AN 3.54 — Paribbājaka Sutta (A Wandering Ascetic)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

54. Paribbājaka Sutta (A Wandering Ascetic) Once, a certain brahmin, who was a wandering ascetic belonging to another sect, approached The Blessed One and after exchanging friendly greetings, sat to one side and said to The Blessed One:

“Master Gautama, we have often heard the statement:

‘The Dhamma is immediate and directly visible, and not a wait-and-see Discipline.’

“But in what manner is it, Venerable Sir, that –

‘The Dhamma is experienced here and now, for it is immediate and directly visible; not a wait-and-see Discipline; it encourages personal examination and inspection; always leading one forward, hence it is to be realized by the wise, each one for themselves!’

Then, The Blessed One replied, by saying:

a. “Brahmin, a passionate person, overcome and consumed by lust or passion, ends up harming himself, harming others, and harming both, while also feeling mental anguish, which leads him to experience more suffering. But, if he relinquishes the passion or lust in his heart, then he no longer harms himself, nor harms others, nor harms both; thereby he does not feel mental anguish, and this itself saves him from experiencing much suffering.

“After all, brahmin, when a passionate person is burning with passion or lust, consumed and overcome by passion or lust, then he allows himself to engage in behavior that is evil and harmful, whether through his bodily actions, his speech, or his mind. But, when he relinquishes that passion or lust, he then no longer engages in misconduct, whether through his bodily actions, his speech, or his mind.

“Therefore, brahmin, a passionate person who is burning with passion or lust, consumed and overcome by passion or lust, does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to himself; he does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to another, and he does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to both.

“It is only when he relinquishes the passion or lust in him, that he comes to know and see what truly is beneficial to himself. Only then can he know and see what is truly beneficial to others; and thereby also comes to know and see what is truly beneficial to both.

“It is in such a way too, brahmin, that one can understand the meaning of the statement:

‘The Dhamma is experienced here and now, for it is immediate and directly visible; not a wait-and-see Discipline; it encourages personal examination and inspection; always leading one forward, hence it is to be realized by the wise, each one for themselves!’

b. “Brahmin, an angry or irritable person, overcome and consumed by anger or hatred, ends up harming himself, harming others, and harming both, while also feeling mental anguish, which leads him to experience more suffering. But, if he relinquishes the anger or hatred in his heart, he no longer harms himself, nor harms others, nor harms both; thereby he does not feel mental anguish, and this itself saves him from experiencing much suffering.

“After all, brahmin, when an angry or irritable person is burning with anger or hatred, consumed and overcome by anger or hatred, then he allows himself to engage in behavior that is evil and unwholesome, whether through his bodily actions, his speech, or his mind. But, when he relinquishes that anger or hatred, he then no longer engages in misconduct, whether through his bodily actions, his speech, or his mind.

“Therefore, brahmin, an angry person who is burning with anger or hatred, consumed and overcome by anger or hatred, does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to himself; he does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to another; and he does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to both.

“It is only when he relinquishes the anger or hatred in him, that he comes to know and see what is truly beneficial to himself; only then can he know and see what is truly beneficial to others; and therefore, also comes to know and see what is truly beneficial to both.

“It is in such a way too, brahmin, that one can understand the meaning of the statement:

‘The Dhamma is experienced here and now, for it is immediate and directly visible; not a wait-and-see Discipline; it encourages personal examination and inspection; always leading one forward, hence it is to be realized by the wise, each one for themselves!’

c. “Brahmin, a deluded person, overcome and consumed by his delusion and willful ignoring, ends up harming himself, harming others, and harming both, while also feeling mental anguish, which leads him to experience more suffering. But, if he relinquishes delusion or the willful ignoring in him, he no longer harms himself, nor harms others, nor harms both; thereby he does not feel mental anguish, and this itself saves him from experiencing much suffering.

“After all, brahmin, when a deluded person is burning with, consumed and overcome by delusion or his willful ignoring, then he allows himself to engage in behavior that is evil and unwholesome, whether through his bodily actions, his speech, or his mind. But, when he relinquishes that delusion or willful ignoring, he then no longer engages in misconduct, whether through his bodily actions, his speech, or his mind.

“Therefore, brahmin, a deluded person who is burning with, consumed and overcome by delusion or his willful ignorance, does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to himself; he does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to another; and he does not know nor stops to consider what is truly beneficial to both.

“It is only when he relinquishes the delusion or the willful ignorance in him, that he comes to know and see what is truly beneficial to himself; only then can he know and see what is truly beneficial to others; and therefore, also comes to know and see what is truly beneficial to both.

“It is in such a way too, brahmin, that one can understand the meaning of the statement:

‘The Dhamma is experienced here and now, for it is immediate and directly visible; not a wait-and-see Discipline; it encourages personal examination and inspection; always leading one forward, hence it is to be realized by the wise, each one for themselves!’

Then, that wandering ascetic from another sect made the following exclamation, with his hands in reverential salutation:

“Magnificent, Venerable sir! Magnificent, Venerable sir!

“The Blessed One has made The Dhamma clear to me in many ways! It is as though He turned upright what had been turned upside-down, thus revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see.

“I go to The Blessed One for refuge, and to The Dhamma, and to The Saṅgha of Bhikkhus!

“From this day forward, may The Blessed One kindly remember me as a lay disciple of His, who has taken refuge in Him, until the end of life.”