

AṄGUTTARA NIKĀYA  
THE BOOK OF THE THREES

## 3.65. KESAPUTTIYA

On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering on tour among the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of monks when he reached the town of the Kālāmas named Kesaputta. The Kālāmas of Kesaputta heard: “It is said that the ascetic Gotama, the son of the Sakyans who went forth from a Sakyan family, has arrived at Kesaputta. Now a good report about that Master Gotama has circulated thus: ‘That Blessed One is an arahant, perfectly enlightened ... *as at 3:63* ... and reveals a spiritual life that is perfectly complete and pure.’ Now it is good to see such arahants.”

Then the Kālāmas of Kesaputta approached the Blessed One. Some paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down to one side ... *as at 3:63* ... some kept silent and sat down to one side. Sitting to one side, the Kālāmas said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, there are some ascetics and brahmins who come to Kesaputta. They explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, denigrate, deride, and denounce the doctrines of others. But then some other ascetics and brahmins come to Kesaputta, and they too explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, denigrate, deride, and denounce the doctrines of others. We are perplexed and in doubt, Bhante, as to which of these good ascetics speak truth and which speak falsehood.”

“It is fitting for you to be perplexed, Kālāmas, fitting for you to be in doubt. Doubt has arisen in you about a perplexing matter. Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence of a speaker, or because you think: ‘The ascetic is our guru.’ But when, Kālāmas, you know for yourselves: ‘These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to harm and suffering,’ then you should abandon them.

(1) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When greed arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his harm, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a greedy person, overcome by greed, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life, takes what is not given, transgresses with another’s wife, and speaks falsehood; and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(2) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When hatred arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his harm, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is full of hate, overcome by hatred, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life ... and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(3) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When delusion arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his harm, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is deluded, overcome by delusion, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life ... and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?” — “Unwholesome, Bhante.” — “Blameworthy or blameless?” — “Blameworthy, Bhante.” — “Censured or praised by the wise?” — “Censured by the wise, Bhante.” — “Accepted and undertaken, do they lead to harm and suffering or not, or how do you take it?” — “Accepted and undertaken, these things lead to harm and suffering. So we take it.”

“Thus, Kālāmas, when we said: ‘Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition ... But when you know for yourselves: “These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering,” then you should abandon them,’ it is because of this that this was said.

“Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence of a speaker, or because you think: ‘The ascetic is our guru.’ But when you know for yourselves: ‘These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and happiness,’ then you should live in accordance with them.

(1) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-greed arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his welfare, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person without greed, not overcome by greed, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life, take what is not given, transgress with another’s wife, or speak falsehood; nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(2) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-hatred arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his welfare, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is without hate, not overcome by hatred, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life ... nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

(3) “What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-delusion arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?”

“For his welfare, Bhante.”

“Kālāmas, a person who is undeluded, not overcome by delusion, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life ... nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?” — “Wholesome, Bhante.” — “Blameworthy or blameless?” — “Blameless, Bhante.” — “Censured or praised by the wise?” — “Praised by the wise, Bhante.” — “Accepted and undertaken, do they lead to welfare and happiness or not, or how do you take it?” — “Accepted and undertaken, these things lead to welfare and happiness. So we take it.”

“Thus, Kālāmas, when we said: ‘Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition ... But when you know for yourselves: “These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and happiness,” then you should live in accordance with them,’ it is because of this that this was said.

“Then, Kālāmas, that noble disciple, who is thus devoid of longing, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful, dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness ... with a mind imbued with compassion ... with a mind imbued with altruistic joy ... with a mind imbued with equanimity, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire world with a mind imbued with equanimity, vast, exalted, measureless, without enmity, without ill will.

“This noble disciple, Kālāmas, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won four assurances in this very life.

“The first assurance he has won is this: ‘If there is another world, and if there is the fruit and result of good and bad deeds, it is possible that with the breakup of the body, after death, I will be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.’

“The second assurance he has won is this: ‘If there is no other world, and there is no fruit and result of good and bad deeds, still right here, in this very life, I maintain myself in happiness, without enmity and ill will, free of trouble.

“The third assurance he has won is this: ‘Suppose evil comes to one who does evil. Then, when I have no evil intentions toward anyone, how can suffering afflict me, since I do no

evil deed?’

“The fourth assurance he has won is this: ‘Suppose evil does not come to one who does evil. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.’

“This noble disciple, Kālāmas, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won these four assurances in this very life.”

“So it is, Blessed One! So it is, Fortunate One! This noble disciple whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won four assurances in this very life.

“The first assurance he has won ... *as above, down to:* ... The fourth assurance he has won is this: ‘Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.’

“This noble disciple, Bhante, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won these four assurances in this very life.

“Excellent, Bhante! ... We go for refuge to the Blessed One, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of bhikkhus. Let the Blessed One consider us lay followers who from today have gone for refuge for life.”