AN 5.179 — AN 5:179 The Householder | Gihi Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN5_179.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

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Text

The Householder

Gihi Sutta (AN 5:179)

Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, surrounded by about 500 lay followers, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. So the Blessed One said to Ven. Sāriputta: “Sāriputta, when you know of a householder clothed in white, that he is restrained in terms of the five training rules and that he obtains at will, without difficulty, without hardship, four pleasant mental abidings in the here & now, then if he wants he may state about himself: ‘Hell is ended for me; animal wombs are ended; the state of the hungry ghosts is ended; planes of deprivation, the bad destinations, the lower realms are ended! I am a stream-winner, never again destined for the lower realms, certain, headed for self-awakening!’

“Now, in terms of which five training rules is he restrained?

“There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking life, abstains from taking what is not given, abstains from sexual misconduct, abstains from lying, abstains from distilled & fermented drinks that cause heedlessness.

“These are the five training rules in terms of which he is restrained.

“And which four pleasant mental abidings in the here & now does he obtain at will, without difficulty, without hardship?

“There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.’ This is the first pleasant mental abiding in the here & now that he has attained, for the purification of the mind that is impure, for the cleansing of the mind that is unclean.

“And further, he is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma: ‘The Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves.’ This is the second pleasant mental abiding in the here & now that he has attained, for the purification of the mind that is impure, for the cleansing of the mind that is unclean.

“And further, he is endowed with verified confidence in the Saṅgha: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples who have practiced well…who have practiced straight-forwardly…who have practiced methodically…who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four pairs, the eight individuals1—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples: deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.’ This is the third pleasant mental abiding in the here & now that he has attained, for the purification of the mind that is impure, for the cleansing of the mind that is unclean.

“And further, he is endowed with virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the observant, ungrasped at, leading to concentration. This is the fourth pleasant mental abiding in the here & now that he has attained, for the purification of the mind that is impure, for the cleansing of the mind that is unclean.

“These are the four pleasant mental abidings in the here & now that he obtains at will, without difficulty, without hardship.

“Sāriputta, when you know of a householder clothed in white, that he is restrained in terms of the five training rules and that he obtains at will, without difficulty, without hardship, four pleasant mental abidings in the here & now, then if he wants he may state about

himself: ‘Hell is ended for me; animal wombs are ended; the state of the hungry ghosts is ended; planes of deprivation, the bad destinations, the lower realms are ended! I am a stream-winner, never again destined for the lower realms, certain, headed for self-awakening!’

“Seeing the danger in hells,

the wise would shun evils,

would shun them,

taking on the noble Dhamma.

You shouldn’t kill living beings

existing, striving;

shouldn’t grasp what isn’t given.

Content with your own wife,

don’t delight in the wives of others.

You shouldn’t drink drinks,

distilled, fermented,

that confuse the mind.

Recollect

the self-awakened one.

Think often

of the Dhamma.

Develop a mind

useful, devoid of ill will,

for the sake of the heavenly world.

When hoping for merit,

provide gifts first

to those peaceful ones, ideal,

to whom what is offered, given,

becomes abundant (in fruit).

I will tell you of those peaceful ones,

Sāriputta.

Listen to me.
In a herd of cattle,
whether black, white,
ruddy, brown,
dappled, uniform,
or pigeon gray:
If a bull is born—
tame, enduring,
consummate in strength,
& swift—
people yoke him to burdens,
regardless of his color.
In the same way,
wherever one is born
among human beings—
noble warriors, brahmans,
merchants, workers,
outcastes, or scavengers—
if one is tame, with good practices,
righteous, consummate in virtue,
a speaker of truth,
with a sense of shame at heart,
one
who’s abandoned birth & death,
completed the holy life
put down the burden,
done the task
effluent-free,
gone beyond all dhammas,

through lack of clinging unbound:

Offerings to this spotless field

bear an abundance of fruit.

But fools, unknowing,

dull, uninformed,

give gifts outside

and don’t come near the good.

While those who do come near the good

—regarded as enlightened,

discerning—

whose conviction in the One Well-Gone

has taken root,

is established:

They go to the world of the devas

or are reborn here in good family.

Step by step

they reach

unbinding

: they

who are wise.”

Note

1. The four pairs are (1) the person on the path to stream-entry, the person experiencing the fruit of stream-entry; (2) the person on the path to once-returning, the person experiencing the fruit of once-returning; (3) the person on the path to non-returning, the person experiencing the fruit of non-returning; (4) the person on the path to arahantship, the person experiencing the fruit of arahantship. The eight individuals are the eight types forming these four pairs.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 130; SN 3:24; AN 3:58; AN 10:92