

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

To The Householder Potaliya (Potaliyasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in Anguttaraapa in a hamlet named Aapana in the bazaar. Then the Blessed One put on robes in the morning and taking bowl and robes entered Aapana for alms. After returning from the alms round and after the meal was over, the Blessed One entered a forest stretch and sat at the root of a tree to spend the day. The householder Potaliya too completely dressed and with a tent, walking and wandering for exercise, entered the forest stretch and approached the Blessed One, exchanged friendly greetings and stood on a side. Then the Blessed One addressed the householder.:’Householder, there are seats, if you wish sit.’ When this was said, the householder Potaliya, thought the recluse Gotama, addresses me as a householder, was angry and averse and would not talk. For the second time the Blessed One said ‘Householder, there are seats if you wish sit.’ When this was said, the householder Potaliya, thought the recluse Gotama, addresses me as a householder, was angry and averse and would not talk For the third time the Blessed One said. ‘Householder, there are seats, if you wish sit.’ When this was said, the householder Potaliya, thought the recluse Gotama, addresses me as a householder, was angry and averse and said. ‘It is not suitable that the recluse Gotama should address me as a householder.’ ‘By your signs and attributes, you are a householder.’ ‘Good Gotama, I have come to the end of all my actions and business. Whatever I had as wealth, grains, gold and silver is given to my sons and I do not advise or blame them. I care only for my food and clothing. Thus I have come to the end of all my actions and business.’ ‘Householder, your ending of all actions and business is different from the ending of all actions and business in the noble ones Dispensation.’ ‘Venerable sir, it is good if the Blessed One teaches me the ending of all actions and business in the noble ones Dispensation.’ ‘Then householder, listen carefully, I will preach.

Householder, there are eight ways to end all actions and business in the noble ones dispensation. What are the eight?. Householder, for the purpose of not destroying life, destruction done to life, should be given up. For the purpose of taking what is given, taking the not given should be given up. For the purpose of talking the truth, telling lies should be given up. For the purpose of not slandering, slandering should be given up. For the purpose of not coveting and non-greed, coveting and greed should be given up. For the purpose of maintaining blameless non-aversion, blameful aversion should be given up. For the purpose of maintaining non-anger and non-malice, anger and malice should be given up. For the sake of non-conceit, conceit should be given up. These stated in short conduce to the ending of all actions and business in the dispensation of the noble ones.’ ‘Venerable sir, may the Blessed One explain, out of compassion, these eight things that conduce to the ending of actions and business in the noble one’s Dispensation.’ ‘Householder, listen and attend carefully, I will tell.

It was said, for the purpose of not destroying living things, destroying life should be given up, why was it said? Householder, the noble disciple reflects, on account of whatever bonds I was a destroyer of living things, I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I destroy living things, myself will blame me, when the wise ones know about it, they will blame me. After death, a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions, for the destruction of living things. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those destroying living things, they are not, to those that abstain from destroying life. If it was said, for the purpose of not destroying living things, destroying life should be given up, it was said on account of this.

It was said, for the purpose of taking what is given, taking the not given should be given up. Why was it said so? Householder, the noble disciple reflects. On account of certain bonds, I took what was not given. I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I take the not given, myself will blame me. When the wise ones know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for taking the not given. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those taking the not given, they are not for those that abstain from taking

what is not given. If it was said, for the purpose of taking what is given, taking the not given should be given up it was said on account of this.. .

It was said, for the purpose of telling the truth, telling lies should be given up. Why was it said so?. Householder, the noble disciple reflects on account of whatever bonds, I was telling lies, I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I tell lies myself will blame me. When the wise ones know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for telling lies. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those telling lies. They are not for those that abstain from telling lies. If it was said, for the purpose of telling the truth, telling lies should be given up, it was said on account of this. It was said, for the purpose of not slandering, slandering should be given up. Why was it said so?. Householder, the noble disciple reflects, on account of whatever bonds, I was slandering, I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I slander myself will blame me. When the wise know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for slandering. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those slandering. They are not to those that abstain from slandering.. If it was said, for the purpose of not slandering, it, should be given up, it was said on account of this..

It was said, for the purpose of non-greed and not coveting, greed and coveting should be given up. Why was it said?. Householder, the noble disciple reflects, on account of whatever bonds, I was greedy and coveting, I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I become greedy and covet myself will blame me. When the wise know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for greed and coveting. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those greedy and coveting. They are not for those that abstain from greed and coveting. If it was said, for the purpose of non-greed and not coveting, greed and coveting should be given up, it was said on account of this.

It was said, for the purpose of maintaining blameless non-aversion, blameful aversion should be given up. Why was it said so? Householder, the noble disciple reflects, on account of whatever

bonds, I was maintaining blameful aversion I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I maintain blameful aversion myself will blame me. When the wise ones know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for blameful aversion. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those maintaining blameful aversion. They are not for those that abstain from blameful aversion. If it was said, for the purpose of maintaining blameless non-aversion, blameful aversion should be given up, it was said on account of this..

It was said, for the purpose of maintaining non-anger and non-malice, anger and malice should be given up. Why was it said so? Householder, the noble disciple reflects on account of whatever bonds, I was maintaining anger and malice I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I maintain anger and malice myself will blame me. When the wise ones, know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for anger and malice. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those maintaining anger and malice. They are not for those that abstain from anger and malice. If it was said, for the purpose of maintaining, non-anger and non-malice, anger and malice should be given up, it was said on account of this.

It was said, for the purpose of non-conceit, conceit should be given up. Why was it said so? Householder, the noble disciple reflects, on account of whatever bonds, I was conceited, I have fallen to the method of destroying those bonds. If I be conceited,my self will blame me. When the wise ones know about it, they will blame me. After death a decrease should be expected. These are the bonds and obstructions for conceit. Desires, trouble and displeasure may arise to those conceited. They are not for those without conceit.If it was said, for the purpose of non-conceit, conceit should be given up, it was said on account of this.

.Householder, these are the eight things stated in short and explained, for the ending of business and actions in the dispensation of the noble ones. Yet with this much only, actions and business will not come to the end in the noble ones' Dispensation.' 'Venerable sir, how does the complete ending of actions and business come about in the dispensation of the noble ones. Sir, it would be for my good,

if the Blessed One explain the complete ending of actions and business in the noble one's Dispensation.' 'Listen carefully, householder, I will tell.

Householder, a clever butcher or his apprentice would throw a fleshless blood stained bone, devoid of any flesh, to a hungry dog, waiting near a slaughter- house Householder would that dog licking that blood stained fleshless bone get over his hunger? No, venerable sir, it wouldn't' 'What, is the reason?' 'That dog licking that blood stained fleshless bone, would gain fatigue and weariness only.' 'In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One has said that sensual desires are comparable to a bone, it brings much unpleasantness and much trouble, the danger here is much. This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be turned out, A single interest and attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity should be developed further..

. Householder, a vulture, a crow, or a hawk would snatch a piece of flesh and would fly away with it, another crow, hawk or vulture seeing it would, pursue it, follow it and snatch the piece of flesh. Householder, if that vulture, crow or hawk does not give up that piece of flesh, wouldn't he come to death or deathly unpleasantness?' 'He would, venerable sir'. 'In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One said that sensual desires are comparable to a piece of flesh that brings much unpleasantness, trouble and danger. .This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be turned out. A single interest and attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity, developed further..

Householder, a man with a blazing grass torch would go against the wind Householder, if that man does not give up that blazing grass torch wouldn't he burn his hand, or arm or any other limb small or large? Wouldn't he come to death or deathly unpleasantness?' 'He would, venerable sir.' 'In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One had said that sensual desires are comparable to a blazing grass torch that brings much unpleasantness, trouble and danger. This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be

turned out, A single interest and attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity should be developed further..

Householder, there is a pit of charcoal to the height of a man, free of smoke and flames, a man who likes pleasantness, wants to live comes along and two strong men take him by his hands and feet and drag him along to the pit of charcoal. Householder, wouldn't his body writhe to get away from it? What is the reason?': 'Venerable sir, he knows, if I fall into this pit of charcoal, I will come to death or deathly unpleasantness.' 'In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One has said that sensual desires are comparable to a burning pit of charcoal, that bring much unpleasantness, trouble and danger. This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be turned out, A single interest and attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity should be develop further.

. Householder, a man in his dreams would see delightful monuments, forests, flat lands and ponds, when he wakes he would not see any of them. In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One has said that sensual desires are comparable to a dream, it brings much unpleasantness trouble and danger. This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be turned out, A single interest and attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity should be developed further.

Householder, a man who had borrowed some ear-rings, and fashionable ornaments would deck himself in them and would go to the bazaar. People, seeing him would say, looks like a rich man. When the owners see him, they would take their belongings. Householder, wouldn't that man be better in his own appearance?'. 'He would be better, venerable sir.' 'In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One has said that sensual desires are comparable to borrowed things, that bring much unpleasantness trouble and danger This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be turned out, A single interest and

attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity should be developed further.

Householder, close to a village or hamlet, there is a stretch of dense forest, and in it, there is a tree full of fruits. A man in search of fruits coming to this tree, and not seeing any fallen on the ground, would climb it and eat as much as he liked. He would fill his sling with some of the fruits. Another man with a sharp dagger going in search of fruits, would come to this same tree and not seeing any fruits fallen, and not able to climb the tree, would cut down the tree. Householder, if the man who had climbed the tree had not come down quickly, wouldn't he die, or come to deathly unpleasantness breaking one or the other of his limbs?' 'Yes, venerable sir, he would.' 'In the same manner, the noble disciple reflects. The Blessed One had said that sensual desires are comparable to a tree full of fruits. It brings much unpleasantness trouble and danger. This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom, as it really is, and the various interests, should be turned out, A single interest and attachment should be developed with equanimity (*), in which all worldly material interests fade completely and equanimity should be developed further.

Householder, the noble disciple come to this purity of mind through equanimity recollects the manifold previous births such as one birth, two births, ---with all modes and all details would recollect the various previous births. Householder, the noble disciple come to this purity of mind through equanimity with the heavenly eye purified above human, would see beings disappearing and appearing in un exalted and exalted states, beautiful and ugly in good and bad states---- would see beings according their actions. Householder, the noble disciple come to this purity through equanimity, has released his mind, is released through wisdom and would abide in that release here and now.

Householder, this is the ending of all actions and business in the dispensation of the noble ones. Householder, do you see this ending of all actions and business in the Dispensation of the noble ones, evident in you?' 'What am I, venerable sir, I am far away from ending of all actions and business of the dispensation of the noble ones. Venerable sir, earlier, we thought, the ascetics of

other sects were thoroughbreds and fed them thinking they were thoroughbreds, and placed faith in them. The bhikkhus, we thought were not thoroughbreds, fed them thinking they were not thoroughbreds and did not place faith in them, thinking they were not thoroughbreds. Now we know the ascetics of other sects are not the thoroughbreds, and feed them knowing they are not the thoroughbreds and do not place faith in them. Now we know that the bhikkhus are the thoroughbreds, feed them knowing that they are the thoroughbreds and place faith in them, knowing they are thoroughbreds. Venerable sir, you have produced in me love and reverence for the recluses. Now I understand venerable sir. It is as though something overturned is reinstalled. Something covered is made manifest. As though the path was shown to someone who had lost his way. It is like an oil lamp was lighted for the darkness, so that, those who have sight could see forms. In various ways the Blessed One has explained the Teaching. Now I take refuge in the Blessed One, in the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus. May I be remembered as a lay disciple who has taken refuge from today till life lasts.’

Notes:

(*) This should be seen with equanimity and right wisdom as it really is and the various interests should be turned out. A single interest and attachment should be developed, with equanimity ’yaa ‘yam upekhaa ekattaa ekattasitaa yattha sabbaso lokaamisesu aparisesaa nirujjhanti tam-eva upekha.m bhaaveti.’ Sensual desires are varied, their provinces and pastures are varied. Ie. We have desires of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking, each of these senses seek vivid and various pastures, and these interests should be turned out and a single interest should be developed, that is the mind base should be developed with equanimity

Equanimity is the highest out of the four divine abidings, developing these is real character building, if developed in the correct perspective, leads to extinction, the Blessed One says in this Sutta.