

## Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

To the Householder Upaali (Upaalisutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in Nalanda, in the mango orchard of Pavarika. At that time Niganta Nataputta lived in Nalanda with a large gathering of niganthas. Dighatapassi the nigantha wandered for alms in Nalanda and returning from the alms round after the meal was over approached the Blessed One, exchanged friendly greetings and stood on a side. The Blessed One said, ‘Tapassi, there are seats, if you wish, sit.’ Then Dighatapassi taking a certain low seat sat and the Blessed One said to him:

‘Tapassi, how many actions does Niganthanaataputta declare for doing demerit and its perpetration?’ ‘Friend Gotama, it is not the practise to say action, it is the practise to say punishment.’ ‘Tapassi, how many punishments does Niganthanataputta declare for doing demerit and its perpetration?’ ‘Friend, Gotama, Niganthanataputta has declared three punishments for doing demerit and its perpetration. They are bodily punishment, verbal punishment and mental punishment’. ‘Tapassi, is bodily punishment one, verbal punishment another and mental punishment another?’ ‘Friend, Gotama, bodily punishment is one, verbal punishment is another and mental punishment is another’. ‘Tapassi these three punishments different and dissected, which one does Niganthanataputta declare as the most blameworthy? Is it bodily, verbal or mental punishment?’ ‘Friend Gotama, of these three punishments that are different and dissected, Niganthanataputta declares bodily punishment as the most blameworthy, for doing demerit and its perpetration not so much verbal and mental punishments’. ‘Does Tapassi say bodily punishment?’ ‘Friend Gotama, I say bodily punishment’. ‘Does Tapassi say bodily punishment?’ ‘Friend Gotama, I say bodily punishment’. ‘Does Tapassi say bodily punishment?’ ‘Friend Gotama, I say bodily punishment’. Thus the Blessed One made Dighatapassi to be established in this argument up to the third time.

Then Dighatapasssi said to the Blessed One: ‘Friend Gotama, how many punishments do you declare for doing demerit and its perpetration?’ ‘Friend, Tapassi, it is not the practise of the Thus Gone One to say punishment, it is the practise to say,action.’ ‘Friend Gotama, how many actions do you declare for doing demerit and its perpetration?’. ‘Tapassi, I declare three actions for doing demerit and its perpetration. They are bodily, verbal and mental actions.’ ‘Friend, Gotama, is bodily action one, verbal action another and mental action another?’ ‘Friend, Gotama, of these three actions that are different and dissected, which one does good Gotama declare as most blameworthy? Is it bodily, verbal or mental actions?’ ‘Friend Tapassi, of these three actions, I declare mental action as the most blameworthy, not so much bodily or verbal action.’ ‘Does friend Gotama say mental action?’ ‘Tapassi, I say mental action.’ ‘Does friend Gotama say mental action?’ ‘Tapassi, I say, mental action.’ ‘Does friend Gotama say, mental action?’ ‘Tapassi, I say, mental action.’ Thus Dighatapasssi made the Blessed One to be established in this argument up to the third time, got up from his seat and approached Niganthanataputta.

At that time Niganthanataputta was seated with a large gathering of lay followers headed by foolish Upali. Niganthanaataputta saw Dighatapasssi approaching in the distance and said to him.’Tapassi, from where do you come at this time of the day?’ ‘Venerable sir, from the presence of the recluse Gotama.’ ‘Was there any dispute between you and the recluse Gotama?’ ‘There was a dispute, between me and the recluse Gotama.’ ‘Tapassi, what was the dispute between you and the recluse Gotama?’ Then the nigantha Dighatapasssi related all the conversation between himself and the recluse Gotama. When it was related, Niganthanataputta said to the nigantha Dighatapasssi: ‘Good! Tapassi! You are a learned disciple of the Teacher. You have said the right thing to the recluse Gotama. What is the vile low mental punishment, when compared to the coarse bodily punishment? Bodily punishment is the most blameworthy for doing demerit and its perpetration, not so much verbal or mental punishment.’

Then the householder Upali said to Niganthanataputta. ‘Venerable sir, your learned disciple has said the right thing to the recluse Gotama. What does the vile low mental punishment matter, when compared to the coarse bodily punishment? Bodily punishment is the most blameworthy for doing

demerit and the perpetration of demerit not so much the verbal punishment or the mental punishment. Venerable sir now, I will arouse a dispute with the recluse Gotama. If the recluse Gotama is firm in what good sir Dighatapassi had made him to establish himself. Like a strong man holding a lamb by its furs would pull it and drag it about. Like a strong brewer of liqueur would rinse a huge crater in a deep pond and shake it about taking it by the ears. In the same manner we would pull and drag about the recluse Gotama drawing him to a dispute. Like an elephant of sixty cubits in a deep pond would enjoy the game of washing hemp. We would enjoy the game of washing hemp with the recluse Gotama. Venerable sir, now we will go to dispute this, with the recluse Gotama.’ ‘Go, householder, and arouse this dispute with the recluse Gotama, either I should go and dispute it, or you or good Dighatapassi should do it.’

The nigantha Dighatapassi said, to Niganthanataputta. ‘Venerable sir, I do not like the householder Upaali going to dispute this with the recluse Gotama. He is crafty and knows how to entice the disciples of other sects’. ‘It is not possible Tapassi, that the householder Upali should become the disciple of the recluse Gotama. It is possible that the recluse Gotama should become a disciple of the householder Upali. Either I should go to dispute this, or the householder Upali or the nigantha Dighatapassi should go. The second, and up to the third time Dighatapassi said to Niganthanataputta. Venerable sir, I do not like the householder Upaali, going to dispute this with the recluse Gotama. He is crafty and knows how to entice the disciples of other sects.’ ‘It is not possible Tapassi, that the householder Upali should become the disciple of the recluse Gotama. It is possible that the recluse Gotama should become a disciple of the householder Upali. Either I or the householder Upali or Dighatapassi, you should go, to dispute this.’

Upali the householder said. ‘Venerable sir, I will go.’ Got up from his seat, worshipped and circumambulated Niganthanatapuuta and going to Pavarika’s mango orchard approached the Blessed One, worshipped and sat on a side. Then the householder Upali said to the Blessed One: ‘Venerable sir, did the nigantha, Dighatapassi come here?’ ‘Householder, the nigantha, Dighatapassi came here.’ ‘Venerable sir, was there any conversation with the nigantha Dighatapassi?’ ‘There was a conversation with the nigantha, Dighatapassi.’ ‘Venerable sir, what was the conversation with the

nigantha, Dighatapassi?’ The Blessed One related the whole discussion that took place between him and the nigantha, Dighataapassi. ‘Good, it is well said to the Blessed One by venerable Tapassi. He is a learned disciple of the teacher. What is this vile low mental punishment compared to the coarse bodily punishment? The bodily punishment is the most blameworthy for doing demerit and for the perpetration of demerit, not so much this verbal or mental punishment.’ ‘Householder, if you establish your self on this truth and take council, there will be a conversation.’ ‘Venerable sir, I will be established in the truth and take council, there will be a discussion on this.’

‘Householder, there is a nigantha gravely ill, rejecting cold water and desiring warm water, he dies not even gaining cold water. Where would Niganthanataputta declare he would be born?’ ‘Venerable sir, there are gods named mental beings, he will be born with them. What is the reason? Because he will die bound by the mind.’ ‘Householder, reflect carefully before you reply. What you said earlier does not agree with what you say now. Householder, you have said words like these, I will be established in the truth and take council and there will be a discussion on this.’ ‘Venerable sir, whatever the Blessed One says, bodily punishment is the most blameworthy for doing demerit and for the perpetration of demerit, verbal punishment and mental punishment is nothing in comparison.’ ‘Householder, there is a nigantha observing all the restraints, and experiencing the results of those restraints. When walking to and fro he kills many insects. What, are the results that Niganthanataputta declares to him?’ ‘When unintentional, venerable sir, Niganthanataputta says it is not so blameworthy.’ ‘Householder if it is intentional?’ ‘Then it is the most blameworthy.’ ‘As what does Niganthanataputta classify intention?’ ‘Venerable sir, it is classified as mental punishment.’ ‘Householder, reflect carefully before you reply. What you said earlier does not agree with these words. Householder, you have said words like these, I will be established in the truth and take council and there will be a discussion on this.’ ‘Venerable sir, whatever the Blessed One says, bodily punishment is the most blameworthy for doing demerit and for the perpetration of demerit, not verbal and mental punishments.’

‘Householder, is Naalanda densely populated, are the people of Naalanda rich and prosperous?’ ‘Venerable sir, Naalanda is densely populated and the people are rich and prosperous.’ ‘A man

with a sword in hand would come along saying, in a moment I will make the whole of Naalanda a mass of flesh, a pile of flesh. Would he be able to do it?' 'Venerable sir, even ten, twenty, thirty, not even forty men would be able to do it, in a moment. What could one vile man do?' 'Householder, a recluse or a brahmin, wielding power over his mind, would come, saying, in one moment I will turn the whole of Naalanda into ashes, with a single defiled intention. Householder, would he, wielding power over his mind be able to turn it, into ashes in a moment with a single defiled intention?' 'Venerable sir, a recluse or brahmin wielding power over his mind will turn to ashes ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty such Naalandaas with a single defiled intention. So what to speak of a single vile Naalanda?' 'Householder, reflect carefully before you reply, your earlier words do not agree with the present word. Householder, you have said words like these, I will be established in the truth and take council and there will be a discussion on this.' 'Venerable sir, whatever the Blessed One says, bodily punishment is the most blameworthy for doing demerit and the perpetration of demerit, verbal and mental punishments are nothing in comparison.' 'Householder, do you know how these forests, Dandaka, Kalinga, Mejjha and Mathanga, turned into forests?' 'Venerable sir, I know.' 'What have you heard about it?' 'On account of a sage's defiled mind, these forests, Dandaka, Kalinga, Mejjha and Mathanga have turned into forests, I have heard this.' 'Householder, reflect carefully before you reply, what you said earlier does not agree with what you say, now. Householder, you have said words like these, I will be established in the truth and take council and there will be a discussion on this.'

'Venerable sir, even with the first comparison I was satisfied, desiring to hear the various explanations of the Blessed One I purposely opposed the Blessed One. Now I understand venerable sir. It seems as though something over turned is reinstated. As something covered is made manifest. It is like the path is told to someone who had lost his way. It's as though an oil lamp is lighted for the darkness, for those with sight to see forms. The Teaching is explained in various ways. Now I take refuge in the Blessed One, in the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus. May I be remembered as a lay disciple from today until life lasts.'

‘Householder, think again, before you act, famous people like you, should think carefully before you act.’ ‘Venerable sir, I am very much pleased with these words of the Blessed One.’ ‘Householder, think again before you act, famous people like you should think carefully before you act.’ ‘If the ascetics of another sect gained my discipleship, they would have carried me about Nalanda saying the householder Upali has come to our discipleship, Here the Blessed One says Householder, think again, before you act, famous people like you should think carefully before you act. Now I take the refuge in the Blessed One, the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus for the second time. May I be remembered as a lay disciple who has taken refuge from today until life lasts.’

‘Householder since long your clan has been a welling spring to the niganthas. I think morsel food should be offered to those that come.’ ‘Venerable sir, I am very much pleased with these words of the Blessed One. Householder, since long your clan has been a welling spring to the niganthas. I think morsel food should be offered to them that come’. ‘Venerable sir, I have heard this said about you. Offerings should be given to me only, not to others. Offerings should be, to my disciples not to the disciples of other sects. Offerings made to my disciples are of great fruit, but not the offerings made to others. Here, the Blessed One advises me to make offerings to the niganthas. We would know the time to do it. Now I take refuge in the Blessed One, the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus for the third time. May I be remembered as a lay disciple who has taken refuge from today until life lasts.’

Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upali the gradual Teaching starting with giving gifts, becoming virtuous, about the heavenly states, the dangers of sensuality, the vileness of defiling things, and benefits of giving up. Then the Blessed One knew that the mind of the householder Upali was ready, malleable, free of hindrances, lofty and pleased and the Blessed One gave the special message of the Enlightened Ones: Unpleasantness, its arising, its cessation and the path to the cessation of unpleasantness. Like a pure, clean cloth would take a dye evenly. In that same manner, the dustless, stainless eye of the Teaching arose to the householder Upali, seated there itself. Whatever rises has the nature of ceasing. The householder Upaali, then and there mastered that

Teaching, knew and penetrated it. Doubts dispelled become self confident attained that state where he did not want a teacher, any more, in the Dispensation of the Blessed One (\* 1). He said. 'Venerable sir, we will go now, there is much work to be done.' 'Householder, do as you think it fit.'

Then the householder Upali delighted and pleased hearing the words of the Blessed One got up from his seat, worshipped and circumambulated the Blessed One and went home. He addressed his gate-keeper: 'Friend, gate-keeper, from today the door is closed to the niganthas and niganthis. It is open to the Blessed One, the bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, lay disciples male and female. If any niganthas come, you should tell them: Wait sirs, do not enter. From today the householder Upali has gone to the discipleship of the recluse Gotama. The door is closed to niganthas and niganthis. The door is open to the bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, lay disciples, male and female of the Blessed One. If sirs, you want morsel food stand here. It will be brought here.' The gate-keeper agreed.

The nigantha Diighatapassi heard. The householder Upali has become a disciple of the recluse Gotama. He approached Niganthanataputta and said: 'Venerable sir, I hear that the householder Upali has become a disciple of the recluse Gotama'. 'It is not possible Tapassi, that the householder Upali should become the disciple of the recluse Gotama. It is possible that the recluse Gotama should become a disciple of the householder Upali' The second time and up to the third time nigantha Diighatapassi said to Niganthanaataputta 'Venerable sir, I hear that the householder Upali has become a disciple of the recluse Gotama.' 'It is not possible Tapassi, that the householder Upali should become the disciple of the recluse Gotama. It is possible the recluse Gotama should become a disciple of the householder Upali'. 'Venerable sir, I will go and see whether the householder Upali has become a disciple of the recluse Gotama or not'. 'Go Tapassi, know whether the householder Upali is a disciple of the recluse gotama or not?'

Then the nigantha Diighatapassi approached the householder Upali's house. The gate-keeper saw him coming in the distance, and said. 'Wait sir. Do not enter. From today the householder Upali has become a disciple of the recluse Gotama. The door is closed to niganthas and niganthis. The door is open to the bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, lay disciples, male and female of the Blessed One. If sir, you want

morsel food stand here. It will be brought here'. He saying, 'friend, I'm not in need of morsel food', approached Niganthanataputta, and said. 'Venerable sir, it is the truth. The householder Upali is a disciple of the recluse Gotama. I told you, venerable sir, that it was not suitable, that the householder Upali should dispute this with the recluse Gotama. He is crafty and knows how to entice the disciples of other sects'. 'It is not possible Tapassi, that the householder Upali should become the disciple of the recluse Gotama. It is possible that the recluse Gotama should become a disciple of the householder Upali'. The second and up to the third time, niganthaDighatapassi said to Niganthanataputta. 'Venerable sir, I did not like the householder Upali going to dispute this with the recluse Gotama. He is crafty and knows how to entice the disciples of other sects.' 'It is not possible Tapassi, that the householder Upali should become the disciple of the recluse Gotama. It is possible that the recluse Gotama should become a disciple of the householder Upali. I will now go and see whether the householder Upali has gone to the disciple-ship of the recluse Gotama or not.'

Then Niganthanataputta approached the householder upali's house with a large gathering of nigantas. The gate-keeper saw them approaching in the distance and said. 'Wait sirs. Do not enter. From today the householder Upali is a disciple of the recluse Gotama. The door is closed to nigantas and nigantis. The door is open to the bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, lay disciples, male and female of the Blessed One. If sirs, you want morsel food stand here. It will be brought here.' 'Then friend gate-keeper, approach the houeholder Upali and tell him. Niganthanataputta has come with a large gathering of nigantas and is standing outside. He likes to meet the householder Upali.' The gate-keeper approached the householder Upali and told him. 'Sir, Niganthanataputta has come with a large gathering of nigantas and desires to see you.' 'Then friend, gate-keeper, prepare seats in the middle hall'. The gate-keeper prepared seats in the middle hall and informed the householder Upali. 'The seats are ready in the middle hall, and it is time to do as you think fit'. Then the householder Upali came to the middle hall and choosing the most excellent, seat sat there and told the gate-keeper. 'Friend gate-keeper, approach Niganthanataputta and tell him. Sir, the householder Upali says, if you wish to enter, enter.' Niganthanataputta entered the middle hall with a large gathering of nigantas.



The householder Upali in the past, seeing Niganthanataputta approaching in the distance would go forward receive him, wiping the best seat, with his over shawl would make him sit. That day he sat on the best seat and said, to Niganthanaataputta. 'Sir, seats are prepared if you wish, sit' 'Householder, are you mad? Are you seized? You went saying I will arouse a dispute with the recluse Gotama. Has returned as though done a good argument. Householder, it is like a man who has gone to remove his testicles, having done it has returned. Like one gone to remove his eyes, removing them has returned. In the same manner you went saying I will arouse a dispute with the recluse Gotama, has returned as though done a good argument. Householder, you are enticed by the recluse Gotama.'

'Sir, those enticements are good. My dear ones and blood relations too should be enticed by those enticements. That will be for their good and welfare for a long time. All warriors, all brahmins, all householders, all out castes should be enticed by those enticements. That will be for their good and welfare for a long time. In this world of gods and men together with its Maras, Brahmas, recluses and brahmins and gods and men, all should be enticed by those enticements. That will be for their good and welfare, for a long time. Then sir, I will give you a comparison, for some wise men understand when a comparison is given.

In the past there was a brahmin, decayed and aged. He had a young wife, about to give birth. That young wife said to the brahmin: Brahmin, go to the bazaar and buy a young monkey for my son. Then that brahmin said wait till you give birth, if you give birth to a boy, I will bring him a male monkey and if you give birth to a girl, I will buy a female monkey. For the second and up to the third time the young wife said Brahmin, go to the bazaar and buy a young monkey for my son. Then that brahmin said wait till you give birth, if you give birth to a boy, I will bring him a male monkey and if you give birth to a girl, I will buy a female monkey. As the brahmin was very much attached to the young wife, he bought a male monkey from the bazaar and said. Here is a young monkey for your son. Sir, then that young wife said, to the brahmin: Brahmin, go to the dyer's son Rattapaani with this monkey and get it dyed into the colour yellow. The colour should be beaten well, on both sides and should be well polished. As the brahmin was very much attached to the young wife, he

took the monkey, approached the dyer's son Rattapani and said. Friend Rattapani, I desire this monkey dyed into the colour yellow, the colour should be well beaten in, on both sides and well polished. Then the dyer's son said to him. Sir, the young monkey, will not tolerate the dyeing, the beating in and the polishing. In the same manner sir, the foolish niganta's dispute is not tolerable to the wise. It is not tolerant to those who know. Then sir, in the mean time that brahmin brought a pair of new clothes and approaching the dyer's son Rattapani told him: Friend, Rattapani I desire this pair of clothes dyed into the colour yellow, with the colour well beaten in on both sides and polished. The dyer's son said. 'Sir, this pair of new clothes tolerate the dyeing, the beating on both sides and the polishing.' In the same manner, the dispute of the perfect rightfully enlightened one is tolerant to the wise and not tolerant to the foolish, tolerant to yoking and wise examination.'

'Householder, all the people together with the king know you as a disciple of Niganthanataputta. Whose disciple are you now?' When this was said the householder Upali got up from his seat, arranged his over shawl on one shoulder and clasping hands towards where the Blessed One was, and said. 'Listen sir, how I become a disciple of the Blessed One..

I'm the disciple of the non-deluded, the arrow pulled out, victorious one (\* 2)

He is appeased, blessed, without worries, virtuous and wise.

Doubts overcome, is a happy one, with vomited worldly matters

I'm a disciple of the perfect human, bearing the last body.

The disciplined charioteer has no doubts, about merit.

I'm disciple of the rightfully enlightened one, who has no conceit.

He is patient, endowed with knowledge, is a limitlessly deep sage.

I'm disciple of the Blessed One, released from bonds.

He is an unbound elephant in the forest, pure, with the flag put down (\* 3).

I'm disciple of that tamed Blessed One, gone beyond the world's diffuseness.

He is the seventh sage abiding on the path of Brahmaa. He knows the three vedas.

I'm disciple of that Blessed One. He is like Sakka the king of gods.

He is mindful, wise, not interested or disinterested

I'm disciple of the undisturbed master of the self.

Neither clinging nor giving up, has the highest secluded mind.

I'm disciple of one who has crossed and helps others to cross.

He is thus gone, is without compare.

I'm disciple of that appeased, wise, clever, Blessed One,

With the destruction of craving he is enlightened.

I'm disciple of that Great Man, without compare.'

'Householder, when did you compose this praise for the recluse Gotama?' 'Sir, when there is a great heap of flowers of various kinds, a clever garland maker would make a beautiful garland. In the same manner, sir, the Blessed One has innumerable good qualities, thousands of them, when they are suitable why not allude them.'

Then Niganthanataputta, not able to hear the honour accorded to the Blessed One then and there vomited hot blood.

Notes

1. Whatever has the nature of arising, has the nature of ceasing. The householder Upaali then and there mastered the Teaching, knew and penetrated it. Doubts dispelled became self confident and attained that noble state when he did not want a teacher, any more in the dispensation of the Blessed One. 'Upaalissa gahapatissa tasmi.m yeva aasane viraja.m viitamala.m dhammacakkhu.mudapaadi: ya.m kinci samudayadhamma.m sabba.m ta.m nirodha-Dhamma.m ti. Atha kho upaali gahapati di.t.thadhammo pattadhaamo viditadhammo pariyogaalhadhammo tinnavicikicco

vigatakatha.mkatho vesaa-rajjapatto aparapaccayo satthusaasane’ This Pali quotation gives the description of a disciple attaining the fruits of the stream entry. So many are the good results. He does not need a teacher any more, he becomes confident of the path, dispels doubts, penetrates the Teaching, and he loses a lot of his unpleasantness. He knows what he should do and what he should not do.

2. The non-deluded, the arrow pulled out victorious one. ‘dhiirassa vigatamohassa pahinnakhiilassa vijita vijayassa’ The pulling out of the arrow is the giving up of the self view ‘sakkaayaditthi’ It is a peculiar feature, in the dispensation of the Blessed One, that until one sees these good results in him, he does not see it in another. When he has attained it he does not think twice to applaud the Blessed One.

3. With the flag put down. ‘pannaddhajassa’ Putting down the flag is putting an end to all conceit, ‘maana’ is the word for conceit. Conceit bothers someone a lot on his path to enlightenment.

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