

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

Suitability to attain Imperturbability (Ananjasappaya Sutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country, in the hamlet named Kammassadhamma. The Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus from there.

'Bhikkhus, sensuality is impermanent, useless, false, a stupid thing and a deception. It is prattle and foolish talk. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, all these are the domain of death, the pasture of death. The evil mind with sensuality is led to greed, anger and quarrels

Bhikkhus. the noble disciple reflects. Sensuality is impermanent, useless, false, a stupid thing and a deception. It is prattle and foolish talk. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, all these are the domain of death, the pasture of death. The evil mind with sensuality is led to greed, anger and quarrels. What if I develop the mind grown great and much, above the material world, then there will be no greed, anger or quarrels. When these are dispelled my mind will be significant, limitless and well developed. Fallen to this method, when developed much, the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in imperturbability here and now, or with wisdom it is released. (*1) After death, there is a possibility that the led on, consciousness should reach imperturbability. Bhikkhus, I say, this is the first suitability to reach imperturbability.

Again bhikkhus, the noble disciple reflects. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, whatever matter of the four primary elements, is on account of this held on matter. (*2) Fallen to this method, when developed much, the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in imperturbability here and now, or with wisdom it is released. After death, there is a possibility that the led on, consciousness should reach imperturbability. Bhikkhus, I say, this is the second suitability to reach imperturbability.

Again bhikkhus, the noble disciple reflects. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, whatever matter, here and now or hereafter, whatever material perceptions here and now and here after, all these are impermanent. It is not suitable to take pleasure and appropriate what is impermanent. Fallen to this method, when developed much, the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in imperturbability here and now, or with wisdom it is released. After death, there is a possibility that this led on, consciousness should reach imperturbability. Bhikkhus, this is the third suitability to reach imperturbability, I say.

Again bhikkhus, the noble disciple reflects. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, whatever matter, here and now or hereafter, whatever material perceptions here and now and here after and the perception of imperturbability, all these perceptions cease in this sphere of nothingness, without a remainder. It is peaceful and exalted. Fallen to this method, when developed much, the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in imperturbability here and now, or with wisdom it is released. After death, there is a possibility that this led on, consciousness should reach imperturbability. Bhikkhus, I say, this is the first suitability to reach the sphere of nothingness.

Again, bhikkhus, the noble disciple gone to the forest or to the root of a tree reflects. All these are perceived things, of the self, or of the belongings of the self.

Fallen to this method, when developed much, the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in imperturbability here and now, or with wisdom it is released. After death, there is a possibility that this led on, consciousness should reach imperturbability. Bhikkhus, I say, this is the second suitability to reach the sphere of nothingness.

Again, bhikkhus, the noble disciple reflects, I have no greed, hate or delusion for anybody, neither is there greed, hate and delusion to me from anyone. Fallen to this method, when developed much,

the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in imperturbability here and now, or with wisdom it is released. After death, there is a possibility that this led on, consciousness should reach imperturbability. Bhikkhus, I say, this is the third suitability to reach the sphere of nothingness.

Again Aananda, the noble disciple reflects. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, whatever matter, here and now or hereafter, whatever material perceptions here and now and here after, the perception of imperturbability and the perception of nothingness, all these perceptions cease in this sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, without a remainder. It is peaceful and exalted. Fallen to this method, when developed much, the mind, partakes pleasure in that sphere or abides in neither perception nor non perception here and now, or with wisdom it is released. After death, there is a possibility that this led on, consciousness should reach the sphere of neither perception nor non perception. Bhikkhus, I say, this is suitability to reach the sphere of neither perception nor non perception.'

Then venerable Aananda said. 'Venerable sir, the bhikkhu falls to this method, there is not, there is not to me, there will not be, there will not be to me, whatever there is, whatever produced, I discard, thus he gains equanimity. Venerable sir, is that bhikkhu extinguished?'

'Aananda, a certain bhikkhu fallen to this method may extinguish, another would not.'

'Venerable sir, why should a certain bhikkhu fallen to this method extinguish and another not extinguish?'

'Ananda, the bhikkhu falls to this method, there is not, there is not to me, there will not be, there will not be to me, whatever there is, whatever produced, I discard, thus he gains equanimity. He delights in that equanimity, welcomes it, tied to it, his consciousness settles in it. Aananda, the bhikkhu with settlements does not extinguish.'

'Venerable sir, where does the bhikkhu settle'

'Aananda, in neither-perception-nor-non-perception.'

'Venerable sir, he settles in the highest settlement.'

'Aananda, of settlements neither-perception-nor non-perception, is the highest settlement. Ananda, the bhikkhu falls to this method, there is not, there is not to me, there will not be, there will not be to me, whatever there is, whatever produced, I discard, thus he gains equanimity. He does not delight in that equanimity, does not welcome it, not tied to it his consciousness does not settle in it. Aananda, the bhikkhu without settlements is extinguished.'

'Wonderful, venerable sir, the Blessed One has explained the crossing of the flood supported on higher and higher spheres. Venerable sir, how is noble release?'

'Again Aananda, the noble disciple reflects. Sensuality here and now and hereafter, sensual perceptions here and now and hereafter, whatever matter, here and now or hereafter, whatever material perceptions here and now and here after, the perception of imperturbability, the perception of nothingness, and the sphere of neither perception nor non perception, these are things of the self and are holdings, that mind without holdings is the mind's release. Aananda, I have taught you the method to attain, imperturbability, the sphere of nothingness, the sphere of neither perception-nor-non-perception, the method of crossing the flood supported on higher and higher spheres and the noble release. Whatever a teacher should do to his disciples out of compassion, that I have done to you. Aananda, these are the roots of trees, and these are the empty houses. Aananda, concentrate and do not have remorse later. This is our advice to you.'

The Blessed One said those words and those bhikkhus delighted in the words of the Blessed One.