AN 9.72 — Shackles of the Heart

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/an9.72/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Numbered Discourses 9.72

7. Mindfulness Meditation

Shackles of the Heart

“Mendicants, there are these five shackles of the heart. What five? Firstly, a mendicant isn’t free of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for sensual pleasures. This being so, their mind doesn’t incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first shackle of the heart.

Furthermore, a mendicant isn’t free of greed for the body … They’re not free of greed for form … They eat as much as they like until their belly is full, then indulge in the pleasures of sleeping, lying down, and drowsing … They lead the spiritual life wishing to be reborn in one of the orders of gods: ‘By this precept or observance or fervent austerity or spiritual practice, may I become one of the gods!’ This being so, their mind doesn’t incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth shackle of the heart. These are the five shackles of the heart.

To give up these five shackles of the heart you should develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings … They meditate observing an aspect of the mind … They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. To give up these five shackles of the heart you should develop these four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”