

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

At Samagama (Sunakkhattasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living in the peaked hall in the Great forest in Vesaali. At that time many bhikkhus were declaring their attainment of perfection in the presence of the Blessed One. Birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived. What should be done is done, there is nothing more to wish. Sunakkhatta, the son of the Licchavis heard many bhikkhus declaring 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived. What should be done is done, there is nothing more to wish.' He approached the Blessed One, worshipped and sat on a side and said. 'Venerable sir, I heard many bhikkhus declaring Birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived. What should be done is done, there is nothing more to wish. Of those declaring perfection how many declare perfection rightfully and are there certain ones declaring perfection out of conceit?'

'Sunakkhatta those declaring perfection in my presence, birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived. What should be done is done, there is nothing more to wish. Some declare perfection rightfully and there are certain ones declaring perfection out of conceit. There Sunakkhatta, those bhikkhus who declare perfection rightfully, it is so to them. About those who declare perfection out of conceit, it occurs to the Blessed One thus. 'To these ones the Teaching should be given. Yet there are the fools who concoct a question and approach the Blessed One to ask it. Then it occurs to the Blessed One, to these the Teaching should be given. It happens that there comes a change to him who hears it. (*1)

'Venerable sir, this is the time to give the Teaching. Hearing it from the Blessed One the bhikkhus will bear it in mind.'

'Then Sunakkhatta listen. I will teach.' Sunakkhatta the son of the Licchavis agreed.

The Blessed One said.'Sunakkhatta, these five are the strands of sense pleasures agreeable pleasant forms cognizable by eye consciousness arousing fondness and sense desires. Agreeable pleasant sounds cognizable by ear consciousness arousing fondness and sense desires, agreeable smells, agreeable tastes, and agreeable touches cognizable by body consciousness arousing fondness and sense desires. Sunakkhatta these are the five strands of sense pleasures..

It happens that a certain person intent on the materiality of the world, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on the materiality of the world. His attention does not settle when words on imperturbability are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in imperturbability. Sunakkhatta, a man gone away from his village long ago, meeting a man gone away from it recently would engage in talk and tell about the prosperity and the well being of the village or hamlet. Would this man, give attention, listen to it and be happy hearing it?'

'Venerable sir, he would listen to it.'

In the same manner, a certain person intent on the materiality of the world, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on the materiality of the world. His attention does not settle when words on imperturbability are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in imperturbability. He is one intent on the materiality of the world.

Sunakkhatta, a certain person intent on imperturbability thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on imperturbability. His attention does not settle when words on materiality of the world are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in the materiality of the world. (*2) Like a yellow leaf strewn from the bond would not regain its greenness. In the same manner a person intent on imperturbability, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on imperturbability. His attention does not settle when words on materiality of the

world are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in the materiality of the world. The man intent on imperturbability is unyoked from the bonds of the material world.

Sunakkhatta, a certain person intent on the sphere of nothingness, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on nothingness. His attention does not settle when words on imperturbability are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in imperturbability. Like a huge rock that has split could not be fixed again.. In the same manner a person intent on the sphere of nothingness, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on nothingness. His attention does not settle when words on imperturbability are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in imperturbability. The man intent on nothingness is unyoked from the bonds of imperturbability..

Sunakkhatta, a certain person intent on the sphere of neither perception nor non perception, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on neither perception nor non perception. His attention does not settle when words on nothingness are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in nothingness. Like a man who has eaten his fill would throw the remains. Sunakkhatta, would that man eat that food again?' 'No, venerable sir he would not.' In the same manner a person intent on the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on neither perception nor non-perception. His attention does not settle when words on nothingness are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in nothingness. The man intent on neither perception nor non perception is unyoked from the bonds of nothingness.

Sunakkhatta, a certain person intent on rightful extinction, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on rightful extinction. His attention does not settle when words on neither perception nor non-perception are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in neither perception nor non-perception. Like a palm of which the top is cut would not grow again. Sunakkhatta, In the same manner a person intent on rightful extinction, thinks, talks, finds pleasure

and associates others intent on rightful extinction. His attention does not settle when words on neither perception nor non perception are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in neither perception nor non perception. The man intent on rightful extinction is unyoked from the bonds of neither perception nor non perception.

Sunakkhatta, it might occur to a certain bhikkhu, craving is the arrow poisoned with ignorance and molested by interest, greed and anger. The arrow of ignorance is dispelled in me, the poisonous ignorance is got over, I'm rightfully intent on extinction, thus he becomes conceited, this is not suitable for one intent on extinction. He yokes himself to seeing unsuitable sights, hearing unsuitable sounds, sensing unsuitable smells, tasting unsuitable tastes, sensing unsuitable touches and thinking unsuitable thoughts, as a result his mind becomes corrupt overcome with greed and he comes to death or deathly unpleasantness. When a man, is shot with a poisoned arrow, his friends, co associates, and blood relations call a surgeon to attend on him. With an instrument he opens up the wound, strives for the arrow, and pulls it out. Thinking there is some poison left, he tells him. 'Good man the poison is removed, yet do not partake unsuitable food , if you do, the wound will fester. From time to time wash the wound and annoint it, if you do not the wound will be covered with blood and pus. Do not walk about in the hot air, if you do, your wound will fester. Good man live in such a manner to heal your wound. It occurs to him. The arrow is pulled out, the poison is dispelled without a remainder, there is no danger to me. So he partakes unsuitable food and the wound festers, does not wash and annoint the wound from time to time and the wound gets covered with blood and pus. He walks about in the hot air and the wound gets covered with fine dust. He does not protect the wound and live in a manner to heal the wound. So he dies on account of the wound or feels deathly unpleasantness. In the same manner it might occur to a certain bhikkhu, craving is the arrow poisoned with ignorance and molested by interest, greed and anger. The arrow of ignorance is dispelled in me, the poisonous ignorance is got over, I'm rightfully intent on extinction, thus he becomes conceited, this is not suitable for one intent on extinction. He yokes himself to seeing unsuitable sights hearing unsuitable sounds, sensing unsuitable smells, tasting unsuitable tastes, sensing unsuitable touches and thinking unsuitable thoughts, as a result his mind becomes corrupt, overcome with greed and he comes to death or deathly unpleasantness.

Sunakkhatta, it might occur to a certain bhikkhu, craving is the arrow poisoned with ignorance and molested by interest, greed and anger. The arrow, of ignorance is dispelled in me, the poisonous ignorance is got over. He becomes rightfully intent on extinction, and does not get yoked to things unsuitable for extinction. He does not yoke himself to seeing unsuitable sights, hearing unsuitable sounds, sensing unsuitable smells, tasting unsuitable tastes, sensing unsuitable touches and thinking unsuitable thoughts, as a result his mind does not become corrupt, and not overcome with greed, he does not come to death or deathly unpleasantness. Like a man shot with a poisoned arrow, is made to attend by a surgeon by his friends, co associates, and blood relations. With an instrument he opens up the wound, strives for the arrow, and pulls it out. Thinking there is some poison left, he tells him. 'Good man the poison is removed, yet do not partake unsuitable food , if you do, the wound will fester. From time to time wash the wound and annoint it, if you do not the wound will be covered with blood and pus. Do not walk about in the hot air, if you do, your wound will fester. Good man live in such a manner to heal your wound. It occurs to him. The arrow is pulled out, the poison is dispelled without a remainder, there is no danger to me. Yet he partakes only suitable food, the wound does not fester, he washes and annoints the wound from time to time and the wound does not get covered with blood and pus. He does not walk about in the hot air and the wound does not get covered with fine dust. He protects the wound and lives in a manner to heal the wound. So he does not die on account of the wound nor does he feel deathly unpleasantness. In the same manner it might occur to a certain bhikkhu, craving is the arrow poisoned with ignorance and molested by interest, greed and anger. The arrow of ignorance is dispelled in me, the poisonous ignorance is got over, I'm rightfully intent on extinction, this is not suitable for one intent on extinction. He does not yoke himself to seeing unsuitable sights, hearing unsuitable sounds, sensing unsuitable smells, tasting unsuitable tastes, sensing unsuitable touches and thinking unsuitable thoughts, as a result his mind is not corrupted, nor overcome with greed, and he does not come to death or deathly unpleasantness.

Sunakkhatta, this is a simile to explain it. This is its meaning. Wound is a synonymn for the six internal spheres. Poisonous anger is a synonymn for ignorance. Arrow is a synonymn for greed. Striving is a synonymn for mindfulness. Instrument is the synonymn for the noble one's wisdom. Surgeon is a synonymn for the Thus Gone One, perfect and rightfully enlightened

'Sunakkhatta, the bhikkhu controlled in the six doors of mental contact, knows that endearment is the root for unpleasantness, destroying endearment is released from endearment. (*3) That the body will be settled with endearment or the mind will be advised for settlement, is not a possibility. (*4) Sunakkhatta, just as there is a prepared drink, colourful and sweet smelling, with poison mixed in it. A man who does not like to die or feel unpleasant comes along. Sunakkhatta, would that man drink that, if he knew, drinking this I will die or come to deathly unpleasantness?'

'Venerable sir, he would not drink it.' 'In the same manner Sunakkhatta, the bhikkhu controlled in the six doors of mental contact, knows that endearment is the root for unpleasantness, destroying endearment is released from endearment. That the body will be settled with endearment or the mind will be advised for settlement, is not a possibility. Just as there is a poisonous snake and a man who does not like to die or feel unpleasant comes along. Would that man hold that snake with his hand if he knew, stung by this snake, I will meet death or deathly unpleasantness?'

'Venerable sir, he would not.' 'In the same manner Sunakkhatta, the bhikkhu controlled in the six doors of mental contact, knows that endearment is the root for unpleasantness, destroying endearment is released from endearment. That the body will be settled with endearment or the mind will be advised for settlement, is not a possibility.'

The Blessed One said thus and Sunakkhatta the son of the Licchavis was delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

Notes

1. It happens, there comes a change in him. 'Iti assa pi hoti a~n~nathatta.m'. This means when he hears the Teaching, he would change his mind, improve his view ie. become one of right view and ultimately enter the stream of the Teaching. This is the first stage of sainthood in Buddhist parlance.

2. A certain person intent on imperturbability, thinks, talks, finds pleasure and associates others intent on imperturbability. His attention does not settle when words on the materiality of the world are spoken. He does not think, talk, find pleasure and associate those interested in the materiality of the world. 'Yam idha purisapuggalo aana~njaadhimutto assa. aana~njaadhimuttassa purisapuggalassa tappatiruupi c'eva katha san.thaati tad anudhamma.m ca anuvitakketi anuvicaareti ta.n ca purisa.m bhajati tena ca vitti.m aapajjati, lokaamispa.tisa.myuttaaya ca pana kathaaya kaccamaanaa na sussuusati na sota.m odhahati na a~n~naa citta.m upa.t.thapeti na ca ta.m purisa.m bhajati na ca tena vitti.m aapajjati'. Imperturbability is quite the opposite of the material world. Yet it is only turning away from the material world, with tears, there is no attainment what so ever, and there is much more to be done before any attainment is attained. One should not be proud of this turning away for any reason.

3. The bhikkhu controlled in the six doors of mental contact, knows that endearment is the root of unpleasantness, destroying endearment is released from endearment. 'upadhii dukkahassa muulanti iti viditvaa nirupadhi upadhisankhaye vimutto.' Endearment is the attachment to wife and children, gold and silver, wealth and property, and all other personal belongings. This inter attachment shared on both sides is endearment.

4. The body will be settled with endearment, or the mind will be advised for settlement, is not a possibility. 'upadhismi.m vaa kaaya.m upasa.mharissati citta.m vaa upadessatii ti na eta.m vijjati.' The body, here is the six doors of internal mental contact, which causes all external data to enter our mind and causes endearment to go to and fro. In short it is endearment that causes unpleasantness. Yet someone should not be misguided to wrong actions hurting others and developing a lot of remorse in oneself. For this will not help him or others to end unpleasantness, which is an ailment in the mind. The the most important aspect of the Teaching of the Blessed One is ending unpleasantness. We have to be quite truthful and honest on this, and should not have pitfalls about this.