

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Habits of a Dog (Kukkuravatikasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived with the Koliyas, in a hamlet named Haliddavasana. Punna the Koliya, who observed the habits of cattle and naked Seniya who observed the habits of dogs approached the Blessed One. Punna the Koliya who observed the habits of cattle worshipped the Blessed One and sat on a side. Naked Seniya who observed the habits of dogs exchanged friendly greetings with the Blessed One, and curling up like a dog, sat on a side. Then Punna the observer of cattle habits said to the Blessed One. 'Venerable sir, this naked Seniya, observer of dog habits, observe difficult vows, partaking food thrown on the ground, has been observing these vows since long. After death where would his consciousness move? What would be his birth?' 'Punna, leave it alone, do not ask me.' For the second and up to the third time, Punna the observer of cattle habits said to the Blessed One. 'Venerable sir, this naked Seniya, observer of dog habits, observe difficult vows, partaking food thrown on the ground, has been observing these vows since long. After death where would his consciousness move? What would be his birth?' 'Indeed Punna, even when I refused to declare it, you entreat me to tell it. Now I will tell you. Punna, a certain one observes, the vows and virtues of a dog complete, without an interval. Develops the mind and the ways of a dog complete, without an interval. After death he is born with the dogs. If he, maintains the view, leading this holy life and keeping my vows, I will be born a god, or among gods. That is his wrong view. Punna, for wrong view, there are two behaviours of the mind either hell or birth in the animal world (* 1). So Punna, with the completion of those vows he will be born with the dogs or in hell.'

When this was said, naked Seniya, the observer of dog habits cried aloud tears streaming down his face. The blessed One said. 'I told Punna, I refused to declare it, and you entreated me.' 'Venerable sir I do not cry because the Blessed One has declared this. We have been observing these vows for a long time.' Seniya the observer of dog habits said to the Blessed One. 'Venerable sir, this Punna

son of the Koliyas, observing cattle habits, has observed these vows, since long. After death, where would his consciousness move? What would be his birth?’ ‘Seniya, leave it alone, do not ask me.’ For the second and up to the third time, Seniya the observer of dog habits said to the Blessed One. ‘Venerable sir, this Punna the koliya observing cattle habits, has been observing these vows since long. After death where would his consciousness move? What would be his birth?’ ‘Indeed Seniya, even when I refused to declare it, you entreated me. Now I will tell you. Seniya, a certain one observes the vows and virtues of cattle complete, without an interval. Develops the mind and ways of cattle complete, without an interval. After death he is born with cattle. If he, maintains the view, leading this holy life and keeping my vows, I will be born a god, or among gods. That would be his wrong view. Seniya, for wrong view, there are two behaviours of the mind either hell or birth in the animal world. Seniya, with the completion of those vows, he will be born with cattle or in hell.’

When this was said, Punna, the son of the Koliyas, observing vows of the cattle cried aloud with tears streaming down the face. Then the Blessed One said. ‘Seniya. I told you, I refused to declare it. You entreated me.’ ‘Venerable sir, I do not cry because the Blessed One declared it. We have been observing these vows since long. I’m pleased with the Blessed One. The Blessed One can preach the Teaching so that I could give up my cattle vows and this naked Seniya his dog vows.’ ‘Then Punna, attend carefully I will teach.’ Punna the son of the Koliyas agreed and the Blessed One said.:

‘Punna, these four are the actions by me realised and declared. What are the four? Punna, there are dark actions with dark results. There are pure actions with pure results. There are dark and pure actions with dark and pure results and there are neither dark nor pure actions, with neither dark nor pure results. Punna, a certain one intends troublesome bodily behaviour, troublesome verbal behaviour and troublesome mental behaviour (* 2). Intending troublesome bodily, verbal and mental behaviour is born in a world of troubles, feeling troublesome feelings that are only unpleasant. Like beings born in hells. Punna, the done, brings birth to the doer. (* 3)The one born feels those contacts. On account of that, I say beings are the heirs of their actions. To these are said dark actions with dark results. Punna, what are pure actions with pure results? Punna, a certain one intends non-

troublesome bodily behaviour intends non-troublesome verbal behaviour and intends non-troublesome mental behaviour. Intending non-troublesome bodily, verbal and mental behaviour is born in a world free from troubles. Born in a world free from troubles, feels untroubled feelings that are only pleasant. Like beings born in complete happiness. Punna, actions and results bring birth to the doer. The one born feels those contacts. On account of that I say beings are the heirs of their actions. Punna, these are pure actions with pure results. Punna what are dark and pure actions with dark and pure results? Punna, a certain one intends troublesome and non-troublesome bodily behaviour troublesome and non-troublesome verbal behaviour and troublesome and non-troublesome mental behaviour. Intending troublesome and non-troublesome bodily, verbal and mental behaviour is born in a world with and without troubles, and feels feelings pleasant and unpleasant, like beings born as humans. They are once godly and another time hellish Punna, actions and results bring birth to the doer. The born, feels those contacts. On account of that I say beings are the heirs of their actions. Punna, these are pure and dark actions with pure and dark results. Punna what are neither dark nor pure actions with neither dark nor pure results that lead to the destruction of actions? Punna, to dispel dark actions with dark results, an intention is made. To dispel, pure actions with pure results an intention is made. .To dispel dark and pure actions with dark and pure results, an intention is made. Punna to this is said neither dark nor pure actions that bring neither dark nor pure results.They lead to the destruction of actions. Punna, these are the four actions by me realised and declared.’

When this was said, Punna the son of the Koliyas who observed the cattle vows said. ‘Now I understand it. Venerable sir, it is as though something over turned was reinstalled. As something covered was made manifest. As though the path was told to one who had lost his way. As though an oil lamp was lighted for the dark for those with sight to see forms. I take refuge in the Blessed One, in the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus. May the Blessed One bear me as one taken refuge from today until life lasts.’ The naked Seniya observing dog vows said to the Blessed One: ‘Now I understand it venerable sir. It is as though something over turned was reinstalled. As something covered was made manifest. As though the path was told to one who had lost his way, As though an oil lamp was lighted for the dark for those with sight to see forms The Blessed One has explained the Teaching in various ways. Now I take refuge in the Blessed One in the Teaching and the

Community of bhikkhus. May I gain the going forth, and the higher ordination, in the dispensation of the Blessed One.’ ‘Seniya, those of another sect seeking the going forth and the higher ordination in this Dispensation should be on probation for four months. After the four months, if the bhikkhus are satisfied, they would give the going forth and the higher ordination. It is to see the difference in the person.’ ‘Venerable sir if one of another sect would have to be on probation for four months, I would be on probation for four years. May the bhikkhus, when satisfied give me the going forth and the higher ordination.’ Seniya, who was the observer of the dog vows gained the going forth and the higher ordination. Soon after the higher ordination, venerable Seniya, abode withdrawn from the crowd, diligent for dispelling. He attained that highest end of the yoke, for which sons of clansmen rightfully leave the household and become homeless. He here and now realized and abode in it and knew, birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived, what should be done is done, there is nothing more to wish..

Notes:

1. For wrong view there are two behaviours of consciousness either hell or birth in the animal world. ‘micchaadi.t.tikassa kho aha.m Punna dvinna.m gatiina.m a~n~natara.m gati.m vadaami niraya.m vaa tiracchaana yoni.m vaa‘ To behave like cattle or dogs, people have to think much about their behaviour, and have to probe into the minds of animals to know how they think. These kinds of mental actions take one to the animal world here and now. Practising that behaviour much, leads one to the animal world, here and now and after death too. When humans behave like animals, they undergo much difficulty and they are here and now in hell. Again when born as animals, they undergo much difficulty as though, in hell.

2. A certain one intends troublesome bodily behaviour, intends troublesome verbal behaviour and intends troublesome mental behaviour. ‘sabyaabajjha.m kaayasankhaara.m abhisankharoti sabyaabajjha.m vaciisankhaara.m abhisankharoti sabyaabajjha.m manosankhaara.m abhisankharoti’ Here it is quite clear that the Blessed One alludes this to the two observers of cattle vows and dog vows. With difficulty and hard straining they have to think how cattle and dogs think, behave, act,

eat, urinate, excrete and how they do everything else, and bearing up all the difficulty, they go on practising these difficult vows, to gain only very bad results. To be born undoubtedly in a worse state than in which they now are. Here the Blessed One clearly shows that intentions are what really matters for one's actions. These two are here and now in unpleasantness in hell.

3 The done brings birth to the doer. 'iti kho Punna bhuutaa bhuutassa uppattii hoti, ya.m karoti tena uppajjati' This means whatever may be the intended actions of someone, it brings him future results of birth, decay, death etcetra. In whatever fields he had his intentions, in sensuality, in materiality or in immateriality, in that and the other sphere he is born, even here and now and also after death.

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