

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Longer Discourse in Assapura (Mahaassapurasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in the Anga country, in a hamlet named Assapura and addressed the bhikkhus from there.

Bhikkhus, people call you recluses, and you too acknowledge we are recluses. Bhikkhus, you, who have promised to be a recluse, should take upon yourself to abide by the things that make you a recluse and a brahmin. By that our recluse-ship becomes true, and our promise is carried out. May it be fruitful to them that offer us robes, morsel food, dwellings and requisites when ill. May my going forth be fruitful, and full of results. Bhikkhus, you should train thus.

Bhikkhus, what are the things that make you a recluse and a brahmin? We will be endowed with shame and remorse. Bhikkhus, thus you should train. Bhikkhus, it might occur to you thus; We are endowed with shame and remorse. With this much our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do, I inform, entreat, and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done? We will be pure in our bodily actions manifest, open and without a flaw. Yet on account of that purity of bodily actions we will not praise ourselves or disparage others. Bhikkhus, thus you should train. It might occur to you. We are endowed with shame and remorse and our bodily actions will be pure. When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do. I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done? We will be pure in verbal actions manifest, open and without a flaw. Yet on account of that purity of verbal actions we will not praise ourselves or disparage others. Bhikkhus, thus you should train. It might occur to you. We are endowed with shame and remorse, our bodily actions are pure, our verbal actions are pure. When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do, I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done. We will be pure in mental actions manifest, open and without a flaw. Yet on account of that purity of mental actions we will not praise ourselves or disparage others. Bhikkhus, thus you should train. It might occur to you. We are endowed with shame and remorse, our bodily actions are pure, our verbal actions are pure. Our mental actions are pure. When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do, I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do. ...

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done? We will be pure in our livelihood manifest, open and without a flaw. Yet on account of that purity of livelihood we will not praise ourselves or disparage others. Bhikkhus, thus you should train. It might occur to you We are endowed with shame and remorse, our bodily actions are pure, our verbal actions are pure. Our mental actions are pure .and our livelihood is pure. When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do, I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done? We will be with protected mental faculties. Seeing a form with the eye we will not take the sign or the details. To one living with the mental faculty of the eye not protected, evil demerit of covetousness and displeasure may arise. To control it, we fall. Hearing a sound with the ear, Cognising a smell with the nose, Cognising a taste with the tongue, Cognising a touch with the body, Cognising an idea with the mind will not take the sign or the details. To one living with the mental faculty of the mind not protected, evil demerit of covetousness and

displeasure may arise. To control it we fall. Thus you should train. It might occur to you. We are endowed with shame and remorse, our bodily actions are pure, our verbal actions are pure. Our mental actions are pure .and our livelihood is pure. We are controlled in our mental faculties. When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do, I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done? We will know the right amount to partake food. Reflecting we will partake food, not for play, not for intoxication, not for growth and beauty, for the upkeep of this body, not to enjoy soups. As support to lead the holy life. Putting an end to earlier feelings, will not arouse new feelings. It will be without blame for a pleasant abiding. Thus you should train. It might occur to you. We are endowed with shame and remorse, pure bodily actions, pure verbal actions, pure.mental actions and a pure livelihood. We are controlled in our mental faculties. We know the right amount to partake of food... When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do. I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship. There is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done? We should be yoked to wakefulness. During the day seated in the chankamana, we will clean the mind of obstructing things. In the first watch of the night seated in the chankamana, we will clean the mind of obstructing things. In the middle watch of the night, turning to the right side making the lion's posture, keeping one foot over the other, mindful and aware of the time of waking we will lie. In the last watch of the night .seated in the chankamana we will clean the mind of obstructing things. Thus you should train. Bhikkhus, . it might occur to you thus. We are endowed with shame and remorse, our bodily, verbal and mental actions are pure. Our livelihood is pure. We are controlled in our mental faculties.We know the right amount to partake of food...We are yoked to wakefulness..When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do. I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship, there is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done?. We will be endowed with mindful awareness. Coming forward and turning back we will be aware. Looking on and looking away we will be aware. Bending and stretching we will be aware, Wearing the three robes and bowl we will be aware. Tasting, drinking, eating and enjoying we will be aware. Urinating and excreting we will be aware. Going, standing, sitting, lying, awake, talking or being silent we will be aware. Thus you should train. Bhikkhus, it might occur to you. We are endowed with shame and remorse. Our bodily, verbal and mental actions are pure. Our livelihood is pure. We are controlled in our mental faculties. We know the right amount to partake of food...We are yoked to wakefulness...We are mindful and aware. When this much is done, our recluse-ship is done. If you be satisfied, thinking there is nothing more to do. I inform, entreat and announce to you, do not fall from your recluse-ship. There is something more to do.

Bhikkhus, what further thing has to be done. We will abide in a secluded dwelling a forest, the root of a tree, mountain grotto or cave, a charnel ground, a forest jungle, an open space, or a heap of straw. Returning from the alms round, after the meal is over, we will sit in a cross legged posture, mindfulness established in front. Dispelling covetousness for the world. Will abide with a mind free of covetousness. Dispelling anger will abide with a mind free of anger. With the perception of light will abide sloth and torpor dispelled from the mind. Will abide appeasing the self, dispelling restlessness and worry. Will abide dispelling doubts, about merit that should and should not be done

Bhikkhus, like a man would borrow some money to engage in some business. When that business prospered, he would pay off the debt and would have some money remaining for his wife and children. So he would reflect, earlier I borrowed this money and engaged in this business. It prospered. I paid off the debt and now I have some money remaining to attend to my wife and children. He gains joy and pleasure on account of it. Or like a man who was seriously ill, not desiring even to take food, and in the meantime he would get over the illness Food too will become agreeable to him and he would regain his bodily strength. So he reflects, earlier I was seriously ill, food was not agreeable to me. Now I have overcome that illness, food is agreeable, and now I have regained my bodily strength. Recalling this he gains joy and pleasure. Or like a man, released from prison.

Happy and without fear and not losing his wealth. He reflects, earlier I was a prisoner, now am free and happy. I have not lost my wealth and now I live without fear. Recalling that he gains pleasure and joy. Or like a man who was a slave under another's power, not in his own power, not able to go where he liked. Released he is no more under another's power, using his power, freed from slavery would go where he liked. He reflects, earlier, I was a slave, under another's power, not in my own power. Now I 'm free, in my own power, free to go where I like. On account of that he gains joy and pleasure. Or like a man in a desert with his wealth. Would safely cross the desert without loss of wealth. He would reflect, I entered the desert path with all my wealth and crossed the desert safely without loss of life or wealth and he gains pleasure and joy on account of it. In the same manner the bhikkhu sees himself as though in debt, with an illness, in prison, as a slave, and as in a desert path when the five hindrances are not dispelled, When they are dispelled he sees himself as the debt paid off, the illness subsided, released from prison, released from slavery, and as having crossed the desert path

Dispelling the five hindrances and wisely making less the minor defilements of the mind, he secludes the mind from sensual thoughts and defiling thoughts. With thoughts and thought processes, and with joy and pleasantness born of seclusion, attained to abides in the first jhana. He pervades this body, perfects it and fills it up with joy and pleasantness born of seclusion. Does not leave a single spot untouched with that joy and pleasantness born of seclusion. Bhikkhus, like a bather or his apprentice, would place some bathing powder in a bronze vessel, would mix it sprinkling water and turning it into a ball of lather. He would mix it well, until the lather becomes a ball and nothing would trickle down from it. In the same manner he would pervade this body, perfect it and fill it up with the joy and pleasantness born of seclusion, not leaving a single spot untouched with that joy and pleasantness.

Again, the bhikkhu overcoming, thoughts and thought processes, would bring the mind to a single point appeasing it internally. And without thoughts and thought processes and with joy and pleasantness born of concentration would attain to abide in the second jhana. Then he would pervade this body, perfect it and fill it up with joy and pleasantness born of concentration. He would

not leave a single spot untouched with that joy and pleasantness born of concentration. Like a deep pond without inlets from the east, west, north or south, is filled up with cool water springing from the bottom. Rain water too would not enter it. The cool water coming up, would fill it flowing all round and completing it, not leaving a single spot untouched by that cold water. In the same manner he pervades this body, perfects it and fills it up with joy and pleasantness born of concentration. Would not leave a single spot untouched with the joy and pleasantness born of concentration. . .

Again, the bhikkhu, with equanimity to joy and detachment, would abide mindful and aware, experiencing pleasantness too with the body and abide attained to the third jhana. To this the noble ones say abiding in pleasantness with equanimity. Then he pervades this body, perfects it, fills it up with pleasantness devoid of joy. Would not leave a single spot untouched with that pleasantness devoid of joy. Like, of blue, red and white lotuses that grow in a pond, some are born, grow, develop, nourish and bloom in the water. Their tops and roots are pervaded with the cold water and they do not have a place not touched with the cold water. In the same manner he pervades this body, perfects it, and fills it up with pleasantness devoid of joy, touching everything with that pleasantness.

Again the bhikkhu, dispelling pleasantness and unpleasantness, and earlier overcoming, pleasure and displeasure, with mindfulness purified with equanimity attained to abides in the fourth jhana. Then he sits pervading the whole body with that pure and clean mind, not leaving out any spot. Like a man who has covered himself with a white cloth together with the head, without leaving out anything. In the same manner he sits pervading the whole body with that pure clean mind, not leaving out any spot untouched with the pure clean mind. .

When the mind is concentrated, pure, free from minor defilements is malleable workable not disturbed, he directs the mind for the knowledge of previous births. Recollects the manifold previous births, one birth, two births, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, innumerable forward cycles of births, innumerable backward cycles of births, innumerable forward and backward cycles of births. There I was of such

name, clan, disposition, supports, experiencing such pleasant and unpleasant feelings and with such a life span. Disappearing from there, was born there, with such name, clan, disposition, supports, experiencing such pleasant and unpleasant feelings, with such a life span. Disappearing from there, is born here. Thus with all modes and all details he recollects the manifold previous births.

When the mind is concentrated, pure, free from minor defilements, malleable workable not disturbed, he directs the mind for the knowledge of the disappearing and appearing of beings. With the heavenly eye purified beyond human, he sees beings disappearing and appearing unexalted and exalted, beautiful and ugly, arising in good and bad states according to their actions: These good beings misbehaving by body, speech and mind, blaming noble ones, with the wrong view of actions, after death are born in loss, in decrease, in hell. As for these good beings, well behaved in body speech and mind, not blaming noble ones, with the right view of actions after death are born in heaven. Thus with the heavenly eye purified beyond human he sees beings disappearing and appearing.

When the mind is concentrated, pure, free from minor defilements, malleable workable not disturbed, he directs the mind for the destruction of desires.. Knows, this is unpleasant, this is the arising of unpleasantness, this is the cessation of unpleasantness and this is the path to the cessation of unpleasantness as it really is.: Knows these are desires, this the arising of desires, this the cessation of desires and this is the path to the cessation of desires as it really is. When he knows thus and sees thus his mind is released from sensual desires, the desires 'to be', and desires of ignorance. Knowledge arises I'm released, birth is destroyed, have done what should be done. The holy life is lived, there is nothing more to wish. Like a man standing on the bank of a pond in a mountain glen with pure clear undisturbed water would clearly see shells, pebbles, stones and gravel and shoals of fish moving and floating in the water. In the same manner, he knows this is unpleasant, this is the arising of unpleasantness, this is the cessation of unpleasantness and this is the path to the cessation of unpleasantness as it really is. Knows, these are desires, this the arising of desires this is the cessation of desires and this is the path to the cessation of desires as it really is. When he knows thus and sees thus, his mind is released from sensual desires, from desires 'to be' and from desires of

ignorance. Knowledge arises I'm released He knows birth is destroyed, what should be done, is done. The holy life is lived, there is nothing more to wish.

Bhikkhus, to this is said the bhikkhu becomes a recluse, a brahmin, a bather, an authority, one mentally well, a noble one, a perfect one. Bhikkhus, how does the bhikkhu become a recluse?. He is arranged with the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. (*1) Thus the bhikkhu becomes a recluse. How does the bhikkhu become a brahmin? He has expelled (*2) the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. Thus the bhikkhu becomes a brahmin. How does the bhikkhu become a bather?. He has washed out (*3) the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. Thus the bhikkhu becomes a bather. How does the bhikkhu become an authority?. He becomes the authority (*4) of the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. Thus the bhikkhu becomes an authority. How does the bhikkhu become mentally well? He becomes sharp (*5) about the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. Thus the bhikkhu becomes sharp. Bhikkhus, how does the bhikkhu become noble? He moves far away from the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. Thus the bhikkhu becomes noble. Bhikkhus, how does the bhikkhu become perfect? He moves far away from the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. Thus the bhikkhu becomes perfect..

The Blessed One said thus and those bhikkhus delighted in the words of the Blessed One. .

Notes.

1. He is arranged with the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death.'samitaassa honti paapakaa akusalaa dhammaa sankhilesikaa ponobhavikaa sadaraa dukkha vipaakaa aayati.m jaatijaraamaraniyaa.' The recluse arranges for himself the defiling things of evil demerit, heavy with future results of birth, decay and death. This means that if the recluse

knows what he has to do he could either end his unpleasantness in this very birth or else put it off for a future birth.

2. He has expelled the defiling...re..... death 'bahitaassa honti' The brahmin has expelled these same things.

3. He has washed out the defiling...re... death.'naahaatassa honti' The bather has washed these same things.

4. He becomes the authority of those defiling... re... death. 'viditaassa honti' He becomes the authority of these same things. This means that he could give advice to others to overcome all the unpleasantness and to put an end to birth and death.

5. He becomes sharp about the defiling.... re...death. 'nissuutaassa honti'. To become mentally well he has to be sharp to see that he does not get involved in these same things..

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