AN 3.137 — Kesakambala Sutta (The Blanket of Head-hair)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

136. Kesakambala Sutta (The Blanket of Head-hair) Bhikkhus, what they call a “cloth,” which is nothing but weaving of head hair that is collected and then turned into a blanket, is undeniably the least efficient of all materials, lacking any insulation whatsoever, keeping one cold and not warm in the cold season, and hot and not cool in the hot season. In addition, any blanket made of head-hair is unappealing, unhygienic, foul-smelling, and does not have a comforting texture to it, at all.

Bhikkhus, in the same way, it should be declared that of the numerous doctrines of various contemporary recluses, Makkhali’s (Gosāla) view is indeed the worst.

For, Bhikkhus, that idiot Makkhali holds the wrong view and keeps instructing those around him that:

‘There is no action being committed; there is nothing that is done; and there is no effort to be applied.’

But Bhikkhus, The Blessed Ones in the past, who became Arahants and Perfectly Self-Awakened, have all taught the truth, that there is indeed intentional action (kamma) being committed; therefore, there is action that is done, and certainly, effort is to be applied.

However, this idiot Makkhali contradicts all The Tathāgatas, with his own insane and foolish view, by declaring:

‘There is no action being committed; there is nothing that is done; and there is no effort to be applied.’

Furthermore, Bhikkhus, The Blessed Ones in the future, who will become Arahants and Perfectly Self-Awakened as well, will also teach the truth, that there is indeed intentional action (kamma) being committed; therefore, there is action that is done, and certainly, effort is to be applied.

However, this idiot Makkhali contradicts all Those Tathāgatas of the future as well, with his own insane and foolish view, by declaring:

‘There is no action being committed; there is nothing that is done; and there is no effort to be applied.’

And now too, Bhikkhus, when I am The Tathāgata, The Blessed One, The Arahant and The Perfectly Self-Awakened One of this age, I also teach the truth, that there is indeed intentional action (kamma) being committed; therefore, there is action that is done, and certainly, effort is to be applied.

However, this idiot Makkhali contradicts all The Tathāgatas, with his own insane and foolish view, by declaring:

‘There is no action being committed; there is nothing that is done; and there is no effort to be applied.’

Bhikkhus, much like a net laid out at the mouth of a river that traps and keeps ensnaring many fish, truly leading to their harm, suffering, and disaster, in the same way, this idiot Makkhali’s net of wrong views is enticing and trapping many sentient beings, truly leading to their terrible harm, suffering, and disaster.