

Samyutta Nikāya 12

Connected Discourses on Causation

66. Exploration

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Kurus, where there was a town of the Kurus named Kammasadamma. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus:

“Bhikkhus!”

“Venerable sir!” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

“Do you engage in inward exploration, bhikkhus?”

When this was said, one bhikkhu said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, I engage in inward exploration.”

“How do you engage in inward exploration, bhikkhu?”

The bhikkhu then explained but the way he explained did not satisfy the Blessed One. Then the Venerable Ānanda said: “Now is the time for this, Blessed One! Now is the time for this, Fortunate One! Let the Blessed One explain inward exploration. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the bhikkhus will remember it.”

“Then listen and attend closely, Ānanda, I will speak.”

“Yes, venerable sir,” the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

“Here, bhikkhus, when engaged in inward exploration, a bhikkhu explores thus: ‘The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world headed by aging-and-death: what is the source of this suffering, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does aging-and-death come to be? When what does not exist does aging-and-death not come to be?’

“As he explores he understands thus: ‘The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world headed by aging-and-death: this suffering has acquisition as its source,

acquisition as its origin; it is born and produced from acquisition. When there is acquisition, aging-and-death comes to be; when there is no acquisition, aging-and-death does not come to be.'

"He understands aging-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading on that is in conformity with its cessation. He practises in that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practising for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of aging-and-death.

"Then, engaging further in inward exploration, he explores thus: 'What is the source of this acquisition, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does acquisition come to be? When what is absent does acquisition not come to be?'

"As he explores he understands thus: 'Acquisition has craving as its source, craving as its origin; it is born and produced from craving. When there is craving, acquisition comes to be; when there is no craving, acquisition does not come to be.'

"He understands acquisition, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading on that is in conformity with its cessation. He practises in that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practising for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of acquisition.

"Then, engaging further in inward exploration, he explores thus: 'When this craving arises, where does it arise? When it settles down, upon what does it settle?'

"As he explores he understands thus: 'Whatever in the world has a pleasant and agreeable nature: it is here that this craving arises when it arises; it is here that it settles when it settles down.' And what in the world has a pleasant and agreeable nature? The eye has a pleasant and agreeable nature in the world: it is here that this craving arises when it arises; it is here that it settles when it settles down. So too the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind have a pleasant and agreeable nature: it is here that this craving arises when it arises; it is here that it settles when it settles down.

“Bhikkhus, whatever ascetics and brahmins in the past regarded that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as permanent, as happiness, as self, as healthy, as secure: they nurtured craving. In nurturing craving they nurtured acquisition. In nurturing acquisition they nurtured suffering. In nurturing suffering they were not freed from birth, aging, and death; they were not freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; they were not freed from suffering, I say.

“Whatever ascetics and brahmins in the future will regard that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as permanent, as happiness, as self, as healthy, as secure: they will nurture craving. In nurturing craving they will nurture acquisition. In nurturing acquisition they will nurture suffering. In nurturing suffering they will not be freed from birth, aging, and death; they will not be freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; they will not be freed from suffering, I say.

“Whatever ascetics and brahmins at present regard that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as permanent, as happiness, as self, as healthy, as secure: they are nurturing craving. In nurturing craving they are nurturing acquisition. In nurturing acquisition they are nurturing suffering. In nurturing suffering they are not freed from birth, aging, and death; they are not freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; they are not freed from suffering, I say.

“Suppose, bhikkhus, there was a bronze cup of a beverage having a fine colour, aroma, and taste, but it was mixed with poison. Then a man would come along, oppressed and afflicted by the heat, tired, parched, and thirsty. They would tell him: ‘Good man, this beverage in the bronze cup has a fine colour, aroma, and taste, but it is mixed with poison. Drink it if you wish. If you drink it, it will gratify you with its colour, aroma, and taste, but by drinking it you will meet death or deadly suffering.’ Suddenly, without reflecting, he would drink the beverage—he would not reject it—and thereby he would meet death or deadly suffering.

“So too, bhikkhus, whatever ascetics and brahmins in the past ... in the future ... at present regard that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as permanent, as happiness, as self, as healthy, as secure: they are nurturing craving. In nurturing craving ... they are not freed from suffering, I say.

“Bhikkhus, whatever ascetics and brahmins in the past regarded that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as impermanent, as suffering, as nonself, as a disease, as fearful: they abandoned craving. In abandoning craving they abandoned acquisition. In abandoning acquisition they abandoned suffering. In abandoning suffering they were freed from birth, aging, and death; they were freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; they were freed from suffering, I say.

“Whatever ascetics and brahmins in the future will regard that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as impermanent, as suffering, as nonself, as a disease, as fearful: they will abandon craving. In abandoning craving ... they will be freed from suffering, I say.

“Whatever ascetics and brahmins at present regard that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as impermanent, as suffering, as nonself, as a disease, as fearful: they are abandoning craving. In abandoning craving ... they are freed from suffering, I say.

“Suppose, bhikkhus, there was a bronze cup of a beverage having a fine colour, aroma, and taste, but it was mixed with poison. Then a man would come along, oppressed and afflicted by the heat, tired, parched, and thirsty. They would tell him: ‘Good man, this beverage in the bronze cup has a fine colour, aroma, and taste, but it is mixed with poison. Drink it if you wish. If you drink it, it will gratify you with its colour, aroma, and taste, but by drinking it you will meet death or deadly suffering.’ Then the man would think: ‘I can quench my thirst with water, whey, porridge, or soup, but I should not drink that beverage, since to do so would lead to my harm and suffering for a long time.’ Having reflected, he would not drink the beverage but would reject it, and thereby he would not meet death or deadly suffering.

“So too, bhikkhus, whatever ascetics and brahmins in the past ... in the future ... at present regard that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as impermanent, as suffering, as nonself, as a disease, as fearful: they are abandoning craving. In abandoning craving ... they are freed from suffering, I say.”

