

AN 6.44: Migasāla Sutta

Measuring

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

Then Venerable Ānanda dressed in the morning, took his bowl and robe, went to the dwelling of the female lay devotee Migasāla, and sat down on the designated seat. Then Migasāla approached Venerable Ānanda, paid respects to him, sat to one side, and said to him,

“Bhante Ānanda, how is one to understand the Dhamma taught by the Fortunate One, when one who is celibate and one who is not celibate both have the same destiny, the same future life? Bhante, my father Purāṇa was celibate, maintaining distance, refraining from sexual activity, from vulgar behavior. When he passed away, the Fortunate One declared that he was a once-returner who had reappeared in Tusita. My father’s brother, Isidatta, was not celibate; he was content with his wife. When he passed away, the Fortunate One declared that he also was a once-returner who had reappeared in Tusita. Bhante Ānanda, how is one to understand the Dhamma taught by the Fortunate One, when one who is celibate and one who is not celibate both have the same destiny, the same future life?”

“Sister, that is what the Fortunate One declared.”

Then after receiving almsfood at Migasāla’s dwelling, Venerable Ānanda rose from his seat and left. After finishing his meal and returning from almsround he approached the Fortunate One, paid respects to him, sat to one side, and said to him,

“Bhante, this morning I dressed, took my bowl and robe, went to the dwelling of the female lay devotee Migasāla, and sat down on the designated seat. Then Migasāla approached me, paid respects to me, sat to one side, and said to me, ‘Bhante Ānanda, how is one to understand the Dhamma taught by the Fortunate One, when one who is celibate and one who is not celibate both have the same destiny, the same future life? Bhante, my father Purāṇa was celibate, maintaining distance, refraining from sexual activity, from vulgar behavior. When he passed away, the Fortunate One declared that he was a once-returner who had reappeared in Tusita. My father’s brother, Isidatta, was not celibate; he was content with his wife. When he passed away, the Fortunate One declared that he also was a once-returner who had reappeared in Tusita. Bhante Ānanda, how is one to understand the Dhamma taught by the Fortunate One, when one who is celibate and one who is not celibate both have the same destiny, the same future life?’ When this was said, Bhante, I said to Migasāla, ‘Sister, that is what the Fortunate One declared.’”

“And, Ānanda, who is Migasāla – an incompetent fool, a mango-dealer who thinks like a mango-dealer? And who is it who knows how people go from one life to the next?”

“Ānanda, there are six kinds of people found in the world. What six?”

“Here, Ānanda, one kind of person is gentle, pleasant to live with, and delights in living together with co-practitioners. However, they have not been listening, they have not

learned much, they have not made a breakthrough in view, and they have not attained temporary liberation. When such a person is separated from their body after death, they head for decline, not for distinction; they are going towards decline, not towards distinction.

“Here, Ānanda, another kind of person is gentle, pleasant to live with, and delights in living together with co-practitioners. They have been listening, they have learned much, they have made a breakthrough in view, and they have attained temporary liberation. When such a person is separated from their body after death, they head for distinction, not for decline; they are going towards distinction, not towards decline.

“In that case, Ānanda, a measurer measures, ‘That person’s traits are the same as the other person’s traits. How is one inferior and one superior?’ Ānanda, this is for their long-term detriment and suffering.

“In that case, Ānanda, the person who is gentle, pleasant to live with, delights in living together with co-practitioners, has been listening, has learned much, has made a breakthrough in view, and has attained temporary liberation is better and superior to the previous person. For what reason? Ānanda, that person flows with the stream of Dhamma. Who could understand this difference except a Tathāgata? Therefore, Ānanda, do not be a measurer of people; do not take up measuring people. Ānanda, one is harmed when one takes up measuring people. Ānanda, only I can measure people, or another who is like me.

“Here, Ānanda, one kind of person is prone to anger and occasionally to greed. And they have not been listening, they have not learned much, they have not made a breakthrough in view, and they have not attained temporary liberation. When such a person is separated from their body after death, they head for decline, not for distinction; they are going towards decline, not towards distinction.

“Here, Ānanda, another kind of person is prone to anger and occasionally to greed. However, they have been listening, they have learned much, they have made a breakthrough in view, and they have attained temporary liberation. When such a person is separated from their body after death, they head for distinction, not for decline; they are going towards distinction, not towards decline.

“In that case, Ānanda, a measurer measures, ‘That person’s traits are the same as the other person’s traits. How is one inferior and one superior?’ Ānanda, this is for their long-term detriment and suffering.

“In that case, Ānanda, the person who is prone to anger and occasionally to greed but who has been listening, has learned much, has made a breakthrough in view, and has attained temporary liberation is better and superior to the previous person. For what reason? Ānanda, that person flows with the stream of Dhamma. Who could understand this difference except a Tathāgata? Therefore, Ānanda, do not be a measurer of people; do not take up measuring people. Ānanda, one is harmed when one takes up measuring people. Ānanda, only I can measure people, or another who is like me.

“Here, Ānanda, one kind of person is prone to anger and occasionally expresses it verbally. And they have not been listening, they have not learned much, they have not made a breakthrough in view, and they have not attained temporary liberation. When such a person is separated from their body after death, they head for decline, not for distinction; they are going towards decline, not towards distinction.

“Here, Ānanda, another kind of person is prone to anger and occasionally expresses it verbally. However, they have been listening, they have learned much, they have made a breakthrough in view, and they have attained temporary liberation. When such a person is separated from their body after death, they head for distinction, not for decline; they are going towards distinction, not towards decline.

“In that case, Ānanda, a measurer measures, ‘That person’s traits are the same as the other person’s traits. How is one inferior and one superior?’ Ānanda, this is for their long-term detriment and suffering.

“In that case, Ānanda, the person who is prone to anger and occasionally expresses it verbally but who has been listening, has learned much, has made a breakthrough in view, and has attained temporary liberation is better and superior to the previous person. For what reason? Ānanda, that person flows with the stream of Dhamma. Who could understand this difference except a Tathāgata? Therefore, Ānanda, do not be a measurer of people; do not take up measuring people. Ānanda, one is harmed when one takes up measuring people. Ānanda, only I can measure people, or another who is like me.

“And, Ānanda, who is Migasāla – an incompetent fool, a mango-dealer who thinks like a mango-dealer? And who is it who knows how people go from one life to the next?

“Ānanda, these are the six kinds of people found in the world.

“Ānanda, if Isidatta’s morality had been as good as Purāṇa’s morality, then Purāṇa would have had no knowledge of Isidatta’s destiny. And, Ānanda, if Purāṇa’s wisdom had been as good as Isidatta’s wisdom, then Isidatta would have had no knowledge of Purāṇa’s destiny. In this way, Ānanda, both of these people were inferior in one aspect.”