AN 7.15 — AN 7:15 The Water Simile | Udakupama Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN7_15.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

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Text

The Water Simile

Udakupama Sutta (AN 7:15)

“Monks, seven types of individuals are to be found existing in the world. Which seven?

“There is the case where an individual sinks down once and stays sunk. There is the case where an individual, on coming to the surface, sinks down again. There is the case where an individual, on coming to the surface, stays there. There is the case where an individual, on coming to the surface, opens his eyes & looks around. There is the case where an individual, on coming to the surface, heads across. There is the case where an individual, on coming to the surface, gains a foothold. Then there is the case where an individual, on coming to the surface, crosses over, reaches the far shore, stands on high ground, a

brahman.

“And how does an individual sink down once and stay sunk? There is the case where an individual is endowed with exclusively dark, unskillful qualities. That’s how an individual sinks down once and stays sunk.

“And how does an individual, on coming to the surface, sink down again? There is the case where an individual comes to the surface, (seeing,) ‘Conviction in skillful qualities is good, a sense of shame is good, a sense of compunction (over the results of actions) is good, persistence is good, discernment with regard to skillful qualities is good.’ But his conviction neither remains nor grows, but simply wanes away. His sense of shame, his sense of compunction, his persistence, his discernment neither remain nor grow, but simply wane away. That’s how an individual, on coming to the surface, sinks down again.

“And how does an individual, on coming to the surface, stay there? There is the case where an individual comes to the surface, (seeing,) ‘Conviction in skillful qualities is good, a sense of shame is good, a sense of compunction is good, persistence is good, discernment with regard to skillful qualities is good.’ His conviction doesn’t wane, but instead develops & remains. His sense of shame, his sense of compunction, his persistence, his discernment don’t wane, but instead develop & remain. That’s how an individual, on coming to the surface, stays there.

“And how does an individual, on coming to the surface, open his eyes & look around? There is the case where an individual comes to the surface, (seeing,) ‘Conviction in skillful qualities is good, a sense of shame is good, a sense of compunction is good, persistence is good, discernment with regard to skillful qualities is good.’ With the total ending of (the first) three fetters, he becomes a stream-winner, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening. That’s how an individual, on coming to the surface, opens his eyes & looks around.

“And how does an individual, on coming to the surface, head across? There is the case where an individual comes to the surface, (seeing,) ‘Conviction in skillful qualities is good, a sense of shame is good, a sense of compunction is good, persistence is good, discernment with regard to skillful qualities is good.’ With the total ending of (the first) three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, he becomes a once-returner, who—on returning only one more time to this world—will make an ending to stress. That’s how an individual, on coming to the surface, heads across.

“And how does an individual, on coming to the surface, gain a foothold? There is the case where an individual comes to the surface, (seeing,) ‘Conviction in skillful qualities is good, a sense of shame is good, a sense of compunction is good, persistence is good, discernment with regard to skillful qualities is good.’ With the total ending of the five lower fetters, he is due to arise spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world. That’s how an individual, on coming to the surface, gains a foothold.

“And how does an individual, on coming to the surface, cross over, reach the far shore, stand on high ground, a brahman? There is the case where an individual comes to the surface, (seeing,) ‘Conviction in skillful qualities is good, a sense of shame is good, a sense of compunction is good, persistence is good, discernment with regard to skillful qualities is good.’ With the ending of effluents, he enters & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known and realized them for himself right in the here & now. That’s how an individual, on coming to the surface, crosses over, reaches the far shore, stands on high ground, a brahman.

“These are the seven types of individuals to be found existing in the world.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 35:200; AN 4:5; AN 10:58; Iti 69; Sn 5