

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

An Address to Brahma (Brahmanimantanasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living in the monastery, offered by Anaathapindika in Jeta's grove in Saavatthi. The Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus from there.

Bhikkhus, at one time I was living in Uka.t.tha, at the root of a big Saala tree in the Subhaga forest. At that time, to Baka brahma an evil view like this had arisen. This is permanent, eternal, complete and a not changing thing. This is not born, does not decay, does not die, is not re-born, and there is no refuge higher than this. I cognised the thought processes in the mind of Baka brahma and as a strong man would stretch his bent arm, or bend his stretched arm, disappeared from the Subhaga forest and appeared in the Brahma world. Seeing me in the distance Baka brahma said, welcome! good sir. It's after a long time, that you have come. Sir, this is permanent, eternal, complete and a not changing thing. Not born does not decay, does not die, is not re-born and there is no refuge higher than this. When this was said, I said thus to Baka brahma: Indeed Baka brahma is deluded, that he says, an impermanent, not eternal, incomplete, changing thing is permanent, eternal, complete and not subject to change. To a born, decaying, dying, fading and reappearing thing, he says is not born, does not decay, does not die, fade and is not re-born When there is a refuge more noble than this, he says there is no refuge more noble than this

Then Death the Evil One took possession of a member of the retinue of Brahma and said to me: Bhikkhu, do not hinder this one. He is the great conquerer, the unvanquished one, he wields power over everything. He is the ruler of creations, the chief among creators, the father wielding power over all creators. Bhikkhu, there were recluses and brahmins before you. They loathed and reviled, earth, water, fire, air, the born, the gods, brahma, the creators and the wives of creators. After death they were born in a lower state. Bhikkhu, there were recluses and brahmins before you, they praised, and took pleasure in earth, water, fire, air, the born, the gods, brahma, the creators, the wives of creators. After death they were born in a higher state.

Bhikkhu, I tell you this, Come sir, do what Brahma asks you to do. Bhikkhu, if you exceed the words of Brahma, like a man come to give splendour is turned out with a stick. Or like a man trying to fall into hell was pulled out from earth with hands and feet. Such a thing will happen to you. Come! Good sir, do whatever Brahma asks you to do and do not exceed him. Do you see the retinue of Brahma seated? The Evil One pointed out the retinue of Brahma to me. When this was said, I said thus to the Death Evil One: Evil One, I know you, Brahma and all his retinue are under your power, Do you think that I 'm in your power?

When this was said, Baka brahma said thus to me: Sir, I'm permanent, stable, eternal, complete and not doomed to fall and say that I'm permanent, stable, eternal, complete, and not doomed to fall. Not born, not decaying, not dying, not fading, not re-born, and not seeing any refuge more exalted than this, say I not born, will not decay, die, fade and be re-born, and see no refuge more exalted than this. Bhikkhu, there were recluses and brahmins before this. Their austerities lasted as long as their sign of concentration lasted. Would they know whether there is a refuge more noble than this, or there is no refuge more noble than this? Even if there be no refuge more noble than this, it will bring you only fatigue and trouble.

Bhikkhu, if you cleave to earth, water, fire, air, the born, to gods, to the lords of the populace, to Brahma, I will be at your bidding, protecting wealth, doing your wishes and standing outside. Brahma, I know your goings and your splendour. Baka brahma has such powers and such splendour. Good sir, what do you know about my powers and splendour?

As far as the moon and sun wield power illuminating, the directions,

As far as the thousandfold world systems, you wield power,

You know this world and the other world, and those with greed and without,

And the movements of thoughts of beings 'to be' here and there.

Thus I know your movements, splendour, and power. Baka brahma is so powerful and has such splendour. Brahma you have three other bodies, do you know and see that? You have a body named Aabhassara. (lustrous) Fading from that is born here. Owing to settling there long, lost mindfulness, you do not know, or see that. So I'm your better in higher knowledge..Brahma you have names Subhakinnaa (full of good) and Vehapphalaa(power in the air) You do not know and see that. So I'm your better in higher knowledge. Brahma, I thoroughly know, and become earth to the least possible extent. Do not appropriate it, or take pleasure in it.. Brahma, I thoroughly know water, fire, air, the born, those wielding power over the populace, gods, Brahma, Aabhassaraa, Subhaakinnaa, Vehapphalaa,The Almighty Brahma and All I thoroughly know and become All, to the least possible extent.Do not appropriate All and take pleasure in All. So I'm your better in higher knowledge.Good sir, if you are not born of All, you would be useless and empty. Consciousness is non-indicative limitless and illuminates all over. If you were not born of earth, water, fire, air, gods, the lords of the populace, brahma, Aabhassaraa, Subhaakinnaa, Vehapphalaa, the Almighty brahma, I will now disappear you. Brahma if it is possible do so. Then Brahma saying I will make the recluse Gotama disappear was not able to do so. Then bhikkhus, I said, brahma I will make you disappear. Then I performed a fete of super normal power in which Brahma, his retinue and his gathering could not see me, yet could hear me and I said this verse.

I saw fear in being and non-being, not desiring any being (*1)

I did not hold with interest to anything.

Then bhikkhus, Brahma, the brahma gathering and his retinue were surprised, and said, wonderful is the majesty and the power of the recluse Gotama. Before this we have not seen a recluse or brahmin so majestic and wonderful as the recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyas, who has gone forth

from the clan of the Sakyas. Friends, the populace is amused in being, fond of being and has arisen from being, has completely come out of being (*2).

Then bhikkhus, Death the Evil One took possession of one of the retinue of Brahma and said thus to me. Good sir, since you know so well and is enlightened, do not lead or teach disciples, or give them the going forth. Do not greed for disciples. Bhikkhu, before this there were recluses and brahmins, in the world, who acknowledged they were perfect and rightfully enlightened. They gave the going forth to the disciples and were greedy for disciples. After death they were born in lower states Bhikkhu, before this there were recluses and brahmins, in the world, who acknowledged they were perfect and rightfully enlightened. They did not give the going forth to the disciples and were not greedy for disciples. After death they were born in exalted states. Therefore, bhikkhu, live at ease, abide in pleasantness here and now, the not told is clever, do not advise others. Then I said thus to Death the Evil One: Death I know you, it is not out of compassion that you speak thus. You know that to whomever the recluse Gotama gives the Teaching, they go beyond your power. Evil One, there are those not rightfully enlightened, acknowledging we are rightfully enlightened. As for me, Evil One, I'm rightfully enlightened, and acknowledge I'm rightfully enlightened. Evil One, whether the Thus Gone One teaches and leads disciples or not it is the same to the Thus gone One. What is the reason? Evil One, those defiled desires of demerit heavy with future unpleasant results of birth, decay, death are dispelled from me, pulled out from the roots, made a palm stump, made things that would not rise again. Evil One when the top is cut the palm does not grow. In the same manner, those defiled desires of demerit heavy with future unpleasant results of birth, decay, death are dispelled from me, pulled out from the roots, made a palm stump, made things that would not rise again.

As this discourse is addressed to Maara, and Brahma so this discourse has a synonymn as An address to Brahma.

Notes.

1. I saw fear in being and non-being, not desiring any being did not hold with interest anything. 'bhavecaaha.m bhaya.m disvaa bhava.m ca vibhavesina.m bhava.m naabhivadi.m kinci nandinca upaadiyinti' It is quite clear that the fear should be to live with desires, it is desires that carry us in various directions.

2. The populace is amused in being, fond of being and has arisen from being. 'bhavaraamaaya vata bho pajaaya bhavarataaya bhavasammuditaaya samuula.m bhava.m udabbahiitii' Again we see how humanity amused and fond of living with desires are born because of them.

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