!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have an enemy who sleeps at ease. An irritable individual, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, sleeps badly, even though they sleep on a couch spread with woolen covers—shag-piled, pure white, or embroidered with flowers—and spread with a fine deer hide, with a canopy above and red pillows at both ends. This is the second thing …

Furthermore, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only their needs are not amply satisfied!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have an enemy whose needs are amply satisfied. When an irritable individual, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, gets what they don’t need they think, ‘I’ve got what I need.’ When they get what they need they think, ‘I’ve got what I don’t need.’ When an angry person gets these things that are the exact opposite of what they need, it’s for their lasting harm and suffering. This is the third thing …

Furthermore, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only they weren’t wealthy!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have an enemy who is wealthy. When an individual is irritable, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, the rulers seize the legitimate wealth they’ve earned by their efforts, built up with their own hands, gathered by the sweat of their brow. This is the fourth thing …

Furthermore, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only they weren’t famous!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have a famous enemy. When an individual is irritable, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, any fame they have acquired by diligence falls to dust. This is the fifth thing …

Furthermore, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only they had no friends!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have an enemy with friends. When an individual is irritable, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin avoid them from afar. This is the sixth thing …

Furthermore, an enemy wishes for an enemy: ‘If only, when their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell!’ Why is that? Because an enemy doesn’t like to have an enemy who goes to a good place. When an individual is irritable, overcome and overwhelmed by anger, they do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is the seventh thing that pleases and assists an enemy which happens to an irritable woman or man.

These are the seven things that please and assist an enemy which happen to an irritable woman or man.

An irritable person is ugly

and they sleep badly.

When they get what they need,

they take it to be what they don’t need.

An angry person

kills with body or speech;

overcome with anger,

they lose their wealth.

Mad with anger,

they fall into disgrace.

Family, friends, and loved ones

avoid an irritable person.

Anger creates harm;

anger upsets the mind.

That person doesn’t recognize

the danger that arises within.

An angry person doesn’t know the good.

An angry person doesn’t see the truth.

When a person is beset by anger,

only blind darkness is left.

An angry person destroys with ease
what was hard to build.
Afterwards, when the anger is spent,
they're tormented as if burnt by fire.
Their look betrays their sulkiness
like a fire's smoky plume.
And when their anger flares up,
they make others angry.
They have no conscience or prudence,
nor any respectful speech.
One overcome by anger
has no island refuge anywhere.
The deeds that torment a man
are far from those that are good.
I'll explain them now;
listen to this, for it is the truth.
An angry person slays their father;
their mother, too, they slay.
An angry person slays a saint;
a normal person, too, they slay.
A man is raised by his mother,
who shows him the world.
But an angry ordinary person slays
even that good woman who gave him life.
Like oneself, those sentient beings
hold themselves most dear.
But when angered, they kill themselves in different ways,
distraught in many respects.
Some kill themselves with swords,

some, distraught, take poison.
Some hang themselves with rope,
or fling themselves down a mountain gorge.
When they commit deeds of baby-killing,
and killing themselves,
they don’t realize what they do,
for anger leads to their downfall.
The snare of death in the form of anger
lies hidden in the heart.
You should cut it out by self-control,
by wisdom, energy, and right ideas.
An astute person should cut out
this unskillful thing.
And they’d train in the teaching in just the same way,
not yielding to sulkiness.
Free of anger, free of despair,
free of greed, with no more longing,
tamed, having given up anger,
the undefiled are fully extinguished.”