



40. SUDHAMMO BHIKKHU

Question: Bhante, today, some contemporary spiritual teachers are beginning to make legal disclaimers as to not get sued by their clients or disciples. after giving them certain types of teachings. What is your view on this phenomena?

Sudhammo: Well, let's, for a second, forget that the question regards so called spiritual teachers and their students, and just focus on the basics of any healthy and truthful relationship. If one of the parties starts off by making disclaimers, it's evident that there's distrust and a setting up for disappointment. If it involves spiritual teachings, the fact that it's a legal disclaimer, just makes it all the worse, for this is a mechanism of business dealings, which should have no part in a spiritual relationship. Commerce to teach spirituality is fraud, a con job, because one is taking money and selling something that already belongs to, in such case, the purchaser. Depending on the circumstances, cost for maintenance and structure are a

reasonable matter, but it can be done in a frank, unambiguous and transparent way. The whole problem is really one of distrust. Even worst, is that if the prospect students think that they're going to purchase something, and that what they want has a price in money,

I tend to think that these students and teachers deserve each other. Like attracts like, and charlatans of this sort could not thrive without demand. They speak the language of money and attract students who also do so.

Again, like any other relationship where there's abuse on one side and a interest of getting some advantage, regardless, on the other. Many of these so called students wouldn't value guidance freely given, because they only understand value that money can buy. So they deserve each other. True teachers and students won't do or fall for that, and will keep away from such scams.

Funny that many use empty slogans like "we are all one", and if that was true to them, in the case of a lawsuit, they would be suing their own selves! Fakes, sooner or later, will trip on their own legs! And there's no room for victim hood for those students who thought they could buy truth. Good, they learn a lesson too. For true spirituality, one must pay with one's own self, not money! Let such disclaimers be a disclaimer for those who are pure and sincere, so to stay away from anything that mixes spirituality with money.

Question: Bhante, if a teacher charges, what would this usually indicate in terms of where they are along the path?

Sudhammo: It would indicate he or she is not a true teacher.

Question: Where do you see this going in the future? Do you see this situation getting better or worse?

Sudhammo: I see it will continue, grow and create a split. The contrast will be so great that it will become a filter for those who are sincere, to know what's what. There are so many misunderstandings and wrongs in the whole issue. First, true teachers don't think of themselves as such. The relationship between a spiritual guide and a spiritual aspirant should be primarily one of friendship, and how could you charge money for friendship? That situations in the world involve money, is understandable, but that should not extend to spiritual guidance, which is to be freely given.

A true friend is a giver and not a taker. When there's money involved, there's expectation of what should be taught, and if that doesn't please the ego of the student, and most likely it doesn't, because that's the ill brought to the table, the so called student cannot but have a feeling that "I want my money back!"

So these supposed teachers inevitably compromise what should be taught, to suit such expectations. This is why I said in the previous answer, that they deserve each other. A teacher who charges and a student that doesn't see anything wrong in paying, are on the same level of valuing things.

A sincere person, earnest after truth will be weary of that from miles away. It betrays their level of maturity and understanding. So I see it will become worse, but that will be helpful for some to find their way. The road to truth is too narrow and subtle, and is for individuals.

So every time you have something being presented to large crowds and made general, it will loose in genuineness. The issue of quantity versus quality. The quality of teachers, of students, and of understanding. Genuine spirituality has always been for the few, because it concerns unraveling the secret of existence, and if everybody woke up, there would be no purpose in being here.

This whole idea that people people seek spirituality because they want to be happy, is a fallacy, most don't know what they're asking for. Once the ultimate is realized, the world looses importance. And who wants that? People want to find something that will make them feel great, but Reality makes people disappear. In truth, one realizes one's self as nobody, so being happy and all that pertains to the duality of body and mind, loses meaning. This is not new, it has always gone on and it will continue to grow, but as I said, the always few, sincere ones, won't have to worry about it, actually it will be helpful to them. It will make things clearer for those who don't love the world. One always gravitates to what's right for them according to their level of understanding. No need to solve anything. Fools will be fools, and the wise always few.

Question: Bhante, would you please give a brief sketch of what's been your life journey so far?

Sudhammo: I was born in Brazil in 1971, had a happy and successful life thinking to be a person until my late 20's, when I renounced worldly pursuits but nevertheless continued to live in the world, although not of it. Went on to live in the Himalayan region of India and Nepal, where I was recognized by spiritual teachers and masters of various traditions.

Later on, having transcended all forms, took a few steps back and chose to become a Theravada monk, Sudhammo Bhikkhu, in order to have a platform from which to speak. Presently residing in Thailand, I consider the whole world my temporary home. Find wise that others see me as a friend who is inspired to inspire them, to find truth, to love reality.

Question: Bhante, any words before we finish the interview?

Sudhammo: I have a "disclaimer!" (laughs) Sudhammo doesn't care about what anyone thinks of him because he's not selling anything! True love is priceless..

THE END

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