

CHAPTER 39

THE STATE OF AN ARAHANT

“Though little he recites the sacred texts, but acts in accordance with the teaching, forsaking lust, hatred and ignorance, truly knowing, with mind well freed, clinging to naught here and hereafter, he shares the fruits of the holy life.”

— Dhp v. 20



he Tipiṭaka abounds with interesting and self-elevating sayings that describe the peaceful and happy state of an arahant, who abides in the world, till the end of his life, serving other seekers of truth by example and by precept.

In the Dhammapada the Buddha states:

For him who has completed the journey,⁴³⁵ for him who is sorrowless,⁴³⁶ for him who from everything⁴³⁷ is wholly free, for him who has destroyed all ties,⁴³⁸ the fever (of passion) exists not.⁴³⁹ (v. 90)

The mindful exert themselves. To no abode are they attached. Like swans that quit their pools, home after home they abandon (and go).⁴⁴⁰ (v. 91)

They for whom there is no accumulation,⁴⁴¹ who reflect well over their food,⁴⁴² who have deliverance,⁴⁴³ which is void and signless, as their object, their course like that of birds in the air cannot be traced. (v. 92)

435. Of life in the round of existence, i.e., an arahant.

436. One gives up sorrow by attaining *anāgāmi*, the third stage of sainthood. It is at this stage one eradicates completely attachment to sense-desires and ill will or aversion.

437. *Sabbadhi*, the five aggregates etc.

438. There are four kinds of *ganṭhas* (ties): i. covetousness (*abhijjhā*), ii. ill will (*vyāpāda*), iii. indulgence in (wrongful) rites and ceremonies (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*), and iv. adherence to one's preconceptions as truth (*idaṃ saccābhinivesa*).

439. This verse refers to the ethical state of an arahant. Heat is both physical and mental. An arahant experiences bodily heat as long as he is alive, but is not thereby worried. Mental heat of passions he experiences not.

440. Arahants wander whithersoever they like without any attachment to any particular place as they are free from the conception of “I” and “mine.”

441. There are two kinds of accumulation—namely, kammic activities and the four necessities of life. The former tend to prolong life in *samsāra* and the latter, though essential, may prove an obstacle to spiritual progress.

442. To get rid of the desire for food.

He whose corruptions are destroyed, he who is not attached to food, he who has deliverance, which is void and signless, as his object, his path, like that of birds in the air, cannot be traced. (v. 93)

He whose senses are subdued, like steeds well trained by a charioteer, he whose pride is destroyed and is free from the corruptions,—such a steadfast one even the gods hold dear. (v. 94)

Like the earth, a balanced and well-disciplined person resents not. He is comparable to an *indakhīla*.⁴⁴⁴ Like a pool, unsullied by mud, is he—to such a balanced one⁴⁴⁵ life's wanderings do not arise.⁴⁴⁶ (v. 95)

Calm is his mind, calm is his speech, calm is his action, who, rightly knowing, is wholly freed,⁴⁴⁷ perfectly peaceful,⁴⁴⁸ and equipoised. (v. 96)

443. Nibbāna is deliverance from suffering (*vimokkha*). It is called void because it is void of lust, hatred and ignorance, not because it is nothingness or annihilation. Nibbāna is a positive supramundane state which cannot be expressed in mundane words. It is signless because it is free from the signs of lust etc.. Arahants experience Nibbānic bliss while alive. It is not correct to say that arahants exist after death, or do not exist after death, for Nibbāna is neither eternalism nor nihilism. In Nibbāna nothing is eternalised nor is anything, except passions, annihilated. arahants experience Nibbānic bliss by attaining to the fruit of arahantship in this life itself.

444. By *indakhīla* is meant either a column as firm and high as that of Sakka's, or the chief column that stands at the entrance to a city.

Commentators state that these *indakhīlas* are firm posts which are erected either inside or outside the city as an embellishment. Usually they are made of bricks or of durable wood and are octagonal in shape. Half of the post is embedded in the earth, hence the metaphor as firm and steady as an *indakhīla*.

445. *Tādi* is one who has neither attachment to desirable objects nor aversion to undesirable objects. Nor does he cling to anything. Amidst the eight worldly conditions—gain and loss, fame and infamy, blame and praise, happiness and pain—an arahant remains unperturbed, manifesting neither attachment nor aversion, neither elation nor depression.

446. As they are not subject to birth and death.

447. From all defilements.

448. Since his mind is absolutely pure.

The⁴⁴⁹ man who is not credulous,⁴⁵⁰ who understands the Uncreated⁴⁵¹ (Nibbāna), who has cut off the links,⁴⁵² who has put an end to occasion⁴⁵³ (of good and evil), who has eschewed⁴⁵⁴ all desires⁴⁵⁵ he, indeed, is a supreme man.

(v. 97)

Whether in village or in forest, in vale or on hill,⁴⁵⁶ wherever arahants dwell, delightful, indeed, is that spot. (v. 98)

Delightful are the forests where worldlings delight not; the passionless⁴⁵⁷ will rejoice (therein),(for) they seek no sensual pleasures. (v. 99)

Ah, happily do we live without hate amongst the hateful; amidst hateful men we dwell unhating. (v. 197)

Ah, happily do we live in good health⁴⁵⁸ amongst the ailing; amidst ailing men we dwell in good health. (v. 198)

Ah, happily do we live without yearning (for sensual pleasures) amongst those who yearn (for them); amidst those who yearn (for them) we dwell without yearning. (v. 199)

Ah, happily do we live, we who have no impediments.⁴⁵⁹ Feeders of joy shall we be even as the gods of the Radiant Realm. (v. 200)

For whom there exists neither the hither⁴⁶⁰ nor the farther shore,⁴⁶¹ nor both the hither and the farther shore, he who is undistressed and unbound⁴⁶² —him I call a brāhmaṇa.

(v. 385)

449. The pun in the original Pali is lost in the translation.

450. *Assaddho*—lit., unfaithful. He does not merely accept from other sources because he himself knows from personal experience.

451. *Akata*, Nibbāna. It is so called because it is not created by anyone. *Akataññū* can also be interpreted as ungrateful.

452. The links of existence and rebirth. *Sandhicchedo* also means a house-breaker that is a burglar.

453. *Hata + avakāso*, he who has destroyed the opportunity.

454. *Vanta + āso*, he who eats vomit is another meaning.

455. By means of the four paths of sainthood. Gross forms of desire are eradicated at the first three stages, the subtle forms at the last stage.

456. *Ninna* and *thala*, lit., low-lying and elevated grounds.

457. The passionless arahants rejoice in secluded forests which have no attraction for worldlings.

458. Free from the disease of passions

459. *Kiñcana*, such as lust, hatred, and delusion which are hindrances to spiritual progress.

460. *Pāraṃ*—the six internal, personal sense-fields.

461. *Apāraṃ*—the six external sense-fields.

462. Not grasping anything as “me” and “mine.”

He who is meditative,⁴⁶³ stainless and secluded,⁴⁶⁴ he who has done his duty and is free from corruptions,⁴⁶⁵ he who has attained the highest goal,⁴⁶⁶ —him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 386)

He that does no evil through body, speech, or mind, who is restrained in these three respects—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 391)

He who has cut off all fetters, who trembles not, who has gone beyond ties, who is unbound—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 397)

He who has cut the strap (hatred), the thong (craving), and the rope (heresies), together with the appendages (latent tendencies), who has thrown up the cross-bar (ignorance), who is enlightened⁴⁶⁷ (Buddha)—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 398)

He who, without anger, endures reproach, flogging and punishments, whose power—the potent army—is patience—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 399)

He who is not wrathful, but is dutiful,⁴⁶⁸ virtuous, free from craving, self-controlled and bears his final body,⁴⁶⁹ — him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 400)

Like water on a lotus leaf, like a mustard seed on the point of a needle, he who clings not to sensual pleasures,—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 401)

He who realises here in this world the destruction of his sorrow, who has laid the burden⁴⁷⁰ aside and is emancipated—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 402)

He whose knowledge is deep, who is wise, who is skilled in the right and wrong way,⁴⁷¹ who has reached the highest goal—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 403)

He who is not intimate either with householders or with the homeless ones, who wanders without an abode, who is without desires—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 404)

463. He who practises concentration (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*).

464. *Āsinam*—living alone in the forest

465. By realising the four truths and eradicating the fetters

466. That is, Nibbāna.

467. Who has understood the four noble truths.

468. Devoted to religious austerity.

469. Because he, having destroyed the passions would be reborn no more.

470. The burden of the aggregates.

471. Who knows the way to the woeful states, to the blissful states, and to Nibbāna.

He who has laid aside the cudgel in his dealings with beings,⁴⁷² whether feeble or strong, who neither harms nor kills—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 405)

He who is friendly amongst the hostile, who is peaceful amongst the violent, who is unattached amongst the attached⁴⁷³—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 406)

In whom lust, hatred, pride, and detraction are fallen off like a mustard seed from the point of a needle—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 407)

He who utters gentle, instructive, true words, who by his speech gives offence to none—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 408)

He who has no desires, whether pertaining to this world or to the next, who is desireless and emancipated—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 410)

Herein he who has transcended both good and bad and the ties⁴⁷⁴ as well, who is sorrowless, stainless, and pure—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 412)

He who is spotless as the moon, who is pure, serene, and unperturbed, who has destroyed craving for becoming—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 413)

He who, discarding human ties and transcending celestial ties, is completely delivered from all ties⁴⁷⁵—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 417)

He who has given up likes⁴⁷⁶ and dislikes⁴⁷⁷ who is cooled and is without defilements,⁴⁷⁸ who has conquered the world,⁴⁷⁹ and is strenuous—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 418)

He who has no clinging to aggregates that are past, future, or present, who is without clinging and grasping,—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 421)

472. Literally, towards beings.

473. Those who are attached to the aggregates.

474. Lust, hatred, delusion, pride and false views.

475. Undisturbed by defilements.

476. That is, attachment to sense-desires.

477. *Arati*, dislike for forest life (commentary).

478. *Upadhi*. There are four kinds of *upadhi*—namely, the aggregates (*khandha*), the passions (*kilesa*), volitional activities (*abhisankhārā*), and sense-desires (*kāma*).

479. That is, the world of aggregates.

The fearless,⁴⁸⁰ the noble, the hero, the great sage,⁴⁸¹ the conqueror,⁴⁸² the desireless, the cleanser⁴⁸³ (of defilements), the enlightened⁴⁸⁴—him I call a brāhmaṇa (v. 422)

That sage who knows his former abodes, who sees the blissful⁴⁸⁵ and the woeful states,⁴⁸⁶ who has reached the end of births,⁴⁸⁷ who, with superior wisdom, has perfected himself⁴⁸⁸ who has completed⁴⁸⁹ (the holy life), and reached the end of all passions—him I call a brāhmaṇa. (v. 423)



480. *Usabhaṃ*, fearless as a bull.

481. *Mahesiṃ*, seeker of higher morality, concentration, and wisdom.

482. *Vijitāvinam*, the conqueror of passions.

483. *Nahātakam*, he who has washed away all impurities.

484. *Buddham*, he who has understood the four noble truths.

485. *Sagga*, the six heavenly realms, the sixteen *rūpa* realms, and the four *arūpa* realms.

486. *Apāya* the four woeful states.

487. *Jātikkhayaṃ*, i.e., arahantship.

488. *Abhiññāvosito*, i.e., reached the culmination by comprehending that which should be comprehended, by discarding that which should be discarded, by realising that which should be realised, and by developing that which should be developed (commentary).

489. *Sabbavositavosanam*, i.e., having lived the holy life which culminates in wisdom pertaining to the path of arahantship, the end of all passions.