

Niraya (Hell)

One who speaks untruth goes to Hell like one who, when he has done a thing, says: "I did not do it." Both, after death, will share the same fate, for these are men of evil.

Though they wear the yellow robe, those who are dissolute and evil-natured, their evil actions will cause them to be reborn in Hell.

It would be better to swallow a red-hot iron ball than to live on alms while leading a dissolute life.

Four punishments await the unscrupulous man who covets the wife of another: shame, troubled sleep, condemnation and Hell.

So he acquires an evil reputation and an evil birth; brief is the pleasure of the anxious pair, heavy the punishment of the law-giver. Let no man therefore seek the wife of another.

Just as Kusa grass cuts the hand if wrongly handled, so also asceticism wrongly understood leads to Niraya.

A duty carelessly fulfilled, a rule wrongly observed and a virtuous life followed out of fear, none of these will bring good results.

If a thing is to be done, do it with zeal. An ascetic with lax habits will stir up the dust (of the passions).

An evil deed is better left undone, for he who does it will be tormented by it. It is better to do a good deed, for he who does it will not have cause to repent it.

Questions and Answers

As a frontier city is well fortified both within and without, so one should guard oneself, so as not to waste a single moment of wakefulness; for those who lose this opportunity, even if only for a moment, will suffer indeed for it when in Hell.

Those who feel shame when there is no cause for shame, and those who feel no shame when there is cause to be ashamed, these deluded ones are destined to a painful state.

Those who are afraid of what should not be feared, and those who do not fear what is to be feared, these deluded ones are destined to a painful state.

Those who see evil where there is none, and those who do not see it where it is, these deluded ones are destined to a painful state.

Those who recognise evil to be evil, and good to be good, these who have right judgment are bound to enjoy happiness.

As in all these teachings there are always several ways of understanding them. The external way is quite commonplace. In all moral principles, the same thing is always said. This Niraya for example, which some take as a kind of hell where one is punished for one's sins, has also another sense. The true sense of Niraya is that particular kind of atmosphere which one creates around oneself when one acts in contradiction, not with outer moral rules or social principles, but with the inner law of one's being, the particular truth of each one which ought to govern all the movements of our consciousness and all the acts of our body. The inner law, the truth of the being is the divine Presence in every human being, which should be the master and guide of our life.

When you acquire the habit of listening to this inner law,

when you obey it, follow it, try more and more to let it guide your life, you create around you an atmosphere of truth and peace and harmony which naturally reacts upon circumstances and forms, so to say, the atmosphere in which you live. When you are a being of justice, truth, harmony, compassion, understanding, of perfect goodwill, this inner attitude, the more sincere and total it is, the more it reacts upon the external circumstances; not that it necessarily diminishes the difficulties of life, but it gives these difficulties a new meaning and that allows you to face them with a new strength and a new wisdom; whereas the man, the human being who follows his impulses, who obeys his desires, who has no time for scruples, who comes to live in complete cynicism, not caring for the effect that his life has upon others or for the more or less harmful consequences of his acts, creates for himself an atmosphere of ugliness, selfishness, conflict and bad will which necessarily acts more and more upon his consciousness and gives a bitterness to his life that in the end becomes a perpetual torment.

Of course this does not mean that such a man will not succeed in what he undertakes, that he will not be able to possess what he desires; these external advantages disappear only when there is within the inmost being a spark of sincerity which persists and makes him worthy of this misfortune.

If you see a bad man become unlucky and miserable, you must immediately respect him. It means that the flame of inner sincerity is not altogether extinguished and something still reacts to his bad actions.

Finally, that leads us again to the observation that you must never, never judge on appearances and that all the judgments you make from outward circumstances are always, necessarily false judgments.

To have a glimpse of the Truth, one must take at least one step back in one's consciousness, enter a little more deeply into one's being and try to perceive the play of forces behind the appearances and the divine Presence behind the play of forces.

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