

DN 23
Pāyāsi Suttanta
“Prince Pāyāsi”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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This is what I personally heard.

At one time, the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa was travelling in the Kosalan country together with a large Sangha of Bhikkhus, numbering about five hundred, as he reached the Kosalan city named Setavyā. There, the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa stayed to the north of Setavyā, in the Siṃsapā-tree Grove.

Prince Pāyāsi

Now at that time the Prince Pāyāsi, the ruler of Setavyā, was residing there as well, having been given this property by King Pasenadi of Kosala, as a royal gift. Setavyā was a fertile and well-populated region teeming with life, with vast grasslands and forests, with abundant water and grain.

It was then that Prince Pāyāsi had developed an evil view about the world, whereby he wrongly concluded that: ‘Aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.’

Then, the brahmins and householders of Setavyā heard the news that the ascetic Prince Kassapa, a disciple of the ascetic Gautama, is currently travelling in the Kosalan country together with a large Sangha of Bhikkhus, numbering about five hundred, having reached their Kosalan city of Setavyā. And how there, the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa is staying to the north of Setavyā, in the Siṃsapā-tree Grove.

Furthermore, they considered, ‘Now, a good report has spread about the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa that he is wise, learned, intelligent and a versatile speaker, someone who is eloquent and has a good understanding of the Dhamma, being an elder and an Arahant. Thus, it is indeed a great fortune to encounter Arahants like him.’

Then, the brahmins and householders of Setavyā began heading out towards the Siṃsapā-tree Grove by the north gate of the city, as they traveled in groups, representing each district.

Now at that time, Prince Pāyāsi had gone to the upper floor of his terraced longhouse, to take his afternoon rest. And on seeing from above, how the brahmins and householders of Setavyā were heading north towards the Siṃsapā-tree Grove, he asked his steward:

“Steward, why are these people of Setavyā heading out in groups like this, towards the Siṃsapā-tree Grove?”

And the steward replied by saying what he had heard about the matter. That is, the ascetic Prince Kassapa, a disciple of the ascetic Gautama, is currently travelling in the Kosalan country together with a large Sangha of Bhikkhus, numbering about five hundred, and had reached their Kosalan city of Setavyā. And how, the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa was now staying to the north of Setavyā, in the Simsapā-tree Grove. Furthermore, that a good report has spread about the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa that he is wise, learned, intelligent and a versatile speaker, someone who is eloquent and has a good understanding of the Dhamma, being an elder and an Arahant. And how it is indeed a great fortune to encounter Arahants like him.’

“Then, good steward,” responded Prince Pāyāsi, “go to the brahmins and householders of Setavyā and say to them: ‘Lord Pāyāsi, sirs, would like you to wait, for he *too* will join you in going to see the ascetic Prince Kassapa.’

Now, go tell them this, my good steward, before that boy Kassapa quickly convinces them by winning over those foolish and unfit brahmins and householders of Setavyā, as he persuades them that, ‘Aside from this life, there *is* an afterlife, where beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents, and that there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.’ Because, my good steward, none of these three things I mentioned *do* exist!”

“Yes, Sir,” said the steward, as he went to the brahmins and householders and relayed his master’s message.

Shortly after, Prince Pāyāsi, the ruler of Setavyā, accompanied by the brahmins and householders of Setavyā, went to the Simsapā-tree Grove, where he approached the Venerable Kassapa and, after exchanging greetings and expressions of politeness and courtesy, took his seat to one side. This was followed by the brahmins and the householders of Setavyā, where some bowed before the Venerable Kassapa and took their seats to one side, while others simply exchanged greetings and expressions of politeness and courtesy and then took their seats to one side; some saluted him with joined palms at the heart and took their seats to one side; still others simply called out their individual and clan names and sat to one side, and yet others among them simply took their seats to one side, while keeping silent.

Once these courtesies were finished and everyone was seated, Prince Pāyāsi addressed the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa and said:

“Master Kassapa, I hold this view, being of the opinion that ‘Aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.’”

And the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa replied,

“Prince, I have neither seen nor heard of any person holding such a view or being of such an opinion. For how can *anyone* truly declare as you do, that ‘aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions?’

“However, Prince, I will cross-question you on this, and you may reply in whatever way you like.

The Simile about the Moon and the Sun

“What do you think, Prince, would you say that the moon and the sun are in this world or in another world? And would you consider them human or divine?”

“The moon and the sun, Master Kassapa, are to be found in another world, not in this one. And they are divine, not human.”

“Then, Prince, this itself gives you the answer that aside from this life, there is an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Even though Master Kassapa is saying this, I still strongly believe that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Have you, Prince, any proof to validate this belief you have that these things do not exist?”

“I do, Master Kassapa.”

“And how is that?”

“Well, here it is, Master Kassapa. I have had friends, companions, relatives, men of the same blood as myself, who engage in killing living beings, who steal things, or engage in sexual misconduct and are unfaithful to their spouses, who lie and speak falsehood, are slanderous, abusive, with much gossiping, as they are also covetous, being malicious, with evil thoughts and intentions, consuming and engaging in different kinds of intoxicating and mind-altering substances, while holding on to wrong views.

“And after some time has passed, they become sick and gravely ill. Now, when I hear that there is no possibility for them to recover from their illness, I go to them and tell them:

‘Sir, there are some practitioners and ascetics who have the understanding that all those who engage in killing living beings, who steal things, or engage in sexual misconduct and are unfaithful to their spouses, who lie and speak falsehood, are slanderous, abusive, with much gossiping, living with covetousness, being malicious, with evil thoughts and intentions, consuming and engaging in different kinds of intoxicating and mind-altering substances, while holding on to wrong views, when their body breaks down, after death, they will be reborn in a state of misery, in a bad destination, as they reappear immediately into a terrible place, in the lower realms, in hell. Now, if that is what will happen to you, then sir, please come back and somehow inform me that there *is* in fact an afterlife, where beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and that there are in fact consequences and fruits of good and bad actions. Given my relationship with you and trust in you, I *will* believe

your words. Therefore, anything you see and experience will be considered as though they were things *I* have seen and experienced *myself!*'

"Now, even though they all agreed to this, none of them has ever come back to somehow inform me either personally or by sending any messengers in their stead, as proof that these things *do* exist!

"This is my proof that 'aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.'

The Simile of the Criminal

"Well, Prince, let me ask you this in turn, and you may go ahead and respond in whatever way you like.

"What do you think, Prince, let us consider the case of someone who broke the law and was caught red-handed, a criminal, and brought to your court to face your judgement, where your captains say:

'My lord, this criminal was caught in the act; do hand him whatever punishment you deem is appropriate!'

"To which you may reply:

'Well then, men, bind this man's arms with a strong rope tightly behind his back; shave his head and beard; lead him around the city as you parade him from one main square to another, from cross-road to cross-road, all to the sharp beat of a harshly loud drum, until you take him out of the city through the southern gate, and there, to the south of the city, at the spot for executions, you cut off his head.'

Your men then exclaim, 'Yes, lord!' and proceed to carry out your orders. But, in taking him to that spot where he is to be executed, would your men sit him down and grant this criminal his wish, if he were to turn to them and say:

'Executioners, sirs! Could you please wait for me here, while I go and visit my family and friends, my blood relatives, in this or that village or town, and then come back?'

"Or would the executioners just go ahead and cut off his head, as he tries talking his way out of his punishment?"

"Such a wish cannot be granted, Master Kassapa; they would certainly just go ahead and cut off his head."

"Indeed, Prince!

Yet, bear in mind that we are still talking about a criminal, merely within the human realm, where *even* here, it is impossible to fathom that his human executioners would allow him to go

and visit his family and friends, his blood relatives, in this or that village or town, and then come back after having left the sight of his human executioners.

What to say then, about the likelihood for your friends and relatives, once they're dead and now reborn in hell, to be given permission to leave the wardens of Hell, simply because *they* have the wish:

'Let my masters, the Hell Wardens, please wait for me here, while I go and visit my relative, Prince Pāyāsi, and tell him that aside from this life, there is in fact an afterlife! That beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and that there are indeed consequences and fruits of good and bad actions?'

"Therefore, Prince, this itself gives you the answer that aside from this life, there is an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions."

"Even though Master Kassapa has given this example to demonstrate his point, I still strongly believe that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions."

"Have you, Prince, any proof to validate this belief you have that these things do not exist?"

"I do, Master Kassapa."

"And what is that?"

"Well, Master Kassapa, I have had friends, companions, relatives, men of the same blood as myself, who have restrained themselves from killing living beings, abstained from stealing things, from engaging in sexual misconduct and are faithful to their spouses, who neither lie nor speak falsehood, are not slanderous, nor abusive, without any gossiping, as they are also non-covetous, but are kind-hearted throughout, with good thoughts and intentions, without consuming or engaging in any kind of intoxicating or mind-altering substances, as they live with Right View.

"And after some time has passed, they become sick and gravely ill.

Now, when I hear that there is no possibility for them to recover from their illness, I go to them and tell them:

'Sir, there are some practitioners and ascetics who have the understanding that all those who have restrained themselves from killing living beings, who have abstained from stealing things, from engaging in sexual misconduct and are faithful to their spouses, who neither lie nor speak falsehood, are not slanderous, nor abusive, without any gossiping, as they are also non-covetous, but are kind-hearted throughout, with good thoughts and intentions, without consuming or engaging in any kind of intoxicating or mind-altering substances, as they live with Right View, when their body breaks down, after death, they will be reborn in a state of much happiness, in a good destination, as they reappear immediately into a delightful place, in the higher realms, in the heavens. Now, if that is what will happen to you, then sir, please come back and somehow inform me that there *is* in fact an afterlife, where beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and that there are in fact consequences and fruits of good

and bad actions. Given my relationship with you and trust in you, I *will* believe your words. Therefore, anything you see and experience will be considered as though they were things *I* have seen and experienced *myself*!’

“Now, even though they all agreed to this, none of them has ever come back to somehow inform me either personally or by sending any messengers in their stead, as proof that these things *do* exist!

“*This* is my proof that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

The Simile of the Cesspit

“Well then, Prince, I will now offer you a simile, for many intelligent individuals can understand the deep meaning of what is being said through the use of similes.

“So, let us imagine there being a cesspit that is deeper than the height of an adult man, filled to the brim with feces. And a man falls and sinks into it, to the point where he is fully submerged in it over his head. Then, desiring to help this person, you quickly order your men to rush and pull him out from the cesspit, and your men quickly comply and get him out. Next, you direct them to scrape off all the feces covering his body with widely split bamboo pieces, and your men follow your orders as directed. Then, you tell them to scrub his full body from head to toe with pale aromatic clay powder, three times over, repeatedly. And they do so. Next, you tell them to rub him with nourishing oils, and then bathe him three times further, while using fine soap. And your men do, as instructed. Then, you direct them to trim and dress his head hair and beard, and they do so. Next, you tell them to deck him with expensive rare flower garlands and precious fragrances and cover him with the finest of clothing. And they do so. Later, you instruct them to take him up to your palace and surround him with all the luxury and amusements that his five senses could fully enjoy and delight in, experiencing all that one’s sensual pleasures could afford a man. And they do so.

“What do you think, Prince? Now that he is out of the cesspit, well bathed, cleaned, anointed in fragrant oils, trimmed, shaved and combed, dressed in fine clothes, garlanded and adorned, and taken to the upper palace, as he indulges in and is surrounded by so much pleasure that was once not even imaginable, but now he finds himself completely drenched in while being treated to all that the five sensual pleasures could afford, *would* this man desire to leave all of this behind and go take a plunge back, once more, into that foul-smelling cesspit of feces and excrement?”

“Absolutely not, Master Kassapa.”

“And why is that?”

“Because, Master Kassapa, a cesspit is disgustingly foul smelling, dirty, and awful, for it is seen by everyone that it is intolerable and simply repulsive.”

“Just in the same way, Prince, for the Devas human beings are considered to be disgustingly foul smelling, dirty, and awful, because human beings are seen by the Devas as filthy and simply repulsive. Also bear in mind, Prince, that the Devas can smell the odor of human beings even from a distance of seven hundred miles and are, therefore, naturally disgusted by them. What to say then about the likelihood for your friends and relatives, once they’re dead and now reborn in the heavens, after having done so many good deeds and now reaping those benefits in utter happiness and delight? They too would not even *think* of coming back to inform you that there is in fact an afterlife.

“Therefore, Prince, this itself gives you the answer that aside from this life, there is an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Even though Master Kassapa has given this example to demonstrate his point, I still strongly believe that aside from this life, there is no afterlife.”

“Can you, Prince, prove this belief of yours to be true?”

“I can, Master Kassapa.”

“And just how exactly, Prince?”

“Well, Master Kassapa. I have had friends, companions, relatives, men of the same blood as myself, who have restrained themselves from killing living beings, abstained from stealing things, from engaging in sexual misconduct and are faithful to their spouses, who neither lie nor speak falsehood, are not slanderous, nor abusive, without any gossiping, as they are also non-covetous, but are kind-hearted throughout, with good thoughts and intentions, without consuming nor engaging in any kind of intoxicating or mind-altering substances, as they live with Right View. Then, after some time has passed, they become sick and gravely ill.

“Now, when I hear that there is no possibility for them to recover from their illness, I go to them and tell them:

‘Sir, there are some practitioners and ascetics who have the understanding that all those who have restrained themselves from killing living beings, who have abstained from stealing things, from engaging in sexual misconduct and are faithful to their spouses, who neither lie nor speak falsehood, are not slanderous, nor abusive, without any gossiping, as they are also non-covetous, but are kind-hearted throughout, with good thoughts and intentions, without consuming nor engaging in any kind of intoxicating or mind-altering substances, are going to be reborn in a happy destination, in a heavenly realm; in fact, that they will reappear in the company of the Devas of Tāvātimsa Heaven.

Now, having lived the kind of life that you lived, if that is indeed what will happen to you, then sir, please come back and somehow inform me that there *is* in fact an afterlife, where beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents, and that there are in fact consequences and fruits of good and bad actions. Given my relationship with you and trust in you, I *will* believe your words. Therefore, anything you see and experience will be considered as though they were things *I* have seen and experienced *myself*!’

“Now, even though they all agreed to this, *none* of them has ever come back to somehow inform me either personally or by sending any messengers in their stead, as proof that these things *do* exist!

“*This* is my proof that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

The Tavatimsa Heaven Simile

“Well, Prince, let me ask you this in turn, and you may go ahead and respond in whatever way you like.

“Humanly speaking, what we call a century, which is a hundred years, equals but one single day and night for a Deva living in the Tavatimsa Heaven. Thirty of those make up a single month, and twelve of those, a full year.

Now, Prince, bear in mind that the lifespan of each of these Devas in the Tavatimsa Heaven runs in the thousands of our human years. Therefore, if one of your friends or blood-relatives were to be reborn into the Tavatimsa Heaven, and if somehow, it happens that they *do* remember their promise to you, they tell themselves:

‘Well, let me first spend some time here, not long, just two or three days, and then, I will go to our friend, Prince Pāyāsi, and tell him that there is in fact an afterlife! But first, let me enjoy these heavenly five kinds of sensual pleasures and delights that this wonderful realm offers!’

“What do you think, Prince? Would your friends and relatives come back and be able to see you or inform you about the fact that there *is* an afterlife?”

“Not at all, Master Kassapa, because by then, I would have been long dead and gone. But how can I truly know for sure, whether the Devas of the Tavatimsa Heaven *do* exist or that they have such long lifespans? Therefore, Master Kassapa, I do not believe in the afterlife!”

The Simile of a Man Born Blind

“You saying that you ‘do not believe in the afterlife, or that the Devas of the Tavatimsa Heaven do not exist, or that they cannot have such long lifespans,’ is like a man who was born blind, unable to see visible objects, nor able to distinguish what is dark from the bright, nor identify them as blue, yellow, red or brown; someone who could not see things by looking at them to know if the ground in front of him is even or uneven, whether it is smooth or rough, nor is he able to see the stars, or the moon, or even the sun.

“What you just said, Prince, is equivalent to this man saying:

‘There are no such things as dark or bright, nothing that could be called blue, yellow, red, or brown; nothing that looks even or uneven, nothing that is smooth or rough to be seen. Similarly,

there are no stars, no moon, no sun. And there is nobody who can honestly declare that they can truly see these things, because these things, in actuality, do not exist! Because I cannot see them!'

“What do you think, Prince? Would this blind man be talking words that are true or smart?”

“Of course not, Master Kassapa! Because there *are* in fact visible objects that are dark and bright, and undoubtedly, there are those who *can* see and distinguish these things, because after all, these things *are* true, as are those who can actually see and witness them. Therefore, I do not consider it to be the same situation here, nor fair to compare me with the blind man, as I happen to *see* these objects *for* myself.”

“Nevertheless, Prince, when you declare that you do not believe me or in the fact that there *is* an afterlife, you become like the blind man in this simile, denying them categorically as you do, by insisting that *because* you cannot see all those things I mentioned earlier, with *your* physical eyes, then they simply must not exist!

“Prince, there are recluses and brahmins who live secluded in the wilderness, dwelling in remote places, away from the crowds and their noises, as they meditate with keen attention, ardently striving and maintaining a diligent practice to the point, where they experience the Divine Eye, and by having purified it, they gain the ability to see beyond the sight of a normal human being. They are then able to see both *this* world *and* the others, as well as see how beings come and go, moving around into different realms, without the need of parents. It is in this manner, Prince, that the other world is seen and witnessed for what it is and not the way *you* imagine it, which you expect to first be seen by *you*, through *your* physical eyes, in order for you to believe that they do in fact, exist.

“Therefore, Prince, this itself gives you the proof that aside from this life, there *is* in fact an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Even though Master Kassapa has given this example to prove his point, I still strongly believe that aside from this life, there is no afterlife.”

“Have you, Prince, any evidence to support your claim?”

“I have, Master Kassapa.”

“And what is that, Prince?”

“Well, Master Kassapa, I regularly meet both recluses and brahmins, who behave virtuously and are of good character, with a solid moral foundation, and who, nevertheless, want to continue living and therefore, are not eager to die, as they shun and avoid pain as much as possible. Now, if those recluses and brahmins actually knew for *sure* that a much better life awaits them somewhere beyond this world, once they leave this body and are dead, then, they would just go ahead and ingest poison, or use the knife on themselves, or put an end to their life by hanging or throwing themselves off a steep cliff, in order to gain the happiness that they think exists beyond.

“So, the very fact that they do *not* kill themselves and end their own lives, clearly shows that they are unsure and even ignorant of what awaits them, once this life is no more. That then is the reason, after all, for them to live such virtuous lives, behaving the way they do, and being of good character, with a solid moral foundation who, nevertheless, want to continue living and therefore, are *not* eager to die, as they shun and avoid pain, as much as possible.

“*This* is my evidence, Master Kassapa, to support the claim of how aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

The Pregnant Woman Simile

“Well then, Prince, I will now offer you another simile, for many intelligent individuals can understand the deep meaning of what is being said through the use of similes.

In the past, there lived a brahmin man who had two wives, one of whom had a son ten or twelve years old, while the other wife was still pregnant, about to give birth. It was at that time that the brahmin died.

“However, once his father had died, the brahmin’s boy turned to his father’s other wife and said: ‘Lady, whatever treasures my father possessed, whether gold, silver, or grains, all that is now mine! There is nothing whatsoever left for you here. Now, turn over to me whatever it is you possess of my father that rightfully should be mine!’

“Then, the pregnant brahmin woman replies:

‘My dear child, you must wait a bit longer until I give birth, for if the child to be born is a boy, then one portion of the wealth will be his. But, if the child is a girl, then she will be yours.’

“But the boy continued for a second time with his harassing demands, and a third time, insisting that the inheritance left by his father was to be solely his.

Then, the co-widow of the brahmin, becoming exasperated and desperate, took a knife and went into the inner bedroom of the house, and cut her belly open as she tried to find out whether the fetus was to be a boy or a girl!

“In this manner, as a result of her foolish and thoughtless action, this woman, in her attempt to gain financial gain was instead ruined completely, by not only destroying her own life, but also the life of her unborn infant, along with whatever wealth that may have come to her and the child in the future.

“In a similar fashion, Prince, applying a foolish and thoughtless mode of seeking, which lacks wisdom, while trying to find out the existence of the afterlife, will instead take you straight to ruin, very much like that foolish and thoughtless brahmin woman.

“Prince, those virtuous recluses and brahmins do not make such errors or mistakes as forcing their life force to expire or the ripening of situations when it is not yet time for them to ripen.

Being wise, they instead persevere and wait for the maturity and ripening to happen, without forcing anything.

“In addition, those with virtuous behavior *do* realize the need that there still is for their life. After all, they *do* know that so long as they are still alive and living with purity, they can continue to have the opportunity to make merits, while living and working with compassion for the benefit and welfare of the many, bringing happiness and peace into the lives of both Devas and humans. “So, Prince, let this then be sufficient proof for you, that there *is* in fact an afterlife, where beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents, and that there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Even though Master Kassapa has given this example to prove his point, I still strongly believe that aside from this life, there is no afterlife.”

“Have you, Prince, any evidence to support this?”

“I have, Master Kassapa.”

“And what is that exactly, Prince?”

“Well, Master Kassapa, take the example of a criminal, caught red-handed and brought in front of me to be punished for his crimes. And my guards tell me:

‘Lord, this man is a criminal caught in the act; do hand him whatever punishment you deem is appropriate!’

To which I would reply,

‘Well then, men, put this man in a large clay jar, and while he is still breathing, put the lid on the jar and make it a tight fit, without leaving any room for air to get in or out, as you seal the openings with wet leather binds and then cover them up with wet clay. Next, have the jar lifted and placed on a furnace and then light the fire from underneath.’

My men go ahead and obey, doing exactly as I commanded them.

Now, once they make sure that the man is dead, they bring the jar back down and untie all the leather binds by removing the dried-up clay, as we all try to carefully observe and investigate to see if, perhaps, we can capture a glimpse of the man’s life-force exiting from the clay jar. But, Master Kassapa, no such proof has ever been found coming out of the jar!

“*This*, therefore, is my evidence, Master Kassapa, to support the claim of how, aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.

The Afternoon Siesta Simile

“Well then, Prince, I will now respond by asking you this question, and you may go ahead and answer as you please.

“Prince, have you ever had an afternoon siesta following a meal, where you saw dreams of pleasure gardens, delightful meadows, and forests that surround lovely ponds, full of lotuses?”

“I have, Master Kassapa.”

“But, during that time, were you not also being watched over by attendant women, eunuchs, dwarves, and maidens?”

“Yes, I was, Master Kassapa.”

“But did anyone of them see your life-force entering or leaving your body, while you were napping?”

“No, they did not, Master Kassapa.”

“So, even though you’re still alive but merely sleeping, your attendants keeping a watchful eye on you *cannot* see some life-force leaving or entering your body. Then, how could you *even* expect to witness the life-force of a *dead* man leaving his body?

“So, you see, Prince, this provides you with yet another valid evidence, that there *is* in fact an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Master Kassapa, even though you are making a compelling case, I still am not convinced, for I strongly believe that aside from this life, there is no afterlife.”

“Based on what evidence, Prince?”

“I will now demonstrate, Master Kassapa.”

“Go ahead, Prince.”

“Well, Master Kassapa, take the example of a criminal, caught red-handed and brought in front of me to be punished for his crimes. And my guards tell me:

‘Lord, this man is a criminal caught in the act; do hand him whatever punishment you deem is appropriate!’ To which I would reply,

‘Well then, men, his punishment is strangulation with a bowstring, but before you execute him, take this criminal, and weigh him on the scales while he is still alive. Then, once he is dead, go ahead and weigh him again. So, they follow my command and do as I instruct. And as a result, we see how, although the man was limber, softer, and even lighter prior to his death, however, after death, his body becomes stiff, rigid, and much heavier.

“*This* is how I can prove to you that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

The Hot Iron Ball Simile

“Well now, Prince, I will give you another simile, for some intelligent individuals can discern the meaning of what is said by way of a simile.

“What you presented, Prince, sounds very similar to a case, where a man heats up a ball of iron all day, and when it starts glowing as it gets red-hot, he puts it on the scale to weigh it. Much later, when the ball of iron had fully cooled and doused, he would weigh it again. Now, when do you think that ball of iron would appear to be limber, softer, and even lighter? When it was glowing red-hot, or when it was cool and doused?”

“Master Kassapa, when that ball of iron is burning and being heated up all day, glowing red-hot, then it certainly will become less rigid, as it is now limber, softer, and lighter. But, when it is no longer on the fire, and is cooling down and being doused, it becomes stiff, rigid, and heavier.”

“In just the same way, Prince, when this body is being supported by the various elemental factors of life, such as vitality, internal body-heat, and sense awareness, then it is limber, softer, and lighter. But when it lacks these three essential components, then it becomes stiff, rigid, and heavier.

“This simile should serve as another evidence for you, Prince, that there *is* in fact an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Master Kassapa, I still am not convinced, for I believe that aside from this life, there is no afterlife.”

“On what grounds, Prince, do you make this statement?”

“I will show you, Master Kassapa.”

“Go ahead, Prince.”

“Well, Master Kassapa, take the example of a criminal, caught red-handed and brought in front of me to be punished for his crimes. And my guards tell me:

‘Lord, this man is a criminal caught in the act; do hand him whatever punishment you deem is appropriate!’ To which I would reply,

‘Well then, men, I want you to kill him but without damaging his outer skin, inner skin, muscles, ligaments, sinews, bones, and even his marrow. That way, hopefully we may get to see his life force leaving the body. And my men do as they are instructed. But nothing is seen escaping or leaving his body. Then, when he is half dead, I have my men turn him onto his back on the floor, as we carefully observe to see whether his life force might leave then. However, we still do not see a life-force. Then, I direct my men to bend him over, to turn him onto his right side, his left side, to have him stand upright, to have him suspended upside down, and even when I tell my men to beat the dead body with sticks, fists, stones, or swords, as well as shake and flail the body

this way and that, and my men were to do *exactly* as I say, nevertheless, *no one* witnesses any life-force leaving the body.

“After all, we clearly see that, though on this dead body there still are to be found the eyes with which to see, while there obviously being forms all around us to be witnessed, yet nothing is seen. Similarly, while there clearly are to be found ears with which to hear, and sounds all around us, yet nothing is heard. With the nose too being present and intact, and odors to be detected around us, still the dead body does not pick up any of it. And similarly, with the tongue that was intact, it did not become aware of any flavors or tastes, and with the body too; no touches were felt by the body.

“In that way also, Master Kassapa, I know *for sure* how aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

The Simile of the Trumpeter

“In that case, Prince, I shall give you another simile, for it is by way of similes that some intelligent individuals discern the meaning of what is being said.

“There was once, Prince, a trumpeter, who travelled to the outer regions of the country, taking his trumpet along with him. Reaching one such village in the borderland, he stood there in the middle of the town square and started playing his trumpet by blowing on it three times, and then placed it down on the ground, as he sat right next to it.

“Now, Prince, those villagers living in this far off region of the country’s borderland, started wondering: ‘What is this sound, so charming, so lovely, so sweet, so invigorating, so captivating? And *how* is it being produced?’

“Then, these people came and gathered around the trumpeter and began asking him: ‘Sir, what is this sound, so charming, so lovely, so sweet, so invigorating, so captivating, and how is it being produced?’

“And the man replied,
‘This, Sirs, is what people call a ‘trumpet.’”

“Then, these villagers started moving the trumpet this way and that, laying it on its side, standing it upright, turning it upside down, even shaking it with their hands and hitting it with their fists, with sticks, stones, and swords, all the while yelling at the trumpet:
‘Speak, master trumpet! Speak, master trumpet!’

“But shout as they did, still, no sound came out of the trumpet.

“Then, Prince, the trumpeter thought to himself:

‘Truly, these people of the borderland are infantile and foolish! Without any rational thinking they are expecting the trumpet to make sounds, by hitting and shaking it!’

“Then, reaching for the trumpet, the trumpeter picked up his instrument and as the people looked on, he started playing on his trumpet by sounding it three times. Then, by taking the trumpet with him, he went on his way.

“Then, Prince, those people of the borderland began talking to each other, and concluded: ‘It seems then, friends, that this thing called a ‘trumpet’ makes a sound *only* when it is held by someone, together with some effort, and in the presence of wind. But when there are none of these things, then it does not make any sounds.’

“In just the same way, Prince, when this body is being supported by the various elemental factors for life, such as vitality, internal body-heat, and sense awareness, then it is able to move here and there, able to stand up or sit down, able to see visible forms with the eyes, hear sounds with the ears, smell odors with the nose, taste flavors with the tongue, touch objects with the body, as well as know and process thoughts or ideas. But, in the absence of those three elemental factors for life, it can no longer do any of these things mentioned.

“Therefore, Prince, let this be your proof that there *is* in fact an afterlife; beings are reborn immediately as they reappear into other realms without any parents; and there are consequences and fruits of good and bad actions.”

“Master Kassapa, I am not convinced, because I still believe that aside from this life, there is no afterlife.”

“On what basis, Prince, do you continue making this statement?”

“I will show you, Master Kassapa.”

“And how, Prince?”

“Well, Master Kassapa, take the example of a criminal, caught red-handed and brought in front of me to be punished for his crimes. And my guards tell me:

‘Lord, this man is a criminal caught in the act; do hand him whatever punishment you deem is appropriate!’ To which I would reply,

‘Well then, men, I want you to cut his flesh open by skinning him. Perhaps we’ll see his life force leave through there!’

“And my men do as they are instructed. But nothing is seen escaping or leaving his body. Then, when he is half dead, I have my men turn him onto his back on the floor, as we carefully observe to see whether his life force might leave from there. Still, we do not see a life-force. Then, I direct my men to cut deeper by going into his inner skin, muscles, ligaments, sinews, bones, and even his marrow, hoping to see his life force leaving the body. Although my men do exactly as I directed them to do, nevertheless, there is no life-force seen leaving the body.

“*This* is my proof, Master Kassapa, on which basis I make this statement how, aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.”

The Simile of the Fire-Worshipping Jaṭila Ascetic

“In that case, Prince, I will give you yet another simile, as it is through the use of similes that some intelligent individuals discern and understand the meaning of what is being taught.

“There was once, Prince, a fire-worshipping Jaṭila ascetic dwelling in a leaf-hut in a forested area. One day, some people traveling in a caravan were passing through that area, and they decided to spend the night there. After having spent one night near the Jaṭila ascetic’s hermitage, they all left. Then the Jaṭila ascetic thought to himself:

‘Now that the caravan has moved on, let me go and explore their campsite. Perhaps I may find something useful there, left behind.’

“So, having reached the abandoned campsite, to his surprise, he found a little boy, left behind lying on its back. And he thought to himself:

‘Well, it is neither acceptable nor appropriate to stand here doing nothing, watching another human being die! Let me then take this little boy back to my kuti, take care of him, nourish him somehow, and raise him myself, for there is nobody else here who could look after him.’ And he did so.

“Then, the boy having reached ten or twelve years of age, the Jaṭila ascetic one day had something or other to do in the city. So, he said to the boy:

‘My Son, I will be going to the city for some time, and I need you to keep the fire constantly burning, so never let it die out. And if you *do* notice it being extinguished, here is a hatchet, along with some fire sticks and the fire drill, so that even if you *do* let the fire out, you can still rekindle it.’

“Having instructed the boy in this way, the Jaṭila ascetic went off on his journey to the city. Meanwhile, the child, lost in his play, let the fire die out. Then he remembered:

‘Father told me, ‘My son, I will be going to the city for some time, and I need you to keep the fire constantly burning, so never let it die out. And if you do notice it being extinguished, here is a hatchet, along with fire sticks and the fire drill, so that even if you do let the fire out, you can still rekindle it.’

“Wondering what to do next, the boy then chopped the fire-drill with the hatchet, thinking to himself:

‘Perhaps that’s how I can get a fire started.’ But, seeing that this did not produce any fire, he split the fire-drill with the hatchet into two more pieces, into three, four, five, ten, a hundred pieces, until he turned it into tiny splinters, and then pounded it in a mortar, and tossed it into the wind, thinking that by doing so, a fire *could* get started. But no fire was ignited.

“Then the Jaṭila ascetic, having finished his business in the city, returned to his own hermitage and discovering what had taken place, exclaimed to the boy:

‘Child, why did you let the fire die out!’

“Father, the fire went out because I was too busy playing my games. Then, I remembered what you had told me, and I immediately tried rekindling it. So, I started chopping the fire-drill with the hatchet to get fire, but I could not make a fire with it. But I kept trying, until I had smashed the fire-drill into smaller and smaller bits, and finally pounded it in a mortar and tossed it into the wind, but I was not able to start a fire!’

“Then the Jaṭila thought to himself,

‘This boy is quite foolish and stupid! How inefficient and unskillful is this boy! For how could anyone think that such a senseless act could somehow ignite a fire?’

“So, by keeping the boy close to him to observe the proper way of starting a fire, he took a bundle of dry fire sticks, and by rubbing them against each other, made a fire as he showed the boy,

‘*This* is the way to make fire, my son. Not the foolish and stupid manner with which you tried making it!’

“In the same way, Prince, you are resorting to foolish and stupid means of trying to prove to yourself that the afterlife does *not* exist!

“So, enough of this, Prince! Give up already this evil and harmful wrong view! Just give it up! And stop creating such enormous suffering and pain for yourself for many years to come, as a result of holding on to these wrong views!”

“Even though Master Kassapa explained this, I still cannot bring myself to renounce this evil and harmful wrong view. For, King Pasenadi of Kosala, as well as other kings from different lands, all know me as someone who staunchly and obstinately holds to the opinion and the conviction that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.

“After all, if I, Master Kassapa, renounce these views, people will then say of me:

‘How foolish is Prince Pāyāsi; how stupid that he should continue grabbing and holding on to something, even though he knows it to be wrong and evil!’

“Therefore, it is out of spite and contempt that I will keep holding on to it. It is a matter of self-respect!”

The Simile of the Two Caravan Leaders

“Well then, Prince, I will give you a simile for this, for it is through the means of a simile that some intelligent individuals can discern the meaning of what has been said.

“Once upon a time, Prince, a massive caravan of a thousand carts was traveling from the eastern side of the country to the west.

“Now, it so happened that wherever the caravan went, they would quickly consume whatever grass, firewood, water, and all available greenery was to be found around them.

“Leading this caravan were two leaders, each commanding and responsible for five hundred of the carts, with their animals and humans, manning the oxen. Realizing the problem they were facing, the two caravan leaders had this idea:

‘This is a massive caravan, made up of a thousand carts, which means that wherever we go, we consume everything. What if we were to divide this caravan into two, with five hundred carts in each, as we continue on this journey separately?’ And they agreed to do so.

“So, by dividing the massive caravan into two equal sections, one of the leaders collected his share of large quantity of grass, firewood, and water, and continued to the next leg of their journey with his carts and group of fellow travelers.

On the second or third day, having already been quite separated from the other leader and his group, this caravan leader saw a dark-skinned man with red eyes, coming towards him from the opposite direction, armed with a quiver, wearing a garland of lotuses around his neck, with all his clothing and hair drenching wet, with donkeys pulling his chariot, which had its wheels all splashed with wet mud.

On seeing this man, the caravan leader cried out:

‘Where do you come from, Sir? Where are you headed?’

‘I come from such a region and am travelling to such a region,’ said the being.

‘But, sir, has there really been an abundant rainfall recently in the arid region where you come from?’

‘Oh yes, indeed, Sir! There has been much abundant rainfall recently where I am travelling from. So much so, that the traveling paths are all covered with fresh green grass, wood, and water wherever you turn to look! So, don’t worry about lack in supplies, Sir! Throw away the grass, firewood, and water you have been burdening yourself with! That way, by traveling light, you will go much faster and reach your destination sooner, and without tiring your animals and men.’

“Then this caravan leader turned to his men driving his carts and informed them of what the dark-skinned man with red eyes had told him. And just as he was told, he instructed his men to throw away all their provisions of grass, firewood, and water, as they would not be needing them further up the road, plus, they would be travelling light, and with speed.’

‘So be it, sir,’ his men replied, and they did, as instructed. But, after a full day’s journey to their first caravan rest stop, they neither came across any grass, nor firewood, nor water, and similarly on their second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and even, seventh rest stop. Thus, the caravan with its animals and men with their five hundred carts, traveling without any provisions after so many days and nights, thirsty and hungry, all perished and died in the dry and parched desert. Meanwhile, the cunning Yakkha, whom they had met a week earlier, rushed in and devoured all,

both the animals and the men of the caravan, leaving nothing of their bodies, except their dry bones.

“Meanwhile, the second caravan leader, thinking that his companion, the other caravan leader, must already be well underway on his journey with his five hundred carts, also took with him a large quantity of grass, firewood, and water and set off on his way, behind his fellow leader.

“A few days into his journey, this caravan leader too saw that same dark-skinned Yakkha with red eyes, coming towards him from the opposite direction, armed with a quiver, wearing a garland of lotuses around his neck, with all his clothing and hair drenching wet, driving a chariot drawn by donkeys, with its wheels splashed with wet mud.

On seeing this man, the caravan leader cried out:

‘Where do you come from, Sir? Where are you headed?’

‘I come from such a region and am travelling to such a region.’

‘But, Sir, has there been an abundant rainfall recently in the arid region where you come from?’

‘Oh yes, indeed, Sir! There has been much abundant rainfall recently in that region where I was. So much so, that the traveling paths are all covered with fresh green grass, wood, and water wherever you turn to look! So, don’t worry about lack in supplies, Sir! Throw away the grass, firewood, and water you have been burdening yourself with! That way, by traveling light, you will go much faster and reach your destination sooner and without tiring your animals and men.’

“Then, this caravan leader turned to his men who were guiding his carts and told them what the dark-skinned ‘man’ with red eyes had told him, and how he had encouraged them to throw away all their provisions of grass, firewood, and water, as they would not be needing them further up the road, plus, they would be travelling light and with speed.’

“Furthermore, the caravan leader added:

‘However, friends, this man is *not* someone whom we know; therefore, he is to be considered neither a friend nor a blood relative. And as such, he cannot be fully trusted. So, we are not going to throw away our valuable grass, firewood, and water, as we continue on this journey through the desert, with our carts full of the necessary provisions.

‘So be it, Sir!’ The men replied in agreement with their caravan leader, and they continued on their journey with their carts full of provisions, as before.

“And while travelling through the successive caravan rest stops, they neither saw any grass, nor firewood, nor water; but at the seventh rest stop, they came across the other caravan that had come to destruction. And they saw what was left of the caravan were the dried skeletons of the animals and the men, with five hundred carts, all devoured by that cunning Yakkha.’

“In the same way, Prince, your foolishness and stupidity in not listening to reason as you keep trying to prove to yourself that the afterlife does *not* exist, will only lead you to much ruin, just like that first caravan leader!

“So, enough of this, Prince! Give up already this evil and harmful wrong view! Just give it up! And stop creating such enormous suffering and pain for yourself for many years to come, as a result of holding on to these wrong views!”

“Even though Master Kassapa explained this, I still cannot bring myself to renounce this evil wrong view. For, King Pasenadi of Kosala, as well as other kings from different lands, all know me as someone who staunchly and obstinately holds on to the opinion and the conviction that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.

“After all, if I, Master Kassapa, renounce these views, people will then say of me:
‘How foolish is Prince Pāyāsi, how stupid that he should continue grabbing and holding on to something, even though he knows it to be wrong and evil!’
“Therefore, it is out of spite and contempt that I will keep holding on to it. It is a matter of self-respect!”

The Simile of the Dung-Carrying Swineherd

“Well then, Prince, I will now give you another simile, for it is through the use of similes that some intelligent individuals discern the meaning of what has been said.

“Once upon a time, Prince, there was a swineherd who was traveling from his own village to another village, when he saw a heap of dry cow dung that was discarded. He then thought to himself, ‘What a large quantity of dry dung that’s been thrown away which, fortunately for me, I can take to my pigs and have them feed on it. Perhaps, I can just carry it away, myself!’

“So, by taking off his upper robe, and spreading it out on the ground, the swineherd began collecting the dry dung into it, tied it into a bundle, lifted and placed it over his head, and went on his way.

Suddenly, it began to rain and soon it turned into a heavy downpour, unusual for that season, and the man became drenched and completely covered with muck, all the way to the tips of his nails, dripping and oozing with dung, but he kept walking unaffected, as he went on his way, still carrying the burden of dung over his head, dripping all over.

“People seeing him on the main road began shouting and yelling at him:
‘You sir, you must be stark mad! Are you out of your mind? Have you lost your senses, carrying all that filth, dripping down to your fingertips, with oozing dung?’

“But the swineherd kept on retorting to all these people:
‘It is *you* who are mad! *You* that are out of your minds! Not realizing that *with* this precious bundle my pigs will get fed!’

“In just the same manner, Prince, in hearing you talk like this, you sound very much like that swineherd, carrying his precious load of dripping cow dung over his head!

“So, enough of this, Prince! Give up already this evil and harmful wrong view! Just give it up! And stop creating such enormous suffering and pain for yourself for many years to come, as a result of holding on to these wrong views!”

“Even though Master Kassapa explains this while using his similes, I still cannot bring myself to renounce this evil wrong view. For, King Pasenadi of Kosala, as well as other kings from different lands, all know me as someone who staunchly and obstinately holds to the opinion and conviction that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.

“After all, if I, Master Kassapa, renounce these views, people will then say of me: ‘How foolish is Prince Pāyāsi, how stupid that he should continue grabbing and holding on to something, even though he knows it to be wrong and evil!’ Therefore, it is out of spite and contempt that I will keep holding on to it. It is a matter of self-respect!”

The Simile of the Two Gamblers

“Well then, Prince, I will give you yet another simile, for it is through the means of a simile that some intelligent individuals can discern the meaning of what is being said.

“Once upon a time, Prince, there were two gamblers playing with dice. One of the two, whenever he had a losing throw in the game, would quickly swallow the dice, claiming it was a draw and that his turn did not count. Now, the other gambler, on seeing his opponent’s deceit, pretended not to have seen the cheating going on, and instead made him think that his opponent had won. Next, while asking for the dice back, for a moment, the second gambler proposed how it would be a good idea, in order to improve their chances of success, for both gamblers to make an offering before the next game, to ‘bless’ the game. The cheating gambler handed over the dice, in agreement.

Then the second gambler, taking the dice, began secretly smearing poison over them and gave them back to the other player, encouraging him to have a go at yet another game of dice, to which the other gambler quickly consented. Again, they played, and again the opponent gambler swallowed the dice after a losing throw, but this time, he fell to the ground, dying slowly in convulsions.

And the second gambler looked on as he stood on top of him, saying these bitter words:

*The clueless fool swallowed the dice, not knowing
It was smeared all over with sharply burning poison
Swallow it then, you cheating gambler! Swallow it, you deceiver!
Go ahead and taste the bitter fruit that you deserve!*

“In just the same manner, Prince, you sound very much like that deceitful gambler in this simile!

“So, enough of this, Prince! Give up already this evil and harmful wrong view! Just give it up! And stop creating such enormous suffering and pain for yourself for many years to come, as a result of holding on to these wrong views!”

“Even though Master Kassapa explains this to me, I still cannot bring myself to renounce this evil wrong view. For, King Pasenadi of Kosala, as well as other kings from different lands, all know me as someone who staunchly and obstinately holds to the opinion and the conviction that ‘aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions.’

“After all, if I, Master Kassapa, renounce these views, people will then say of me: ‘How foolish is Prince Pāyāsi, how stupid that he should continue grabbing and holding on to something, even though he knows it to be wrong and evil!’ Therefore, it is out of spite and contempt that I will keep holding on to it. It is a matter of self-respect!”

The Simile of the Man Who Chose to Carry Hemp

“Well then, Prince, I will give you yet another simile, for it is through the means of a simile that some intelligent individuals can discern the meaning of what has been said.

“Once upon a time, Prince, there was a town where its people were suddenly forced to evacuate and leave their homes, never to return. And a man, knowing of this, told his friend:

‘Come, good friend. Let us go to that town, and perhaps we can come across some treasures left behind!’

“His friend agreed, and soon both were on their way to that town with no inhabitants. Once there, they saw how on one of the streets there was a pile of hemp lying around, abandoned, and left behind. Then, one of them said to the other:

‘Here is a pile of hemp. Why don’t we make for ourselves bundles out of this pile of hemp, and carry them off with us?’ The other consented, and they both did as was suggested.

“Carrying their individual bundles with them, the two friends continued exploring through the vacant streets and alleyways of the town, until they saw a large amount of hemp thread that was cast aside, and one of them said to the other:

‘This large amount of hemp thread thrown away is *exactly* what we wanted the hemp for in the first place! So, friend, you throw away your bundles of hemp, I’ll throw away mine, and we’ll each take away a load of hemp thread.’

“His friend, however, said:

‘No, friend, I’ve already carried this load of hemp a long way. Plus, it is nicely tied up and bundled together. I’m quite satisfied with the hemp I am carrying. So, if you want to, you can put yours down and pick up the loads of hemp thread instead.’ And his friend discarded his own bundle of hemp and picked up the load of hemp thread instead.

“Continuing on further through the streets, they came to another area of the town where they saw a large pile of hemp fabric. And the one carrying the load of hemp thread said excitedly to the other:

‘This large amount of abandoned hemp fabric is *exactly* what we wanted the hemp or the hemp thread for, in the first place! So, friend, you throw away your bundles of hemp, I’ll throw away my load of hemp thread, and we’ll each take away a load of hemp fabric.’

“His friend, however, said:

‘No, friend, I’ve already carried this load of hemp a long way, plus, it is nicely tied up and bundled together. I’m quite satisfied with the hemp I am carrying. So, if you want to, you can put your load of hemp thread down and pick up the loads of hemp fabric instead.’

And his friend discarded his load of hemp thread and picked up the load of hemp fabric instead.

“Going further on their expedition through the streets, they saw a large pile of flax, and further up the road, they saw piles of linen thread, and then loads of linen cloth, all abandoned and free for the taking. And at each one of these stops, the man made the plea to his friend for them to change their carrying load for something of a higher value, while his friend obstinately continued to refuse and chose to retain his bundles of hemp instead.

“Moving on further, they came across large pieces of iron, copper, tin, lead, and silver, until they reached a place where they found many quantities of gold left behind and free for the taking. And similarly, as before, the one friend urged his companion to replace his carrying load for something of a higher value, but his friend continued to obstinately refuse and chose to retain his bundles of hemp instead. Meanwhile, his friend abandoned his own load of silver that he had already collected, and instead replaced it with the large quantities of gold he had just found.

“Finally, both men returned to their own village, where one was carrying with him bundles of hemp, while the other, gold.

“There, the man who brought bundles of hemp pleased neither his parents, nor his own family, nor his friends, and as a result experienced neither pleasure, nor contentment, nor happiness. But the other man, with his load of gold, pleased his parents, his own family, his friends, and as a result, experienced much pleasure, contentment, and happiness.

“In just the same manner, Prince, you sound very much like that obstinate friend among the two, in this simile!

“So, enough of this, Prince! Give up already this evil and harmful wrong view! Just give it up! And stop creating such enormous suffering and pain for yourself for many years to come, as a result of holding on to these wrong views!”

The Taking of Refuge

Then, Prince Pāyāsi said:

“The very first simile, offered by Master Kassapa, was already enough in pleasing my heart, for I found myself both delighted and inspired by it. But, in my eagerness to hear more, I feigned opposition by challenging him with new problems, so that Master Kassapa may grant me more ways of seeing through the delusion of my original opinions and convictions.

“It is excellent, Master Kassapa! It is marvelous, Bhante! Master Kassapa has made the Dhamma clear to me in many ways. I feel as though Master Kassapa has turned upright what was overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the correct path to someone who was lost, as though one were to bring a lamp into the darkness for all those with eyesight to see.

“Bhante, I go for refuge to the Blessed One Gautama, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of Bhikkhus. May Master Kassapa accept me as one of his lay disciples, who has taken refuge in him as my teacher, from today until the end of my life.”

“Master Kassapa, I want to make a great sacrifice. May I be instructed by Master Kassapa now, on how to go about making a sacrifice that can bring me a long life, with lasting joy and happiness?”

“Any kind of offering, Prince, where oxen, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, chicken, or any other animals are sacrificed or butchered, is neither a wholesome one, nor does it bring fruits that are beneficial, nor is it splendid, nor it leads to prosperity. Similarly, an offering where the recipients possess wrong views, wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong collectedness of mind, also is neither considered to be a wholesome one, nor does it bring fruits that are beneficial, nor is it splendid, nor does it lead to prosperity.

“Prince, it is just as if a farmer were to enter a forest while taking along with him his plough and some seeds, and there, in an untilled and uncultivated barren area, strewn with stumps of trees that are still in the ground, he starts sowing the seeds he carries that are unhealthy, badly damaged, spoiled, and infertile. The skies also do not provide him with enough rain for the possibility of their growth.

“Now, would those seeds have a chance to grow, increase, or even reach maturity, so that the farmer would get abundant returns from his crops?”

“He would not indeed, Master Kassapa.”

“In the same manner, Prince, any kind of offering, where oxen, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, chicken, or any other animals are sacrificed or butchered, is neither considered to be a wholesome one, nor does it bring fruits that are beneficial, nor is it splendid, nor it leads to prosperity. Similarly, an offering where the recipients possess wrong views, wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong collectedness of mind, also is neither considered to be a wholesome one, nor does it bring fruits that are beneficial, nor is it splendid, nor does it lead to prosperity.

“On the other hand, Prince, any kind of offering, where oxen, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, chicken, or any other animals are not sacrificed nor butchered, is considered to be a wholesome one, for it *does* bring fruits that are beneficial, as it is splendid, and leads to much prosperity. Similarly, an offering where the recipients possess the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right collectedness of mind, also is considered to be a wholesome one, for it *does* bring fruits that are beneficial, as it is splendid, and leads to much prosperity.

“Prince, it is just as if a farmer were to enter a forest while taking along with him his plough and some seeds, and there, in a tilled and cultivated fertile spot of land, empty of stumps of trees, he starts sowing the seeds he carries that are healthy, undamaged, pure, and fertile. The skies also do provide him with enough rain for the possibility of their growth.

“Now, would those seeds have a chance to grow, increase, or even reach maturity, so that the farmer would get abundant returns from his crops?”

“He would indeed, Master Kassapa.”

“In the same manner, Prince, any kind of offering, where oxen, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, chicken, or any other animals are not sacrificed nor butchered, is considered to be a wholesome one, for it *does* bring fruits that are beneficial, as it is splendid, and leads to much prosperity. Similarly, an offering where the recipients possess the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right collectedness of mind, also is considered to be a wholesome one, for it *does* bring fruits that are beneficial, as it is splendid, and leads to much prosperity.

The brahmin Youth, Uttara

Then, Prince Pāyāsi began offering gifts to recluses and brahmins, the poor, the homeless, traveling beggars, and all those in need. However, the offering he made included food that was prepared with rough gruel, with stale and fermenting vegetables and fruits, along with coarse robes with rough and damaged fringes, as gifts to those in need of clothes.

Now, the person who was placed in charge of overseeing these offerings was a young brahmin by the name of Uttara. Every time Uttara gave one of these gifts to recipients, he kept saying:

“With this offering, may my connection with Prince Pāyāsi *only* extend as far as *this* world, but not beyond to the next one.”

Eventually, the Prince came to hear about the young brahmin’s words, and he summoned him to his court, and asked:

“Is it true, Uttara, that every time you give one of my gifts to recipients, you keep saying the words:

‘With this offering, may my connection with Prince Pāyāsi *only* extend as far as *this* world, but not beyond to the next one.’

“Yes, Sir,” replied Uttara, the young brahmin.

“But why, Uttara, do you say such words? After all, when making offerings, are we not expected to seek the merits for the resulting fruits of our generosity?”

“Sir, the gifts of food you are having us donate to recipients is prepared with rough gruel, with stale and fermenting vegetables and fruits; food that you would not even *want* to touch with your foot, let alone eat it yourself!

“Also, the robes made with coarse material and rough and damaged fringes we are giving away to the poor and needy as clothing, are of the type of material that you would not *even* think of using as rags to wipe your palace floors with, let alone want to wear it yourself!

“Prince, you are very dear to my heart, and I cherish having you as my lord. But *how* can I reconcile what is dear and beloved to me with what is ugly and deplorable?”

“Well then,” exclaimed Prince Pāyāsi, “My dear Uttara, from now on, see to it that only food that I enjoy eating, and clothing that I enjoy wearing are offered to those in need!”

“Very good, sir!” Joyfully replied Uttara, and did as he was instructed.

In this way, Prince Pāyāsi continued offering gifts, but he did so neither through engaging in the act of giving himself by offering the gifts with his own hands, nor in offering them with the purity of intention, but did so thoughtlessly and without consideration, as he sought the gains from giving away things, which he knew in his heart he did not care for nor valued himself, giving so called ‘gifts’ that were to be discarded. And, when the time came and his body broke down, after death, he was reborn into the company of the Four Great Kings, in the empty mansion of the Acacias.

Meanwhile, the brahmin youth Uttara - who had objected to Prince Pāyāsi for making offerings of refuse food and unusable clothing, and had challenged the donor’s position of heart in making gifts to the needy, having instead offered choice food and clothing to the people, with his own hands, thoughtfully, and with the purity of intention in his heart - when the time came, and his body broke down, after death, was reborn into the bright and happy world, in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods, in the Tavatīmsa Heaven.

Pāyāsi, the Deva

During that time, the Venerable Gavampati used to frequently go for his afternoon meditation to the empty mansion of the Acacia, in the realm of the Four Great Kings. There, Pāyāsi, now one of the Devas of that realm, approached him and, after paying homage to him, stood to one side. Seeing him standing thus, the Venerable Gavampati asked:

“And who might you be, friend?”

“I, sir, was known as Prince Pāyāsi.”

And the Venerable Gavampati said:

“Weren’t you once of the firm conviction that aside from this life, there is none; beings are not reborn immediately nor reappear into other realms without any parents; and that there are neither consequences nor fruits of good and bad actions?”

“Yes, Bhante, I was indeed,” replied the Deva Pāyāsi, as he continued, “it was through the kindness of the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa that I was finally able to free myself by abandoning those evil and unwholesome wrong views and opinions.

“And where is your faithful friend, the young brahmin Uttara, reborn now?”

“Uttara, Sir, who had objected to me for making offerings of refuse food and clothing and challenged my position of heart in making gifts to the needy, and had instead offered choice food and clothing to the people, with his own hands, thoughtfully, and with the purity of intention in his heart - when the time came, and his body broke down, after death, was reborn in a bright and happy world, in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods, in the Tavatimsa Heaven.

“Bhante, although I had offered gifts, I had done so neither through engaging in the act of giving by offering the gifts myself with my own hands, nor offered them with the purity of intention, but did so only thoughtlessly and without consideration, as I sought the gains from giving away things that I knew in my heart I did not care for nor valued myself, giving so called ‘gifts’ that were to be discarded. And when the time came and my body broke down, after death, I was reborn into the company of the Four Great Kings, here, in this empty mansion of the Acacias.

“But the young brahmin Uttara, with *his* own hands, thoughtfully, and with the purity of intention in his heart, after his death, was reborn into the bright and happy world, in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods, in the Tavatimsa Heaven.”

Later, on his return to the world of humans, the Venerable Gavampati recounted to all what he had seen and heard from Prince Pāyāsi, the Deva.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu